

# **CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF METRO NEW YORK LABOR COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL**

(as revised May, 2017)

## **Article I — Name**

This Council shall be known as the Metro New York Labor Communications Council.

## **Article II — Objectives**

The objectives of this organization shall be:

- a. to foster improvement of labor union communications, internal and external, and to encourage the establishment of new communications efforts.
- b. to promote cooperation for the purpose of aiding labor union communicators and their unions in the general improvement of their communications.
- c. to establish a clearing house for the exchange of ideas of members based on actual experience.
- d. to provide a strong cooperating agency between labor union communicators and those engaged in allied branches, such as workers education.
- e. to cooperate with and help in advancing the program of the International Labor Communications Association, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations/Canadian Labour Congress.

## **Article III — Membership**

### **Section 1**

This Council shall be composed of regular labor union publications, regularly scheduled media productions, and in-house public relations or communications departments of affiliates of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Change to Win and bona fide independent labor organizations. The executive board shall determine and vote on full membership for each bona fide labor organization.

### **Section 2**

All persons interested in the development of labor union communications shall be eligible for individual associate membership. Recognized organizations allied with or supporting the objectives of bona fide labor organizations as noted in Section 1 of this Article shall be eligible for associate membership, and representatives of such organizations shall participate in the activities and meetings of the Council on the same basis as individual associate members. Such membership shall have voice but no vote in business meetings of the Council. Neither shall they be eligible for elective office of the Council.

### **Section 3**

Candidates shall make application for membership to the Treasurer of the Council. Names of applicants for membership must be presented to the Executive Board of the Council for approval or rejection. Approval shall be by simple majority. Failure to pay dues within three months after due date and written notice by the Treasurer shall be cause for loss of membership.

## **Article IV — Dues**

### **Section 1**

Dues for each calendar year will be set by the prior year's Convention. Annual dues for labor organizations shall be based on their membership.

### **Section 2**

The Executive Board, upon application, may defer annual dues for members, as defined in Article III, whose unions are suffering undue hardship because of economic conditions, including protracted strikes, etc. Such deferment shall be for periods of hardship only.

## **Article V — Annual Business Meeting**

### **Section 1**

A business meeting of the Council shall be held annually at an appropriate time and place to be designated by the Council in session.

### **Section 2**

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

### **Section 3**

The annual business meeting shall be the governing body of the Council, and it shall establish laws and policies. Between meetings, an Executive Board as hereinafter provided shall be the governing body of the Council.

## **Section 4**

A quorum for the transaction of business by the annual meeting shall consist of voting delegates representing not less than one-quarter of all members, as defined in Article III, properly seated.

## **Section 5**

Each member, as defined in Article III, shall have one official representative designated to vote at the annual business meeting of the Council.

## **Article VI — Officers and Elections**

### **Section 1**

Officers of the Council shall consist of two Co-Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and thirteen Executive Board members, and shall constitute the Executive Board of the Council. The President and Secretary-Treasurer of the International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO/CLC, shall be ex officio members of the Executive Board. No local union, regional body of an international union, or international union shall have more than one Council officer representing it with one exception. Whenever possible one of the officers will be a designer; this officer only may be the second of two officers from a local, regional, or international labor organization. At least three-quarters of the executive board must be representatives of AFL-CIO or Change to Win affiliates.

### **Section 2**

Nominations shall be made by a nominating committee to be appointed by the Executive Board. Nominations may also be made from the floor.

### **Section 3**

Election shall be by secret ballot on majority vote of the annual business meeting.

### **Section 4**

Vacancies in office shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

### **Section 5**

Those eligible to be elected and to hold office in the Metro New York Labor Communications Council must be working communications staffers of member units, as defined in Article III.

### **Section 6**

In the event an elected officer leaves his or her member unit, as defined in Article III, that officer shall resign forthwith.

### **Section 7**

Term of office shall be one year.

### **Section 8**

The Executive Board shall meet at least quarterly and, when necessary, at the call of the Co-Chairs. An Executive Board Member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings shall report to the Executive Board the reason or reasons for said absence or the Executive Board shall by a majority vote declare the office vacant.

## **Article VII — Committees**

The Co-Chairs, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall be empowered to establish committees as needed.

## **Article VIII — Duties of the Officers**

### **Section 1**

It shall be the duty of the Co-Chairs to plan and carry out policies that will promote the welfare and purpose of the organization, and to preside at all meetings of the Council and the Executive Board. The Co-Chairs shall be members ex officio of all committees and shall submit a report to the annual business meeting.

### **Section 2**

The Secretary shall conduct the correspondence pertaining to the office and shall act as Secretary of the annual business meeting and Executive Board meetings.

At the end of each calendar year, the Secretary shall, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, compile all written materials produced by Metro during that year (e.g., meeting minutes, event leaflets, conference and contest mailings, conference journal, contest

judge's report and related materials) and send them to the Wagner Labor Archives/NYU for inclusion in the Metro New York Labor Communications Council archival collection.

### **Section 3**

The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of all monies of the Council. The Treasurer shall deposit all monies so received to the credit of the Metro New York Labor Communications Council in a bank where deposits are guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The Treasurer shall pay all liabilities of the Council that have been approved or authorized by the Executive Board, all disbursements to be made by check.

The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of receipts and disbursements and shall render a report thereon to the annual business meeting and meetings of the Executive Board. The Treasurer shall submit the Council's books and records for audit when required by the Executive Board or the Council business meeting. The Treasurer shall be bonded at the expense of the Council for the amount of \$500. The signature of the Treasurer and one of two other designated officers shall be required on all checks.

### **Section 4**

The Executive Board shall be the governing body of this Council between annual business meetings. All matters affecting the policies, aims and means of accomplishing the purposes of this Council not specifically provided for in this Constitution or by action of the annual business meeting shall be decided by the Executive Board, which shall meet at the call of the Co-Chair or at such times as seem expedient to a majority of the members thereof.

A majority of the members of the Executive Board shall be a quorum. Except as may be directed by the annual business meeting, the Co-Chairs, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint committees. Expenditures of funds of the Council shall be authorized or approved by the Executive Board.

## **Article IX — Suspension**

Violation of this Constitution and these Bylaws, failure to pay dues, violation of the Code of Ethics referred to in Article XI, or failure to act in accordance with principles of sound trade unionism shall be cause for suspension from the Council.

Such suspension shall be voted by the Executive Board upon the presentation of proven charges by a member of the Council. A two-thirds vote of the members voting shall be required for suspension.

Appeals from such suspension by the Executive Board may be taken to the annual meeting of the Council. A simple majority of those voting shall overturn a suspension.

## **Article X — Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the annual business meeting. Proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Board at least 30 days before the annual business meeting, which shall consider the proposals and report them with its recommendations to the next annual business meeting, where they shall be discussed and voted on. Notice of the annual business meeting shall be sent to all members at least 45 days before the meeting.

## **Article XI — Adoption**

Constitution, Bylaws and Code of Ethics first adopted June 14, 1975.

## **Article XII**

This Council shall maintain affiliation with the International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO/CLC. The Executive Board shall elect no more than two delegates from this Council to the International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO/CLC.

## **METRO NEW YORK LABOR COMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL CODE OF ETHICS**

To better serve the members of organized labor, and to protect the good name of labor from exploitation by racket papers masquerading as union publications, the Metro New York Labor Communications Council and its member publications and other member units subscribe to and shall abide by this Code of Ethics:

1. Member publications and all other member units will serve the best interests of organized labor and uphold the high ideals of the labor movement at all times.
2. Member publications will plainly and prominently publish in each issue an accurate statement of ownership and endorsement.
3. Member publications will not misrepresent, either in their publications or in the promotion or sale of advertising, that they are endorsed by the National AFL-CIO, or any other bona fide labor organization.
4. Member publications will not knowingly solicit, accept or publish advertising from any firm against which a strike or lockout is in progress, or from any firm on the unfair list of a central labor body.
5. Member publications shall refuse to accept advertising from any firm which resists organization of its employees.

6. Member publications will not solicit nor accept local advertising from outside their area of circulation. This does not apply to national advertising.
7. Member publications shall not accept advertising that has no demonstrable value to the advertiser in his or her relations with the union members who read the paper.
8. Member publications will not employ high-pressure, long-distance telephone solicitors, or accept or publish advertising obtained through such methods.
9. Member publications will make no claim or suggestion directly or through salespersons that the purchase of advertising space can accomplish anything for the advertiser beyond winning consumer acceptance or approval of the advertiser's product or service. All advertising in member publications, except that concerned with nationally advertised name brands, must carry the name and location of the advertiser and, when pertinent, the identification of the product or service he or she sells.
10. Member publications will not associate themselves in any manner with the publication of any yearbook, directory or program that has for its primary purpose the solicitation of donations under the guise of selling advertising.

## **INDIVIDUAL/PROFESSIONAL — CODE OF ETHICS**

The mission of the Metro NY Labor Communications Council is to provide a voice for people working in the labor media. We believe that the labor media's mission is to represent the broad interests of the labor movement. We regard this mission as central to the struggle for social, political and economic justice waged by unions on behalf of working people.

By comprehensively and truthfully reporting on issues of vital importance to working families, the labor media plays a crucial role in the empowerment of the rank and file, protection of worker rights and the improvement of the standard of living of working families. We believe that the strength of organized labor and union democracy depends upon enlightened members.

We make no pretense that our coverage of labor issues is value-free. As the voice of working people, the labor media must be unabashedly partisan.

We are unwilling to hide our pro-worker bias behind a doctrine of journalistic objectivity as the corporate-owned media do. In practice, that doctrine is often violated, not necessarily by journalists but by those who control and own the media. Our purpose is to offer workers an alternative source of information to the mainstream media, a task more urgent than ever as the media becomes more monopolized and controlled by corporations, which have a greater commitment to profit-making than truth and fairness.

To carry out our responsibility of fighting for dignity in the workplace and for the fair distribution of income, we agree to a body of ethical and professional standards outlined here:

### **I — Duties**

The duty of labor communicators is to keep the rank and file informed about the unions that they have entrusted to protect their collective bargaining rights and job security. Our purpose is to educate workers about general social, economic and political issues affecting their daily lives. More broadly, the role of the labor communicator is to help shape the public discourse about the concerns of organized labor and the daily struggles of workers.

Through its commitment to the free flow of information and a free exchange of ideas, the labor press is responsible for promoting union democracy. One of its major tasks is to encourage members to become active in their unions and communities.

### **II — Ethics**

1. Labor communicators should strive to be free of obligations other than their commitment of advancing union members' right to know the truth. Within the union, the labor communicator is charged with the dual — and sometimes contradictory — role of being an impartial observer and the conveyor of union policies. Though these two responsibilities may occasionally be in conflict, the labor communicator must aim always to uphold the truth. In this sense, the labor media serves as a mechanism for checks and balances within the union. In their work, they must strive to avoid compromising the legitimacy of the union as an institution.
2. As advocates for workers, labor communicators are partisan professionals. Any secondary employment and outside involvement in political and community activities in support of working families should be considered as complementary to and ethically consistent with their union work.
3. Labor communicators recognize their ethical and professional duty to protect their sources of information. That includes granting confidentiality to their sources and making sure their sources are aware of the risks of openly appearing in the labor media.
4. Plagiarism and visual and factual distortions are dishonest and unacceptable.
5. Despite various impediments, labor communicators have the responsibility of reporting the truth about Union issues to the membership. They must strive not to distort the truth or report falsehoods about union business.

### **III — Advocacy and Accuracy**

1. As advocates of working people, labor communicators are dedicated to presenting news and information from as a working-class perspective. That task is sometimes at odds with the mainstream media's supposed commitment to "objectivity," as a professional doctrine that erroneously claims it is always appropriate and desirable to report the facts without a hint of bias. But we believe that the doctrine of objectivity sometimes masks a conscious or unconscious anti-worker agenda on the part of the media. Much too often, it presents a distorted view of reality by failing to present issues within a broad social, political and economic context.
2. Labor communicators believe the practice of balanced reporting can be useful to their mission insofar as it promotes the interests of working people and sheds light on the ideology and point of view of anti-labor interests. We do not believe in a rigid adherence to balance and fairness, which sometimes gives legitimacy to abhorrent, anti-labor opinions and may even lead to an obfuscation of reality and a confusion of fiction with fact.
3. Nevertheless, labor communicators must strive to present information about internal union business, including disputes over policy, in a fair and balanced manner. In the course of that work, they must aim to be intimate observers at all union meetings and events, taking care in their reporting to distinguish between union policy and factual information. The free flow of information is one of the cornerstones of union democracy. The labor media should be a forum for the airing of the diversity of opinions of our members, but not personal attacks and falsehoods. The truth and institutional integrity of our unions must never be compromised in carrying out our service.
4. Labor communicators must adhere to high standards of accuracy and thoroughness. Any failure to meet those standards represents a failure in their duty of presenting news and information through the lens of workers. The labor media's success in generating support for union positions — both inside and outside the labor movement — presupposes that the work of labor communicators is truthful and accurate.

#### **IV — A Compact with Workers**

Adherence to this code is intended to preserve and strengthen the bond and trust between labor communicators, union members and unorganized workers. Labor communicators must live up to the tenets of the Code of Ethics, in order to effectively carry out their mission of truthfully and accurately presenting news and information that furthers the interests of working people and their unions. *Violation of the Code of Ethics by a member publication or other member unit shall constitute cause for suspension and expulsion under procedures provided in the Constitution of the Metro New York Labor Communications Council.*