

# The Constitution of the Union of Judicial Professional Employees

Revised 09/27/07

**ARTICLE 1: NAME** The organization shall be known as the Union of Judicial Professional Employees AFT/AFT-CT, AFL-CIO.

**ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES I.** To unite and organize all Professional Judicial Employees into a relationship of mutual assistance and cooperation.

1. To secure for them all rights and guarantees of due process to which they are entitled.
2. To raise the standards of working conditions essential to producing the best professional service.
3. To promote the welfare of the people of the state of Connecticut by providing progressively better Judicial Branch standards for all regardless of race, national origin, sex, sexual preference, age, creed, place of residence, and social, political, or economic beliefs or affiliations.
4. To strongly support principles of solidarity with other members of the union movement in the protection and upgrading of jobs and working conditions.

## **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** Active membership shall be available to all professional employees of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch. An active member shall be a current professional bargaining unit employee who has signed and filed a membership application with the Union. Only active members shall serve in elective or appointive Union office.

**Section 2.** No discrimination shall ever be shown toward individual members or applicants for membership because of race, national origin, sex, sexual preference, age, creed, social, political, or economic belief or affiliation.

**Section 3.** Retired professional employees of the Judicial Branch may be members of the Union and shall be entitled to the same benefits of membership upon payment of minimum dues (cost of all dues to affiliated organizations.)

**Section 4.** A member who fails to pay dues or to arrange reasonable payment procedures with the Treasurer within the time limits or procedures established by the then current contract shall be dropped from the membership rolls and the employer shall be so notified. Also, their names shall be removed from the records at the national and state offices. A member will be reinstated upon payment of all dues in accordance with the procedures established by the Treasurer.

**Section 5.** A member in good standing who is granted a leave of absence (greater than two months) because of military service, or for valid personal or professional reasons shall upon request be placed on the inactive list and shall pay no dues for the duration of said leave. Such members shall be restored to active membership without penalty upon termination of their leave.

## **ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The following officers shall be elected biennially by the membership:

1. President
2. Vice - President
3. Treasurer

4. Secretary
5. Nine Representatives:

Two (2) Adult Probation Officers One (1) Chief/ Lead Adult Probation Officer One (1) Support Enforcement Officer One (1) Family Relations Counselor One (1) Juvenile Probation Officer One (1) Judicial District Assistant Clerk One (1) Family! Support Supervisor One (1) From All Other Groups

The order of succession shall be President, Vice - President, Treasurer, Secretary. Any vacancies on the Executive Board shall be filled by appointment by the President subject to 2/3 vote of approval by the Executive Board.

**Section 2.** THE EXECUTIVE STEWARD shall be elected by a majority vote of the Executive Board. Candidates for the position shall undergo evaluation by the President or his/her designee who shall retain sole authority to recommend one or more candidates for consideration.

The Executive Steward shall bear statewide responsibility for maintenance of the grievance procedure and operation of the Steward network. He/she will serve until voluntarily relinquishing the position or being removed for cause and after a hearing by 2/3 vote of the Executive Board.

The Executive Steward shall review all applications of members wishing to become stewards. He/she shall recommend prospective stewards to the Executive Board, which, by majority vote, shall retain sole appointing authority. Unless said authority is delegated to another officer or steward, the Executive Steward shall assume jurisdiction of all grievances at the Step III level of the grievance procedure. He/she shall report regularly to the Executive Board regarding all steward and grievance related matters.

The Executive Steward shall make recommendations to the Executive Board concerning those grievances, which should proceed to arbitration. Said recommendation shall be subject to review by the Union's four principal officers (President, Vice - President, Treasurer, Secretary) who shall have the power by majority vote to overrule the recommendation of the Executive Steward. Final decision-making authority over those grievances which proceed to arbitration shall reside with the Executive Board. Any grievant wishing to challenge a decision of the four principal officers may request and shall receive a hearing before the Executive Board.

Following said hearing , the Executive Board shall render its decision by majority vote of those attending the meeting at which the hearing is conducted. The decision of the Executive Board is final and shall be communicated in writing to the grievant by the Executive Steward.

**Section 3.** STEWARDS shall be volunteers from the active membership. The Executive Steward shall accept for consideration by the Executive Board a written statement of interest by any member wishing to become a Steward. The Executive Board shall retain sole appointing authority and its decision shall be final. Stewards shall serve until voluntarily relinquishing their position or being removed for cause and after a hearing by majority vote of the Executive Board.

Stewards shall be expected to handle employee inquiries and grievances through Step II of the grievance procedure. Stewards shall provide the Executive Steward a copy of any grievance filed within five (5) working days of said filing. More experienced Stewards may be authorized by the Executive Steward to represent grievants at Step III of the grievance procedure. Whenever possible, grievances will be processed by Stewards employed in the same agency as the grievant.

Stewards shall encourage participation in Union activities by all active members and shall perform other tasks as assigned by the Executive Steward or the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE V: ELECTIONS**

**Section 1.** All elections for officers and/or delegates to the affiliates shall be by secret ballot.

**Section 2.** Elections for Executive Board Officers shall be conducted at the September meeting in odd numbered years.

**Section 3.** Notice for nominations to any to any office must be given at least thirty days prior to that election. The list of candidates must be given to the membership fifteen days prior to an election.

**Section 4.** Results of an election shall be announced at the meeting at which the election takes place and published in the minutes of the meeting.

**Section 5.** The Secretary shall send a list of all elected officers and/or delegates to the national AFT office and the AFT-CT office.

**Section 6.** The new officers shall be designated officers elect and shall be formally installed at the November Executive Board meeting following the election. All elected officers shall automatically become delegates to the conventions or annual meetings of all bodies with which this Union is affiliated.

## **ARTICLE VI: EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Section 1.** The Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice -President, Treasurer, Secretary and those Representatives chosen in accordance with Article four, Section one of this Constitution.

**Section 2.** The Executive Board shall normally meet monthly or at the call of the President and/or any three of its members. A quorum shall consist of seven (7) of its members.

**Section 3.** The Executive Board shall be empowered to act for the general good of the organization by establishing and administering those policies, methods, means and procedures required to accomplish the goals established by the members or specifically referenced elsewhere in this

Constitution. The Executive Board shall: appoint all committees, approve all appointments made by the President, approve the annual budget, employ personnel as may be determined by the needs and finances of the organization, approve the continuation of grievances to arbitration, and develop policies necessary to achieve the Union's objectives.

**Section 4.** The PRESIDENT shall be the chief executive officer of the Union and shall be responsible for the daily activities thereof. The President is empowered to execute documents and obligations and bind the body subject to limits set by this Constitution and approval of the Executive Board. The President shall act as official spokesperson for the Union, shall serve ex-officio on all Union committees, and shall be entitled to be a delegate to any convention or meeting at which the Union is allotted representation.

**Section 5.** The VICE - PRESIDENT shall serve as acting President during the absence or disability of the President and, in the case of a vacancy in the office of President, shall succeed to said office until the next election. The Vice - President shall discharge such other duties as may be assigned by the President.

**Section 6.** The TREASURER shall be responsible for the fiscal affairs of the Union and for all matters pertaining to the current budget. The Treasurer shall be responsible for timely payment of all required dues, fees, and obligations to labor federations or councils with which the Union is affiliated. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of revenues and for the authorized disbursement of Union funds. The Treasurer shall serve as acting President during the simultaneous absence or disability of the President and Vice - President.

**Section 7.** The SECRETARY shall record, compile, and maintain minutes of all meetings and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all official correspondence. The Secretary shall maintain the membership records and shall be responsible for regular informational mailings to the general membership. The Secretary shall serve as acting President during the simultaneous absence or disability of the President, Vice - President, and Treasurer.

## **ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES**

**Section 1.** Special committees may be appointed as the President or Executive Board deems necessary. Only Union members in good standing may serve on committees. The chairperson of each committee shall be appointed by the President with the consent of a majority of the Executive Board.

**Section 2.** Every effort shall be made to secure the broadest possible representation on all committees.

**Section 3.** The Executive Board shall charge each committee with its duties and shall receive and consider all recommendations forwarded by committees.

**ARTICLE VIII: CONVENTIONS** This organization shall whenever possible send delegates to all organizations with which it is affiliated. All delegates shall make reports to the Executive Board on meetings attended. Their reports shall be made part of the minutes of the Executive Board meeting at which they are rendered. The Union shall make every reasonable effort to pay the approved expenses of delegates to meetings and conventions of all affiliated organizations.

## **ARTICLE IX: MEETINGS**

**Section 1.** There shall be a general membership meeting in September of each year. Additional special meetings shall be called by the President with majority consent of the Executive Board. Special membership meetings will also be called by the President upon receipt of a petition signed by at least 20 % of the active members in good standing as of the date of the petition.

**Section 2.** A quorum at any membership meeting will consist of 5 % of the organization's total active membership unless otherwise specified in this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE X: FINANCE**

**Section 1.** Membership dues shall be set by majority vote of the members present at the September membership meeting. Members shall be provided with a written notice of any proposed increase in the

Local's dues at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.

**Section 2.** Increases in the dues of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), The American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut (AFT-CT) or the AFL-CIO shall be added to membership

dues as they take effect.

**Section 3.** The fiscal year shall be October 1 - September 30.

**ARTICLE XI: RECALL PROCEDURES Section 1.** Recall procedures against any officer or delegate to any affiliated body may be initiated by any member in good standing upon filing of a valid petition with the Secretary who shall issue a receipt for such petition. The Secretary will serve said petition on the officer named therein within three working days of its receipt. The petition must be on a form prescribed by the Secretary. Said form shall include a statement of cause. Cause shall be defined as neglect of duty, malfeasance in office, or misappropriation of funds. In order to be valid, the petition must include the signatures of at least 30 % of the active membership in good standing at the time of filing. Said petition shall also be accompanied by photocopies of all documents and written exhibits, which the complainant would seek to submit for consideration during the recall process.

**Section 2.** After verifying that recall charges have been properly filed, the Secretary shall present the petition to the Executive Board which shall hold a hearing into the charges at its next regularly scheduled meeting following fifteen (15) days from the date on which the petition was served on the charged official. Said hearing shall be conducted by the highest ranking officer not formally charged in the petition. The Executive Board shall consider any and all documents and/or exhibits which the complainant and charged officer may wish to submit. Additional hearing days may be ordered at the sole discretion of the Executive Board if such are deemed necessary for a full and complete examination of all testimony, documents, and exhibits submitted by both parties to the process. The Executive Board will render its decision by 2/3 vote which shall be final and binding unless appealed to the membership through the process contained in Article nine, Section one of this Constitution.

**Section 3.** When a recall election is ordered by finding of the Executive Board, said election shall be scheduled within sixty (60) days of that finding on a date to be determined by the Executive Board. Said election shall take place at a special membership meeting called for that purpose alone and for which a quorum shall consist of 25 % of the active members in good standing on the date on which the meeting is held. A special meeting notice specifying the date, time, place, purpose and procedures under which the meeting will be conducted shall be mailed to each active member not later than fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting. An officer shall be deemed recalled upon the secret ballot vote of 2/3 of those active members in good standing attending the meeting at which the recall election takes place.

## **ARTICLE XII: AVAILABILITY OF CONSTITUTION**

**Section 1.** Three copies of this Constitution and all future amendments shall be submitted to the national office and state federation of the AFT.

**Section 2.** Copies shall be made available to all affiliated organizations upon request.

**Section 3.** Copies will be available at all times for any members of this Union upon request to the Secretary.

## **ARTICLE XIII: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.** Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be submitted by any active member at any time prior to the June meeting of the Executive Board. Such proposals shall be accompanied by an endorsement petition containing the signatures of not less than twenty (20) active members.

**Section 2.** At its June meeting, the Executive Board shall evaluate all proposed amendments

for presentation to the September membership meeting. Only proposed amendments receiving a majority vote of those Executive Board members present and voting at the June meeting shall be presented to the membership for its consideration.

**Section 3.** The power to amend this Constitution shall reside with the membership exclusively. All proposed amendments shall be included in the notice for the annual membership meeting to which they will be submitted. In order to be adopted, a proposed amendment must receive 2/3 vote of the active members in good standing present and voting at the annual membership meeting to which the proposed amendment has been submitted.

**ARTICLE XIV: RULES OF ORDER** Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, all questions of procedure shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order Revised.

#### **ARTICLE XV: AFFILIATION / DISAFFILIATION PROCEDURES**

**Section 1.** A vote to affiliate or disaffiliate with another labor organization may be called by 2/3 vote of the Executive Board or after receipt by the Secretary of a petition containing the signatures of 30 % of the active members in good standing of this Union.

**Section 2.** When the threshold requirements for an affiliation or disaffiliation vote have been met, the vote will be scheduled to take place not less than forty-five (45) days nor more than ninety (90) days later. All procedures pertaining to said vote will be supervised by the American Arbitration Association or the State Board of Labor Relations.

**Section 3.** As soon as possible but not later than twenty (20) days after the call for the vote , a notice will be mailed to all professional bargaining unit members detailing the methods and the scheduling of said vote and informing non-members that they must join this Union to be eligible to vote.

**Section 4.** The Executive Board shall schedule at least one general membership meeting and, if possible, additional regional meetings to provide the fullest possible discussion of the respective issues. In addition, a general mailing or newsletter containing both viewpoints on the affiliation or disaffiliation issue will be circulated not later than twenty (20) days prior to the election.

**Section 5.** The prevailing side shall have received at least one vote more than 50 % of the total number of valid ballots cast.