

How Are Local Union Women's Committees Funded

Lost time and expenses for Chair(s) are funded through the local union treasury in the same manner as all other mandated committees.

When Local Union Women's Committee Chairs attend quarterly "Council" meetings the lost time, travel, and per diem are the responsibility of the local union. The local does not have to vote to send the Chair to regular quarterly "Council" meetings as it is part of her responsibilities as Chair of her "Committee."

In some cases this may vary given the size of the local and its financial status, but if other committee chairs are afforded lost time for meetings and their duties in handling grievances, the same should be provided to the Chair of the Women's Committee.

The District Women's Coordinator will provide notice to the local union on who attended each meeting and when the next meeting is scheduled so that any lost time submitted can be verified as authentic and attendance was made.

Can We Charge Dues to Belong to WOS?

NO – each sister who is considered a member of the local union or a retiree from her local is a "Woman of Steel" and no additional fees can be set for them to participate in WOS. In addition, our brothers who attend any regular meetings of the "Committee" or its activities cannot be charged either.

In the spirit of WOS, we encourage outreach to family members to attend Committee and Council events that are planned by the "Committee."

How Do We Fund Projects?

Most "Committee and Council" events should aim their goals to outreach, educate, mentor, and support

Women's issues; to charge a fee to attend such events is not encouraged. A donation of canned goods, old coats, items for a women's shelter may be requested from those attending an event but not a requirement.

"Committees" should not expect special funding for projects or meetings that are not afforded to other local union committees. Any overall rules should be applied equally. It is always recommended that the President and/or Executive Board be kept advised of the "Committee's" activities and needs as to mentor women in their goal towards building activism and leadership.

If a "Council" elects to undertake a project or sponsor an event, it should discuss funding needs as part of their development planning. The District Women's Coordinator(s) can offer guidance on these matters.

In some cases other local community women's groups may be holding events that WOS can help co-sponsor. In these cases the "Committee" must make sure the local union leadership and membership approve of such a joint venture and how it is to be funded. At the "Council," the District Women's Coordinator will make sure the Director has no problem with such co-sponsorships.

Can We Do Fund Raising?

It is not the purpose of WOS to create a committee of fund-raisers or women to handle community service projects. Although many of these activities are important to the union and community outreach.

Internal union sanctioned fund raising (PAC, Hurricane Relief, etc.) is something all committees in the local need to urge its members to support.

Outside fund raising or fund raising to build a treasury for WOS is NOT supported or encouraged by the Union. Union dues should fund most local and district functions which is the purpose for collecting union dues.

If there is an occasion when the WOS "Committee" needs to hold fund raising activities to sponsor an event or hold funds not fully used, the USW has strict rules governing such funds:

International Rules On Holding Any Funds Collected By WOS Must Be Followed Strictly!

USW rules require that all monies of the local and/or its committees or other funds be placed in the local union treasury. The USW requires strict adherence to these rules. Any funds collected or held in any other accounts are not secured or protected by the Union.

The local union must keep a separate line item to show the status of any WOS funds they receive, hold, and disburse.

An accounting of the funds must be reported at every regular local union meeting, as other funds are reported to the membership.

The removal of funds from this line item must be done in the same manner that all other local union checks are cut. A voucher must be submitted, available for membership review, and voted on by the body at a regular membership meeting.

Even though funds collected through WOS are held in the local's general fund, there should be an approved motion on record with the local that such funds can only be used for WOS activities/events.

Financial Issues

A request for disbursements must be made by the Chair of the Women's Committee after the "Committee" has requested such a withdrawal of funds.

The Chair must make a motion at a regular scheduled local union meeting stating the specific reason the Women's Committee has voted to remove certain funds. The motion must then be voted on and approved by the membership attending that meeting.

The local union Treasurer can then cut a check. The check must carry the same 3-signatures of elected union officers that all other union checks must carry. It is advisable that such checks be written to specific stores, agencies, etc. rather than issued in bulk directly to the Chair's name. However, in some cases the amounts may be too small to warrant such individual checks.

All this is done to protect the funds of both the local and the members of the "Committee." Individuals elected by the local union to specifically account for all union funds are covered by the proper bonding and are subject to periodic audits of the accounts.

If there is any question relative to holding such funds, additional information can be provided on a case-by-case basis through the International Secretary Treasurer's Office and its Auditing Department in Pittsburgh, PA.

More about WOS, Goals, and Fund-raising

Historically, women in the labor movement and family members have played an important role in building and maintaining the union's strength and voice. We have all heard or seen the activism of women during a work stoppage or organizing drive. We know that women have long been volunteers for local union events such as picnics, holiday celebrations, fund raisers, and other functions. These

Financial Issues

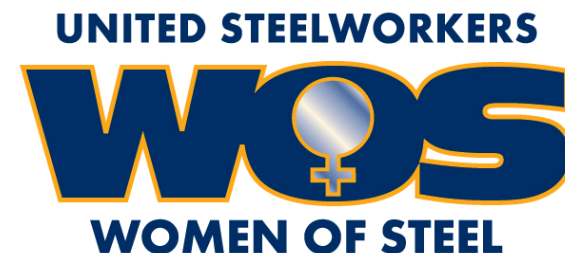
are roles that women have felt comfortable doing as they often are a continuation of their second job – caring for the household. Throughout history our union brothers have recognized the value of women to the movement but have been raised with a certain image of what "women's role in the union is."

"Women of Steel" does not seek to stop all such roles that women have historically played in support of their union. We do want to open opportunities for women who want to do more in the mainstream structures of the USW, to seek skills and education that will move them into leadership positions, and to find true equality with their union brothers on committees, negotiating teams, and contract administration.

This is good for them and especially good for the USW as it continues to grow. Our culture changes as the workforce changes. More women than ever before are part of our Union. Along with their brothers and families, women give rise to new ideas and issues that can be brought to the union culture reflecting their needs at work and society.

Yes, a Women's Committee may elect to do some "traditional" projects which are exceedingly important for use in mentoring new female activists. New activists can build knowledge and self-confidence through planning and being part of events they feel most comfortable undertaking.

As many of our sisters are already at varying levels of activism, they may want to also do some "non-traditional" projects that will help mentor and build their skills. It is important that we provide all levels of projects to meet the needs of the women in our Union and encourage them to reach for whatever they aspire to become in the Union.



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Financial Issues

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Thought to Ponder:

To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world