The mission of the National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity is to develop and promote the CWA Civil Rights and Equity Program. Our vision is to build a union where members of all cultures, religions, sexual orientations, gender, disabilities, ages and nationalities feel welcomed, respected and heard; and where the leadership reflects the diversity of our membership.

This pamphlet’s recommendations are suggested guidelines for locals to help to establish a local Civil Rights and Equity Committee. It is very important for the local committee to be aligned with the local’s policies and priorities. The scope of the work of this committee should include:

- Addressing all issues pertaining to civil rights and equity in accordance with CWA national and local priorities; and
- Building coalitions with community groups interested in civil and human rights.

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Steps to Establishing a Local Civil Rights and Equity Committee

Step 1
Approach the local leadership with a proposal identifying needs and opportunities within your local and your community. You can start small: a good committee need not have lots of members, but rather ones that are committed to the idea. Once your committee is established you should meet regularly—at least as often as local union meetings are held. Many local committees have budgets; however this must be determined once the committee goals and agenda are set. Active committees often conduct fundraisers to help implement programs.

Step 2
Local Civil Rights and Equity Committees across CWA are involved in a wide range of activities working along every side of the CWA Triangle. These programs help to educate members on Civil Rights issues. Examples of successful programs are:

- Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote Drives.
- Educating members on legislation that impact working people.
- Organizing
- Community service projects such as women’s and homeless shelters, breast cancer, AIDS awareness and literacy programs.

Step 3
Once your committee is fully established, the committee should set short-term priorities and long-range goals. When establishing priorities and selecting specific activities to begin its work; the committee should keep the following in mind before getting started:

- Communications should be established with other committees and stewards in the local.
- Rank-and file members should be informed of the existence of the committee.
- A “success” is needed to establish the credibility of the committee, which could be the establishment of a new program.

- The Local Civil Rights and Equity Committee should always keep the Local President/Executive Board, National leaders and membership informed of its activities and progress. Information gathered help to develop national programs, conferences and to encourage locals that have not established committees to get one started in their local.
- The CWA web-page is a good resource for posting activities and signing up as an e-activist.

Duties and Responsibilities of Local Civil Rights and Equity Committees

- **Build** an effective committee which provides a valuable service to the Union and the membership, and carries out the CWA Civil Rights and Equity Program. Additionally, the committees should seek out training on relevant issues, laws and resolution process.

- **Work** cooperatively with the Local Union Executive Board, other Local committees, stewards and community activist.

- **Educate** the membership on the role of the Civil Rights and Equity committee and current civil and human rights issues and inform the membership on laws and protections.

- **Strengthen** labor by working with communities, minority organizations and coalitions which aim to eliminate discrimination.

Civil Rights and Equity Issues and Resources

**Civil Rights Issues**
- Affirmative Action
- Age Discrimination
- Language Discrimination
- AIDS Discrimination
- Hate Crimes
- Discrimination against Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgendered individuals
- Discrimination against the Disable

**National Civil Rights Groups**
- LCCR—Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
- NAACP—National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- NCLR—National Council of La Raza
- NUL—National Urban League
- SCLC—Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- LULAC—League of United Latin American Council
- NCTE—National Center for Transgender Equality

**AFL-CIO Support Groups**
- APALA—Asian Pacific Labor Alliance
- APRI—A. Philip Randolph Institute
- CFTU—Coalition of Black Trade Unionist
- CLUW—Coalition of Labor Union Women
- LCLAA—Labor Council of Latin American Advancement
- Pride at Work

**Federal Enforcement Agencies on Civil Rights**
- EEOC—Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- U.S. CCR—United States Commission on Civil Rights
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Civil Rights
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Labor
- National Labor Relations Board

**Federal Laws that protect Civil Rights and should be monitored**
- Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1991, Title IV, Title VII
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Equal Pay Act
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Voting Rights Act
- Election Reform Laws
- Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act
- Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act
- Pregnancy Discrimination Act

**Suggested Activities for Local Civil Rights and Equity Committee**

Committee’s should think of their work in terms of the three sides of the Triangle…

- Advocate for equal employment opportunities for all people, regardless of race, social class, religion, gender, national origin, disability or sexual orientation.
- Survey pension, health and insurance policies for discriminatory sections.
- Work to eliminate materials that include discriminatory or derogatory reference towards all people.
- Work to eliminate practices that promote racial bias.
- Help Organize employers with large minority and Female populations.
- Speed Matters and the digital divide.
- Running for public office/work on campaigns.

“...the activity of Civil Rights committees in all CWA locals can be of great value…"