

New CWA Local 2108 Executive Board Sworn In

CWA District 2-13 Vice President, Mike Davis was on hand at the CWA District 2-13 Conference to administer the "Oath of Office" to CWA Local 2108's new Executive Board. Pictured from left to right, President - Johnny Brown, Executive Vice President - Amory Proctor, Secretary-Treasurer - Tamera Nelson and Vice President - LaTasha Carpenter.

The new term of office for the Executive Board began on January 1, 2024 and will continue through December 31, 2026.



Struggling to Afford Broadband?

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT?

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service.

The benefit provides:

- Up to \$30/month discount for internet service;
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands; and
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider.

Some **no-cost plans** are available. For a list of participating companies visit GetInternet.gov

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A household is eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program if the household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or if a member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Participates in any of the following assistance programs: SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Participates in any of the following Tribal specific programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or Tribal Head Start (income based);
- Participates in the Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income internet program.

TWO STEPS TO ENROLL

1

Go to AffordableConnectivity.gov to submit an application or print a mail-in application

2

Contact your preferred participating provider to select an eligible plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

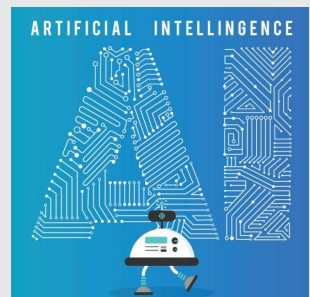
Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete.

Eligible households must **both** apply for the program **and** contact a participating provider to select a service plan.

LEARN MORE

📞 Call 877-384-2575, or

🌐 Visit fcc.gov/acp



CWA Shapes the Future of AI at Work

CWA members and leadership are preparing to leverage the power of union contracts to shape the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools at work and ensure AI's economic benefits are broadly shared with workers.

The CWA Committee on Artificial Intelligence, composed of members from across the union, has presented the CWA Executive Board with principles and recommendations on how to address the challenges that AI presents through both bargaining strategy and public policy. CWA has taken a member-led approach to AI, harnessing the expertise of CWAers with direct experience working with AI programs from diverse industries, including call centers, telecommunications, journalism, and tech.

The committee's principles direct CWA bargaining committees and leadership to be proactive in bargaining contract language that protects members against the negative effects AI tools

can have in workplaces, including invasive surveillance, unfair automated employment decisions-making (including hiring, discipline, and pay-setting), unsafe and stressful work intensification and speed-up, the reduction of compensation or benefit levels, and the reduction of union members' work.

New AI systems in the workplace have the potential to create economic gains when they lead to increased productivity. As we have done in the past, CWA members will bargain to capture our fair share of those economic gains, ensuring that working families see a rising standard of living and that these technologies do not contribute to the growth of inequality in this country.

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

Happy New Year from the RMC 2108 Executive Board!! We hope 2024 brings everyone health, prosperity and a more peaceful world.

We will kick off the new year with our monthly RMC 2108 meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 11:00am with a luncheon provided by our guest speaker. We encourage anyone wishing to bring a desert to do so.

See you there!!

Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108



I would first like to wish everyone a happy New Year and thank you for the privilege for allowing me to serve the membership of this great Local for the next 3 years. I look forward to working with our Executive Vice-President, Amory Proctor, Secretary-Treasurer, Tammy Nelson and Vice President, LaTasha Carpenter to continue to build strength and solidarity. Your Executive Board brings decades of leadership abilities to the table which will be an invaluable resource as we move into changing times.



I would also like to add that our Chief Stewards and Stewards are second to none. Years of training and real world experience have prepared them to step up and handle any issue. They are the first line of defense when our members are pulled in by management and as we move forward, I will be asking them to take a more pro-active approach to getting in front of workplace issues. Finding an agreeable solution before things get out of control will help build a better relationship with local management and provide a better work environment.

I would like to wish former CWA Local 2108 President, Marilyn Irwin all the best in her retirement. The transition of power from one union leader to another is a crucial moment in the history of any labor union. Marilyn has made this transition seamless. Over the past 24 years I have worked closely with her and have benefitted from her knowledge and experiences in dealing with issues. I am happy for her that she now gets to try and make up for all the lost time with her family that she unselfishly gave to our union over the past 50 years.



District 2-13 Staff Representative, Mike Sommers honors former CWA Local 2108 President, Marilyn Irwin on her retirement at the annual District Conference in Baltimore.

The next 3 years will be crucial to our Union. Never before have we negotiated any contract with two-thirds of our membership working from home. This provides a unique challenge, primarily, our ability to connect with members on a day to day basis. I will be implementing Town Hall meetings via Zoom or whatever platform is the flavor of the month to ensure that our member's needs are being addressed and that we are all on the same page.

I will also be asking everyone to jump into the fire with me. I cannot do this alone. I am not the Union. We are the Union. There will be plenty of opportunities for every member to get involved. We will be revisiting committee appointments, training new stewards and asking volunteers to attend rally's in support of other Unions. But you don't have to wait.

Attending union meetings to stay aware of what is going on is the easiest way to get involved. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month and while there might not be any pressing issues on a given month, it gives us the time to talk about workplace issues that we might not be aware of. We will need all hands on deck.

With your help and commitment, these uncertain times can be navigated more effectively. I look forward to working with all of you and hope to see you on January 10, 2024 at 6:00pm at our next membership meeting.

In Solidarity,

Get Your Unused Vacation on the Books!!

As you are aware, recent negotiations have modified how **unused** vacation days from calendar year 2023 may be scheduled and utilized by March 31, 2024. Any and all requests for specific dates to be used in 2024 will be considered on a **first come, first served basis** and approval will be based on the contractual 18% and 12% ratios set forth in the "Vacation Scheduling Percentages" Letter of Understanding. **Any 2023 Vacation, paid or unpaid Excused Work Days not selected and not taken by March 31, 2024 shall be forfeited and not eligible for selection or "in lieu of" payment after March 31, 2024.**

CWA Local 2108 is advising all members who have unused vacation from 2023 to be aware of potential scheduling conflicts with vacation scheduling percentages. With a "use it or lose it" policy in effect, there may be a mad dash to get unused vacation scheduled as we move closer to March 31st .

Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out these important workshops presented by **Nettworth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon!!

CWA District 2-13 Retirement Benefits

Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 6:30 PM - The Chart House, 300 Second Street, Annapolis, MD 21403

Market Update Q&A

Tuesday, January 16, 2024 @ 6:30PM - Via Zoom

CWA District 2-13 Retirement Benefits

Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 6:30 PM - Ruth's Chris Steak House, 106 Crown Park Ave. Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at :

<http://www.nettworth.net/event/marylanddcvirginia>

NettWorth is also advising members who are considering retirement to schedule an appointment to evaluate your company supplied pension calculations. Over the past 20 years, Nettworth has uncovered numerous calculation discrepancies and their Independent Pension Analysis can help verify accuracy.



Following the events of September 11, 2001, CWA and Verizon have taken steps to support those employees who are activated or who enlist in the armed services.

While all the provisions of the current Enhanced Military Leave of Absence Agreement remain unchanged, it has been updated so that eligible employees will receive the benefits irrespective of the nature of the military orders they have. In addition, eligible employees will receive the benefits irrespective of their length of service at the Company, meaning such benefits will be available at the commencement of their employment with the Company.

The scope of this enhanced agreement also provides protections for employees for pay treatment, benefits, service credit, disability issues, the ability to apply for an EISP if offered, and return to work protections when the EML is activated by Verizon.



AVAYA Declares Impasse, Implements Last Offer

As you may be aware, CWA and AVAYA have been negotiating terms for a successor collective bargaining agreement since July 2023. This process has involved 27 formal bargaining meetings, numerous additional conversations, and the exchange of many written proposals. Avaya's collective bargaining agreement with the CWA expired on November 3, 2023, and according to AVAYA's H.R. department, they have decided without merit that negotiations on the successor agreement have reached an impasse.



Accordingly, Avaya is now attempting to implement the terms and conditions of employment contained in its last, best, and final. These terms, include a number of concessionary issues which will further degrade existing benefits.

CWA has deep concern over Avaya's unilateral decision to impose terms without our consent. It appears that Avaya LLC has become a puppet of private equity firms, driven by the goal to exploit hardworking employees and divert the fruits of your labor into their own pockets. This alarming move reflects corporate greed and a disregard for the well-being of dedicated employees like you.

Rest assured, CWA is actively working to address this situation and protect your rights.

Your Action Needed:



- Note any concerns or questions about the imposed terms.
Contact Your CWA Representative: Reach out promptly for assistance and to share your concerns.
Stay Informed: Look for updates from CWA

on further actions and responses. This situation is challenging but our unity is our strength. We are actively exploring legal and bargaining options to address this issue.

Personals

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:

Former Local 2108 Steward, Rodney Peake, who passed away on December 20, 2023.

Welcome to Local 2108

New Members



Tonja Jones
Ashley L Hudgens
Justin Lee



Congratulations to Recent Retirees:

- William Cahalan, Robert Carter Sr., James Goan Jr.
Cordell Opher, Andre Taylor, Collin Anderson
Miguel Aguilar, Marjorie Dallas, Tarek Davis
Amory Proctor, Paul McLeod, Loretta McArthur
Mary (Tina) Mischo, Theresa Day, Willie Bennett
Suzie Fortin, Neal Wadsworth, Kimberly Pettross
Dwayne Richburg, Edwin Sites, Denise McCants
James Cornett, Guillermo Ralda, David Calhoun



2024 Union Plus Scholarship Program Accepting Applications

Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$5.4 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. Over 3,800 families have benefited from our commitment to higher education.

Eligibility

Current and retired members of participating unions, their spouses and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations). At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant's spouse or parent (if applicant is a dependent). The one year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31, 2024.

Application Timeline:

Applications are available starting in mid-June, and a complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) on January 31, 2024. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Scholarship Award Amounts:

Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2024. Students may re-apply each year.

Award date:

The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by May 31st each year. During the first week of June 2024 award recipients will be notified by postal mail, and all applicants will be sent email notification.

To apply, go to:

www.unionplus.org/benefits/education/union-plus-scholarships

To receive CWA action alerts via text message, Text CWAAction to 69866

2023 VZ Corporate Profit Sharing Award May Be Deferred

You have the opportunity to defer the entire amount of your CPS award (minus appropriate taxes and deductions and any overtime adjustment you may receive) into your Verizon Savings Plan account.

To defer payment of the CPS award, you must be actively contributing to the associate savings plan at the time the award is paid and meet all other eligibility criteria.

If you elect this option, the CPS award will be deferred into the associate savings plan on a before-tax basis, and the applicable company matching contribution of the CPS deferral will be made to your account.

Your paystub will show an increase in the year-to-date "Basic Savings - Before Tax" contributions to include the first 6% of your deferred CPS award, and the remaining portion will be added to the year-to-date "Supplemental Savings - Before Tax" contributions total.

If you choose to defer your award, you will not receive your payment in your paycheck; however, your pay stub will reflect the deferral processing.

If you choose to defer your CPS award, you must make your election between **January 3, 2024 and February 2, 2024**. To make your election on the NetBenefits web site, go to <http://netbenefits.com/Verizon>, then enter your Username and password. Under the Quick Links drop down box for your plan, choose Contribution Amount. Scroll down to Profit Sharing and choose the Profit Sharing Election link.



You may also call the Verizon Savings Plan Service Center at 888-457-9333 from 8:30 a.m. through Midnight Eastern time, Monday - Friday (except when the New York Stock Exchange is closed). Please note that the deferral period ends at **5:00 p.m. ET on February 2, 2024**.

No action is required if you choose NOT to defer your CPS award. The CPS award is a lump sum payment and will be paid to eligible employees on March 1, 2022 in a separate paycheck/direct deposit.

Local 2108 Calendar

JANUARY 2024

- 1 **New Year's Day**
Local Office Closed



- 10 **RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 10 **Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 15 **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

FEBRUARY 2024

- 14 **Valentine's Day**



- 14 **RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 **Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 19 **President's Day**
Local Office Closed



WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward to be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, January 10, 2024 - 6:00pm RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, January 10, 2024 - 11:00am

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Communications Workers of America Local 2108

Johnny Brown - President
Amory Proctor - Executive Vice President
Tamera Nelson - Secretary-Treasurer
LaTasha Carpenter - Vice President

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