

Officer Duties - Chapter 3

NFFE Local 1998 Officers have a number of duties which are explained throughout this Steward Manual. This chapter concerns the "nuts and bolts" of what Local 1998 Officers are expected to do. This chapter focuses on the following:

- Main duties/responsibilities
 - The Duty of Fair Representation
 - Learning about being a Union Rep
 - Seeking guidance
 - Don't miss deadlines
 - Recruiting new members
- The structure of the NFFE Local 1998 organization.
- The roles/duties of the various Union representatives.
- The Union membership list.
- The bargaining unit employees (BUE) email distribution list.
- The NFFE Local 1998 Union officer list.
- The Union bulletin board.
- The Union cabinet.
- The Union newsletter: *One Voice, Union Strong*
- The Union website: <http://www.nffe1998.org/>.

Main duties/responsibilities

The Duty of Fair Representation

NFFE Local 1998 is the exclusive representative of all Passport Services bargaining unit employees ("BUE"). The BUE includes all government staff, except for: supervisors, managers, AFOPS, analysts, the secretary, and the system administrator. Those employees who choose to submit form SF-1187 for dues deductions become dues-paying members of the Union. It is important to keep in mind the distinction between the terms – all Union members are BUE, but not all BUE are Union members.

One important concept that you must understand as a Union representative is the Duty of Fair Representation. The rule is that because NFFE Local 1998 has been certified by the Federal Labor Relations Authority, by a vote of bargaining unit employees, as the exclusive representative of the employees, then NFFE Local 1998 has an obligation to represent all of the employees in matters pertaining to the contract. In other words, the Union cannot discriminate and only file grievances for dues-paying Union members and exclude or refuse to

represent those who choose not to join the Union .

See Chapter 4 of this Steward Manual for more information on the Duty of Fair Representation.

Learning about being a Union rep

As a Union representative, you will receive emails and information on how to do your job, and will also be notified of training opportunities. However, one of the most important things to understand is that you must take responsibility yourself for obtaining training, learning about being a Union rep, and growing in the job. Read this entire Steward Manual. Check out the website. Read the Master Agreement (aka “contract”, “collective bargaining agreement”, or “CBA”). Read the Federal Service Labor Management Relations Statute (§ 5 U.S.C. 71). Look into training (see Chapter 2). Don’t wait for the training and knowledge to come to you, go out and get it!

Seeking guidance

No one expects you, as a Union Steward, to know everything there is to know about filing grievances, bargaining, contract interpretation, or other Union issues. We are all Passport Services employees and not labor-management experts. Seek guidance from the NFFE Local 1998 nationwide Union reps (see below) and from the NFFE Business Representatives (see Chapter 1).

You are not expected to know all of the answers, but you are expected to go find them.

Don’t miss deadlines

One of the most important concepts that you must understand as a Union rep is that virtually everything you deal with has deadlines. There are deadlines on internal Union business matters, such as elections. There are deadlines on filing grievance, on requesting to bargain, on filing Unfair Labor Practice charges, etc. In many cases, if we miss a deadline we LOSE whatever it is we are seeking to accomplish – regardless of the merits of our case.

Recruiting new members

Note: duties involving recruiting new members are internal Union business and cannot be conducted on official (work) time. They should be performed on breaks or lunch, or before/after work.

A Union Steward is responsible for recruiting new Union members to grow the size of the Union. The more members we have, the stronger we are. For more

information on recruiting new members, see Chapter 18.

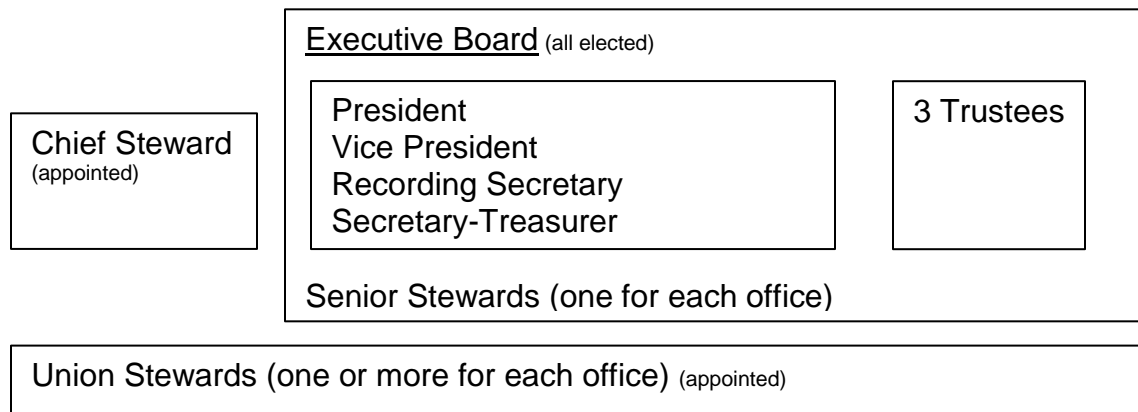
Structure of NFFE Local 1998

The organizational structure of the Union is determined by the Bylaws. The local is organized as follows:

- Nationwide Officers (aka "the Local 1998 leadership"): President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Chief Steward. These officers represent employees in all office and provide guidance to the officers in the local offices.
- Executive Board: the Senior Steward in each office along with the Trustees and the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. The Executive Board is the decision-making body of the Union.
- Local Officers: each office has a Senior Steward and one or more Stewards. These officers are the representatives for employees in that office.

The Senior Steward in each office, along with the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Trustees are elected positions. The term of office is three (3) years. The current term of office runs from January 1, 2011 until December 31, 2013. The Stewards and other positions are appointed, subject to confirmation by the Executive Board.

NFFE Local 1998 Structure



Roles of the NFFE Local 1998 Union Officers

The roles and duties of the various Union Representatives are described as

follows:

Nationwide Union Representatives

- **President:**
 - Provides representational assistance/guidance to Senior Stewards and Stewards;
 - The chief spokesperson of the local;
 - Represents the employees to HQ;
 - Leads E-Board;
 - Develops proposals regarding budget and expenses;
 - Serves as liaison with NFFE HQ and Business Reps;
 - Usually serves as the Union representative during arbitration hearings, in conjunction with NFFE Business Rep;
 - Training Coordinator;
 - Chief Negotiator for the Union , in absence of NFFE negotiator;
 - Communicates to all bargaining unit employees;
 - Co-signs, along with the Secretary-Treasurer, the LM-4 financial report to the Department of Labor;
 - Gathers input from Union Reps, Union members, and bargaining unit employees; and
 - Provides representational service directly to bargaining unit employees on occasion.
- **Vice President:**
 - Provides representational assistance/guidance to Senior Stewards and Stewards;
 - Fills in as Union President during absences;
 - Spokesperson for the local; represents the employees to HQ;
 - Runs the officer ratification process
 - Serves as liaison with NFFE HQ and Business Reps;
 - May serve as the Union representative during arbitration hearings;
 - Communicates to all bargaining unit employees; and
 - Provides representational service directly to bargaining unit employees on occasion.
- **Secretary-Treasurer:**
 - Provides representational assistance/guidance to Senior Stewards and Stewards;
 - Fills in as Union President during absences;
 - Occasionally spokesperson for the local;
 - Represents the employees to HQ; serves as liaison with NFFE HQ and Business Reps;
 - Manages budget/finances of the local;
 - Completes/submit new membership forms to Personnel/Payroll;
 - Ensures that dues deductions done in a timely basis (responsible

for resolving problems with Personnel/Payroll/HQ on this issue – including filing a grievance or ULP, if necessary);

- Completes/submit new membership forms;
- Prepares financial report;
- Completes and submits LM-4 report to the Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards;
- Works with Recording Secretary to ensure accuracy of membership lists and addresses; and
- Provides representational service directly to bargaining unit employees on occasion.

- **Recording Secretary:**

- Provides representational assistance/guidance to Senior Stewards and Stewards;
- Fills in as Union President during absences;
- Occasionally spokesperson for the local;
- Represents the employees to HQ;
- Serves as liaison with NFFE HQ and Business Reps;
- Assists S/T with budget/finances of the local;
- Ensures accuracy of membership lists and addresses;
- Benefits Coordinator;
- Communicates membership list information and updates to NFFE; and
- Provides representational service directly to bargaining unit employees on occasion.

- **Chief Steward:**

- Provides representational assistance/guidance to Senior Stewards and Stewards;
- Fills in as Union President during absences;
- Occasionally spokesperson for the local;
- Represents the employees to HQ;
- Serves as liaison with NFFE HQ and Business Reps; and
- *Often* provides representational service directly to bargaining unit employees.

Office Union Representatives

- **Senior Steward:**

- Provides representational service to bargaining unit employees;
- Chief spokesperson for the local at the agency level;
- Informs S/T and RS of changes in member info;
- Provides guidance to Steward;
- Works with Steward to address representational issues (e.g., changes in working conditions, grievances, work schedules, etc.);
- Seeks guidance from leadership when needed;

- **Stays on top of deadlines** (bargaining, grievances, ULP's, etc.);
 - Reads/responds to email queries and surveys from Union President and nationwide leadership;
 - Communicates with employees - informing employees of issues and gathering input/feedback, forwards appropriate emails from Union leadership, and distributes newsletter; and
 - Communicates with and informs local leadership on office issues/employee concerns.
- **Steward:**
 - Provides representational service to bargaining unit employees;
 - Spokesperson for the local at the agency level;
 - Informs S/T and RS of changes in member info;
 - Works with Senior Steward to address representational issues (e.g., changes in working conditions, grievances, work schedules, etc.);
 - Seeks guidance from leadership when needed;
 - **Stays on top of deadlines** (bargaining, grievances, ULP's, etc.);
 - Reads/responds to email queries and surveys from Union President and nationwide leadership;
 - Communicates with employees - informing employees of issues and gathering input/feedback, forwards appropriate emails from Union leadership, and distributes newsletter; and
 - Communicates with and informs local leadership on office issues/employee concerns.

The office reps may choose to split up duties in the office, such as maintaining the bulletin board, recruiting new members, and drafting UMC meeting minutes.

Other Union Representatives

- **Trustees:** members of the Executive Board - participate in decision making; run the union in the event of collapse.
- **Webmaster:** responsible for maintaining the Union's website - <http://www.nffe1998.org> - including both the representational content and the portions of the website that deal with internal union business.
- **Educator:** responsible for obtaining information of use to Union Reps, members, and BUE (e.g., from NFFE and the IAMAW) and disseminating that appropriately.
- **Training Coordinator:** responsible for coordinating training for Union Stewards, especially in dealing with Passport Services HQ and with the IAMAW's Winpisinger Center staff
- **Editor:** assists with creating, writing, editing, and layout of website, newsletter, and handouts. Solicits articles and input, gathers information, and sees that printing and distribution are effective and efficient.

Maintaining the Membership List

Note: duties involving the Union membership list are internal Union business and cannot be conducted on official (work) time. They should be performed on breaks or lunch, or before/after work.

The Union Stewards in each office are responsible for maintaining an updated list of dues-paying Union members for their office. They are also responsible for communicating to the Recording Secretary and the Secretary-Treasurer any changes in member's addresses, phone numbers, or names (e.g., marriage or divorce).

The list is vitally important as it used for the election of officers. It is also forwarded to NFFE and the IAMAW, which send newsletters and benefits information to the dues-paying Union members.

For more information on the Union membership list, please read Chapter 18.

Maintaining the BUE email distribution list

Passport Services agreed to create email distribution lists for each office to be filled with the names of all bargaining unit employees (see Article 10, Section 4 of the Master Agreement). One Union representative in each office is listed as the "owner" of the list, meaning he/she can update the lists by adding or subtracting names. Oftentimes the owner is the Senior Steward, but not always. For those offices without a Union representative, the Local 1998 President is listed as the owner.

These lists are vital tools for communication to bargaining unit employees. They must only be used for Union purposes. Representational messages can be sent on work time, during approved official time, while messages relating to internal Union business must be sent during personal time, such as breaks or lunch.

If the NFFEBUE email distribution list for each office is not maintained, then when the Local 1998 President emails all employees nationwide, he/she is either missing some employees and/or is reaching some former employees who are now supervisors.

Your job, as the owner of the list, is to maintain the list for your office.

How to create the list:

You can find the email distribution list in the Global Directory. In Microsoft Outlook (your email program), under “Tools” select “Address Book”. Where it says “Type Name or Select from List” type in “**NFFEBUE-BN**” for Boston , “**NFFEBUE-NPC**” for NPC, and so on. All of these lists together are included in the “**NFFEBUE-Central**” distribution list, which is maintained by the Local 1998 President.

From the Global menu, pull up desired NFFEBUE list

- Click on Properties (or just double-click on the distribution list)
- Click on Modify Members
- Click on ADD (Global List will pop up again)
- Click ADD again, to add, one by one, the email address of each person (Or Delete if you wish to remove names)
- Then Click OK when list is complete.

Adding/Subtracting Future Names:

Employees regularly leave the bargaining unit by retiring, resigning, being promoted (e.g., to a supervisory position), or transferring (e.g., to a different DOS position outside of PPT).

When an employee leaves the unit, or transfers from your office, delete them from the NFFEBUE distribution list in your office.

When new employees come on board, make sure to add them right away. Sometimes there is a delay before they are added by the systems administrator to the email system, so keep checking back if you don't see the name right away.

Make sure to only add “bargaining unit employees” to the list.

Do NOT add:

- Supervisors
- Contractor workers
- Managers
- The secretary
- The system administrator
- The regional training coordinator
- The AFOP

Maintaining the NFFE Local Officer List

The Officer List is the list of employees designated by the Union to serve as representatives of the employees.

As a Union Steward, your job in relation to this list is to:

- Check to make sure that you have the latest list available: the most recent list will be emailed to you.
- Notify the Local President and Secretary-Treasurer whenever there has been a change in the information for officers in your location (e.g., change in name, telephone number, or in the person[s] serving as the officer[s]).
- Post the officer list on the Union bulletin board (see Article 8, Section 5 of the contract for information on the bulletin board).

The Local 1998 Vice President maintains the list and forward it to HQ Management and to the officers themselves. Article 7, Section 1d of the 2009 Master Agreement states that:

The Employer will recognize elected Union officers and appointed representatives throughout the bargaining unit. The Union will supply the Employer in writing, and will maintain on a current basis, a list of the Union officials. The list will identify the group of bargaining unit employees each official is designated to represent and which officials are national representatives.

The Officer List is a useful tool for Stewards. Questions and concerns can be shared with fellow Union representatives in other locations, and oftentimes you will find that others have faced the same problems or dealt with the similar issues that you have. Other officers may contact you for your help and guidance, and to share your experiences. No one is expected to have all of the answers, and just as the Union derives its strength from the solidarity of its members, the officer corps should draw its strength from each other.

Bulletin Board

All offices should have a Union bulletin board. Article 8, Section 5 states:

- a. Bulletin board space of approximately 24" by 36" for posting notices and literature, limited to NFFE local use only, will be made available at each location. Where a location has more than one floor, one bulletin board will be made available for each floor. Additional bulletin boards are subject to local negotiations.

- b. The Union is responsible for posting and maintaining material on its bulletin boards in an orderly manner.
- c. The Union agrees that all material posted on union bulletin boards will be appropriate for a professional work place, be factually correct, and will comply with all applicable laws.
- d. Only the designated bulletin boards will be used for such postings.
- e. The Union assumes all responsibility for the preparation and reproduction of materials posted under this Section.
- f. Management has the right to remove any Union material not posted in accordance with the provisions of this Section; however, the Employer must notify the Union that the material will be removed.

Some items that should be posted on the bulletin board include:

- The name of our Union : “NFFE Local 1998”
- Our website: <http://nffe1998.org/>
- The names, phone numbers, and email addresses of your office’s reps
- The Union officer list (see above)
- The latest Local 1998, NFFE, IAMAW, and AFL-CIO newsletters

Other items you may want to consider posting include:

- Benefits information
- Announcements from NFFE and the IAMAW
- The IAMAW calendar
- Union-Management Council meeting minutes
- Grievances – but only if all private or confidential information is protected
- Local agreements (e.g., dress code, work schedules, etc.)
- Relevant news information (e.g., pay increase, salary tables, etc.)

Securing the Union cabinet

Article 8, Section 1b of the Master Agreement states:

The Employer shall identify existing and available bar lock cabinets. In agencies where available cabinets exist, the Employer will provide the designated representative one cabinet with a minimum of two drawers. In Agencies where no existing cabinets are available, and there is a designated representative, the Employer shall provide a two drawer

cabinet. In both cases the Employer and designated Union representative shall work together to identify a mutually agreeable location for cabinet placement. In offices where the Union Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, or Chief Steward work, the Employer shall provide one additional two-drawer cabinet.

As a Union Steward, one of your responsibilities is to safeguard private and confidential information in the Union cabinet. If your office has not yet provided a cabinet, then request one as soon as possible – this is a contractual requirement. The cabinet should have a lock, and only the Union Stewards should have keys to that cabinet.

Publishing the Union newsletter

The Union President and the Communicator are responsible for publishing the Union 's newsletter. However, they cannot update it unless the Union Stewards communicate what is happening in their offices. If there are stories or photos regarding any representational or internal Union business function in your office, then forward them to the Union President and the Editor for possible inclusion in the next newsletter. It is important to email not just successes but failures as well, and not just issues with outcomes but also issues that are of concern.

Updating the Union website

The Union Webmaster is responsible for maintaining and updating the Union website – www.nffe1998.org. But, as with the newsletter, if he/she does not hear from you then that prevents helpful information from being shared. If there are stories or issues from your office that may be useful to post on the website, email the Webmaster with information on them. Also, if you have photos (e.g., from a trip to the Winpisinger Center , or a membership drive), then forward them to the Webmaster as well. As with the newsletter and other matters, the success of any Union endeavor is due to the work of many people.

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