

THINK BIG. ACT BOLD.



Our Vision for Power

Activating Thousands More Member
Leaders to Build Power in Our Union
and Beyond



Adopted at the SEIU 1021 Convention,
September 27, 2015

Introduction

The members of SEIU Local 1021 want to see a society where the voices of working people have as much influence as the rich and powerful: A society where nobody has to worry about paying for health care or finding affordable housing and where parks, schools, libraries and public services and programs are well funded.

We want an economy that is fueled by robust working and middle classes, with job security, where the gap between the very wealthy and the rest of us is shrinking, not growing.

That is our vision, and planning for the future is based on moving it forward.

This is not something that one or two leaders or an executive board and staff can do alone. It requires all of us, working together, to make progress. It will mean activating and organizing the power of our union, our communities and working people everywhere.

By Activating Thousands More Member Leaders, We Build Our Movement

The centerpiece of our Vision for Power is for all of us to take the lead in activating thousands of new member leaders who will implement a plan that builds power at our worksites and in our communities; to bring more workers into our union ranks and make effective alliances with community organizations.

With thousands of new member leaders showing the way, we can become a more powerful force for better worker representation and better contracts and play a more active role in changing the political climate that has us under attack.

Unions have faced great challenges in the past, and we are facing them today.

But we are not alone, and we are not powerless: We have been winning victories at the bargaining table, in the streets marching alongside our communities, and in the political world.

We are forming new alliances, building stronger community ties. Our union makes us strong, and we make our union strong.

Introduction

Working People, United

Unions and the working people we represent are under attack. We notice it everywhere, from the bargaining table to the communities we live in and serve: No matter what the politicians say about the economy improving, times just keep getting tougher for working people.

We face demands from our employers for "austerity" – which means shrinking spending for public services while corporations take greater control over the economy. Despite the improving financial climate, our employers refuse to offer workers decent wages and benefits or to help fund our pensions and retiree health care.

Employers continue to shift rising health care costs to us; the price tag is prohibitive and unsustainable. Rents and housing prices have skyrocketed, even as wages have slipped behind inflation. Secure pensions for many have disappeared and, next fall, we may face a ballot measure that would eliminate our pensions and retiree health care.

Improving Our Quality of Life

Meanwhile, public resources that are vital to our quality of life—parks, schools, libraries, courts, roads, water and mass transit—are being downsized, left in disrepair, or sold off to privatizers who profit by slashing wages and selling inferior services back to the public at higher prices.

At the same time, the environment we live in is threatened by climate change that is linked to some of these same powerful interests.

The attacks we experience as union members, as members of our communities and as working people, and the threats to the environment, are the result of economic inequality. Communities of color, marginalized and poor people, children, the elderly, LGBT people and people with disabilities suffer the most.

These powerful interests have targeted unions because they see us as a threat. Decades of hard-fought union rights will be challenged when the Supreme Court case *Friedrichs v. CTA* is heard later this year. The decision could end our current model of fair share, where everyone who benefits from a union contract and union representation contributes to the cost of winning and maintaining those benefits.

Why are they after us? Because only unions, with our strength in numbers and ability to organize collectively, stand in the way of this corporate agenda.

Over the past three years, our union has built the infrastructure and reached the level of engagement needed to fight back.

By activating thousands more member leaders, we will be more ready than ever to take on these challenges. If our members become active, we can increase our power — while winning better pay, working conditions and benefits — and work with community groups to create a better, more just society and a sustainable environment for everyone.

We need to unite closely in our communities with movements for social, economic and environmental justice.

Our agenda must lift all workers to prevent a race to the bottom that harms everyone. We have to fight back as part of a larger movement, one of and for the 99 percent.

Our Vision For Power

Our Vision has four parts, but they aren't separate or distinct. We can't accomplish one of them without accomplishing all of them. Here is an overview:

Grow Our Labor Movement

By increasing union membership for working people in both the public and private sectors. By working with the community, we have the strength to protect our interests for a fair economy while also providing quality services and programs.

Build Our Worksite Power

Our union's power is built on member participation and engaging other working families in our communities. We need increased attention to building leadership and organizing around issues like economic equality, affordable healthcare and housing.

**Activating
THOUSANDS MORE
Member Leaders to
Build Power in Our
Union and Beyond**

Unite With Our Communities

Identify, work with and support community allies in their organizing efforts. Win better contracts that include common good proposals, like making the rich pay their fairshare and fighting alongside low-wage workers.

Reclaim Our Democracy

The powerful 1% and their corporate interests don't want us to vote. But when we organize together and talk to our co-workers, our neighbors and our friends, we can make important changes that do matter.

Grow Our Labor Movement

Organizing — that is, bringing more unrepresented workers into our union — is more than a concept. It's a necessity for survival. Union membership in the U.S. is the lowest it's been in a century, with even fewer members in the private sector. In the 1950s, three times as many people were in a union. That meant less economic inequality. It meant a stronger middle class, where a living wage meant a family could afford a house, a car and a college education. It meant private-sector and public-sector workers had pensions. It meant more people could go to work without fear of harassment or being treated unfairly.

Now, much of our economy is moving toward part-time or temporary work, with no security, no benefits and no protection from exploitation.

Without increased union membership for working people in both the public and private sectors, we will not have the strength to protect our interests for a fair economy while also providing quality services and programs.

SEIU Local 1021 and the Service Employees International Union are committed to organizing more publicly funded and private-sector workers, including nonprofits, into unions. We also must organize the non-union workers who work alongside us.

The more people with union representation, the more wages and working conditions improve for everyone in America.

By activating thousands of new member leaders, we can seek out opportunities to grow the labor movement as a whole. Our Vision:

▶ Make sure that staff and member communications raise Local-wide awareness about external organizing to:

1. Educate members about the necessity of organizing new members into a union.

2. Improve coordination between internal and external organizing campaigns.

3. Recruit and develop member leaders into the Reserve Organizing Corps, a group of volunteer members who are active in organizing campaigns, to help build new membership.

▶ Make a plan to fight the outsourcing of public jobs – and if those jobs are outsourced, follow the work to make sure that the workers remain organized.

▶ Publicize the organizing victories our Local and the labor movement as a whole have achieved.

▶ Publicize the role of labor unions in our society, starting in the public schools and utilizing social media.

▶ Develop a campaign to promote the positive role of public sector unions and counter the anti-union messages about government workers.

▶ Develop a campaign to educate the public about what our union has won in the areas of pensions and collective bargaining – and explain the real sources of government budget problems and the need for the rich to pay their fair share of taxes.

▶ Encourage member leaders to identify areas within their workplaces that still need to be organized. Active and engaged members are the most effective organizers of their co-workers.

Build Our Worksite Power

Our union's power is built on member participation and engaging other working families in our communities. We need increased attention to building leadership and organizing around issues like economic equality, affordable healthcare and housing, and a better quality of life for all. We can use our organizing strength and our community ties to improve the lives of our members at the worksite.

We will need to be at the top of our game. Our rights to collectively bargain are under attack. The US Supreme Court may decide next year to force an "open shop" on public employee unions nationwide, meaning that some workers could enjoy the benefits of our hard-fought contracts without paying union dues or fees – thus weakening our ability to enforce, maintain and improve those contracts.

The wages and benefits we bargain for, the contract language we negotiate that protects us from retaliation and unfair discipline, the security of being a union member – these are the results of the empowerment of our members who are moved to action. People want to join a union that knows how to fight, and wins.

By activating thousands of new member leaders who understand the challenges of an open shop, we can continue to build our power through contract fights and onsite organizing. Our Vision:

- ▶ Address the issues that most affect our work life – work reorganization, the intensification of work, deskilling, rapid technological change, privatization, contracting out, and the proliferation of part-time and temporary employment.
- ▶ Ensure that our members set priorities, receive regular reports, are consulted and have input on bargaining decisions.
- ▶ Make the union contract the base, but continue to organize our worksites to strengthen and expand our rights.
- ▶ Train our Bargaining Teams and Contract Action Teams to reject two-tier

contracts and go on the offensive in bargaining.

- ▶ Keep Contract Action Teams alive by creating Chapter Action Teams to build unity and participation even after bargaining concludes.
- ▶ Prioritize bargaining proposals that build our union, such as better release time for union work, steward training while at work and presence in new-hire orientations.
- ▶ Use our contract fights to publicize and articulate how unions benefit the wider society and highlight the pride our members have in the job we do.
- ▶ Fight for fair wages and affordable healthcare and defend and expand a secure retirement for all.

▶ Expand the crucial role stewards play in building our union, form Stewards Councils, and train and resource our stewards.

Build Our Power Through Member Involvement and Growing Leaders

- ▶ Work with members to identify, recruit, and train new member organizers.
- ▶ Turn our Regional Mobilizations into ongoing leadership bodies.
- ▶ Work together as members and staff to build at least 85% membership in every chapter and worksite by June of 2016.
- ▶ Break down the silos of "experts" in our union and train our members in all areas. Members are our best communicators, political organizers, researchers, contract-enforcers and bargainers.
- ▶ Use our democratic structures and mentorship to make it easier and more attractive for members to move into activist and leadership positions.
- ▶ Strengthen and support our Industry and Committee Chairs and our Chapter Officers.

▶ Show our members how they can participate even if they can't make it to meetings, by such things as wearing stickers, coming to rallies, and welcoming new workers into our union.

▶ Engage members and community allies through social media.

Build Our Power by Creating a Culture of Solidarity

- ▶ Talk Union and politics on the job.
- ▶ Treat each other with respect both at the worksites and within our union.
- ▶ Teach union culture and the importance of solidarity.

▶ Fight for equal pay for equal work in all our contracts.

▶ Develop a rapid response for our member leaders who are victimized or retaliated against.

▶ Exercise our fundamental right to honor picket lines.

“In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work’. It provides no ‘rights’ and no ‘work’. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining. We demand this fraud be stopped.

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Unite With Our Communities

All over America, people are fed up with economic and racial injustice, and they are fighting back. We are part of those movements, and they are part of us.

By activating thousands of new member leaders, trained and skilled in advancing the fight against economic inequality and the destruction of our planet, we can unite our communities. Our Vision:

- ▶ Educate our member leaders to understand economic inequality and its connections to environmental degradation; offer trainings on how to inform and mobilize our coworkers.

- ▶ Engage in the fights all around us, for movements like Black Lives Matter, immigration reform, fighting racism and sexism, a higher minimum wage for all workers, “\$15 and a union,”

a cleaner, safer environment, and for accountable political representation at all levels, from city councils and county supervisors to the Halls of Congress.

- ▶ Identify, work with and support community allies in their organizing efforts, and collaborate with people who share our goals and visions of safe, healthy, sustainable communities.

- ▶ Engage with young people and young families to improve access to good-paying jobs and affordable housing and fight back the burden of student loan debt.

- ▶ Work at the bargaining table to push Common Good proposals that connect our issues with issues in the community and fight for quality public services for all.

Reclaim Our Democracy

The power of people can overcome the power of wealthy corporations and individuals. In the last 100 years, women organized and won the right to vote; African Americans fought and won the right to vote, but had to fight for decades for access to the polls. Today, people are organizing to overturn *Citizens United* (the Supreme Court ruling that stated “money is speech,” allowing the super-rich and corporations to flood our elections with unlimited money), for transparency and for a more inclusive democracy.

The powerful 1% and their corporate interests don't want us to vote. They spend millions buying politicians while trying to convince us that voting doesn't matter and that government doesn't work.

But when we organize together and talk to our coworkers, our neighbors and our friends, we can make important changes that do matter.

The rich and powerful are using years of institutional racism and exclusion to suppress the voting rights of the working class, but unions joining with their communities can fight back.

By activating thousands of new member leaders who can bring a strong, unifying voice to the issues of working families, we can take back our democracy. Our Vision:

- ▶ Train our leaders to engage members in conversations about why politics matters.

- ▶ Engage our members where they work and where they live to discuss our victories and current work.

- ▶ Plan our political work with our members.

- ▶ Engage in voter registrations, voter contact campaigns and vote-by-mail drives for our members and our communities.

- ▶ Train and develop our own member leaders to get involved in politics and run for office.

- ▶ Meet our member political contribution goals every year so our union has the financial resources to win campaigns for the rights of working people in the political arena on a local, statewide, and national level.

What's Next?

Following the 2015 Member Convention, the delegates will help implement Our Vision for Power.

When members become engaged, we increase our power — while also winning better pay, working conditions and benefits.

We also bring our collective strength to our communities to create a better, more just society and a sustainable environment for everyone.

This is our struggle, our union, and we are all a part of it.

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Find out how to get involved with
Our Vision for Power by visiting
www.SEIU1021.org

