



THE 4200 BUZZ

A quarterly publication brought to you by your local union

AFGE Local 4200

1st Quarter 2025



Understanding BUEs and Union Membership

As a Bargaining Unit Employee (BUE) under the representation of AFGE Local 4200, it's crucial to understand the role and advantages of being a dues-paying union member. While all BUEs benefit from collective bargaining agreements (CBA), union membership offers additional perks that enhance workplace conditions and personal growth. By becoming a dues-paying member, you gain a stronger voice in contract negotiations, ensuring that your concerns and priorities are effectively represented. Membership also provides access to valuable resources such as discounts to many services and products, professional development opportunities, and a network of support from fellow union members. Furthermore, active participation in the union empowers employees to collaboratively advocate for improved safety standards and working conditions, and equitable workplace policies. Joining AFGE Local 4200 not only strengthens the union's negotiating power but also fosters a more cohesive and supportive work environment for all employees.



A Message from the Executive Board

Dear Members of AFGE Local 4200, As we enter the first quarter of 2025, the Executive Board expresses gratitude for your commitment as proud union members. Your contributions are crucial, and we value your input in setting the direction and priorities for our local.

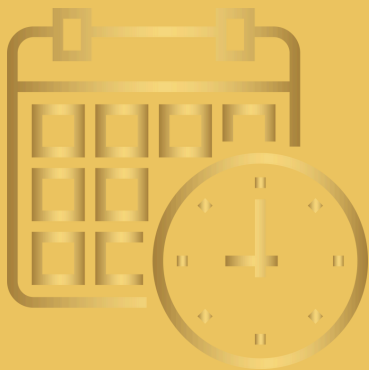
In the past year, we've faced challenges but achieved much, including:

- Advocacy and Representation: Coordinated over 1000 notifications of changes to working conditions to the BUEs.
- Filed grievances and ULP charges addressing systemic issues and delayed market pay reviews.
- Council Representation: Engaged in the DHA Council of Local Unions for fair negotiations.

Looking ahead in 2025, we plan to continue to:

- Support our bargaining unit employees from unfair processes and illegal practices.
- Uphold bargaining unit employees legally binding rights as outlined in our CBAs.
- Advocate for proper ACQ DEMO implementation.
- Amplify our strength and voting power at the District and National levels by growing our membership.

Upcoming Events



- **5 March 2025** (6:30-7:30PM CST): New BUE Townhall. Watch for your invite! **(Note: This townhall is only for new BUE's to DHA from the Army Commands).**
- **6-7 March 2025** (6:30-8:00PM CST): Townhalls for all of AFGE Local 4200 Bargaining Unit Employees.
- **March-May 2025:** Site visits in Aberdeen, Falls church, Ft. Detrick, Roselyn; Aurora, Colorado with "BUE Brew Bash" events in each location.
- **8 March 2025:** If you're in San Antonio, TX come out to the "BUE Brew Bash"- Stone Werks Lincoln Hights 999 Basse Rd. 1pm to 4pm CST.
- **26 March 2025** (6:30-7:30PM CST): Members only Meeting. Watch for your invite!

**** IMPORTANT NOTE ****

Please **DO NOT** attend the townhalls on duty hours, using government computers or on government property (i.e. Location)

SUPPORTING OUR PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

Recent developments have raised concerns among our probationary employees about job security. It's important to know that while probationary employees have fewer protections than tenured staff, there are still rights and resources available to you.

Even during probation, you cannot be terminated for discriminatory reasons, such as partisan political beliefs or marital status, age, sex, etc.

If you believe your termination was based on discrimination or a prohibited personnel practice, you have grounds to appeal.



Recent mass terminations of probationary employees have been legally challenged. A federal judge ruled that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) exceeded its authority by directing agencies to terminate probationary employees en masse.

Labor groups, including the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), have filed lawsuits against these actions, advocating for the rights of probationary employees. AFGE Local 4200 is committed to supporting all members, including probationary employees.

If you encounter issues or feel at risk, contact AFGE 4200 representatives promptly. Early intervention can be crucial.

We can provide information on the processes available to challenge unjust actions.

Keep abreast of updates regarding employment policies and your rights as a probationary employee by checking the news section of our SharePoint page.

A final point, it is always advisable to maintain records of your work performance and the value you add to the mission, including any commendations or positive feedback, to support your employment status.

UNDERSTANDING REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF) PROCEDURES

As of now, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) has not been affected by any Reductions in Force (RIFs). However, we wish to share the Key Points About RIFs for those who may have questions:

- A RIF occurs when an agency needs to downsize its workforce due to reasons such as reorganization, lack of work, or budget constraints.
 - Notice Period: Employees normally receive at least 60 days' written notice before a RIF takes effect. This notice includes details about the selection process and potential reassignment opportunities.
 - Appeal Rights: If affected by a RIF, you have the right to appeal the decision to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) if you believe proper procedures weren't followed. Appeals must be filed within 30 days of the RIF's effective date.
 - Severance and Benefits: Eligible employees may receive severance pay, unemployment benefits, payout for unused leave, and insurance coverage.
- Please go to [OPM.gov](https://www.opm.gov) for more detailed information on these topics.

Stay Informed and Supported:

It is crucial to remain informed. Attend union meetings, go to our SharePoint and website, and review official communications from [OPM.gov](https://www.opm.gov).

Return to the Office

With recent concerns about telework and remote work, we want to inform you that AFGE previously negotiated these rights with DHA and they are outlined in the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) (also referred to as the IMLA). With the issuance of the DHA Return to Office Guidelines, our team of experts at the AFGE National level will be negotiating with the agency to uphold these rights as outlined in the agreement. In the meantime, Telework & Remote Work Programs remain in effect and all existing agreements are held as “status quo” for bargaining unit employees until the negotiations between the agency and union are complete.

Your Right to Request Telework -

You still have a right to request telework and remote work under the “status quo” status. The union is actively monitoring any agency discussions about telework and will fight to uphold your rights.

AFGE Local 4200: Committed to Political Neutrality

First and foremost, our local union remains politically neutral. Our mission is to protect your rights, fight for fair working conditions, and ensure job security—not to push any political agenda. Our focus is solely on your workplace rights and interests as federal employees.

While we remain committed to advocating on your behalf regarding significant issues, we defer to the AFGE National Office, as they are better positioned and equipped to address these matters effectively.

Where Your Union Dues Go

Approximately half of the dues you pay go directly to AFGE National, which advocates on your behalf at the highest levels of government. AFGE National uses these funds to protect your pay & benefits, defend your job rights, engage in congressional advocacy, and they leverage legal action such as filing national lawsuits to protect federal jobs from outsourcing & cuts.

See recent actions

Why This Benefits You:

While our local focuses on direct representation at DHA, AFGE National ensures that federal employees across the country are protected at the legislative and executive levels.

Our Promise to You:

- ✓ At the local level our focus is on your workplace rights and conditions. All voices are welcome.
- ✓ Your dues support legal defense, collective bargaining, and advocacy that benefit ALL federal employees.
- ✓ AFGE National works to ensure fair treatment, protect federal jobs, and fight for your pay and benefits.



MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

A Safe Space to Talk Freely

Our union meetings are a venue for respectful discussion, collaboration, and solidarity. Members **MUST** sign in to the meeting using full first and last names to gain access.

Every member has the right to voice concerns, but this must be done respectfully and truthfully so that we can work together to find solutions.

As a reminder, members, in order to remain in good standing, are expected to:

- ✓ Respect fellow members/refrain from disruptive behavior.
- ✓ Share concerns honestly, avoiding misinformation.
- ✓ Engage constructively, even in disagreement.

Spreading false claims or disrupting meetings not only hinders productive discussion but violates union rules on conduct and respect.

We're Stronger Together

Your union representatives work hard without special compensation to advocate for every member. Respecting our meeting space ensures everyone's voice is heard and helps us build a stronger, more effective union.

Protecting Member Privacy

We want all members to feel safe and comfortable discussing workplace issues without fear of retaliation. That's why union meetings are for members only. So recording or transcribing meetings using AI assistants or other technology will not be permitted in meetings going forward.

If you need assistance with meeting notes due to a disability, please reach out to union leadership—we are happy to provide meeting minutes as needed. Our goal is to foster open, honest discussions while protecting the privacy of our members. Thank you for respecting these guidelines and helping us maintain a secure space for all!



1-855-DHA-AFGE

1-855-342-2343



Please visit our website at <https://afge4200.org>
To contact a steward: email us at stewards@afge4200.org
To Join Local 4200 go to: <https://join.AFGE.org/L4200>
Email us at info@afge4200.org for general union questions and suggestions for article topics or let us know [here](#)

[AFGE LOCAL 4200](#)

[DHA SHAREPOINT SITE:](#)

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