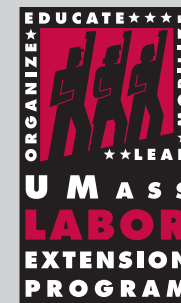




UMass Amherst
 Labor Extension Program
 Labor Center, Gordon Hall
 418 N. Pleasant St.
 Amherst, MA 01002-1735
 A105125



In the Past 4 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program Has Provided Trainings On These Topics...

- **Approaches to Organizing**
MassCOSH
- **Basic Unionism**
Springfield Works
- **Building Support for the Public Sector**
AFSCME SUMMUP
- **Contract Bargaining**
SEIU Local 615 Higher Ed Division
- **Filing a Prohibited Practice Charge**
Various unions
- **Filing an Unfair Labor Practice Charge**
Various Unions
- **Labor's Role in Economic Development**
Pioneer Valley AFL-CIO
- **Leadership Skills**
WILD
- **Popular Education: Teaching to Change Training of Trainers**
Massachusetts Teachers' Association
- **Political Economy of Race**
United Association of Labor Educators
- **Transformational Leadership**
United Association of Labor Educators

To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

<p>■ UMASS AMHERST LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM Labor Center, Gordon Hall 418 N. Pleasant St. Amherst, MA 01002-1735 Dale Melcher: 413-545-6166 Fax: 413-545-0110 email: dmelcher@LRRC.umass.edu</p>	<p>■ UMASS DARTMOUTH LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM Dubin Labor Education Center 285 Old Westport Road North Dartmouth, MA 02747 Kim Wilson: 508-999-8781 Fax: 508-999-9168 email: kwilson@umassd.edu</p>
<p>■ UMASS BOSTON LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM CPCS Labor Resource Center 100 Morrissey Blvd. Boston, MA 02125-3393 Tess Ewing: 617-287-7352 email: tess.ewing@umb.edu</p>	<p>■ UMASS LOWELL LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM 600 Suffolk St., 5th Floor Lowell, MA 01854 Susan Winning: 978-934-3127 Fax: 978-934-4033 email: susan_winning@uml.edu</p>



- **Sexual Harassment Workshop**
Taller Anti-Opresión (Anti-Oppression workshop)
MassCOSH Immigrant Workers Center
- **Sexual Harassment at Work**
Speaking Up for Ourselves and Others (Assertiveness)
Standing UP to Workplace Bullying
WILD in the Winter
- **Stewards' Training**
SEIU Local 888
Central Mass Labor Council various unions
- **Strategic Campaigns**
New York State Nurses' Association
- **Strategic Planning**
North Shore Central Labor Council
- **Unionization and the Economy**
UMass Lowell
- **Unions and How They Work**
College of Public & Community Service
- **Women and People of Color in the Trades and Green Jobs**
Springfield Works
- **Workers Rights**
E-Team
Springfield Works

Public Sector Workers Get a Bum Rap

Public sector workers, and their unions, have increasingly been the focus of anger, ridicule and outrage as working people watch their jobs, pensions, savings, and homes slip away. Pick up a newspaper, turn on the TV or the radio, or go online and you'll hear that public sector workers are lazy, inefficient, overpaid, have too many benefits and are responsible for municipal and state budget problems, the rise in health care costs, the decline in public school student performance, and possibly global warming!

“Taxes are the price we pay for civilization.”

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

The reality is something quite different. These workers are the folks who teach, protect and care for our children, keep our water drinkable, repair potholes and clean streets, handle sewage, help our farmers and small business, and take care of the most vulnerable among us, and they do it with inadequate resources. As for inflated wages, studies show that only the lowest paid public employees, thanks to their unions, make more than their private counterparts while the rest make less. Formerly decent health plans are being eroded with higher contributions and co-pays, more restrictions on coverage. Public sector pensions, paid for primarily from employees' own contributions, average about \$26,000 a year. And Massachusetts public employees are not eligible to collect social security, even if they have contributed to it.

Public sector unions have won job protection and benefits for their members. They have contributed to creating a stable middle-class in Massachusetts. Decent wages, job security, good health care plans and benefits, and a decent retirement should be the standard for private sector jobs as well—not the target of envy and rage. Good wages means workers can afford to consume - the engine that currently drives our economy—and contribute to taxes and fees that support the public good.



Graphic by Rini Templeton

Our state and municipalities are facing serious financial challenges, but scapegoating public employees is not the solution. Budget busting health care costs are caused by double digit health insurance increases that health care reform hasn't touched. The real problem is

loss of taxes from an economy that is just now beginning to show signs of recovery and a regressive tax system that has shifted the tax burden away from business and the wealthy and disproportionately onto the backs of working people. Massachusetts is 40th in the nation for total business tax contributions. The wealthiest 1% pays 5.4% of income in

taxes, while 80% of middle and low income residents pay 9%.

So why the attack on the public sector? Well, it deflects anger away from corporations that don't pay their fair share and away from growing income inequality. It is part of the neo-liberal ideology that seeks to shrink the role of government by reducing taxes and shifting public work to the private sector, remove barriers to the free market and bust unions.

We need to advocate for adequate funding of public services, for good jobs that pay a living wage, for affordable healthcare and for a fairer tax system with a more equitable distribution of financial responsibility for the services we all—workers, families, businesses—rely on. And we have to defend our unions as the voice for all working people.

The Labor Extension Program offers workshops on how to challenge the negative image of public sector workers and counter the neo-liberal agenda. (see article AFSCME SUMMUP Takes up the Challenge) Contact the coordinator nearest you for more information.

AFSCME SUMMUP Takes up the Challenge

In April UMass Labor Extension conducted an all-day training for AFSCME SUMMUP on Building Support for the Public Sector. SUMMUP is made up of locals that represent state human service workers who work in the departments of mental health, youth services, public health, developmental services and corrections. They work long hours for modest wages and provide essential services for the most needy members of our society. Yet they are often the target of people's general anger and frustration about the public sector. The workshop examined media stereotypes of "public sector workers", and analyzed the politics behind these anti-public sector attitudes. Then participants discussed ways their union could frame alternative positive messages about the important work they do.

Around THE STATE

UALE Northeast Regional Summer Institute for Union Women

July 25-30, 2010

Cost: \$625

Location: Penn State University, State College, Pennsylvania

Contact: Dale Melcher at (413) 545-6166 or
dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu

This week-long residential school for union women offers leadership skills workshops, union skills workshops, cultural programs and opportunities to network with union women from throughout the Northeast. This year's theme, *Generational*

Alliances+Sisterhood=Union Power, will be explored in general sessions and workshops.

Youth Organizing Summit

Saturday, August 14, 9:30 am - 5 pm

Cost: Free

Location: UMass Dartmouth Woodland Commons

Contact: Diane Cruz, 508-999-8007

Join us for food, fun, music, and movement building as we work to identify hurdles, search for solutions, and build the young worker movement. Sponsored by the UMD Labor Education Center, SEIU 1199 and 509, Greater SE MA Labor Council, Community Economic Development Center of SE Mass and MassCOSH.

The Resource Corner: PUBLIC GOOD AND SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

Debunking the Myth of the Wealthy State Worker By Kate Thomas & Jessica Kutch, May 3, 2010 on the SEIU Blog;
<http://www.seiu.org/2010/05/debunking-the-myth-of-the-wealthy-state-worker.php>

The Economic Policy Institute (EPI) <http://www.epi.org/> does extensive and careful research on the status of American workers. Relevant resources include *Rethinking Growth Strategies: How State and Local Taxes and Services Affect Economic Development* by Robert G. Lynch http://epi.3cdn.net/f82246f98a3e3421fd_o4m6iiklp.pdf and *The Roots of the Public Sector Fiscal Crisis* by Max B. Sawicky, http://epi.3cdn.net/c1f55aa8e40f8a2f05_npm6b10dx.pdf

ONE Massachusetts: a network sharing a common vision: to rebuild public confidence in our capacity to work together, through our government, to expand economic opportunity and improve the quality of life. Their website includes resources on the importance of public service, need for alternative tax structure, educational materials, etc. <http://onema.org/>

Out of Balance? Comparing Public and Private Sector Compensation over 20 Year, April 2010 by Keith A. Bender and John S. Heywood, a new report by the National Institute for Retirement Security (NIRS) and the Council on State and Local Government Excellence (CSGE)
http://www.nirsonline.org/storage/nirs/documents/final_out_of_balance_report_april_2010.pdf

PHENOM (Public Higher education network of Massachusetts) unites students, faculty, staff, alumni, and others to advocate for affordable, accessible public higher education. <http://www.phenomonline.org/>

Public Sector, Public Good by Jeff Crosby, AFL-CIO Blog, April 22, 2010
<http://blog.aflcio.org/2010/04/22/public-sector-public-good/>

UALE (United Association of Labor Educators) has a page on its website, *Public Sector Workers and Unions*, which lists links to articles and reports. Workshops on the topics are downloadable as well. <http://uale.org/public-sector-workers-and-unions>

The Wage Penalty for State and Local Government Employees by John Schmitt, May 2010 at the Center for Economic Policy and Research examines the education and wages of public sector workers. Available at <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/wage-penalty-2010-05.pdf>

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

Amherst Extension has had an active spring, offering workshops on such varied topics as strategic campaigns, basic unionism, workplace bullying, and filing unfair labor practice and prohibited practice charges. We participated in a pre-apprenticeship program, Springfield Works, offering workshops in basic unionism, workers rights, and women and people of color in the trades and green jobs. Ongoing work with the Hampshire Franklin and Pioneer Valley labor councils included organizing and observing Workers Memorial Day in Northampton and Springfield. For the PV AFL-CIO education conference we conducted a discussion of labor's role in economic development. We hope to continue in the fall a conversation on what should be labor's economic development agenda. We participated in program and curriculum development and planning for WILD and the Northeast Regional Summer School for Union women. Finally, the Labor Center will be moving into the Sociology Department in August. Watch for our announcement of address change.

■ UMASS BOSTON

In March, the UMass Boston Labor Resource Center hosted its most recent forum in our ongoing "Thinking Big/Moving Forward" series, this one on Bringing Good Jobs to Our Communities. The LRC has also released a new study, "Prevailing Wage Laws and the Cost of Public Construction in Massachusetts", which can be downloaded from our website: www.cpcs.umb.edu/lrc/. A more exciting bit of news is that we hope to be able to start admitting students to our degree program in Labor Studies this coming year. The Provost has given his approval to re-opening the College of Public and Community Service as soon as certain final conditions are met. In the last few years, our only students have been those that were already matriculated when the shutdown took place. Now, we expect to come back stronger than ever.

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

This summer we are gearing up for a Youth Organizing Summit to be held on the UMass Dartmouth campus. Several great organizations have been partners in planning the event and this collaboration should lead to a diverse group of participants, within unions and those who may become union members. Our focus is on supporting young people in union and community organizing and the event will be followed up with a creation of a network to continue these conversations and to plan future events. Please see *Around the State* for details. Our union photography course continues with our year long commitment to work with a group of union members to create a book of pictures taken by the group depicting worker lives. With the other labor extension coordinators, the Dartmouth campus is thrilled to be participating in providing steward training and leadership development to SEIU Local 888.

■ UMASS LOWELL

UMass Lowell has had a productive and promising year. With the support and advocacy of UMass labor Trustee Ed Collins, our advisory board, and AFL-CIO President Bob Haynes, the administration has agreed to continue our program for another year. We are working with the Sociology department to development an interdisciplinary minor for students which we hope to be approved and up and running by spring 2011. A highlight of the year was the inspiring day with Lilly Ledbetter, longtime fighter for equal pay, whose visit culminated with a forum attended by both the university and labor community. During Lowell Women's Week, we hosted the annual luncheon of women workers at UMass Lowell with a focus on issues related to promotion and advancement for women. Both events were collaborations with the UML Center for Women and Work. A spring forum featured Les Leopold, author of a new book on *The Looting of America*, who spoke on *Why the Economic Crisis Is Not Going Away*.

S P O T L I G H T

MassBudget Information.
Participation.
Democracy.
Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center

As this issue of the LEP Bulletin has focused on supporting public workers, we wanted to let our readers know of an important resource in this fight. The Mass Budget and Policy Center, known as MassBudget, is an organization that produces policy

research, analysis, and data-driven recommendations focused on improving the lives of low- and middle-income people, strengthening our state's economy, and enhancing the quality of life in Massachusetts.

An important tool of MassBudget is their Budget Monitors which offer clear and timely analysis of each version of the state budget. By studying the Budget Monitors, we don't have to sift through hundreds of line items to understand what the budget funds. These Budget Monitors provide clear information on the policy initiatives and funding levels that each budget proposes for each area of government, and how those proposals compare to each other and to the past.

MassBudget also produces reports on specific topics that look at longer term trends in areas such as education, health care funding, human services, and tax policy. Please visit their website for more information at <http://www.massbudget.org/>.