

NFFE News



NFFE Wins Election to Represent USDA Animal Care Employees *Union welcomes new Local of more than 110 veterinary employees stationed nationwide*

April 16, 2021

On April 8th, the Denver regional office of the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) confirmed that NFFE-IAM had won an election to represent over 110 federal employees at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Animal Care Program. The new Local is mostly veterinarians and animal welfare inspectors tasked with monitoring the wellbeing of animals used in commercial and research settings. NFFE was overwhelmingly elected as their exclusive representative with a winning tally of 80 to 3. The new Local also voted to merge into a single bargaining unit from two, a show of strength in numbers to help with future bargaining. The Agency indicated no objection to the election result clearing the way for FLRA to certify it in the coming weeks.



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Animal Care Program employees expressed considerable concerns about the work environment at USDA including improper treatment by leadership, unfair hiring practices against older workers, unanticipated and invasive policy implementation without proper input from the field, and work-life balance inequalities.

“I’m ecstatic about Animal Care becoming part of the NFFE family,” said Dr. Pamela Smith, a Veterinary Medical Officer in the newly-formed unit, “It’s exciting that my coworkers have overwhelmingly supported joining NFFE, and I am looking forward to all of us working together to move Animal Care toward a better future.”

NFFE Midwest Business Representative Amanda Booher will assist the new Local with its new charter and facilitate training for new Local leaders on employee representation and union stewardship. The NFFE Legal Department is working to establish a bargaining strategy in preparation for the Local’s first contract.

“We are very excited to welcome our new sisters and brothers from Animal Care into our Union,” said NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “This group overcame so much adversity just trying to organize a union during the pandemic, but they persevered and earned a decisive victory for the workers in their agency. Now we go to work to get a contract and build their Local to even greater numbers. I’m excited to see all of the wonderful accomplishments awaiting this new Local!”

If you are interested in forming a union or growing a Local, contact NFFE Organizing Director Ethan West at ewest@nffe.org.

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