

NFFE Local 1998 Steward Manual



Welcome to Chapter 1 of the official Union Steward Manual for IAMAW FD1 NFFE Federal Local 1998 (aka “NFFE Local 1998” or just “FL 1998”). This guide seeks to provide information and self-study training to the Union officers who are charged with representing the needs and the views of the employees of Passport Services.

This chapter addresses:

- Who are we?
- Points of contact
- Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Bylaws
- History
- Website
- Newsletter



The most current version of the Steward Manual can be found at the NFFE national website www.nffe.org, in the “Members Only” section under the heading “Passport Agency Hub”.

Local 1998 and NFFE National officers outside of the old NFFE Building in 2006.

The goal of the Steward Manual is to provide a primary resource for Union Stewards to access most of the information needed to do the job. The Manual covers topics like handling complaints, filing grievance, negotiating with Management, and many other issues. Additional information can be found on the Union’s website.

Union representatives may use their official time to read this guide - with the exception of Chapters 17 and 18, which contain "internal union business" and must be read on personal/non-work time. Make sure to coordinate the use of

official time in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement.

Who Are We?

NFFE Local 1998 is the Union that represents the approximately 1,400 bargaining unit members of Passport Services. We are the “exclusive representative” of the employees, which means that we are the only labor union that can speak on behalf of the employees.



The new NFFE seal

We are limited to only representing members of the bargaining unit – employees such as Passport Specialists, Operations Officers, Paralegal Specialists, Contact Representatives, and Processors. We cannot represent Management officials or confidential employees, such as a Director's secretary. We cannot represent contractors. We represent the employees in every office that is part of Passport Services, including PPT/L/LE, PPT/TO (formerly Information Management & Liaison) and the Special Issuance Agency in Washington, DC, as well as the Passport Agencies and Centers in: Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Charleston, SC; Connecticut; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Honolulu, HI; Houston, TX; Aurora, CO; Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; New Orleans, LA; Miami, FL; Minneapolis, MN; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Portsmouth, NH; Tucson, AZ; Buffalo, NY; El Paso, TX; Minneapolis, MN; San Diego, CA; Dallas, TX, Vermont, and Washington, DC.

“NFFE” stands for the National Federation of Federal Employees, and is often referred to as “**NFFE National**” to avoid confusion between our local and the national organization. NFFE is the umbrella union of which we are a part. NFFE was established in 1917 and it was the first union created solely to represent the needs and the views of federal employees. NFFE has almost 200 locals, including locals with employees in the Veteran's Administration, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Defense, the Forest Service, and the General Services Administration. NFFE is the exclusive representative for approximately 100,000 federal employees. NFFE's mottoes are “*all for one, one for all*” and “*We Work For America – Every Day.*”



The old NFFE seal

In 1999, NFFE members voted to affiliate with the **IAMAW**, which stands for the “International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers”. The IAMAW has a number of regions and there is a General Vice President (GVP) for each region. The region that NFFE is a part of is the “Headquarters” region (Washington, DC area). The regions each have a number of districts, but NFFE remains its own district within the



The IAM seal

IAMAW - NFFE is "Federal District 1" or "FD1". The IAMAW is often referred to as simply "the IAM", and its members are sometimes referred to as "Machinists". Obviously, as the name implies, the IAMAW represent more than just federal employees. Both private sector and public sector employees from a wide variety of industries are represented by the IAMAW, including employees at Harley-Davidson and Boeing.

Though we often refer to ourselves as "Local 1998", when interacting with IAMAW officials or staff it is helpful to refer to our Union as "Federal Local 1998" or "FL 1998." This is because there is an "IAMAW Local 1998" that represents private sector employees In Hawaii.



Points of Contact

The staff of NFFE National Headquarters and the Business Representatives around the country work (more than) full time on our behalf and have their salaries paid for by our dues. They are important and valuable resources, and it is important to respect their time. They provide much needed advice and assistance to Local 1998, and also argue cases and submit briefs on our behalf in grievances, negotiations, Unfair Labor Practice charges, Negotiability Appeals, and numerous other matters.

Protocol: In order to avoid a barrage of unnecessary queries, the normal protocol is for Union Stewards to contact the Local 1998 leadership (President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Secretary-Treasurer, and Chief Steward) first with questions or to get advice on how to handle complaints. The Local 1998 leadership then tries to answer/assist the Union Steward. In those

situations where the leadership does not have the answers or needs further assistance, then NFFE National Business Representatives or HQ will be contacted.

However, there is no prohibition or rule against a Union Steward directly contacting NFFE National staff. In those cases where either the Steward is unable to get help from the Local 1998 leadership (e.g., due to an absence) or for some other reason feels it necessary to contact NFFE National directly, he/she certainly may do so. It is important to keep in mind that NFFE National staff deal with numerous issues and communicate with hundreds of Union representatives, so keeping the volume of queries down and avoiding unnecessary calls is a serious consideration.

Check the Local 1998 and NFFE National websites for the latest contact information. If you do need the assistance of NFFE National, normally you would contact the Business Representative in the closest proximity to your office.

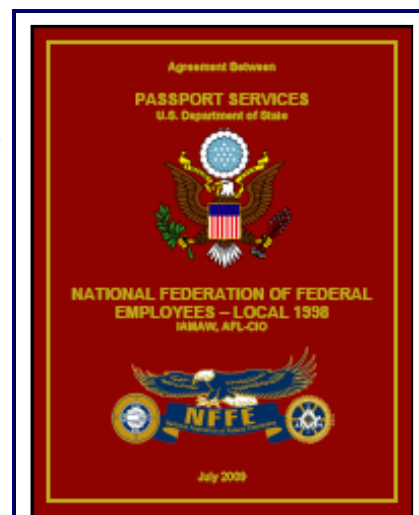
Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

The Master Agreement, or “collective bargaining agreement”, is negotiated by NFFE Local 1998 and the Management of Passport Services. The Master Agreement is sometimes referred to as the “CBA”, the “contract”, or simply as “the Agreement”. When dealing with Passport Services’ Management, NFFE Local 1998 is often referred to as simply “the Union”.

The CBA includes articles governing the rights and responsibilities of employees, the use of official time by union representatives to address employees’ concerns, and also promotions, evaluations, awards, leave, work schedules, and many other issues.

Violations of the CBA or law, rule or regulation can be grieved by employees or the Union through the negotiated grievance procedure. Only the Union can invoke binding arbitration in matters where the grievance procedure failed to settle an issue.

The current CBA went into effect on July 20, 2009 and was revised on August 25, 2009. It is required to be provided to each bargaining unit employee and is also available on the Passport Services Intranet as well as the NFFE Local 1998



The current collective bargaining agreement, effective July 20, 2009 and revised August 25, 2009

website. All employees are allowed 4 hours of work time to review the CBA, per a November 2007 Memorandum of Understanding.

Bylaws

The inner workings, or internal union business, of NFFE Local 1998 are governed by its Bylaws. These bylaws must conform to the rules established by NFFE National's bylaws and the IAMAW's Constitution. The bylaws establish the Union's officers, how long are the terms of office, what is the rate of dues payment, and many other issues.

The NFFE Local 1998 Bylaws are included in Chapter 17. The NFFE National Bylaws and the most current edition of the Local 1998 Bylaws can be found on the NFFE national website.

History

NFFE Local 1998 came into official existence on October 19, 1981 when it was recognized as the exclusive representative of Passport Services' bargaining unit employees by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) in Case No. 3-RO-98. NFFE Local 1998 was again certified as the exclusive Union representative for the bargaining unit employees on September 10, 1985 (FLRA Case No. 3-UC-50003). Management made an attempt to decertify NFFE Local 1998 as the exclusive representative in the early

1990's. Management alleged to the FLRA in the late 1980's that NFFE Local 1998 had not prosecuted many grievances, invoked arbitration, or responded to Management initiatives, and therefore had it had not done its job as a union. Local 1998 prevailed, and continues to represent the employees of Passport Services to this day.



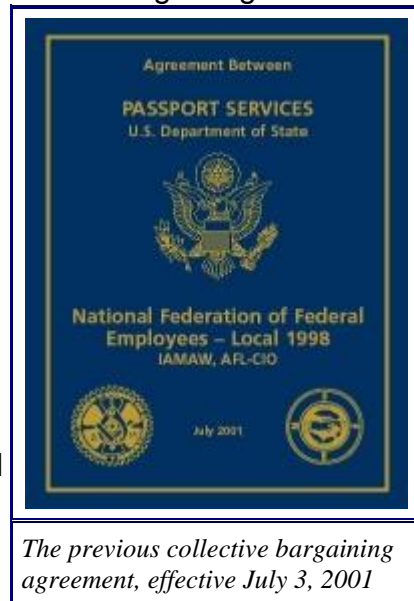
NFFE Local 1998 celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2011.

The Union has negotiated six collective bargaining agreements with Management – effective on: June 8, 1983; March 11, 2005; June 4, 1986; September 23, 1991; July 3, 2001; and July 20, 2009. The 2001 CBA saw the expansion of alternate work schedules, a more defined awards program, improvements in the career ladder promotion requirements, and the inclusion of partnerships as a more friendly and informal mechanism for labor-management bargaining. The 2009 CBA saw a more streamlined grievance procedure,

improvements in the procedures for mandatory overtime, and a number of additions that enhanced the integrity of the passport issuance process.

NFFE Local 1998 has taken many actions that benefit the bargaining unit employees of Passport Services. For example, in April 2004 the Union filed a grievance challenging the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) status of bargaining unit employees and won - as a result, affected employees received \$306,401.09 in back pay. Even more of a benefit is the change in status to being covered by the FLSA, so that employees at the GS-11 or GS-9, Step 5 and higher levels now earn true time-and-one-half for overtime work (rather than being capped at the GS-10, Step 1 OT rate).

Another example is the steps taken by NFFE Local 1998 to protect and enhance work schedule options for employees. The Union filed a negotiability appeal in 2003 and a grievance contesting unilateral work schedule changes. The Union prevailed on both fronts in 2004 with a decision by the FLRA on the negotiability appeal (60 FLRA No. 34) and in arbitration. The Union also filed grievances and negotiated changes on behalf of employees when Management tried to force them to move to a night shift in 2007 and then tried to force employees to the day shift in 2009. A reoccurrence of this action in Houston was taken to an arbitration hearing in 2012.



The previous collective bargaining agreement, effective July 3, 2001

For more information on the history of NFFE Local 1998, check out the website.

Union Website

The official website for NFFE Local 1998 is: <http://nffe1998.org/>.

The website was created by former NFFE Local 1998 President Bill Beardall. He brought a lot of his own experience and knowledge into creating and improving the website, and he was helped by the IAMAW as well through his attendance at two week-long courses on web development at the IAMAW's Winpisinger Center. Former VP Mike Garofano, former President Colin Walle, and current President Rob Arnold have also assisted with the development of the website. Garofano, Arnold, and Walle also attended the IAMAW's web development classes.

To access the website, type "nffe1998.org" into your web browser (e.g.,

Internet Explorer) and hit "enter" or press the "Go" button. You will then be on the Main Page of the website. This page houses the latest "News & Information" on our local. Scroll down the page to read the headlines. Some of the stories have links to more information or to other web pages.

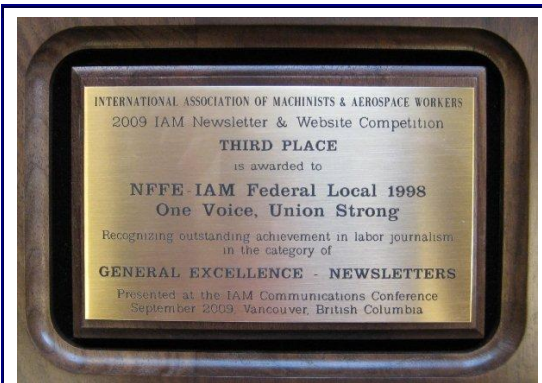
All Union officers should check out the website on a weekly basis, if not more frequently. It is recommended that you save the website as a "Favorite" for easy access on a regular basis. To do this, click on the "Favorites" tab at the very top of the Internet Explorer frame (between "View" and "Tools"), then select "Add to Favorites", which should be the first option in the list that opens up. A box will open asking if you want to save the web site as a Favorite. Click "Okay". The site will normally be saved at the bottom of your list of favorites. You can move it to a higher, more visible position, by dragging it to the top of the list of favorites and releasing it there (to see the list on a regular basis, you have to click on the "Favorites" button - below the "Favorites" tab and between the "Search" and "Media" buttons on the second line from the top in the Internet Explorer frame).

Union Newsletter

While most written communication from the Union to the employees takes the form of email and website updates, many employees appreciate receiving and reading their updates in printed form. To meet that need, NFFE Local 1998 publishes a newsletter.

NFFE Local 1998 first published a newsletter back in 1990 titled, "*The Passport Employee Voice*." Later, beginning in 1998, NFFE Local 1998 published a string of newsletters (usually twice a year) titled, "*Local 1998 News*."

In 2008 the Union held a contest for all dues-paying Union members to rename the newsletter. The members nominated scores of names and then voted for the winner. The top choice was "*One Voice, Union Strong*."



Recognition for General Excellence

Most of the information in the newsletter is representational, though occasionally some of it involves internal union business (see Chapter 4).

NFFE Local 1998 has received recognition for our newsletter in the following

categories:

- General Excellence
- Layout and Design
- Feature Articles

Union Stewards play a critical role in the success of the newsletter by providing story ideas, writing articles, taking and sending photos, and distributing the newsletter to the employees.

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