



PAC Guide for AFSA Locals

What are local and state Political Action Committees (PACs)?

Local and state PACs can help you accomplish your state and local political goals. They are a means to legally contribute to and support local candidates who stand for issues that are important to you and your members, for example, a candidate who stands for public education. PACs are also a way to defeat incumbent lawmakers who consistently oppose issues that your local cares about.

Forming a local PAC is essential if you wish to be heard on legislative matters and to play a more effective role in the legislative process. You want to make sure that the lawmakers are paying attention to you and the issues you and your AFSA local stand for. If you do not have an active local PAC, then your voice is surely being drowned out by dissenting voices.

What is the National AFSA PAC?

Forming local and state PACs are necessary to gain full access to your state and local legislators. It is equally important that you contribute to the National AFSA PAC to have your voice heard on national issues, such as what is happening right now with No Child Left Behind and the waivers being offered by the Secretary of Education.

Specifically, the AFSA PAC supports federally elected public officials who fight for quality public schools, early childhood education, collective bargaining rights and organized labor and meaningful professional development for principals, assistant principals and school supervisors.

AFSA encourages its locals to form State and Local PACs *and* contribute to the National AFSA PAC. This will ensure that you are proactively taking all of the necessary steps to protect and strengthen your local's position on a city, state and national level.

Why Contribute to the National AFSA PAC?

Consider your AFSA PAC contribution as an investment in public policy for education, labor and for YOU. In order to increase the visibility of school administrators, gain access to lawmakers, and impact public policy on a national level, we strongly urge you to contribute to the AFSA PAC.

Across the nation, major business groups who seek to privatize education, threaten the collective bargaining rights of school administrators and take away the ability of workers to unionize are raising unprecedented amounts of money to support candidates for public office that share their

views. As you are well aware, AFSA members' professions health benefits and pensions are all under constant attack. These attacks are taking place in every state and locality across the nation. Contracts are being ignored and your basic rights are being challenged like never before.

This is why supporting the AFSA PAC is especially important. AFSA is committed to thwarting these attacks, standing up for your rights as a member, and striving to continue the progress we have made on the national level to represent your interests and ensure your voice is heard.

In order for the AFSA PAC to be truly successful, every member needs to become actively involved and play an essential role. YOU are the expert in YOUR field! Building relationships with elected officials and educating them is integral to achieving all of our overall goals as a national union.

What You Will Gain from a Local and State PAC

By forming a local PAC you and your members will be able to:

- Endorse, elect and retain legislators who are friends to public education and labor.
- Build strong alliances with key legislators in your state government.
- Cultivate and maintain an ongoing relationships with key representatives.
- Invite representatives to PAC fundraisers and introduce them to your members.
- Gain access to legislators at their receptions and fundraisers.
- Effectively enhance your legislative and lobbying efforts.
- Provide legislators with your unique knowledge on important legislative issues.

How Do I Form a Local PAC?

Each state has their own specific campaign finance laws, but generally, forming a PAC takes only a few simple steps:

1. Go to your Secretary of State's or Board of Elections Office
2. Fill out a Political Action Committee Application form
3. Follow your state's guidelines carefully (i.e. reporting, record keeping etc.)

While your Secretary of State or Board of Elections Office will have the most up-to-date information, you can contact AFSA for a PAC Contribution Form that lists the specific guidelines to form a local or state PAC in your state. It is critically important that you know your state's fundraising guidelines. Failure to abide by your state's laws can result in serious penalties. When in doubt, always ask for a second advice. It doesn't hurt having a lawyer go over the guidelines with your local members! You can find a summary of each state's Campaign Finance Laws by visiting: <http://www.fec.gov/>.

Get Affiliated

Finally, it is very important you coordinate your PAC efforts with allies, e.g., your State Federations of Labor and Central Labor Councils (CLC). These organizations provide valuable resources to school administrators that will help us achieve our goals and strengthen our collective voice.

CLCs have many local union affiliates and members that they fight for every day. They speak for many with a powerful voice that carries clout in legislative and political matters. When they speak in solidarity, influential people listen. CLCs can help fight with us when threats of reorganizing, restructuring, privatization, vouchers, and budget crisis arise or when harmful legislation is being considered.

As a member of AFSA, you have the right and the privilege to work with your State Federations of Labor and community CLCs. If you are not already a member, become one today – it's easy! Just visit: www.aflcio.org/aboutus/unioncities and search for your state or call the AFL-CIO Office of State and Local Affiliates at (202) 637-5280. There is great strength in numbers, and working together at the local level will more effectively influence your representatives!

Quick Tips

- Contribute to the AFSA PAC to support good public policy
- If your local doesn't already have them, create a local or state PAC today!
- Remember to learn your state's fundraising guidelines and follow them closely
- Get to KNOW your local politicians by name and have them get to know YOU
- Invite local politicians to your local or statewide functions, meetings, socials, or school events
- Arrange meetings with those who play an important role in shaping your issue interests (Committee Chairs, Committee members, Speakers of the House and Senate and the Majority and Minority Leaders)
- Demonstrate support for your representatives if they are in line with your views by going door to door for them, writing articles, attending victory parties, sponsoring fundraiser events, giving legislative testimony, supporting legislative initiatives, etc.
- Use the AFSA Legislative Alerts and have your members write, contact, call, fax, and e-mail their representatives on YOUR issues
- Establish credibility in your community, with your board, town council, PTA, community organizations – this is hard work but very necessary – you must be KNOWN and RESPECTED as a professional within the community. Be known as a community activist and advocate for children and schools
- Write editorials in your local/state newspapers
- Secure a lobbyist – they are a most valuable asset in the legislative process, they open doors and have strong and credible working relationships with legislators – when possible, try to engage lobbyists that have a working relationship/ties to the governor and key legislative personnel
- Host a “School Administrator Day” at the Capitol – coordinate with allied groups in holding these events if necessary – use your coalition sponsors as well
- Establish solid COALITIONS that can assist you greatly in the legislative process
- Realize that your connection with the AFL-CIO can assist you in your efforts of pushing an issue of interest
- Join the State AFL-CIO Organization and get on their leadership committee – be visible and engaging in state AFL-CIO issues
- Join your local labor council

- KNOW the state AFL-CIO President and Executive Officers and invite them to your functions
- Have your members understand the importance of the AFL-CIO connection as it affects your members/organization
- Know the leadership of other organizations within the AFL-CIO and network with them
- Work with the AFL-CIO lobbyist at the Capitol to get their agenda, as well as YOUR agenda done