

ENGAGING MEMBERS AND LEADERS IN A NON-AGENCY FEE WORLD: A TOOLKIT



NEA CENTER FOR ORGANIZING

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Thanks to:

Alabama Education Association

California Teachers Association

Illinois Education Association

Michigan Education Association

New Jersey Education Association

New York State United Teachers

Pennsylvania State Education Association

Vermont-NEA



Introduction

Fair Share is a commonsense way to protect equity, individual rights, and the pocketbooks of educators. Also known as Agency Fee, Fair Share provisions ensure that all educators contribute to the legally required representation and negotiated benefits provided to them by local associations. Fair Share does not force individuals to join the Association. It simply makes sure that all educators contribute to the negotiated benefits and legally required representation that they all enjoy.

But Fair Share has been under attack in the courts and state legislatures in recent years by opponents who wish to undermine the rights of working people and erode the strength of our Association. We have only to look at our colleagues in Michigan to see how quickly a state with a strong labor tradition can abandon rights for working people. A new case, *Harris v. Quinn*, was heard before the U.S. Supreme Court earlier this year and we expect a decision soon. No matter what the outcome of *Harris* or other cases, we must proactively prepare for the possibility that Fair Share provisions could be eliminated.

If we act now, we can thwart this attack on our members and ensure that our opponents are not successful in their attempts to undermine our Association. The solution is to organize. Affected affiliates will need to move quickly to engage each of their members, explain the issue at hand, and mobilize them around the value of membership.

We have no time to waste in our efforts to start contacting those covered by Fair Share and converting them into full members, and we must contact existing members to mobilize them in light of these attacks.

Each affiliate will need to execute an extensive membership campaign that reaches each member of the affiliate. Any successful campaign is going to need certain elements for success: a viable structure of Association Representatives (ARs); a consistent and accurate means of communicating with the general membership; and strong, trust-based relationships between leaders and the membership that they represent. This toolkit is designed to help threatened affiliates plan for, prepare, and execute that campaign.

Inside, you'll find:

- ✓ A checklist of things to do NOW and things to do NEXT
- ✓ What you need to know about *Harris v. Quinn*
- ✓ Why Fair Share is under attack
- ✓ Preparing a campaign
- ✓ Sample communications plan
- ✓ How to move Fair Share payers to full members
- ✓ How to create a year-round membership engagement plan
- ✓ Tips for reaching out to younger members
- ✓ Benefits of NEA membership
- ✓ Additional resources

Checklist – What Every Affiliate Should Do Now



- Consider: What would your affiliate look like if Fair Share is stripped from workers? Though we don't know the exact effect on membership, without a vigorous engagement plan, we know we could experience an immediate, short-term loss of membership resulting in fewer resources to support critical programs for our members and students.
- Begin developing a comprehensive field plan to focus on engaging and recruiting members, developing leaders, and organizing local unions.
- Identify your Fair Share members — work locations, primary or cell phones, home addresses.
- Examine your governance documents now and consider whether any changes need to be made.
- Check your representation policies.
- Develop and commit to writing the value your association adds to the lives of your members.
- Create ready-to-go one-sheeters on how the dues are broken down and reinvested in benefits for members and students.
- Examine your drop period now. What plans do you need to put in place?
- Partner with other unions.
- Explore other models.
- Examine your budget and create “what-if” scenarios.
- Have crucial conversations with your staff and leaders now.
- Examine your existing AR structure.
- Develop means to quickly communicate among staff and leaders.
- Call on your NEA Regional Director for assistance.

What to Do Next

- Finalize your plan. Recognize that this kind of campaign is now the new way you do business — it is not a short-term strategy.
- Create targeted engagement plans tailored to younger members and other unique constituencies within your membership.
- Develop a plan that identifies those people most likely to join if asked. Where are they? What is your plan to contact them?
- Be ready on Day One of school to engage your membership in every single school and worksite.
- Have Association Reps in place and provide training over the summer.
- Ensure staff and leaders are informed and dedicating significant time to planning and execution of your plan.





What You Need to Know About *Harris v. Quinn*

Harris v. Quinn, which is now pending before the Supreme Court, could have significant implications for state and local affiliates that collect agency fees from non-members. The National Right to Work Committee and its supporting *amici* have asked the Supreme Court to reconsider and overrule its prior decisions that have allowed public-sector unions to collect agency fees in a manner that is consistent with the First Amendment. Should the Court overrule its prior precedents — which is an outcome that we consider unlikely but within the realm of possibility — it would have immediate consequences for NEA and its affiliates.

1. Background

Harris involves a First Amendment challenge to an Illinois statute that (a) allows home-care providers (who are paid through certain state programs but are directed in their day-to-day activities by the patients they care for) to select a union to be their exclusive representative for purposes of negotiating with the state over rates of pay and other working conditions and (b) allows such a duly-selected union to collect a representation fee from all home-care providers, whether they are members of the union or agency fee payers.

Home-care providers represented by the National Right to Work Committee challenged the statute, arguing in the lower courts that the home-care workers were not bona fide employees of the state and that a Fair Share requirement therefore could not be justified under the Supreme Court's decision in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, 431 U.S. 209 (1977), which upheld the constitutionality of Fair Share arrangements in the context of traditional public employment. The plaintiffs lost before the trial court and again before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, which held that the home-care workers were jointly employed by the state

and therefore that, under *Abood*, the First Amendment did not prohibit non-union member state employees from being required to pay agency fees to the union to support activities germane to the union's collective bargaining representation.

The *Harris* plaintiffs filed a petition for *certiorari* with the U.S. Supreme Court in November 2011, repeating many of the same arguments they made in the lower courts. In other words, from the initial filing of their suit and all the way through their petition for *certiorari*, the *Harris* plaintiffs did not directly challenge *Abood*, only whether *Abood* could be extended to the home-care worker employment context.

While the *Harris* petition was still pending, however, the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Knox v. SEIU Local 1000*, 132 S.Ct. 2277 (2012). Although the *Knox* case itself dealt with a fairly obscure aspect of the agency fee process (namely, whether a union must issue a new agency fee notice to non-members if it enacts a mid-year dues increase), the majority opinion went out of its way to criticize the *Abood* line of cases and suggest that their holdings were "an anomaly" in the Court's First Amendment jurisprudence.

In late November, the *Harris* plaintiffs and several supporting *amici* filed their briefs with the Court, all of which argue that the Court should explicitly overrule *Abood* and declare *all* public-sector agency fee arrangements unconstitutional. As a fall back from that position, the petitioner's brief argues that *Abood* should be narrowed and permit agency fee arrangements only in traditional public sector employment contexts and only to charge for union conduct that does not amount to speech on matters of public concern (a test that would, if adopted, significantly reduce the type of union activities that may be charged to agency fee payers).

2. Implications of an Adverse Ruling in *Harris*

The Court heard arguments in *Harris* in January, with a decision to follow sometime between March and the end of June 2014. The union defendants in *Harris* and their supporting *amici* (which include NEA) made strong arguments as to why agency fee arrangements are constitutional, which included pointing out that several of the current justices (including Justices Scalia and Kennedy) previously have accepted the proposition that Fair Share arrangements are constitutional at least insofar as fee payers are only being charged for the costs of the union carrying out its statutory duties as the employees' exclusive collective bargaining representative. Given the prior decisions of the Court in this area, NEA attorneys believe it is unlikely that the Court will directly overrule *Abood* and make all public-sector agency fee arrangements unconstitutional but reasonably likely that the Court will narrow *Abood* so significantly as to drastically alter existing Fair Share arrangements.

Should the Court issue a ruling along either of these lines, it obviously would have significant implications for NEA and our affiliates that collect agency fees. As of the date of the ruling, all state and local laws that permit public-sector agency fees would be subject to immediate challenges that would seek to void those arrangements and/or recoup fees.

Affiliates that now collect agency fees should therefore be aware of these developments and begin to make contingency plans accordingly.



Why Is Fair Share Under Attack?



Anti-labor and anti-public education groups have steadily sought to limit the rights of educators. One way they seek to do this is to outlaw Fair Share clauses in contracts. Fair Share clauses — which ensure that all educators contribute to the legally required representation and negotiated benefits provided to them by local associations — are common in states where educators engage in collective bargaining. Fair Share does not force individuals to join. It simply makes sure that all educators contribute to the negotiated benefits and legally required representation that they all enjoy.

Our negotiated or statutory right to Fair Share is under attack in the courts and in state legislatures. The game plan is to undermine public education by weakening the power of educators to advocate for their students and for themselves.

Who's behind this? A number of ultra-conservative organizations, most notably the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). Listed below are several resources.



National information on what the far right is doing to workers and union rights:

<http://stinktanks.org/national/>

A national map you can click to see what is going on in each state:

<http://stinktanks.org/wheres-it-going/>

ALEC exposed — collective bargaining model language:

http://alecexposed.com/wiki/Worker_Rights_and_Consumer_Rights

ALEC Employee Rights Reform Act model language:

http://alecexposed.org/w/images/2/27/IR0-Employee_Rights_Reform_Act_Exposed.pdf



Preparing Your Campaign

Below is a step-by-step list that threatened affiliates can use **now** to develop a plan for dealing with a negative court decision.

1. Bring together all key stakeholders — president, vice president, executive director, staff from legal, field, communications, member processing, and business/finance.

- a. Describe the nature and potential extent of the challenge.
- b. Identify the potential consequences of an unfavorable Supreme Court decision.

2. Develop the framework of a plan to reach every member on the issues frequently and on a regular schedule.

- a. Goals: identify and recruit leaders, maintain members, and build power through member engagement.
- b. Ask locals to group their membership by their level of support and engagement with the Association, ranking them from 1 to 4, with 1 being the highest level of support and engagement.
- c. Consider a “recommitment campaign” in which every member is visited and asked to do something public to demonstrate his/her support for the union.
(For example: sign a letter, wear a button, put a sign on classroom door)
- d. Building visits
- e. Materials
- f. Special emphasis on younger members and those new to the profession
- g. Schedule touch points for assessment and refinement.



3. Reach out to other affiliates: what have they done that has proven to be successful?

4. Develop a plan to convert fee payers to full members.

5. Develop a strong communications plan.

- a. Develop a strong message and talking points to support that message.
- b. Use newsletters, email, and new media to get your message out to members.
- c. Be prepared for attacks by other organizations that may attempt to either peel off your members or use the opportunity to attack you in the media. Expect right-to-work organizations to barrage members with email and postcards.
- d. Develop templates, forms, and flyers for use in the campaign.
- e. Develop a materials distribution process for each local.

6. Assess the depth and breadth of internal systems.

- a. Assess each local's capacity to undertake an internal organizing campaign — What changes and assistance are needed?
- b. Determine appropriate locals to run pilots.
- c. Ensure buy-in from governance and staff.
- d. Ensure a contact person at each work site.
- e. Develop a cadre of active and retired members to work on the campaign.

7. Train staff/leaders/members/workers on the campaign and message discipline, as well as specific skills.

- a. Organizing conversations — talking to members one-on-one or in small groups
- b. Mapping and assessments
- c. Creating milestones and benchmarks
- d. Talking points to respond to members' concerns
- e. Connecting member values to union values





Sample Communications Plan*

An NEA state affiliate drafted this communications plan to address issues related to member retention should it lose Fair Share. This draft plan will give you some ideas and some insight into the effort needed to mount and coordinate a significant communications plan.

First of all, the Association views this as its “air game,” to complement (not replace) its “ground game” — face-to-face organizing with members.

Key Steps

A. Update materials and message about how we bring value to members.

Overall frame — To more clearly frame the issue of what the value proposition of membership involves, we will stress the benefits of membership. All the benefits of membership we routinely talk about fall into these “buckets”:

1. For Public Education

- a. Belonging to the state’s leading education organization
- b. Unity and collective action as tools for better contracts for employees/kids
- c. Communications and political advocacy to be informed and involved
- d. Ability to vote for contracts/officers and hold elected office

2. For Your Career

- a. Online professional development
- b. Certification guidance
- c. Conferences and trainings
- d. National Board Certification
- e. Special education training

3. For Your Rights

- a. \$1 million in work-related liability insurance
- b. Legal representation
- c. Access to employee rights experts

4. For Your Wallet

- a. NEA Member Benefits
- b. Discounts through other programs

** NEA Note: A calendar with specific deadlines accompanied this plan — an essential part of any plan.*



B. Develop and implement a multi-media communications calendar.

Each week for the balance of the school year, we'll have a featured benefit from one of the four key areas (Career, Rights, Wallet, Public Ed). Copy on that benefit will be included in our online publication, the website, and social media (Facebook and Twitter). An email will go to staff and leaders with the same materials for inclusion in local communications.

Similar materials will work their way into our magazine and the monthly local newsletter template, along with more cross-discipline career/life guidance stories that have broader appeal than K-12, ESP, Higher Ed, etc. (On the job...planning for retirement, dealing with a difficult boss or co-worker, do's and don'ts of social media, what to do if sexually harassed, etc.).

C. Develop and distribute local newsletters to supplement state-level communications.

Supplementing state-level communications with local newsletters is an important echo chamber for our message. The first full week of each month, Communications will craft a monthly, ready-to-distribute, Word-based newsletter that can be customized to include the name, photo, and contact information of the UniServ director.

D. Develop a toolkit and devise training for using the materials in the field.

A special Toolkit will be developed, complete with instructions and a training module. Contents: revised video, handouts, and a PowerPoint presentation — everything necessary to go in front of a group of any size to explain why membership matters, both from a value proposition and an advocacy standpoint.


E. Re-launch the Access discount platform.

Our state association's discount service, Access Development, has a new website interface that is ready to be rolled out to our members, providing a more user-friendly experience via the Web and greater synergy with their successful mobile discount app. This rollout will happen in March, with associated marketing mixed into existing communications. Access is an excellent way to capture members email addresses.

F. Other

Create a video with our president and a member who will do a "what do I get for my dues" message.

Brainstorm more cross-discipline content for our communications vehicles - not just "an EA story and an ESP story and a Higher Ed story."



Include in the next magazine a spread laying out the four key areas of the frame through member testimonials.

Use the summer organizing conference as a kick-off for the back-to-school push, with the magazine timed to land in homes on Aug. 1.

G. Create new member kits and tips.

Create options for both electronic new member tips and a hard copy, traditional welcome kit, which is well-used by staff and locals. Consider costs, logistics, local tailoring, etc.

Electronic tips were tried in the past with mixed success as they were generic and untargeted. Technology now allows us to automate this through a sequence of emails triggered by a member's entry into the system. Customization for member type is possible, although dependent on data quality. One general set of tips could be done on employment rights, job tips and membership value, which also drives traffic to beefed up EA, ESP and HE areas on our website. Another set of tips could be created on professional practice by subject, ELL, classroom management, etc.

H. Develop an “app.”

For both the unique, excitement factor and as a mechanism to drive content to members, we will develop a mobile app. Content can include a direct news feed from our website, an interface to find local offices and/or access the member service center, an interface with the Access discount app, etc.



How to Move Fair Share Payers to Full Members

Why do some people pay an agency fee instead of joining? There are many misconceptions including:

- Some rationalize it as a way to save a few bucks to offset perceived poor contracts.
- Some are always looking for an excuse not to pay their fair share.
- Some strongly disagree with the union's positions on political or social issues.
- **But in a large number of instances, people have not joined as full members simply because they have not been asked.**

Impress upon Fair Share payers that the more members we have, the stronger our collective voice. Fair Share payers currently have the wages and benefits they have because others who are union members have paid for them. It is only fair that we all pay our fair share so we can keep fair wages and benefits.

Some basic steps:

- Identify fee payers. Where do they work? Are they clustered in particular buildings or locals? Do they tend to work in close proximity to each other (e.g. all work in the school cafeteria or all are English teachers at the high school)?
- Who can talk with them? Identify building leaders. Is there an Association Rep at the work site? Can he/she tell you who might influence their decision to join?
- Determine which of the fee payers are persuadable.
- Train your building reps and volunteers with messages and techniques, how to conduct one-on-one conversations, and data collection.
- Conduct a short-term blitz over two weeks to talk to every persuadable Fair Share member.
- Hold one-on-one organizing conversations between ARs/volunteers and fee payers. The purpose is to build relationships, gather

information on issues, provide factual information about the union, and secure their commitment to the Association.

- Collect data on the conversations, enter it into VAN, and analyze it.

Sample messages:

(Courtesy of Vermont-NEA and Pennsylvania State Education Association)

Here are helpful talking points to encourage non-members to choose Association membership over paying the Fair Share fee. As we know, the more members we have, the stronger our union becomes. Growing membership builds power for our Association and allows us to improve the conditions under which students learn and educators work.

Why be a member? Union membership brings an array of benefits and rights, including:

- **Benefits of the bargained contract.** All employees in the bargaining unit draw the same benefits, rights, and protections

under the contract — union members and Fair Share fee payers, but the similarities end there.

Members are the only individuals who gain:

- **A voice in running their union.** The right to participate in the decision-making process of our local, state, and national unions — this includes ratification of contracts, election of local, state, and national union leaders, and key decisions that the union makes to improve working conditions in your school or to interact with the larger community.
- **Added power.** When membership is high, the power of the union grows at the bargaining table, where it can advocate for better working conditions from a position of strength. The more members a union has, the more powerful it is in advocating for bargaining unit employees.
- **Added protection and expertise.** The right to representation by experts and union attorneys in matters unrelated to the contract (such as matters regarding public pension systems and reforms of the health insurance system).

- **Impact on public policy.** Direct representation in the legislature and public policy arena to advance legislation and programs that benefit children, public schools, and school employees.
- **Access to professional development.** Free participation in professional development offerings and labor advocacy trainings.
- **Protection as an individual.** Liability insurance valued at \$1 million to protect you personally from any liability claim against you in your workplace.
- **A voice in political action work.** The right to participate in the Association’s political endorsement process of candidates for elected state or federal office. Members inform the endorsement process every election cycle. It is our opportunity to impact those who vote on education policy.
- **Savings (money) through NEA Member Benefits.** Members can save hundreds of dollars a year by taking advantage of discounted rates from various endorsed vendors, including on car insurance, homeowners insurance, appliances, car rentals, and so much more.



Yet more reasons to become a member:

- Your decision to be a Fair Share payer impacts not only you — it impacts every worker in this district — ESPs and teachers. Full membership increases the power of all working in this school district and the community.
- The administration knows exactly how many members we have. They try to use the percentage of fee payers against all educators during bargaining and this affects our ability to negotiate a better contract for everyone. They also use this fact against us when we meet with them about grievances and other issues that affect our working conditions.
- In light of the current economic climate in our state and in our country, we are facing an uphill battle to retain quality jobs for the middle class. Unions are the only hope for the middle class to fight back to protect their families.
- Union workers earn 28% more than non-union workers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (The 15 states with the highest teachers' salaries are the states with the strongest collective bargaining laws and the highest percentage of union membership. The states with the lowest salaries and lowest membership tend to have no collective bargaining rights.)
- As a member, you are entitled to vote on the contracts or other important decisions that can greatly affect your job. You are empowered to have a say on what happens to you in your workplace.
- The poorest states in the US are those in which unions don't have many members or much power. These are called "Right to Work" states, but what that phrase really means is that workers there have no rights and work for less.





Creating a Year-Round Membership Recruitment and Engagement Plan

Courtesy of Vermont-NEA

Every NEA member is recruited to join by an existing member. Our membership program is about relationship-building, creating a welcoming and responsive association, and working to meet the needs of our members and potential members. As a result, our membership work is grassroots, personal, and vital to the ongoing growth of our union.

Mapping Out the Year

Membership recruitment and retention is a year-long effort. While new teachers are rarely hired mid-year, many ESPs are hired throughout the year based on changing student needs. Moreover, some staff need to be approached a few times before they will agree to join the Association. Engaging existing members throughout the year is an important part of membership work. If members are not engaged in their associations, it will likely be hard to recruit new leaders, build an active association presence in every building, and existing leaders will often become overwhelmed with Association work.

{ **AUTUMN** }

August - October

- Request a list of current employees from the district. Note which are new hires and non-members, and the building and subject area/grade for each person. Create an electronic list so you can easily update and maintain it throughout the year. Assign existing members (membership team members or building reps) in those buildings to discuss the Association with each non-member.
- Request time to speak about your Local Association to the full staff during an in-service day. Try to arrange speaking time at the full staff in-service day so you can reach new teachers and new support staff who are joining the district.
- Approach each and every non-member. The number one reason given by non-members for not joining the Association is, *“No one ever talked to me about membership.”*
- Assume a non-member will join! Start the conversation with *“let’s get you signed up.”* It is much easier to say “yes” to an assertive, positive “welcome” to the Association.
- Don’t begin a conversation with a potential member with the “fear factor.” Begin with a positive message and focus on the issues that are important to the potential member.
- Hold a general membership kick-off meeting to review association goals for the year, ask for feedback, and offer multiple ways for members to get involved in the Association.

- Give the building reps an accurate list of members twice a year (August and March) to help keep track of active members and potential members. Building reps should keep notes on when they approached a non-member about membership and why non-members were not interested in joining. Building reps should share this information with the membership team.
- In October, organize a “new members” orientation meeting to help new members become familiar with the local, state, and national associations. The orientation is a great opportunity to have new members volunteer to get involved in the Association. The meeting should also include a section for hearing from new members about their needs, insight into the Association, and expectations.

{ WINTER }

November - March

- Approach all non-members in November and ask them to join in order to obtain the maximum benefits of paying dues for the year. Frame this approach as *“their last chance to join for full membership this year.”*
- Review why non-members have stated they will not join. How can the Association address these reasons? For example: *A new support staff person is a recent college graduate with a teaching degree who doesn’t want to join because he/she is waiting for a teacher position to open. He says, “I am only in this position temporarily.” A good response: “Have you considered that the Association is a professional organization as much as is it a union? While you’re here, we can support you and improve your experience as an employee in the district.”*
- Have building reps hand deliver a copy of the master agreement to every member and non-member. Organize a “know your contract” information session, send out a survey/quiz on the contract and offer a prize for people who respond, attach a membership form to the contract for every non-member with a “Brought to you by the Union” note.
- Use your bulletin boards and/or create a bulletin board above the copy machine to post important association information.
- Identify members who could help the Association on a specific task or who might make a good leader. Many people **need to be asked** before they would consider volunteering or serving as a leader in the Association. Present a potential leader with a reason to get more involved. Think of what *issue* would motivate a person to do more for the Association versus simply filling an empty leadership position. *Example: working to improve professional development opportunities within the district. This issue would motivate some staff to join a committee to advise the district on professional development offerings.*
- Hold another “new member” orientation mid-year to allow new members who missed the fall orientation a chance to learn more about the Association.



{ **SPRING** }

April - June

- Early Bird Membership begins on April 1 and runs until June 1. People can join the Association and pay no dues until September 1. The program only applies to people who have never been members before.
- Have building reps or the membership team approach every non-member and make sure he or she knows about the Early Bird Membership program.
- Summarize the Association's accomplishments for the year and share with members.
- Identify a team of members who will attend the Association's Summer Membership Seminar in August. Register the members.
- Review the winter membership survey and see what issues the Association can address to meet the needs and interests of members.

{ **SUMMER** }

June - August

- Send a team of members to attend the August Membership Seminar. Pick up next year's membership recruitment and engagement materials. Learn new tips and strategies for membership work.
- Request time for your President or Membership Chair to speak at the August in-service day.

Last thoughts . . .

Maintaining connections with your membership is the most important part of membership retention and renewal. Each of us knows the importance of making connections. If relationships are not nurtured, they wither and die. Our most successful associations are those that have members who feel an authentic sense of belonging and are engaged in their association.

Membership is about recruiting potential members, but it is also about engaging our existing members in meaningful ways.



Reaching Out to Younger Members

The Association is undergoing a generational transformation. Members and leaders who led efforts to win collective bargaining rights and negotiate good contracts have retired (or soon will). Where just a few years ago the average age of a teacher member was in the 50s, today nearly a quarter of all teachers are 30 or under.

As you develop your plan to maintain members and to convert Fair Share payers to full membership, don't forget there is a new cohort of potential members entering the profession in the fall. Don't overlook the need to reach out to them.

These young educators feel differently about their work and generally know little about the value of the Association. They were likely not raised in union households, and they grew up in an era of union decline. Young educators are joining the Association for reasons different than those who joined 25 years ago. While they value the work we do to secure good salaries and benefits, they are also interested in personal recognition, improving the profession, and student-centered educational changes.

So how can we connect with the young educators and ensure that the Association is relevant to their needs? Here are some things they tell us they want:

- Support networks and resources to do the job
- A better explanation of what the Association is all about
- Positive relationships with others. They are less concerned about needing legal resources and grievance representation
- Meaningful participation in the Association
- Professional development and opportunities for networking

A number of NEA state affiliates have developed programs exclusively for young members and leaders. Club 30-ish in Denver, Arizona's eSWAG (Educators Soaring With Aspiring Goals), and Young Educator cadres in Florida, Kentucky, and Minnesota are all vibrant programs, designed to create a leadership opportunity and a community among young educators. Several other states have established successful leadership training programs for young members: Washington Education Association is among those that conduct "Sparks" training, and Pennsylvania has its "SOUL" program (Strengthening Our Union Leadership). A number of other state affiliates have established mentoring programs to help young members gain access to resources and learn from those who have "been there."



Benefits of NEA Membership

Incorporate this information into your materials

NEA/BetterLesson Master Teacher Project

NEA and BetterLesson launched a new website in January that allows teachers to share what works in the classroom. It features more than 3,000 classroom-ready lessons that are easily accessible and can be integrated into any curriculum. This new BetterLesson product was built entirely for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and features the lessons of NEA members, 130+ Master Teachers (MTs), who represent every K-12 grade level for Math and English Language Arts and Literacy. This is one of several long-term partnerships NEA has pursued to support members' professional development and leadership in the teaching practice; members have been recruited around the country to participate and develop comprehensive materials along with these partner organizations. Visit cc.betterlesson.com to meet the NEA MTs and search for user-friendly and classroom-ready lesson plans.

NEA Academy: Online Learning for Your Life

The NEA Academy is the online professional development and continuing education learning resource dedicated to supporting the diverse ongoing education requirements of NEA members. Educators can take advantage of NEA member-only discounted pricing:

- Professional development courses
- Continuing education courses
- Degrees — Bachelor's and Master's
- NEA member-only scholarships
- No-cost Association courses on leadership development
- Significant savings on publications, professional books, learning tools, and classroom supplies


The NEA Academy's collection of peer-reviewed and approved, high-quality, online education courses, degree programs, and resources are provided to NEA members at reduced rates and are delivered through select nationwide education partners. The NEA Academy is committed to meeting the budget, scheduling, and lifetime learning needs for all NEA members. For more information visit: www.neaacademy.org

NEA Common Core Resources

NEA Common Core Toolkit: An online compilation of Common Core resources. The toolkit consists of sections that cover basic background on the standards, advocacy tools, and links to instructional supports. www.nea.org/commoncore

Teaching Channel: A video showcase — on the Internet and TV — of inspiring and effective teaching practices in America's schools.

NEA's GPS Network: A free online professional network, open to all educators to collaborate, share



lesson plans and resources, engage in webinars, and explore the latest education topics — all designed to help improve student success. The site currently features more than 3,000 comprehensive lessons and plans to have more than 16,000 free Common Core-aligned lessons by 2015, including narratives, videos, personal reflections, and classroom resources.

Teach Plus: NEA is partnering with Teach Plus to improve outcomes for urban children by ensuring that a greater proportion of students have access to effective, experienced teachers.

NEA-PTA Common Core Parent Guides: In collaboration with the National PTA, we have materials available to help educators communicate with families about the Common Core standards. These resources provide strategies for how educators and families can work together and advocate for student achievement.

Ending the Classroom to Prison Pipeline

Check out the new collaborative toolkit, [“Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools,”](#) which comes on the heels of widely publicized independent research that challenges virtually every notion behind the frequent use of disciplinary policies that remove students from the classroom.

NEA’s Read Across America

NEA members participate in this annual celebration of Dr. Seuss’s birthday in March and devise activities to encourage students to pick up a book and read. Extensive resources are provided at www.nea.org/readacross.

NEA Foundation

The NEA Foundation awards grants to public school educators to enhance teaching and learning. Awards are given three times a year. See www.nea.org/grants.

NEA Health Information Network

The mission of the Health Information Network (HIN) is to improve the health and safety of the school community through information and programs that educate and empower school professionals and positively impact the lives of students. Within NEA, HIN serves as the “go to” place on issues of health and safety. HIN works with NEA affiliates and members to provide information on everything from helping ensure our school environments are safe and healthy, to information about HIV, to a Breakfast in the Classroom program.



NEA Member Benefits

The mission of NEA Member Benefits is to add value to Association membership through customized products and services that meet the dynamic needs of NEA's diverse membership. NEA MB's goal is to be regarded as a trusted source of information, education, and personal and professional products and services in order to help members make informed choices and save time and money. NEA MB programs and services include professional development opportunities through the NEA Academy, financial services, investments, insurance, consumer discounts, and travel. Members can access these valuable benefits by visiting www.neamb.com.

Other Benefits

Association Staff: Each local association has an association staff member assigned to be accessible, assist with training, provide counsel on grievances and arbitration processes, and assist as needed with negotiations. UniServ staff help with research, proposal development, contract review, assistance if the negotiations reach impasses, special help in crisis situations, and training for the negotiations team. UniServ also help plan campaigns and organize members and the community to ensure great public schools.

Liability Insurance: Liability coverage for both civil and criminal cases, with \$1 million coverage for civil damages.

Training and Conferences

NEA and its affiliates provide ongoing training and workshops throughout the year on many relevant issues where members and leaders can meet and network with others. There are a wide variety of programs and resources for every type of member.

Communications

NEA provides a variety of communications tools to reach the public and members. With a strong social networking presence, NEA is the leading education organization in the country.

Most Importantly...

You are part of an organization that advocates for public schools, school employees, and students.

Benefits of MEA Membership

Members receive:

Benefits found in your collective bargaining agreement
Representation on matters pertaining to your collective bargaining agreement
Belonging to an organization that advocates for public schools, school employees and students
Supporting MEA's political, legislative and public relations efforts for great public schools
Free online professional development
Employment liability insurance for both civil and criminal cases, with \$1 million coverage for civil damages
MEA Advantage members-only discounts
Legal services for:

- unemployment cases
- certification issues
- retirement issues
- discrimination based on union activity
- discrimination under federal/state laws based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc.
- teacher tenure, wage & hour and Michigan Employment Relations Commission cases

Training and consultation regarding special education issues
Advice on employment-related statutory rights
Subscriptions to MEA Voice & NEA Today magazines and other e-mail newsletters
NEA magazine discount service
Access to MEA and NEA conferences, including:

- Bargaining and Public Affairs Conference
- Summer Leadership Conference
- Higher Education Conference
- ESP Conference

Ability to attend local and regional MEA-sponsored trainings
Assistance in obtaining National Board Certification
Voting privileges (contracts, officers, etc.) at the state, local and national levels
Eligibility to hold elected office at the state, local and national levels
Access to MEA-Financial Services programs:

- Group automobile insurance discounts
- Group homeowners insurance discounts
- MEA Credit Card (w/special payment options due to job actions)
- MEA Sponsored Group Term Life Insurance
- Long Term Care Insurance – member discounts
- Member Investment programs
- Local access to an MEA Financial Services Representative

NEA Life Term Insurance at no additional cost

Fee-payers receive:

Benefits found in your collective bargaining agreement
Representation on matters pertaining to your collective bargaining agreement
Legal services for teacher tenure, wage & hour and Michigan Employment Relations Commission cases
Advice on employment-related statutory rights
Training and consultation regarding special education issues
Subscriptions to MEA Voice & NEA Today magazines and other e-mail newsletters

Non-members receive:

Benefits found in your collective bargaining agreement
Representation ONLY on matters pertaining to your collective bargaining agreement

Additional Resources*

Collective Bargaining Fact Sheets

To help affiliates promote and defend collective bargaining, Fair Share, and related issues, NEA has developed factsheets for use with legislators, school board members, parents, and the general public. They may also be helpful in educating members and organizing non-members. <http://www.nea.org/home/16375.htm>

Payroll Deduction Campaign Handbook

<https://insidenea.nea.org/Departments/C4O/Documents/Campaign%20Handbook.docx>

Electronic Fund Transfer

Information from NEA's Center for Business Operations about converting to Electronic Fund Transfer as an alternative to payroll deduction. You will find a host of materials at <https://insidenea.nea.org/Departments/FMS/MMS/Pages/default.aspx>

Organizing: A Tool to Build Strong Locals

Produced by NEA's ESP Quality department, this guide includes worksheets and samples you can use. The step-by-step manual provides tools to reach five organizing goals: revitalizing the Association, building membership, organizing around an issue, organizing to support bargaining, and organizing for community support. Order it by emailing esp.program@nea.org.

Early Enrollment Toolkit

Produced by the NEA Center for Organizing, this toolkit has been designed to provide worksite representatives, local leaders, and Association staff access to information on the Early Enrollment Period and to provide resources and best practices regarding recruitment and messaging tips for organizing. <http://www.nea.org/home/58342.htm>

"Building Better Relationships for Better Organizing" is an article by Michael Gecan contained in NEA *Thought & Action*. You can find it at <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/TA2013Gecan.pdf>

Association Rep Handbooks

A number of NEA state affiliates produce handbooks for their Association Representatives. You can find a number of them on the Web:
From the New Jersey Education Association: <http://bordentownregea.org/files/2013/08/AR-Pocket-Resource-Guide1.pdf>
From the Alabama Education Association: <http://membermaterials.myaea.org/app.asp?RelId=5.5.7p1.2>

**If you are unable to access InsideNEA, contact your NEA regional director.*





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