

THE Advocate



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THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE
Rob Newell, President
International Vice President



ON THE FRONT LINES OF CHANGE

Although we are only a few short months into 2025 it is already shaping up to be another year of significant challenges and opportunities for Local 1500 and our members. In addition to the inconceivable number of political challenges already fired at Union workers by the White House, we received notice that the Gemstone KeyFood in Bayside will be sold at the end of March and are also currently working through proposed layoffs at 2 of our legacy employers. Remarkably while dealing with those challenges, we still managed to win an election at another new coffee company and have plans to seek recognition at another one in a few short weeks. To really round off this year's opportunities, we are also in the process of scheduling contract proposal meetings for VSM Fairway, Stop & Shop, Tops, and our Bogopa/Food Bazaar wall to wall stores. All this and it's not even April yet.

As I'm sure you all know, our employers change every year, which in turn changes the working conditions for all of you. Some of those changes are subtle and relatively simple, like the introduction of a new uniform shirt, or requiring you to fill out a new form to take a vacation or get paid for a sick day. However, others will be more impactful and dangerous for our members, like an employer's renewed focus on increasing automation or their decision to close or sell stores. Today there are so many different variables that go into these decisions that sometimes it can be hard for many of us to fully understand them.

Our recent store closings have been the result of many different factors. In my younger staff days, there was typically one reason a store closed - crappy sales. Today, in addition to sales issues, our members are impacted by stores with expiring long-term leases that cost too much to renew, companies where a new family member takes over and has a very different vision, the influx of non-union operators in some areas, excessive shrink because of organized retail theft, the rising cost of goods, supplies, and utilities, the retirement of that long term head of operations, as well as the passage of new legislation that drives up labor costs or forces employers to change the way they do business. The retail food business has become sensitive to so many different variables that sometimes it's an easier decision for an employer to close or sell a marginal store than it is to invest in the battle to keep it open. Mind you I am not saying that I always agree with an employer's decision to close or sell a store, but more times than not lately, with everything going on around us, at least I understand.

The amount of money tied up by or lost on online purchasing, even in cases where it is fully handled through a 3rd party, is not something our employers really worried about or had to work around 7-8 years ago. Now it's something most of your employers only do because they feel they must, just to remain competitive or to avoid giving away the volume to a competitor. The Covid years may be behind us from a healthcare perspective, but those years also left behind a group of customers that modified their shopping habits, are doubling down on finding good prices to contend with inflation, have a diminished loyalty towards national brands and are now more likely to shop in multiple places each week to stay on budget. The years of doing all your shopping in the store closest to home seem to be long gone for most of us.

These challenges can create operational hardships that lead to tough decisions if an employer waits too long to address them. In my mind the biggest opportunity for an employer to conquer these challenges is to invest in their

employees. For decades the supermarket industry was a great place to start a career, not just a place you worked at to supplement your income or when you were in-between jobs. Some employers would argue that the rules were different then, and in some ways they are right. But in my experience the more things change, the more they stay the same. Customers don't only determine where they shop based on the best prices and whether you have a click and collect or home delivery option to fill their order. If that was the case, everyone would be shopping at the discount operators and having the rest of their groceries delivered by Amazon. The truth is strong retail food sales have always been about a company's attention to cleanliness, in-stock conditions, prices, and most of all CUSTOMER SERVICE.

I'm not delusional enough to think that a company's way back to the promised land of great sales and high gross profits is by bringing back the days of all full-time cashiers across the front end, but I do think the first steps on that path begin with investing in their people. I must clarify that I mean investing in their people on the sales floor, behind the service counters, in the back rooms, and on the front ends, those that interact with the customers, not the CEO's and the senior management positions back at corporate. Creating great customer service is not just about making people watch a PowerPoint presentation when they are hired or putting up motivational signs in a breakroom, it's about changing how employees feel about their job, and therefore the customers. Does your employer really think you feel appreciated?

Could anyone really feel appreciated working for a company that only focuses on finding new ways to cut labor, replace people with machines, and who turns customers into cashiers? Machines don't stop or deter theft, stupid Marty (or all the other dumb robots out there) can't help customers, and employees who see little to no opportunity to make a career out of their job don't really care about customer service. I remember the first time I felt a shift coming in the way retail employers looked at their employees. I was sitting across a negotiating table from an employer and their lead bargainer said that our members "were lucky they had jobs." It's that type of moronic, short-sighted mentality that started our industry down the path of killing real customer service programs and has led to a complete abandonment of employee training.

As I mentioned earlier in my article, we have a few big contracts expiring this year. What are the chances that these employers will realize that real success for them starts by investing in you? Those of you out there reading this are the only ones that can impact what happens next. Elect a strong member negotiating committee to sit with our team and stand up for what you need. Remember when we are at the table, we won't ever want to do anything that puts a company or store out of business, but will your employers have that same respect for you? How many of them will provide you with strong wage increases so you can take care of yourselves and your families, properly fund your benefit plans so they are available to you when you need them and re-invest in creating long-term career opportunities for you to pursue instead of continuing to pretend that you're gig workers. With approximately 8,000 members being represented at the bargaining tables this year, I hope they all do. See you in the stores again soon! **#MyUnionHasValueContract2025**



LA PERSPECTIVA DEL PRESIDENTE **Rob Newell, Presidente** **Vice Presidente Internacional**



EN LA PRIMERA LÍNEA DEL CAMBIO

Aunque solo llevamos unos meses en 2025, ya se perfila otro año de importantes desafíos y oportunidades para el Local 1500 y nuestros miembros. Además de la inconcebible cantidad de impugnaciones políticas que la Casa Blanca ya ha presentado contra los trabajadores sindicalizados, recibimos la notificación de que Gemstone KeyFood en Bayside se venderá a finales de marzo y también estamos procesando propuestas de despido en dos de nuestras empresas tradicionales. Sorprendentemente, mientras lidiábamos con estos desafíos, logramos ganar una elección en otra nueva empresa de café y tenemos planes de buscar el reconocimiento en otra en pocas semanas. Para realmente completar las oportunidades de este año, también estamos en el proceso de programar reuniones de propuesta de contrato para VSM Fairway, Stop & Shop, Tops y nuestras tiendas de pared a pared Bogopa/Food Bazaar. Todo esto y aún no es abril.

Como seguramente ya saben, nuestros empleadores cambian cada año, lo que a su vez modifica las condiciones laborales de todos ustedes. Algunos de estos cambios son sutiles y relativamente simples, como la introducción de una nueva camisa de uniforme o la obligación de completar un nuevo formulario para tomar vacaciones o recibir el pago de una baja por enfermedad. Sin embargo, otros serán más impactantes y peligrosos para nuestros miembros, como el renovado enfoque de un empleador en aumentar la automatización o su decisión de cerrar o vender tiendas. Hoy en día, hay tantas variables que influyen en estas decisiones que a veces puede resultar difícil para muchos comprenderlas por completo.

Los cierres recientes de nuestras tiendas se deben a diversos factores. En mi época como empleado más joven, solía haber una razón para el cierre: las malas ventas. Hoy, además de los problemas de ventas, nuestros miembros se ven afectados por tiendas con contratos de arrendamiento a largo plazo que vencen y cuya renovación es demasiado costosa, empresas donde un nuevo miembro de la familia asume el control con una visión muy diferente, la afluencia de operadores no sindicalizados en algunas zonas, la merma excesiva de personal debido al robo organizado en tiendas, el aumento del precio de los productos, suministros y servicios públicos, la jubilación del jefe de operaciones que llevaba mucho tiempo al frente, así como la aprobación de nuevas leyes que aumentan los costos laborales u obligan a los empleadores a cambiar su forma de operar. El negocio minorista de alimentos se ha vuelto sensible a tantas variables diferentes que a veces es una decisión más fácil para un empleador cerrar o vender una tienda marginal que invertir en la batalla para mantenerla abierta. No digo que siempre esté de acuerdo con la decisión de un empleador de cerrar o vender una tienda, pero últimamente, con todo lo que sucede a nuestro alrededor, al menos lo entiendo con frecuencia.

La cantidad de dinero inmovilizada o perdida en compras en línea, incluso en los casos en los que se maneja completamente a través de un tercero, no es algo que a nuestros empleadores realmente les preocupara o que tuvieran que solucionar hace 7 u 8 años. Ahora es algo que la mayoría de sus empleadores solo hacen porque creen que deben hacerlo, simplemente para mantenerse competitivos o para evitar ceder el volumen a la competencia. Los años de Covid pueden haber quedado atrás desde una perspectiva de atención médica, pero esos años también dejaron atrás a un grupo de clientes que modificaron sus hábitos de compra, están redoblando esfuerzos para encontrar buenos precios para lidiar con la inflación, tienen una lealtad disminuida hacia las marcas nacionales y ahora es más probable que compren en varios lugares cada semana para mantenerse dentro del presupuesto. Los años de hacer todas las compras en la tienda más cercana a casa parecen haber quedado atrás para la mayoría de nosotros.

Estos desafíos pueden crear dificultades operativas que conducen a decisiones difíciles si un empleador espera demasiado para abordarlas. En mi opinión,

la mayor oportunidad que tiene un empleador para superar estos desafíos es invertir en sus empleados. Durante décadas, la industria de los supermercados fue un excelente lugar para comenzar una carrera, no solo un lugar donde se trabajaba para complementar los ingresos o cuando se estaba entre empleos. Algunos empleadores argumentarían que las reglas eran diferentes en ese entonces, y en cierto modo tienen razón. Pero en mi experiencia, cuanto más cambian las cosas, más se mantienen iguales. Los clientes no solo determinan dónde compran en función de los mejores precios y si tiene la opción de hacer clic y recoger o de entrega a domicilio para completar su pedido. Si ese fuera el caso, todos comprarían en las tiendas de descuento y recibirían el resto de sus compras a través de Amazon. La verdad es que las fuertes ventas minoristas de alimentos siempre se han relacionado con la atención de una empresa a la limpieza, las condiciones de existencias, los precios y, sobre todo, el SERVICIO AL CLIENTE.

No me equivoco lo suficiente como para pensar que el camino de regreso de una empresa a la tierra prometida de grandes ventas y altas ganancias brutas es recuperar los días de todos los cajeros de tiempo completo en la parte frontal, pero sí creo que los primeros pasos en ese camino comienzan con invertir en su gente. Debo aclarar que me refiero a invertir en su gente en la sala de ventas, detrás de los mostradores de servicio, en la trastienda y en la atención al cliente, aquellos que interactúan con los clientes, no en los directores ejecutivos y los altos directivos de la empresa. Crear un excelente servicio al cliente no se trata sólo de hacer que las personas vean una presentación de PowerPoint cuando son contratadas o de colocar carteles motivadores en una sala de descanso, se trata de cambiar la forma en que los empleados se sienten acerca de su trabajo y, por lo tanto, de los clientes. ¿Su empleador realmente cree que usted se siente apreciado?

¿Alguien realmente podría sentirse apreciado trabajando para una empresa que sólo se centra en encontrar nuevas formas de reducir la mano de obra, sustituir a las personas por máquinas y convertir a los clientes en cajeros? Las máquinas no detienen ni disuaden los robos, el estúpido Marty (ni todos los demás robots tontos que hay por ahí) no puede ayudar a los clientes, y los empleados que ven pocas o ninguna oportunidad de desarrollar una carrera profesional en su trabajo realmente no se preocupan por la atención al cliente. Recuerdo la primera vez que sentí un cambio en la forma en que los empleadores minoristas veían a sus empleados. Estaba sentado frente a un empleador en una mesa de negociaciones y su negociador principal dijo que nuestros miembros "tenían suerte de tener trabajo". Es ese tipo de mentalidad estúpida y miope la que llevó a nuestra industria a eliminar los programas de atención al cliente reales y ha llevado al abandono total de la capacitación de los empleados.

Como mencioné anteriormente en mi artículo, tenemos algunos contratos importantes que vencen este año. ¿Qué posibilidades hay de que estos empleadores se den cuenta de que su verdadero éxito empieza por invertir en ustedes? Quienes leen esto son los únicos que pueden influir en el futuro. Elijan un comité de negociación sólido para que se sienten con nuestro equipo y defiendan sus necesidades. Recuerden que, cuando estemos en la mesa de negociaciones, nunca queremos hacer nada que lleve a la quiebra a una empresa o tienda, pero ¿les tendrán sus empleadores el mismo respeto? ¿Cuántos de ellos les ofrecerán fuertes aumentos salariales para que puedan cuidar de sí mismos y de sus familias, financiar adecuadamente sus planes de beneficios para que estén disponibles cuando los necesiten y reinvertir en la creación de oportunidades profesionales a largo plazo que puedan desarrollar en lugar de seguir fingiendo ser trabajadores independientes? Con aproximadamente 8,000 miembros representados en las mesas de negociación este año, espero que todos lo hagan. ¡Nos vemos pronto en las tiendas! **#MiSindicatoTieneValorContrato2025**



JUST FOR THE RECORD
Aly Y. Waddy, Secretary-Treasurer



Hey Employers: MAKE THE PIE BIGGER

When sitting at the bargaining table your companies always want to put you, or your worth to them, in a “box” or in a “bucket”. For those of you who have served on negotiating committees, you have definitely heard this before. That “there’s only so much in the bucket, so you can decide where you want to take the money from and where you want to move it to”. Or the more horrible “there’s more than one way to skin a cat”. Of course the most famous phrase is the one that’s most widely used by the employers that we know: “There’s only so much pie to go around”, or “The pie is only so big”.

Well here is a new school of thought for all employers out there: MAKE THE PIE BIGGER, Then you can fit more into it. We always fight to get you a bigger piece of the pie but that always seems to conflict with your company’s budgetary goals. They come to the table pre-disposed to exactly how much they need to spend on your contract. If you want something more, or unexpected, they’ll look to take it away from someplace else in your contract.

However, what they never, EVER seem willing to do is -- cut further into their profit margin to give you more. That never comes into the conversation. Their profits are well outside of your pie. They have their own pie for that, and guess what, it’s bigger than yours and you don’t get a piece. They reserve those slices for the people at the top of their food chain. But why is that? The question we always ask big business owners and operators is why not share your profits with the people who make those very profits for you? And most aren’t even willing to have that conversation. They don’t want to entertain changing the dynamic so their employees can have an elevated quality of life. And right about then is when we start to feel that our members are just numbers to them. And the bigger the company is that you work for, the more distant you seem to be from the real profits of that company. We’re not going to stop talking about the pay disparity between CEO’s and rank-and-file employees that have to punch in and out every day to make ends meet. Although it’s not every company that we represent that approaches the bargaining table in that fashion, it’s definitely the norm. The bottom line is that owners and CEOs will always look to keep as much profit as possible.

“In 2025, CEO pay ratios are expected to continue reflecting the broader trend of income inequality, with CEOs earning significantly more than the median employee, though specific figures are still emerging, with some reports suggesting a 261 to 1 ratio for S&P 500 CEOs.” That’s a response from a google search I conducted. That’s not acceptable when your employees are potentially struggling. We have always said that we want the companies that we represent to be as healthy and as prosperous as possible. We try to promote their success as much as we can, while seeking to steer customers away from irresponsible employers. But that doesn’t mean that our employers cannot or should not share just a bit more with their employees/our members. They can make the pie bigger. They can reset their expectations and rework a budget plan that includes more for you. Right?

This may be an unpopular opinion for a select few, and I’ve had the opportunity to work with several CEOs or business owners by virtue of my position. But I know the number of folks that agree with this message is rather small. And heck, my allegiance isn’t to them. It’s for the working members of Local 1500. It’s my job to see that our members get the best shake possible from their employers, so although I may share a joke or good conversation with a management representative, I have also shared some harsh words with them at times. It’s just our nature. And if I currently have the attention of anyone in a decision-making position, this message is for YOU...make the pie bigger! There is more money out there for your employees. Let’s balance things out a little bit, your workers deserve it!

To everyone else that heads into their shop every day to keep things running smoothly, and keep that company profitable... let’s break the barrier on corporate profits. You’re worth way more than the box, bucket, pie, pizza pie, donut, pancake, or any other circular-shaped food that your boss wants to keep you confined within. And let’s fight together to get you an even bigger slice of that bigger pie!



On Friday, January 24, 2025, the workers of Roasting Plant Coffee on Manhattan's Lower East Side made history by unanimously voting to join UFCW Local 1500. Their decision marks a powerful step toward securing a fair and just workplace, where their voices are heard, and their needs are met. UFCW Local 1500 is proud to welcome them into the union, alongside coffee shop workers from Partners Coffee in Brooklyn and 19 Blank Street Coffee locations throughout New York City.

For the workers at Roasting Plant Coffee, the decision to unionize came from a need for stability and support. One of our newest Local 1500 member Ben, from Roasting Plant Coffee, described their experience leading up to this moment. "A huge part of why we wanted to unionize was that we were getting basically no support from corporate. Our previous manager left in August, and while we still don't have a new one, the new CEO started conducting interviews two weeks ago—after we filed to unionize. We felt that being effectively left to our own devices for six months was unfair,

especially since we had no way to negotiate on a fair playing field with the company for the things we need. So, we began to talk about unionizing to actually work productively with the company." Now, as part of UFCW Local 1500, these workers have the opportunity to negotiate a fair contract that will help improve their store and strengthen their workplace.

President Rob Newell shared his pride in the determination of these workers, stating, "We are incredibly proud to stand alongside these courageous workers who have fought tirelessly to secure a voice in their workplace and take control of their future. We are excited to work together to build a stronger and fairer workplace."

The Roasting Plant Coffee workers have taken a bold step forward, and their victory is a reminder that when workers stand together, real change is possible. We welcome them into the UFCW Local 1500 family and look forward to supporting them every step of the way as they fight for the fair treatment and respect they deserve.



UFCW Childcare Grant

All applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Applicant must be a member of UFCW or RWDSU in good standing for one (1) year
- Have a dependent child (or children) in need of childcare
- Parents must work outside of the home
- Use a qualified child care provider either licensed by the state or on file with the IRS
- Grant winners from the prior year are not eligible for the following consecutive year, but may apply in future years



For more information contact your
union representative or Stefanie Andrade at
516-214-1305

MEET YOUR NEW SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES



DAVID BRIJLALL
Senior Representative for
Staten Island and Queens



JUAN GUARDADO
Senior Representative for SW Nassau County,
Brooklyn & New Jersey



STEVE ZEINER
Senior Representative for
Nassau and Suffolk



VILMARIE FLORES
Senior Representative for the Bronx,
Westchester & Dutchess County



**On January 8th, 2025,
Union Representative
Jeff Guardado was elected
17th Vice President to the
Local 1500 Executive Board.**



Joseph Waddy, Executive Vice President/Recorder



Something Good Is Brewing In The Labor Movement



quickly as possible, there may be more than just coffee brewing inside that shop.

By now, you must have heard of the multitude of union organizing drives taking place throughout our country. Over the past few years this rejuvenated organizing movement has hit us like a tidal wave. Workers have been standing up for their rights, wants, and needs in a way we haven't seen in a very long time.

UFCW Local 1500 has been fighting for the rights of working people for many decades, representing people who work in supermarkets, bakeries, food manufacturing facilities, pharmacists, kosher shops and facilities, gourmet shops, urban farming, and has recently turned up the heat on the owners of cafes and coffee shops.

Most people know that UFCW Local 1500 has represented employees at Starbucks shops within supermarkets for many years, successfully fighting for the best contracts possible for them. But more recently, baristas and workers at other cafes have sought to unionize with Local 1500. In 2023 several union elections were held for the workers at Blank Street Coffee to join Local 1500, which led to the union representing over 20 of their locations within the New York City limits.



Shortly after the successful organizing drives, contract bargaining began. After about a year, the member negotiating committee settled on a tentative agreement with their Company, and Blank Street members UNANIMOUSLY ratified their very first contract. Blank Street has continued to grow quickly, with shops in New York, Boston, Washington D.C., and London. If you haven't done so already, hit up a Blank Street Coffee shop in Brooklyn or lower Manhattan, you won't be disappointed.

As negotiations for Blank Street were winding down, a new organizing drive had started boiling over. In April of 2024, workers at the Partners Coffee location in Williamsburg, Brooklyn voted to join UFCW Local 1500. This worker victory further enhanced our union's place in New York's coffee industry. The Partners location in Williamsburg is a large café, with approximately 30 employees in the bargaining unit. Just like Blank, Partners members are a group of dynamic, young folks who know exactly what they want and will fight to get as much of it as they can. At the time of this writing, negotiations for their inaugural contract continue, but the union is confident that a good resolution is not that far away.



And in a seemingly clockwork-type fashion, as Partners Coffee negotiations are moving towards a successful conclusion, we just welcomed our newest members to UFCW Local 1500 from Roasting Plant Coffee. On January 24th, 2025, workers at Roasting Plant voted unanimously to join Local 1500! So far there is only one Roasting Plant location in New York, located just south of Delancy Street in Manhattan, although they do have several shops throughout the country and in England. We couldn't be happier welcoming these workers into our Union, and we look forward to forging a brand-new relationship with these members and their company!



It's starting to become clear to baristas throughout the New York metropolitan area that UFCW Local 1500 is a valuable partner if you want/need to amplify your voice and impact the conditions at your workplace. They have seen the union's commitment to making theirs, and all workers' jobs the best they can possibly be.

You already know that UFCW stands for the United Food & Commercial Workers union, which represents over 1.2 million workers across North America. But now you also know that UFCW Local 1500 also stands for the:

Union For Coffee Shop Workers, Local 1500...or the United Food & Café Workers, Local 1500. Whichever abbreviation or initialism you prefer, the bottom line is that Local 1500 is proud to be a choice all baristas, roasters, and café employees can make if they are interested in working together to positively impact their working conditions and negotiating their own contract.



And it's not just about coffee! We also represent workers at Petee's Pie Company on Delancy Street in Manhattan, where baristas and other front and back of the house employees joined Local 1500 in 2022. Nothing like a good piece of pie to go along with a great cup of coffee, right! We highly recommend you go get a Petee's Pie, or two, and enjoy New York City's UFCW-made pie with some amazing UFCW-made coffee. You'll be happy you did!

Local 1500 partners with high-road employers to highlight them throughout the state, but especially within the City of New York. Labor Unions across New York are always looking for good, unionized employers to cater their endless events taking place all around our state. We work closely with central labor bodies such as the NYC Central Labor Council and the NYS AFL-CIO to promote their use of high road employers whenever available. When a good union and a good union employer work together to accomplish goals, the workers are the true winners.

There are many options to purchase coffee in NYC, but we urge you, of course, to buy where the union members are doing the brewing. Stop into any of our unionized locations and say congratulations to those workers for seeking even better working conditions for themselves. And make sure you grab some coffee while you're at it!



IMPORTANCE OF A UNION



"Unions give workers power. They continue to protect workers by securing rights and holding the company owners and management accountable."



"A couple of years ago I had a scheduling issue I needed help with. I called the union and they helped me resolve my issue."



"Schedule stability for members who go to school or have a second job. The union can work with your company to make sure that you get the schedule that fits your needs."



"Unions are important because they help protect the rights of employees and helps ensure they are safe while they are at work."



"I believe unions are important because they support people both on and off the job—offering benefits like healthcare and educational opportunities."

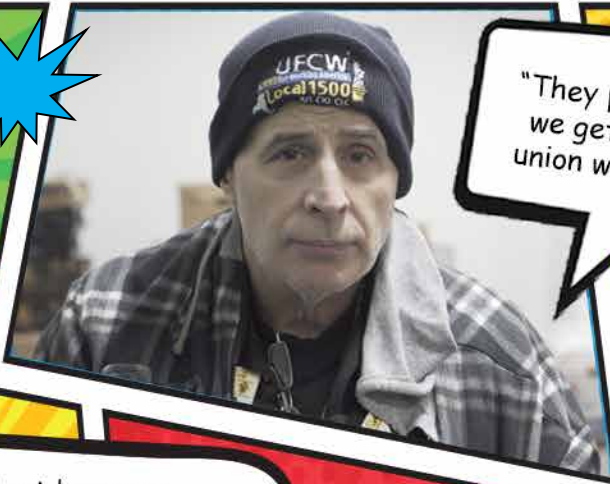


"I think unions are important today for the same reason they were in the past, to provide workplace protections, so neither management nor conglomerates can overstep and mistreat employees in the workplace."



"I believe among mem"

"I think one of the most important benefits that the union provides is access to medical and dental care."



"They protect the workers making sure we get treated fairly. By being in the union we get good wages and benefits."

"Unions are important because they prevent exploitation from happening in the work place."

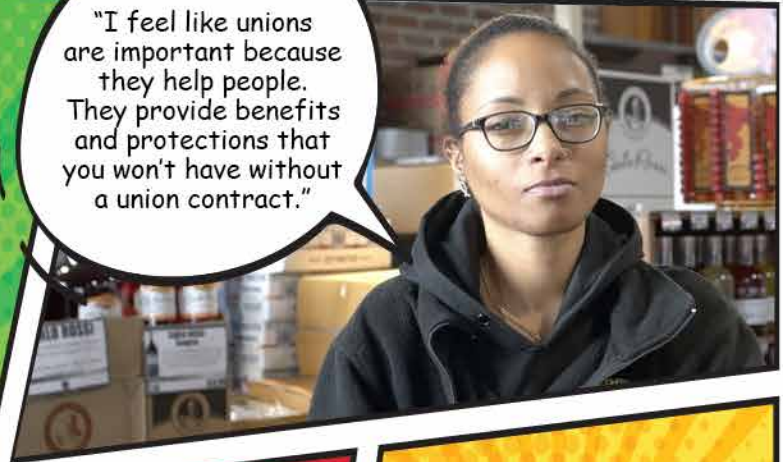


"Unions are important because it's a standard for how the working people are able to work, and is also a standard for the working conditions."



"Job protection, security and having a safe environment to work with no discrimination."

"I feel like unions are important because they help people. They provide benefits and protections that you won't have without a union contract."



"We have the sense of community with our fellow union store members, unite us together."



"Throughout history, unions have been a powerful tool for historically marginalized communities to fight for equality, greater acceptance, expanded rights, and a better, more secure future."

CONGRATULATIONS ROB ECKER



After over 21 years of dedicated service to UFCW Local 1500's members, Rob Ecker decided he'd handed out his last business card and filed his papers to retire effective March 31st, 2025. Throughout his career, Rob fought tirelessly for the rights of working people and ensured the voices of our members were always amplified. Rob served the members of Local 1500 in the roles of Organizer, Union Representative, Administrative Field Coordinator, Assistant Field Director, and Vice President. He walked countless picket lines in the cold and the rain, rallied for hours to secure workers' rights in the blazing sun, and routinely took on assignments that meant traveling out of state and sacrificing his personal time for the greater good of our Union.

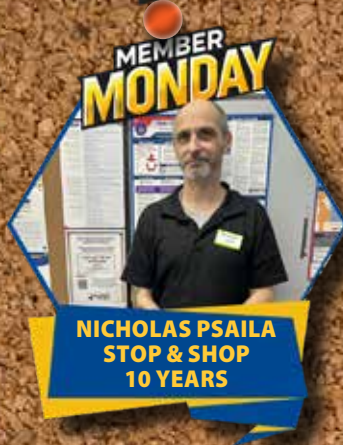
Rob's departure is bittersweet. While we celebrate his career and the contributions he made, we will all deeply miss him.

Congratulations on your retirement Rob! You have truly earned this next chapter in your life. We wish you and Cathy nothing but health, happiness, sunshine, and relaxation. In solidarity your UFCW Local 1500 family.



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROB NEWELL

Rob Ecker is my friend, my former partner in NYC and someone I will miss for the rest of my career. When Rob came to work at the Local, he was a brash, in shape, smart-ass, ready to take on the world. I had the pleasure of working closely with him for virtually his whole career and although there may be a story or two I'd edit if I could, I wouldn't trade-in any of our time together, no matter the offer. We had great days and really tough days together, we accomplished some amazing things and occasionally got out over our skis and needed help. But that's the thing about Rob, he was always trying to do more, always pushing the envelope for our members and was a master at our craft. I have seen many people come and go at Local 1500, I have never seen another Rob Ecker. Thank you brother! Thank you for always being there for me, for your members and for our Union. Thank you for never saying no, no matter the ask. Thank you for being the first on our staff to get Covid and for coming back and telling the rest no matter how many more times you got it; we belonged in the stores with our members! Thank you for your skillset, your patience, and the time you spent training our new staff. Thank you for your honesty and for never being afraid to speak up. Although we must move on and continue to succeed without you, you will always be missed, you will never be forgotten, and the hall won't ever be as funny. God bless you and Cathy and may you have a long, beautiful retirement together. Salud!





Fallon Ager, Director of Region 1 – Northeastern

Stay Engaged With Our Union

The 2024 election did not result in a favorable outcome for working people. While political outcomes can feel discouraging, staying engaged with our union is a powerful way to make a positive difference.

Local 1500 members can continue to push for better working conditions, fair wages, and labor protections through collective action and ongoing involvement with our union. Staying active in union activities strengthens our ability to welcome more workers to our union family regardless of the political landscape. It also strengthens our ability to negotiate for a better life.

Whether it's participating in membership meetings and events or training to be a union steward, being an active member of our union not only amplifies workers' voices, but also helps to build a sense of community and solidarity. Through active participation, Local 1500 members can learn more about their rights, share experiences, and support one another both in and outside of the workplace.

You can get more information at <https://www.uncw1500.org/events/>.

By staying engaged with our union, we can build a better and stronger UFCW.

MAKING MENOPAUSE WORK: SUPPORT FOR OUR UNION MEMBERS

Menopause is a Natural Stage of Life

- Affects women typically between ages 45-55 (can start as early as 35).
- Symptoms include hot flashes, difficulty sleeping, memory issues, mood changes, and more.

Menopause at Work

- 1 in 5 women experience symptoms severe enough to interfere with work.
- Menopause-related issues cost employers \$1.8 billion annually due to lost workdays.

How We Can Support You

- Create a safe and open space to talk about menopause.
- Educate managers on common menopause challenges.
- Make workplace conditions comfortable (temperature control, breaks).
- Update policies to support menopausal employees.

Need Support?

- Talk to a trusted supervisor or colleague.
- Find a menopause specialist at menopause.org/find-a-practitioner.
- Build a support network in your workplace and community.
- Visit menopause.org/workplace for conversation guides and other tools.



SCAN ME

menopause.org/workplace

UFCW Local 1500 Welfare Fund Important Notice

Please be advised that the UFCW Local 1500 Welfare Fund ("Fund") was recently contacted by Integrated Dental Administrators, Inc. (hereinafter "IDA") that it was ceasing operations effective 04/30/2025.

In response to this notification, the Fund contacted DDS, Inc. ("DDS") to advise of IDA's notification of its termination of operations and to request DDS research and compare the current IDA participating dental panel listing with the current DDS participating dental panel listing to ensure that there would be no issues with the continuity of any current ongoing treatment. The Fund also wanted to ensure as best as possible that the Participants of the Fund would not be required to change dentists due to this termination.

In response, DDS advised that the majority of the dentists on the IDA panel were also on the DDS panel and would be considered "participating" or "in-network" with the Fund. DDS also discovered that several of the offices noted on the IDA panel listing had ceased practicing and were closed. The handful of dentists/dental offices noted on the IDA Panel listing that were not currently on the DDS panel were contacted by DDS to join its panel of network dentists in order to allow them to continue treating the Participants of the Fund as "in-network" providers. After a full and proper review of the dental office and dentist's credentials by DDS, DDS has advised that the IDA dental providers that were not previously on their panel have now joined the DDS network. Therefore, your treatment by and/or your utilization of a former IDA panel dentist under the DDS panel will be deemed "in-network" at this time. That said, there is always a possibility of miscommunication

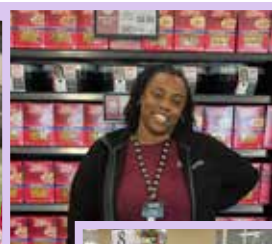
and/or misunderstanding by and between the provider and the respective network. Therefore, it is suggested you confirm with your dental office its participation in the DDS panel at the time the appointment is made and again at the time of your visit to avoid issues in the future. Moreover, if you are seeing or using a former IDA panel dentist and they advise that they are not participating with the DDS panel, you should contact DDS Provider Relations Department at the number/website below. Once advised, DDS will contact the dental office to have them become a participating provider within their panel.

As always, you may still use a dentist of your choice. However, it is always best if you can utilize a participating provider for your dental services. By doing so, it will keep your out-of-pocket costs down while at the same time allowing you to receive the most from your Dental Benefit.

If you need to locate a DDS participating provider, as indicated in the correspondence sent to you with your UFCW Local 1500 Welfare Fund DDS Dental Benefit ID card, simply visit the DDS website, www.ddsinc.net, and click on Patients Only and Find a Provider. You may also call DDS Inc. at 1-800-255-5681 to find a provider and ask any questions you may have about your Dental Benefits. If you call, be sure to let the DDS representative know that you are covered under the UFCW Local 1500 Welfare Fund.

On behalf of everyone associated with the Fund, the Fund wants to thank IDA for its years of service to the Fund and its Participants and their families and wishes everyone involved with the IDA organization the very best with their future endeavors.

CELEBRATING
WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH.



In Memoriam

Local 1500 mourns the passing of the following members. To their families and friends, we extend our deepest sympathy. May they rest in peace.

Abdur-Rasheed, Shareef
Aspromonti, Robert
Behuniak, Patricia E.
Budzinski, Lorraine
Bukovsky II, William
Ciao, Ralph
Covino, Nicholas
Cruz Jr., Robert
Debiase, Dorothy
DeStefano, Frank C.
DuBois, Jacqueline
Eckhard, Newell D.
Fattore, Lilia
Fisher, John B
Fludd, Joseph
Giuseppone, Gerard
Granato, Louis
Grauer, Conrad
Gruberger, Bessie
Gunnerson, Lois
Handburg, Jack
Hensler, Christine
Hintze, William
Holzmacher, William F.
Horn, Harold
Iannone, Vincent A.
Ingram, Esiah
Kaminsky, Malvin
Karopoulos, George J.
Kipp, Sophie
Kirszenweig, Rose
Koehler, Carol
Leidecker, Charlotte
Lewis, Raphael

Mastellone, Marion
Mauro, Angelo
McCarthy, Emily
McDonald, Jacqueline
McKinney, Charles W.
Meisel, Maureen
Merritt, Patricia
Moe, Rose
Mosiczuk, Steven
Mrakovic, Antoinette
Nieders, Rosemary T.
Ollivierre, Anthony
Pensiero, Patsy A.
Perdomo, Mabel
Perlman, Daniel
Peterson, John
Polis, James G.
Powell, Calvin C.
Prestia, Dominic
Reiss, Irene L.
Rigano, Diane M.
Rivera, Maria E.
Rock, Philip E.
Saccone, Nancy
Salvatore, Joseph
Sandor, Peter
Savasta, Stephen
Stewart, Jeanne
Thomas, Herbert
Vaccaro, Matilda
Vitanza, Claire L.
Williams, Christine J.
Woods, Leroy
Zecca, John V.

CONGRATULATIONS



HENRY WETZEL & WILLIAM ZANGRILLO
UFCW LOCAL 1500 MEMBERS FOR 50+ YEARS



11TH ANNUAL UFCW LOCAL 1500 BOWL-A-THON

IN SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL 1500 CHARITY FUND

\$27

PER PERSON (CASH ONLY)

2.5 HOURS
UNLIMITED BOWLING
SHOE RENTAL &
YOUR DONATION INCLUDED

FISHKILL BOWL

SATURDAY, JULY 26th 2025

5:30 - 8:00 PM
@ 110 ROUTE 82
FISHKILL, NY

RESERVE YOUR LANE BY CONTACTING
RAFAEL MAULEON: 516-214-1358 OR GREG PASQUALE: 516-214-1356

RESERVE YOUR SPOT EARLY !

RAFFLE AUCTION FEATURING:

- 4 \$500 WINT GENERATOR
- 4 FIELD LEVEL NY YANKEES TICKETS
- 4 ANY MONTH TICKETS
- 4 GIFT CERTIFICATES FOR GOLF COURSES, RESTAURANTS & MUCH MORE

Local 1500
UFCW

DONATION: \$20.00 Comedy Fundraiser Night

SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2025

LOCAL 1500 CHARITY FUNDRAISER

SHOWTIME: 700PM

Doors Open at 5:30 PM... Please arrive by 6:30pm
Please Call Gina Guelee 516-214-1322

or Alicia Siano 516-214-1360 for tickets

FOOD IS AVAILABLE AT ALL SHOWS
16 and Over 2 Item Minimum per person at table

90 Division Avenue Levittown NY 11756



Prescription Drug Exclusions



We advise all members that the Trustees have specifically indicated that any drugs purchased in the following stores will **NOT** be reimbursed under the Local 1500 Welfare Fund Prescription Plan under any conditions:



C.V.S., WALMART, SAM'S, PRICE CHOPPER,
COSTCO, BJ'S, WALGREENS, TARGET & HANNAFORD.

NEED A WITHDRAWAL CARD?

Send an email to wcards@ufcw1500.org with the following content in the email:

- Name
- Store Number
- Company
- Last Day Worked

For further questions on withdrawal cards, please contact your union representative. You can also send a letter requesting a withdrawal card to:

UFCW Local 1500 Attn: Sara Musco
425 Merrick Avenue, Westbury, NY 11590



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Check out our latest Member Spotlight Video



SCAN CODE

With Charlie White

LOCAL 1500 RETIREES

The officers of UFCW Local 1500 extend their warmest congratulations to these new Retirees and urge them to join the Union's Retiree Club. Contact Terri Gorman, 516-214-1330 or Monique Suarez, 516-214-1333.

Abruzzo-Isengard, Debora E	Harris, Jean A.	Pagano, John
Adamek, Theresa	Henry, Wayne	Palemire, Thomas A.
Anderson, Dugal F.	Holmes, Patricia A	Palma, Rosa
Anzaldi, Luis A	Hubbard, Daniel M.	Parody, Marguerite
Ashe, Robert L	Humphreys, Gregory J	Penny, Dawn S.
Baldera, Robin	Hutchins, Gwendolyn J.	Pepe, Maria
Bastiansen, Robert	Jones, Alice R.	Peura, Daniel D.
Beesley, Richard	Jones, Thomas	Philipp, Kevin
Brathwaite, Vera A.	Julius, Debra J.	Pinales, Saturnino
Budgen, Wayne R.	Kaminsky, Ramona	Piniella, Ellen
Camacho, Jill	Kelty, Michael	Pinto Magallanes, Maria Y.
Carman, Susan M	Kojac, Debra A.	Prehn, James M.
Casey, Tina	Laronga, Michael	Prestin, Barbara
Cohen, Ira Z.	Lempert, Frank	Rowe, Maryann
D'Amato, Julius C	Levine, Barbara A	Saldana, Jose A.
Dangol, Narayan	Liguori, William P.	Sambach, Marc E
Davis, Jackie	Loyola, Jose E	Sass, Kathleen G.
De Los Santos, Clemente	Lupoletti, Lynda L.	Shabat, Hagit
Defazio, Michael S.	Magliulo, Joseph	Stor, Wayne
Doncom, Rose R	Mandarino, Lois	Strauss, Deborah A.
Farino, Ronald R	Martinez, Hector L	Sulma, Henri
Fawcett, Arthur J.	Masia, Frank J	Tessitore, Elsa J.
Fegan, Eddie L	Maxilien, Raynold	Velez, Edna L.
Frey, Barbara	McKenna, Mary C.	Villanueva Sr, Jesus C
Fronzo, Maryann	Medina, Lydia E.	Virga, Doris E.
Gallagher, James M.	Mertlik, Frank	Vivas, Alfonso A.
Garcia, Josue	Minore, Thomas J.	Watkins, Brian K
Garger, Dolores	Mondadori, Victor	Werst, Kenneth
Gertz, Audrey M.	Moore, Gralen	West, Antoinette
Griz, Michelle L.	Mora, Eusebia	Wetzel, Henry
Gross, Douglas	Neal, Westley	Whamond, Patricia
Hanrahan, Donna	Nickel Jr., Ernest T.	Wyant, Ann
	Norris, Judith A.	Zeller, Francine

THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING UNION STORES

YOU HELP PRESERVE YOUR JOBS WHEN YOU SHOP UNION

UNION JOBS CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITIES' TAX BASE

CONTINUE TO SHOP UNION STORES IN YOUR

COMMUNITY WHERE UNION WORKERS HAVE BETTER WAGES, BENEFITS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

SHOP THESE UNION STORES

STOP & SHOP SHOPRITE KING KULLEN WILD BY NATURE FAIRWAY
 PICK QUICK KEY FOOD BLANK STREET COFFEE DAN'S KEY FOOD MANDELL KEYFOOD
 GRISTEDES KING'S GOURMET GLATT D'AGOSTINO TOPS MARKET
 FOOD BAZAAR SCATTURO PETEE'S PIES HOLIDAY FARMS

SHOP UNION - SAVE JOBS

Social Media Corner



@UFCW1500

@UFCW1500

@UFCW1500

@UFCW1500



SCAN THIS QR CODE TO WATCH OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL



Any suggestions or comments for the advocate
 Send us feedback to info@UFCW1500.org



UFCW Local 1500
425 Merrick Ave
Westbury, NY 11590



NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
WESTBURY, NY
PERMIT # 102

General Membership Meetings

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

December, 10, 2025

ALL IN PERSON MEETINGS START AT 7:00 P.M.

YOUTUBE LIVE STARTS AT APPROX. 7:30 P.M.

UFCW LOCAL 1500, FRANK MEEHAN HALL
425 MERRICK AVENUE, WESTBURY, NY 11590



YOU CAN WATCH AN ARCHIVE OF
OUR PAST GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETINGS ON OUR YOUTUBE
CHANNEL. JUST CLICK ON THE
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
PLAYLIST OR SCAN THIS QR CODE.



Prizes Will Be Awarded!



FRANK MEEHAN HALL OFFICE HOURS & CONTACT LIST

516-214-1300 • 800-522-0456

General Office Hours, Pension, Welfare, Legal Services & Annuity, Mon – Fri 8am – 5pm.



EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

1305 Newell, Rob - President
1306 Waddy, Aly - Secretary-Treasurer
1303 Waddy, Joe - Executive Vice President/Recorder
1304 Santarpia, Paul - Director of Operations

OFFICE MANAGER

1351 Wright, Michele - Michelew@ufcw1500.org

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

1305 Andrade-Castro, Stefanie
Scastro@ufcw1500.org

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1306 Reyes, Samantha - Sreyes@ufcw1500.org

FIELD DIRECTOR

1356 Pasquale, Greg - Gpasquale@ufcw1500.org

ASSISTANT FIELD DIRECTOR

1340 Scorzelli, Jay - Jscorzelli@ufcw1500.org

DUES OR INITIATION FEE REFUNDS

1351 Wright, Michele - Michelew@ufcw1500.org

SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES

1334 Brijlall, David - Davidb@ufcw1500.org
1371 Flores, Vilmarie - Vflores@ufcw1500.org
1346 Guardado, Juan - Juang@ufcw1500.org
1311 Zeiner, Steve - Szeiner@ufcw1500.org

UNION REPRESENTATIVES

1362 Byfield, Desmond - Dbyfield@ufcw1500.org
1317 Guardado, Jeff - Jguardado@ufcw1500.org
1322 Guelee, Gina - Gguelee@ufcw1500.org
1350 Kapogiannopoulos, George - Georgek@ufcw1500.org
1358 Mauleon, Rafael - Rmauleon@ufcw1500.org
1360 Siano, Alicia - Asiano@ufcw1500.org
1349 Walter, Fred Jr. - Fwalter@ufcw1500.org

MEMBERSHIP SERVICING REPRESENTATIVES

1368 Cordoba, Matias - Mcordova@ufcw1500.org
1343 Cruz, Israel - Icruz@ufcw1500.org
1318 Ortiz, Sandra - Sortiz@ufcw1500.org
1339 Rodgers, Dan - Drodgers@ufcw1500.org

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

1374 Allen, Nick - Nallen@ufcw1500.org
Media & Communications Coordinator
1372 Thomas, Tarrik - Tthomas@ufcw1500.org

ANNUITY FUND

1314 Mcglone, Christine - Cmcglone@ufcw1500.org
1325 D'Antona, Nikki - Ndantona@ufcw1500.org

LEGAL SERVICE FUND

1310 Punzo, Wendy - Wpunzo@ufcw1500.org

MEDICAL, VISION & DENTAL FORMS

1336 Merlos, Carla - Cmerlos@ufcw1500.org
1337 Sefcik, Michelle - Msefcik@ufcw1500.org

PENSION FUND

1330 Gorman, Terri - Tgorman@ufcw1500.org
1333 Suarez, Monique - Msuarez@ufcw1500.org

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

1310 Punzo, Wendy - Wpunzo@ufcw1500.org

WITHDRAWAL CARDS

1328 Musco, Sara - Smusco@ufcw1500.org

DIRECT LINE
516-214-1300

CHECK US OUT
@UFCW1500.org

MY UNION HAS VALUE

EMAIL US AT
INFO@UFCW1500.org