

Call center: A vital resource for members

Effective, timely support

Thousands of Local 1000 members who phone our Member Resource Center (MRC) with questions are getting fast reliable answers provided by trained representatives.

Local 1000's call center has handled nearly 200,000 calls since it opened in November 2009, covering issues important to state workers and the business of Local 1000—contract language, civil service rules and representation. MRC representatives also refer members to other Local 1000 resources including job stewards, union representatives and staff attorneys.

"We want to be able to help our members get the information they need in a timely fashion," said Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker. "Whether the question is the time and place of a meeting or a complicated issue involving our contract, it's our job to have answers."

Fast and efficient

Members can count on fast, efficient responses—more than 95 percent of our callers report receiving "clear and accurate information" while average hold time is less than 30 seconds. The statistics are evaluated on a monthly basis to ensure constant improvement of service levels.

Barbara Ames has worked as a representative at the Member Resource Center since it opened in 2009.



Follow-up services

When an issue arises requiring more comprehensive support, members are referred to the Union Resource Center (URC) for one-on-one service. The URC takes on grievances, unfair labor practices, appeals, arbitrations and administrative hearings, which have resulted in major wins for many state workers.

Judy Garcia, a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) employee, got worried when the state said she had been overpaid. As a result of Local 1000's intervention, CDCR recalculated the amount of the payroll error and Garcia was required to repay a much smaller amount.

"I received an Accounts Receivable (AR) for over \$4,000 saying nothing else except that I needed to pay it back," says Garcia. "I called the union as soon as I could and received immediate help which resulted in a corrected AR of only \$880."

Resource Center wins

Issue:

Williana Mefom and six other health service specialists at Lanterman Developmental Center were unaware that they should be receiving overtime pay if they were paged and required to work during meal breaks.

Solution:

Members filed a grievance for back pay for overtime. They will receive an average of \$1,160 for three months of working without being paid overtime by the Department of Developmental Services. The department has since issued a memo telling members to ignore their pager during lunch in order to cut overtime.

Issue:

Sally Gomez, an analyst in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, filled in as an employee relations officer (ERO). She received the higher ERO pay for about three months. After she returned to her analyst position, the state ordered her to repay the difference between the higher and lower pay.

Solution:

As a result of Local 1000's action, the state rescinded its collection efforts and ensured that Gomez was properly compensated for her entire time as ERO.

Issue:

Antonio Hebb, CDCR employee, filed a grievance for losses incurred from not being paid on time. His original paycheck was paid a week late. As a result, he had to pay a returned check fee.

Solution:

DPA agreed to pay Hebb for losses incurred from untimely payment of wages.



MRC by the numbers—2011

- 95,726 calls handled
- 84 percent issues resolved on the first call
- 27.9 seconds average hold time

Judge: ‘EDD supervisor violated member’s rights’

Decision affirms employee right to union rep in investigatory meeting with the boss

An Employment Development Department (EDD) supervisor who violated a member’s right to representation during an investigatory interview has provided a powerful reminder for the 95,000 workers represented by Local 1000.

Our contract—and state law—grants employees the right to union representation at investigatory meetings with the boss that could result in discipline. Administrative Law Judge Shawn Cloughesy ruled unequivocally in favor of Local 1000 that the EDD supervisor denied the employee the right to such representation.

The case goes back to June 2010 when EDD supervisors in the Customer Service Center in Riverside questioned an employee about an anonymous note they had received. The employee asked for and received permission for Beto Hernandez, a Local 1000 steward at EDD, to accompany her.

However, when Hernandez asked if the meeting was informational or investigatory, the supervisor refused to answer.

‘You do not speak’

“The supervisor told me ‘Beto, you do not speak’—several times,” Hernandez recalled. “She refused to answer a basic question and that is illegal.”

Hernandez, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran with long experience in representation, and staff attorney Sherry McPhee helped the employee by filing an unfair labor practice charge with the Public Employment Relations Board. The charge accused EDD of violating the employee’s rights by not disclosing the purpose of the meeting in advance or letting Hernandez speak.

The law is on our side

“It doesn’t get any more clear cut. This case showed that our members have an absolute right to union representation and that the union rep must be allowed to speak at the meeting,” said Hernandez. “We backed up our member and the judge backed us up because the law is on our side.”



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—Beto Hernandez
longtime steward,

Employment Development Department

The judge wrote: “Representation is denied if a union representative present at a meeting is prohibited from speaking ... As such, EDD interfered with (the employee’s) protected right to be represented by her employee organization in violation” of the Dills Act.

The decision makes Hernandez’ work easier.

“Every month, I send out a reminder to the workers I represent,” Hernandez said. “Because if you cannot exercise your rights, then what good are they?”

ONLINE INFORMATION

For further information on your Weingarten rights, go to **seiu1000.org/2010/01/weingarten-rights-your-right-to-represen.php**



Resource Center

Monday-Friday
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
866.471.SEIU (7348)

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