

You Just Might be Eligible for a Broadband Discount

For several months, CWA has been actively working throughout District 2-13 to push our employers to apply for funding made available through the IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). Money has been earmarked in this bill to build out broadband. For our members, securing this funding could increase jobs and secure more work. Verizon, Frontier and AT&T are 3 employers we are working with our District.

Part of this funding also has permanent funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program. This funding provides, for those who qualify, a discount on the cost of their internet.

CWA is actively advertising this program with legislators, community groups and internally with our membership.

Here are the ways your household can qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP):

1). Based on your household income

You are eligible for the ACP if your income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The guideline is based on your household size and state.

2). If you or your child or dependent participate in certain government assistance programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, or other programs.

3). If you or anyone in your household already receives a Lifeline benefit.



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



UPDATES ON COVID-19

Modified Verizon Covid Leave Policies

Given the CDC's revised COVID guidance Verizon has modified the following Company policies:

1. Effective 8/22 Verizon is no longer requiring quarantine time for those not fully vaccinated who had close contact with someone with or suspected of having COVID unless required by local or state law. Currently only Pennsylvania has a quarantine requirement. Verizon will contact anyone quarantined to let them know they can return immediately.
2. Effective September 2, 2022 Verizon is discontinuing the Return To Office tool (RTO).
3. Effective September 2, 2022 Verizon is no longer requiring a COVID test and therefore discontinuing the 2 hours of paid time to take a COVID test. If an employee feels sick they should stay home using available illness time and may choose to take a COVID test if they suspect they have COVID and to qualify for COVID leave.

Workers Helping Workers You Make a Difference !!



That's what the Community Services Agency of the Washington Metro Council AFL-CIO is all about. Reaching out to local working families in need. Workers helping workers in their own communities.

To contribute through the United Way:

Use designation number **8253**

Your donation will:

- Help laid-off or striking workers and families in financial crisis buy groceries, avoid utility cutoffs, evictions and other emergencies.
- Provide holiday baskets of food, clothes and gifts to families that would otherwise go without.
- Educate youth about careers with good wages and benefits, and help adults needing job training.

And so much more!

To find out more - www.dclabor.org • 202.974-8220 •

"...the future of labor is the future of America."—John L. Lewis

It is no coincidence that when labor flourishes in America, so does the middle class. For the first time in over forty years we are seeing growth in the number of workers attempting to come together to unionize. Petitions filed at the National Labor Relations Board by working people who want to exercise their freedom to come together in unions and negotiate for a fair return on their work jumped 69% last year over the previous year. Even those Americans who are not members of a union are expressing support and respect for the positive impact that being a represented by a union can have on the pay, benefits, on-the-job safety and working conditions of workers.



The benefits of more and stronger unions for workers and our economy are clear. Workers in a union earn on average 12% higher wages than non-union counterparts. That effect is even greater for Black workers, who earn around 14% more. Unions also raise standards across the economy in so many ways, from safer working conditions and better anti-discrimination policies, to better benefits like paid vacations and over-time compensation



But the right to join a union has been under attack for decades. Because of anti-worker legislation, right-wing court decisions and a lack of federal protections, the share of workers represented by a union is less than half of what it was forty years ago. You might be surprised to learn that U.S. employers are charged with violating federal labor laws in more than 41% of union organizing campaigns. Many wealth-hoarding corporations hire high-priced union-busting law firms to teach them all of the dirty tricks to use in their quest to stop workers from having any say or power in the workplace. The corporations spy on their workers to determine who is speaking with whom, retaliate against and/or fire union organizers for trumped-up reasons, hold captive-audience meetings where they profess their love and caring for the workers (usually while feeding them pizza) as they explain that all the union wants is to take their union dues and be a "third party" which will interfere with the employer-employee relationship. They mis-classify workers as "independent contractors" so they are excluded from the bargaining unit. If the b.s. and scare tactics are unsuccessful and the majority of workers vote to unionize, many corporations then close down that workplace and re-open in a different location, where the time-consuming process has to start all over again.

We all understand that it is imperative that we have laws in place to protect workers who, among other things, are trying to unionize, are hurt on the job, discriminated against or lose their job and need to collect Unemployment Insurance. But how do those laws get enacted? **They get enacted when we vote for legislators who understand and respect the fact that labor unions are the most effective tools to build power for workers, increase economic security and spread wealth more equitably.**

General Election Day in Maryland is November 8th. Early Voting will be held for 8 days, beginning on Thursday, October 27 through Thursday, November 3, from 7a until 8p every day. While you must vote at your

assigned voting location on Election Day, during Early Voting you can vote at any Early Voting location in the county in which you live. If you want to vote by mail, your request for a mail-in ballot must be received no later than November 1. In Maryland we had the opportunity prior to the Primary Election to request that all future ballots be mailed to us. If you made that request (like I did), your ballot will be mailed to you approximately three weeks before Election Day. You can mail your ballot in the U.S. mail or drop it into one of the secure Drop Boxes at an Early Voting location. If you have any questions about voting, such as where to register, where to vote, how to change your name, address or party affiliation, etc. you can go the website www.elections.maryland.gov to get answers.

We will publish names of the AFL-CIO-endorsed candidates in our October 2108News and on our website (www.cwalocal2108.org). These are candidates whose voting records and/or positions show they are on the right side of issues that affect working people. We need candidates who will enact laws to protect workers, including those trying to unionize, after they are elected. We need legislators who will protect the freedom of workers to vote, to join a union, to access health care and to earn a living wage. Please carefully consider the AFL-CIO-endorsed candidates and make a plan to vote in the General Election.

In Solidarity,

Marilyn

School is Back in Session!!

Are you familiar with Maryland's school bus laws?

- Two-lane roadway:**
When school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop!
- Two-lane roadway with a center turning lane:**
When school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop!
- Four-lane roadway without a median separation:**
When school bus stops for passengers, all traffic from both directions must stop!
- Divided highway of four lanes or more with a median separation:**
When school bus stops for passengers, only traffic following the bus must stop.

Verizon Express Retail Workers Form Union With CWA

In another historic win for worker organizing in the retail industry, a majority of workers at Verizon Express in Portland, Oregon have voted for union representation with CWA in an official National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election. The Portland workers are the first Verizon Express store workers in the country to win formal union representation. With their newly formed union and a voice on the job, Verizon Express workers are preparing to bargain for fair compensation, comprehensive health benefits, wage increases, appropriate staffing levels, and safe working conditions.

Earlier this month, CWA filed an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against Verizon Wireless on behalf of workers at Verizon Express Portland locations alleging that the company forced workers to attend mandatory captive audience meetings, a common union-busting tactic in which company representatives intimidate workers in an attempt to interfere with organizing efforts.

The retail workers at the Portland Verizon Express store now join five other traditional Verizon Retail store unions across New York and Washington. Verizon Express, a new pilot concept from Verizon Wireless, bills itself as creating a more streamlined experience for customers, mainly through customers using self-checkout kiosks. However, unlike workers at full-service stores, workers at Verizon Express stores do not make commission, leaving them dramatically underpaid compared to similar workers in other stores.

The latest organizing efforts signal a growing movement among Verizon workers and adds to the labor momentum taking place nationwide, especially amongst retail and hourly workers.

CWA & Thryv Agree to Extension

Last month, Thryv requested an extension to the existing collective bargaining agreement with CWA until October 14, 2022. The original expiration date, set to expire on April 22, 2022, was extended until May 23, 2022, and then extended again until August 5, 2022. All provisions of the contract continue in full force.

Thryv indicated they were still in the process of putting together a proposal on compensation and economics.

Are you "WEARING RED" on Thursdays?

RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

I hope everyone has had an enjoyable summer and all our friends and families have remained safe and healthy.

The next meeting will be on September 14, 2021 at 11:00am at the local.

As usual, lunch will be available. A \$3:00 donation would be greatly appreciated and if you have a dessert specialty that you would like to bring, they are always welcomed!!



Calvin C Foster Jr
President- RMC 2108

Personals

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

Virginia Wright, a retiree who passed away on July 30, 2022.

Larry Christian, a retiree who passed away on August 2, 2022.

Brandon Soffer, a retiree who passed away on August 8, 2022.

Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Raynod Dye



James Smola

Thinking About Retirement?

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

Social Security

Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 6:30 PM - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

Medicare Basics

Thursday, September 22, 2022 at 6:30 PM - Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at [Nettworth.net](https://www.nettworth.net).



Have You Scheduled Your Floating Holiday?

It seems that almost every year CWA Local 2108 hears from members who haven't scheduled their Floating Holiday prior to October 1st of the calendar year and then Verizon denies that employee the ability to schedule after that date, causing them to lose it altogether. It is the Union's position that if an employee has not scheduled it by October 1st, it is the company's responsibility to notify the employee to schedule it at that time.



With that being said, CWA Local 2108 strongly suggests that all of our members working under the Verizon agreement schedule their Floating Holiday prior to October 1, 2022. This way you cannot be denied the ability to schedule your holiday. Keep in mind that you can still be required to work on your Floating Holiday. In that case you will receive holiday pay treatment just as if you worked any other negotiated holiday.

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

Hero's in Labor: Heroic Telephone Operator Saves Lives in New Mexico Flood

Some may call Folsom, New Mexico a ghost town. Located at the headwaters of the Cimarron River, known locally as the Dry Cimarron, it has hardly any active businesses. Most community life centers around the Folsom Museum, established in 1966. According to the 2010 census, its population was 56, down from 75 in 2000.

According to Tom Drake of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, "the town never recovered from the disastrous flood of 1908."

On that day, August 27, 1908, a freak storm struck the town with only a few hours warning, leading to tragic results. Earlier that summer hay was cut and the leftover stalks littered the fields around the river's headwaters. "When the rains came the water collected the hay stalks and other debris and carried them along until they began to block the small railroad bridges. When these impromptu dams gave way, the resulting surge added to the already swelling river." (Mike Schoonover, *Folsom Area History*, 2010)

People living upriver sounded the alarm by calling Folsom's switchboard operator, Sally Rooke. Sally began ringing townspeople who had a telephone, warning them to escape the impending flood. She stayed at her station, contacting over 40 people who were saved from the flood. Then the rushing waters washed away her building.

"Residents of the town who lived on high ground and beyond the reach of the torrent, saw houses containing families crying for aid swept away before their eyes, powerless to render them any assistance."

Along with drowned cattle and horses, Sally's body was found 12 miles downstream still wearing the headpiece worn by telephone operators. She died along with 17 other people that day.

Eighteen years later the town honored her with a small memorial, donated by the contributions of telephone operators around the country. In 2007 the New Mexico Dept. of Cultural Affairs erected a historic marker in her name.



Local 2108 Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2022

- 5 Labor Day**
Local Office Closed

- 11 911 Remembrance Day**
- 14 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 14 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD

OCTOBER 2022

- 3 Chief Stewards Meeting- 9:30am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11am**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 12 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm**
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
- 13-15 MD State & DC AFL-CIO Biennial Conf.**
Baltimore, MD
- 27-11/3 Maryland Early Voting - 7am-8pm Daily**
- 31 Halloween**


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, September 14, 2022 - 6:00pm RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, September 14, 2022 - 11:00am

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

Local Office: (301) 595-2108 :: Local Fax: (301) 595-2412
Web Address: www.cwlocal2108.org
10782 Rhode Island Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

 

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