Union Dues Frequently Asked Questions

How much are union dues?

- Dues for active and SEIU staff members and fairshare workers are 1.7%, of the member’s gross monthly salary for time in regular pay status. Dues are not calculated on overtime or premium pay.

What is the Issues assessment? (“SEIU 503 ISS” $2.75 on your paystub)

- This is an ongoing assessment dedicated to promoting and defending the interests of members through public issue campaigns including ballot measures.

If I don’t join the union, do I have to pay dues?

- It is your choice to join a union or not.
- Every person employed in a represented position in Oregon, per state law, must pay either dues or fees which pay for services provided by the union. There is no financial advantage to not becoming a member since dues and “fair share” fees are the same. Represented workers who are not members are called “fair share workers”.

How much money do worksite locals get to spend?

- Monthly dues rebates are given to locals to conduct their business per SEIU 503 Bylaws.
- CAPE political contributions are voluntary

How were the ODFW Local 109 rebates spent?

- Meetings, including food, workshops, Local 109 T-shirts, mileage.

Who determines how Local 109 spends our rebates?

- Per federal law, the ultimate decision and authorization to spend money is by the elected Officers. It’s the Officer’s legal obligation to reflect the wishes of members and to assure that dues are spent only in accordance with bylaws, ethics and applicable laws.

What can Locals spend rebates on?

- In general, locals can only spend money for operational costs that benefit the majority of members and fairshare workers.
- Federal law, SEIU Local 503 Bylaws and ethics govern what the money can be spending on.
What other funds are my dues allocated to?

- Partial allocation of monthly dues payments for regular/active members
- Union’s Strike Benefit Fund
- Strike and Job Protection Fund
- Union’s political action program *Members can choose to have this allocation go to a scholarship fund

What do our dues get used for?

- Dues are an investment in job security and respect on the job. In addition to higher wages, union workers enjoy better health insurance, pensions, occupational safety and health, and job security than do unorganized workers. Far more than unorganized workers, union employees receive fair treatment, right, dignity, and respect on the job.

Some of the things dues are used for:

- Negotiating contracts requires research analysts, negotiators, union reps, and field staffers to organize rallies, worksite actions, and press events.
- Defending members and enforcing contracts requires money for legal help as well as grievance and arbitration expenses.
- Winning improved legislation and public service by lobbying, research, and testifying at the local, state, and federal level.
- New member organizing to improve wages and benefits in competing workplaces so our own wages and benefits are not eroded or contracted out.
- Occupational safety and health programs. Education and publications for union programs of all kinds, including newsletters, media campaigns, public relations, and opinion surveys.
- Strike, welfare, defense, and other worker funds.
- Office rents, travel, supplies, and administration.
- Support for programs on civil and human rights, equal opportunity, senior members, and organizing.

How do we change the amount we pay for dues?

- Members determine the amount and structure of dues. Dues cannot be changed except by a majority vote of active membership and staff.
- Generally, proposals to change the dues structures are brought forward at the biennial General Council (held in August of even years). General Council delegates decide if the proposal should be brought to the members for ratification.
- The voting process for members to change dues must follow strict federal election guidelines.
- Only members can vote, voting is by secret ballot and ballots are counted by an independent accounting firm. Members can observe ballot counting and ballots are kept for 1 year after the election. For details about union elections, including challenge timelines, go to the Department Of Labor website.