

COMMUNITY SERVICES

BY AMY RUEFF, ILLINOIS AFL-CIO RESOURCE DIRECTOR

AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison programs and staff are a valuable resource to Central Labor Councils and the Illinois AFL-CIO. The mission of AFL-CIO Community Services is to improve the lives of workers and their families by meeting their human and social service needs; building broad and diverse coalitions to promote and protect dignity and justice for workers; and empowering workers and their unions to make their communities better, more responsive places to live, work and raise a family.

Through a partnership with United Way, which has lasted more than 70 years, Illinois currently has twelve AFL-CIO Community Services Liaisons in place to ensure that this mission is carried out. Each liaison works in their local community, in cooperation with their Central

Labor Council, to expand services, work for public policy and increase the capacity for workers and their families to impact and improve the quality of their lives. In areas where a liaison is not present, Central Labor Councils have community services committees designed to help their brothers and sisters in need.

Community services programs provide training to workers and their families that can prepare union volunteers by teaching ways to meet the needs of working families, understand the economic conditions that perpetuate those needs and develop strategies to counter those conditions. Training provides critical assistance to workers who have been laid off or are on strike.

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