

**AFGE'S**

**New**

**LUNCH  
&  
LEARN  
TOOLKIT**

**Meeting the Urgent Need  
To Build Our Union**

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# Letter from the President

Fall 2003

Dear AFGE Leader:

Never before has the need been so urgent for us to pull together and build our union. This is why I have spent the first few weeks of my presidency evaluating the effectiveness of our organizing programs. What I found is that with just a bit more focus, our ability to educate, mobilize and recruit new members can be dramatically increased.

This Lunch & Learn (L&L) Toolkit is meant to help us bring our issues to government worksites with laser-sharp precision, focusing not on the lunch or the rebate or the trinket, but instead on the crucial issues facing our union and its members. Please take a close look at this Toolkit for the Lunch & Learn program and let me know what you think.

Sincerely and in solidarity,



John Gage  
National President

## Structure of the Event



### Hook

#### **Grab them with a timely issue.**

Pick an issue of urgent importance to the participating bargaining unit and its Local – preferably one whose impact is imminent or already being felt, even if in a small way or through a very particular situation, (e.g. FEHBP reform, revised EEO regulations, reorganizations, shift changes, etc.).

### Educate



#### **“Let’s Look at the Record”**

Using the Education Flashcards provided, review the Bush Administration’s record on Civil Service Issues, such as:

- Job security (outsourcing)
- Diversion of resources (A-76)
- Civil service “reform”
- Overtime rules

### Organize & Mobilize



#### **Give them something to do.**

- Voter registration
- Write an Action letter (to the president, to their members of Congress or to the Editor)

Finish with a closing pitch for joining AFGE or becoming a member of a Local Action Committee.

# Planning the Meeting

## Organization equals success.

It takes people and time to organize a successful Lunch & Learn. Take the time to sit down with your team, identify what needs to be done and assign responsibility for each task using the worksheets that follow.

- Know the facts about the Local, the bargaining unit and membership.
- Understand how things work and the best ways to communicate with employees.
- Involve Local leaders in planning as early as possible.

## Keep an ear to the ground.

Throughout our normal activities, listen for issues that will attract employees to our meetings. We call these kinds of issues “hooks,” because with proper advertising they will draw employees to our meetings. The issues could be isolated:

- Shift changes
- Reorganizations
- Contracting-out studies

Or the issues could be broader:

- EEO regulatory changes
- Overtime
- Pay for performance

## Get on the ground early.

Relying on Locals to email employees or distribute flyers to advertise a L&L is spotty. We want to invest more by having an “outside team” at the site at least a full day before the L&L. Taking the time to get the word out can be the difference between a huge success and mediocrity.

- Do a meticulous walk-thru with a Local activist
- Personally invite employees to the L&L
- Introduce yourself
- Hand out written invitations
- Where possible, give trinkets to existing members

The key is the sizzle—the personal touch emphasizes the immediacy and importance of the meeting.

## Hold the lunch for last.

Despite the limited lunch times, don't serve lunch until after the presentation. Of course, it is essential to have the food, literature, trinkets and presenters in the L&L areas at least 20 minutes before the scheduled start.

As employees begin coming in, engage them. If they are currently members, give them a trinket. Move about the room, asking employees to sign in. Explain that we need the sign-in sheet information to obtain their view and keep them informed.

## The Hook

**Address the “hook” issue factually, professionally and in a timely manner.**

Our challenge is to get a team in quickly to address the hook issue and, if necessary, to continue to assist the Local on the matter, even after the Lunch & Learn.

You will need to use your creativity, knowledge and representational experience. Your preparation should include a crisp action plan. The issue may require:

- a grievance
- demand to bargain
- letter writing
- selecting a contingent of employees for a congressional visit, or
- an immediate meeting with the appropriate managers

Be strong. Take charge. Emote confidence, advocacy and determination.

## Educate: Let's Look at the Record

**Now that you’ve gotten their attention, smoothly transition to the Big Picture.**

Follow closely the information on the flashcards provided. Be positive. Employees should leave the meeting feeling that “We can meet these challenges if we stick together, and fight back together.”



# Organize and Mobilize

## The close is critical!

Begin by circulating voter registration forms. Even if an employee is registered, ask them to register a friend or family member.

Quickly move to the action letter, petition or action fax in their packet. Ask them to fill it out before they leave. AFGE will deliver them.

## Now is the time.

Ask one of the audience for the 1187 or the 277 in his or her packet. Hold it up.

### Point to the top of the form.

Explain that this information is for their benefits' eligibility.

### Point to the middle of the form.

"This is the privacy act that says that this information must be kept confidential."

### Point to the authorization line.

"This enables the dues to be paid painlessly. Dues are only \$200 a week." (laughter)

"I just wanted to see if you were listening! Dues are only \_\_\_\_ per pay period."




### Display a \$50 bill.

"To show our commitment to you, to show our dedication to your best interests, here is a crisp \$50 to take your favorite person to lunch."

"How many are already union members?" (Show of hands) Organizers and Local activists take note and descend upon non-members with cash, pens and personality.

"Enjoy your lunch! We will be here for any questions."

# Planning Profile

Local \_\_\_\_\_ Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Event \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

B.U.# \_\_\_\_\_ # of Members \_\_\_\_\_ Unit type (WG, GS, Prof., Non-Prof.) \_\_\_\_\_

Bi-weekly Dues \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Local Benefit \_\_\_\_\_

Site Team \_\_\_\_\_

Directions to Organizing Site \_\_\_\_\_

Training Needs \_\_\_\_\_

Contract Info \_\_\_\_\_ Council \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter? \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency \_\_\_\_\_ Recipients \_\_\_\_\_

## LOCAL CONTACTS

President \_\_\_\_\_ Day Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ Eve. Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Sec./Treas. \_\_\_\_\_ Day Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ Eve. Tel. \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Organizing Committee \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Local Mailing Address (NO P.O. Box) \_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible for:

Security arrangements \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parking \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Room \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Food/Drinks \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Rebate Money \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Other Incentive \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Flyers and Other Materials \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch Hours \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Lunch Time \_\_\_\_\_

Speakers 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Hot Issues \_\_\_\_\_

Who will follow-up with Potential Members? \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Who will follow-up with Potential PAC Members? \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



# Lunch & Learn Checklist

## LUNCHEON MEETING

Steward in Charge \_\_\_\_\_

Luncheon Assistant \_\_\_\_\_

Area \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PLANNING PHASE

Planning Meeting with Steward/Contact

Target area \_\_\_\_\_

Decide issue \_\_\_\_\_

Decide on speaker(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Plan flyer distribution and/or poster placement \_\_\_\_\_

Choose location/room for meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Plan food budget and food selection \_\_\_\_\_

## IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

### Activity

### Person Responsible

Line up speaker(s)

Secure room and confirm  
two days before meeting

Prepare flyer copy

Prepare posters (optional)

Put new member packets together

Distribute flyers – one-on-one  
contact/walk thru with guest

Post flyers/posters

Talk about the union and L&L  
to all targeted people

Provide union information

Ask 5 people to invite 5 people

Issue one-on-one invitations

\_\_\_\_\_

All stewards and volunteers

\_\_\_\_\_

All stewards and volunteers

\_\_\_\_\_

All stewards and volunteers

\_\_\_\_\_

All stewards and volunteers

LUNCH & LEARN

# Meeting Attendees

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Local #: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

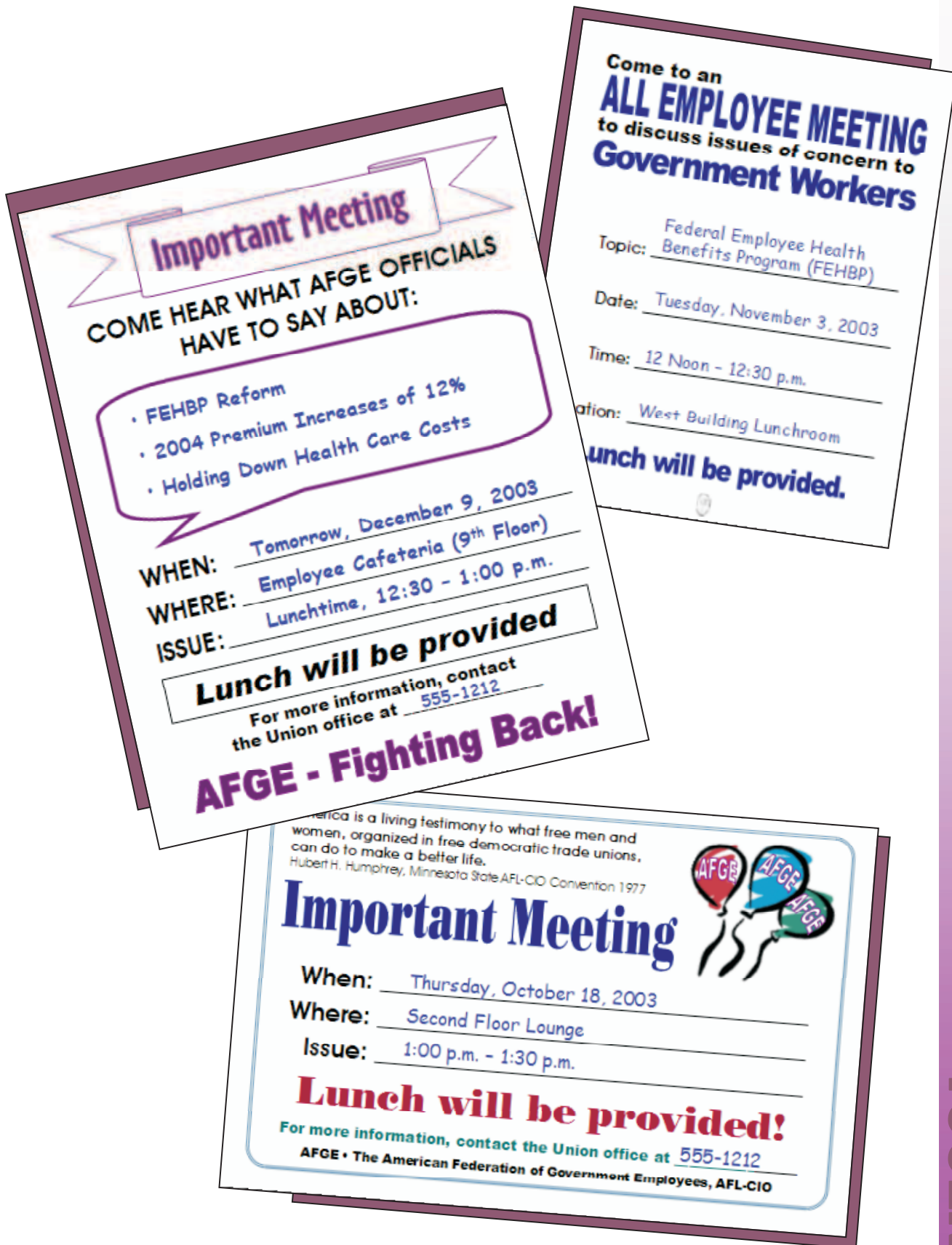
## ■■■■■■■■■■ Sign-In Sheet ■■■■■■■■■■ (Please print)

	Name	Home Phone	Home E-Mail	Member yes/no?
0.	Jane Gonzalez	(301) 555-1212	Jgonzalez@homeisp.com	yes
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____	_____

MORE Team Member: \_\_\_\_\_



# Sample Invitations



# Important Meeting

**COME HEAR WHAT AFGE OFFICIALS  
HAVE TO SAY ABOUT:**



**WHEN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHERE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ISSUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

***Lunch will be provided***

**For more information, contact  
the Union office at \_\_\_\_\_**

**AFGE - Fighting Back!**

America is a living testimony to what free men and women, organized in free democratic trade unions, can do to make a better life.

Hubert H. Humphrey, Minnesota State AFL-CIO Convention 1977



# Important Meeting

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch will be provided!**

For more information, contact the Union office at \_\_\_\_\_

**AFGE • The American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO**

America is a living testimony to what free men and women, organized in free democratic trade unions, can do to make a better life.

Hubert H. Humphrey, Minnesota State AFL-CIO Convention 1977



# Important Meeting

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch will be provided!**

For more information, contact the Union office at \_\_\_\_\_

**AFGE • The American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO**

Come to an  
**ALL EMPLOYEE MEETING**  
to discuss issues of concern to  
**Government Workers**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch will be provided.**



Come to a  
**ALL EMPLOYEE MEETING**  
to discuss issues of concern to  
**Government Workers**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch will be provided.**



Come to a  
**ALL EMPLOYEE MEETING**  
to discuss issues of concern to  
**Government Workers**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch will be provided.**



Come to a  
**ALL EMPLOYEE MEETING**  
to discuss issues of concern to  
**Government Workers**

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch will be provided.**



# Sample Letter to the President

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: The Civil Service

Dear Boss:

I am a **JOB TITLE HERE** in **AGENCY HERE** who has worked with pride for the U.S. government for **NUMBER OF YEARS HERE**.

I write with dismay over the news that your Secretary of Defense is seeking to suspend, within the civilian defense workforce, major portions of the law that grant civil service protections to all federal workers. Although current plans will apply these waivers from the U.S. Code to only the DoD, once passed, the precedent will be set for the destruction of the civil service code in any and all federal agencies.

We are not the enemy, Mr. President. We care deeply about the work we do and the programs we administer in the service of the American people. And we have proven, time and again, that our union membership poses no threat to our nation.

However, the message you send when you allow a cabinet member to portray us in a poor light is indeed demoralizing, especially at a time when we are short of staff, are constantly threatened with the loss of our jobs to contractors, and remain on high alert for potential terrorist activity. Instead of feeling appreciated, we find ourselves demonized by the rhetoric of many in Congress and the administration.

If you look into your heart, Mr. President, I know that you will see our innate trustworthiness as servants of the American people. We are solid citizens who pay our taxes and participate in our democracy.

My colleagues and I have worked hard for you and for the American people. When you look at the exceptional work done by federal employees in this era of tension and war, I'm sure you will have a change of heart. Let me thank you in advance for it – and offer the thanks of my family, as well.

Sincerely

---

*Signature*

---

*Print Name*

---

*Address*

---

*City, State Zip*

# Sample Letter to the Editor

DATE HERE

Editor of **NAME OF LOCAL NEWSPAPER HERE**  
**STREET ADDRESS HERE**  
**CITY, STATE ZIP HERE**

Dear Editor:

The 2004 increase in government employee health care premiums doesn't seem that terrible until you look back at the last several years. Since 1999, government employee premiums have skyrocketed, forcing employees and their families to pay 65 percent more today than just six years ago for health insurance.

As a result, some 250,000 government employees are going without health insurance – not because they don't want or need health care, but because they can't afford it.

OPM likes to tout the fact that government employees have a wide variety of insurance options from which to choose, which helps to keep premium costs down. Nothing could be further from the truth. That's because OPM refuses to harness the purchasing power of the 8.3 million people who belong to the FEHBP to hold insurance carriers accountable for the cost and quality of their plans. As a result, both taxpayers and government employees are paying more than they should, given the benefits provided.

Some say the FEHBP is a model for the private sector. Yet, the federal government pays only 70 percent of the premiums for this plan while large employers in the private sector and several large states pay at least 80 percent and often 100 percent of premiums.

Proposed legislation in both the Senate and the House would change the financing formula for FEHBP so that agencies would pay 80 percent of health care premiums. This legislation would make FEHBP more affordable for federal workers and their families. It is also a smart response to the government's much-discussed "human capital crisis."

Sincerely

---

*Signature*

---

*Print Name*

---

*Address*

---

*City, State Zip*



# Sample News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Month, Day, Year

Contact: **NAME OF LOCAL CONTACT**  
Phone Numbers (Office & Home)

## GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES RALLY FOR LESS COSTLY HEALTH COVERAGE Big Insurance Carriers Are Gouging Workers and Taxpayers

**WHEN:** Day of week, Month, Date **HERE**  
Time (a.m./p.m.)

**WHERE:** City, State  
Location name  
Address  
Description (e.g. "Corner of Main & 10 Street")

**CITY, STATE** – Frustrated by health care premiums that have skyrocketed over the last several years, government workers from around the area will rally at **SITE NAME HERE** to voice their concerns and demand a better deal both for themselves and for America's taxpayers. **LOCAL OFFICER NAME HERE**, local president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local **NUMBER**, will address the gathering, joined by **NAMES OF OTHER DIGNITARIES IN BOLD TYPE**.

Since 1999, premiums for the government's Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) have risen by 65 percent. As a result of ever-escalating premiums, an increasing number of government employees find themselves unable to afford health insurance at all. "At last count, some 250,000 government employees and their families are without health insurance, not because they don't want or need health care, but because they can't afford it," says AFGE Local President **FULL NAME**.

Because of the political clout wielded by big insurance companies, the government is unwilling to hold FEHBP insurance carriers accountable for the cost and quality of their plans. As a result, both government employees and taxpayers are being gouged.

In 2002, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the largest FEHBP insurance carrier, thumbed its nose at both the Congress and the government, threatening to pull out of the FEHBP if it was forced to comply with cost accounting standards that prevent insurance carriers from passing on illegitimate overhead costs to enrollees and taxpayers. "Shamefully, the government's negotiator – the Office of Personnel Management – gave in to the Blues' demands," adds **LAST NAME HERE**.

"The government should harness the purchasing power of the 8.3 million people who belong to the FEHBP to negotiate a better deal," explains **LAST NAME HERE**.

The government currently pays only 70 percent of FEHBP premiums while large employers in the private sector and states pay at least 80 percent and often 100 percent of premiums. **LAST NAME HERE** notes that current legislation pending in both the Senate and the House would increase the government's share of premiums to 80 percent, making the FEHBP more affordable and more comparable to other health plans.

###

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