



ASEA | Strategic Plan Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic planning is an organizational tool for establishing common goals, setting priorities, strengthening operations, and focusing energy and resources appropriately. Strategic planning is the process of creating a Strategic Plan, which serves as a blueprint for the organization as we move forward. This document will outline our vision for ASEA’s future, our common organizational goals, the steps we need to take to achieve those goals, and other critical elements developed during the Strategic Planning process.

In early September, 30 AFSCME member leaders, activists, executive staff leadership and staff came together to participate for an intensive Strategic Planning retreat. Participants came from a variety of regions and backgrounds to ensure equity and representation for all stakeholders of our union. The one-and-a-half-day workshop was facilitated by AFSCME International staff, who guided the committee through a series of exercises designed to help us assess our institutional environment, establish a vision and benchmark goals for reaching it, and specific actions that we’ll take in order to get there.

Patterns and themes emerged and helped the group find common ground. Those themes affectionately called “Pillars” are: Representation; Organizing; Communications; and Political.

Specifically, this strategic plan builds our internal capacity by encouraging local leaders to collaborate within geographical areas of our state; increase their use of technology for communicating with members; create teams of member educators to deliver trainings throughout the state on New Employee Outreach and Member Action Teams; and encourage the use of direct action issue campaigns and contract campaigns. It facilitates our union’s growth by creating Organizing Advisory Committees; instituting comprehensive New Member Outreach strategies; and establishing benchmarks for organizing progress. It increases our political influence through expanding our base of political activists running for elected office and engaging in other activities; and commits the union to influencing redistricting and district apportionment decisions at the legislature and within local governments.

OBJECTIVES

MISSION AND VALUES

- AFSCME Alaska Local 52 is proud to be an informed, strong, active, and diverse membership of Alaskans.



- We have a healthy political presence through our public service.
- We recognize the value of our solidarity and our communities.
- We go beyond the worksite to achieve our Union's Mission, Vision, and Values.
OUR VALUES

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN : SURVEY RESULTS

Members of the planning committee conducted 4 surveys of union stakeholders: members, staff, chapter presidents, and stewards. The goal of these surveys was to identify the current state of ASEA to identify areas we can build upon and improve. The results were compiled and summarized with the following overview:

Survey Participation

- **Membership Return Rate:** ASEA sent the membership survey to 6,067 members. In total, 1,203 participants, or 20% of members contacted, completed the survey.
- **Membership Sample Size:** ASEA has 8,040 members total. We have survey results from 15% of the total membership.
- **Steward Sample Size:** ASEA sent the membership survey to all 300 stewards. In total, 139 Stewards, or 46% of stewards, completed the survey.
- **Presidents:** ASEA received eight survey responses from Presidents.

Communications

Overall, members conveyed a neutral or positive view about the quality of ASEA communications. Over one-third of members do not recall communications from the State Executive Board members.

- 94.6% of member participants rate the quality of ASEA Communications as average or above.
- Most member participants rated the quality of ASEA Communications as "Above Average" (506), followed by "Average" (376) and "Excellent" (255).
- Less than 6% of participants rated communications as either "Poor" (17) and "Below Average" (49).

Member Participation

Members reported low participation in ASEA activities over the past 6 months. Participation in statewide committees is low overall, even while participants are aware there are vacancies on the committees.

- 82% of participants have not participated in an ASEA activity in the last six months (excluding chapter meetings) compared with 18% who have.



- While 71% of membership participants claim they are aware there are vacancies in statewide committees, only 10.9% are on statewide committees.

Members & Benefits:

Members overwhelmingly rated the value of the union higher than dues. Over half of members say they feel comfortable explaining the benefits of union membership.

- 52% of members said they feel comfortable explaining the benefits of union membership.
- Over 83% of members rated dues as equal to or greater than the benefit they receive.

PAC and Political

Support for building awareness in the ASEA PAC is strong among the membership, but knowledge of candidates, trust in ASEA PAC endorsed candidates, and PAC participation is low.

- Three out of four members agree that ASEA should increase awareness of the ASEA PAC's purpose and explain how to play a role in PAC leadership.
- Two-thirds (67%) of member participants are aware that member dues are not used for political purposes.
- 11.9% of general membership participants say they contribute to the PAC. The rest of respondents say they are not PAC contributors (64.8%), or do not know if they contribute to PAC (23.2%). More than half (54%) of ASEA Stewards reported being PAC contributors while 29% responded 'No' to the question and 17% were unsure whether they contributed.
- When asked about candidates endorsed by the ASEA PAC, over half of general membership participants either question the motive behind endorsements (14%) or lack information about candidates supported by the PAC (39%)—a clear opportunity to raise awareness of both endorsement outcomes and decision criteria.
- Nearly half (47%) of respondents do feel that the ASEA PAC endorses candidates who have "ASEA's best interests in mind."

Steward Activity

Stewards reported the most activity around talking to new employees and informing them about union activities. Talking to current and non-members about joining our union was reported at much lower rates. Grievance handling was low as well.

- The most frequent activities stewards "always" conduct are discussing the benefits of union membership with new employees (34%), greeting new employees (32%), and informing members about union activities (30%).
- The least common activity participants selected is talking to non-members about joining or rejoining the union (12%).



- While 32-24% of stewards said they discuss the benefits of union membership with new employees and/or greet new employees, only 19% of members said they talk to current members about maintaining union membership, and only 12% say they talk to non-members about joining the union.
- The activities that have the highest selections overall are activities with new members. Only 1% of stewards say they “never” greet new employees, and only 2% say it is “not often” they discuss the benefits of union membership with new employees.
- When asked what handouts they are most likely to share with members, three out of four stewards said they are most likely to share the Union Contract. The other handouts selected were AFSCME Free College (45%), Welcome Letter (35%), Contract Gains & Losses (32%) and Business Card (32%).
- When asked how many complaints or grievances they have filed in 2019, 117, or 84% of Stewards said zero. When asked how many scheduled union worksite meetings they have attended in 2019, the most popular responses were zero (29%), one (24%) and two (20%).

President Survey

Most of the feedback from presidents about how to improve ASEA centered around communications and training.

- **Feedback to Improve ASEA:** Presidents were asked how ASEA can improve member events or direct actions. One centered on training, two centered on communications, one centered on staffing organizing support, one centered on political positions, and three had no feedback
- **Quality and Quality of ASEA Communications:** Presidents were asked if they are satisfied with the quality of ASEA Communications. Seven out of eight responded “Yes.” Presidents were asked if they are satisfied with the frequency of ASEA Communications. Seven out of eight answered “Yes.”
- **Leadership Training Needs:** Chapter Presidents were asked what type of leadership training their chapter needs. The highest selection was “Communicating benefits of membership,” followed by “understanding the contract,” “Recruitment Practice,” and “Steward Responsibilities.”
- **PAC and Political Survey:** Presidents were asked about PAC participation, encouraging members to participate in PAC, and relationships with elected officials. Six presidents are ASEA PAC contributors, six presidents say their chapter has relationships with elected officials, and five say their chapter encourages PAC membership.
- **External Organizing:** Five out of eight chapter presidents surveyed said their chapter would help with an effort to organize unrepresented public employees. Only four are



aware of any opportunities to organize unrepresented public employees in the area and only three are aware of ongoing external organizing in their area.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Pillar 1: REPRESENTATION

ASEA aspires to be a union of members across the state who feel heard, and have easy access to knowledgeable stewards in the workplace who represent them well with strong support from staff who actively identify, train, and coach member leaders and activists.

Goal #1: Fill 75% of Statewide Steward positions, chief stewards. All stewards receive robust training by December 2022.

- At least one Steward in each worksite per shift:
 - 264 worksites statewide w/ an average membership of 8000, 75% would be 200 Stewards.
 - Encouraging VMO's and identify potential leaders in the workplace via Stewards and Business Agents at worksite meetings
- Maintain 100% chief stewards per chapter
- A regular statewide chief stewards meeting
 - Encourage a regular monthly stewards meeting per chapter
 - Encourage labor management meeting quarterly
 - Get well-informed on updates/ issues/ grievances/ complaints/ etc. by scheduling a quarterly meeting w/ Business Agents
 - Fill 60% of Steward vacancies by December 2020, 70% by December 2021, 75 % by December 2022
- Attendance of local shop stewards at work site meetings to answer and address questions
- Recruit and encourage new activist involvement in local/chapter activities
- Create process to follow up on new hires and members who opted out
 - Develop and train bullet points on benefits of union membership.
 - Stewards conducting new hire orientation along with Business agents.

Goal #2: Negotiate strong contracts that represents the needs of all strike classes and regions.

- Creating open and transparent communication between the staff, leaders and membership
 - Utilizing online Surveys quarterly that would extend to ALL class groups and regions, to identify the wants & needs of the membership



- Utilizing Stewards to make one-on-one contacts w/ at least 1-2 members per day in their worksite locations per shift, to identify issues/ concerns/ suggested improvements needed
- Reporting everything back to CNC for review and consideration in preparation for negotiations.
 - Create an online voting system for members top priorities to be presented at negotiations, based-off of surveys
 - Begin utilizing online surveys for CNC input by March 2022

Goal #3: By the end of 2022, create a Member Resource Center that captures and tracks answers and resources that members need.

- Reaching out to Council 28 & Council 75 to get further information & research on the process and necessities needed before the end of 2020, to establish an effective and functional Member Resource Center by 2022.
- Getting E-Board approval on funding for:
 - New software system that would enable an effective data system
 - Staffing
 - Training
- Possibly collaborating w/ other AFSCME affiliates to share a Member Resource Center that would split the costs in:
 - Staff Recruitment
 - Providing essential tools & training
 - Funding in new software system
 - Begin collaboration with Councils 28 and 75 by November 2020 for development of Member Resource Center
- Establish database of stewards work centers
- Assign Stewards follow up on new hires and members who opted out
- Provide talking points/bullets on benefits of membership

Tactics/Mechanism for Representation goals communication outreach

- Advertise Steward openings and the need for them to be filled by department and worksite in the weekly digest
- Announce reports to membership from quarterly Business Agent/Steward meetings via newsletter
- Announce CNC surveys and Steward one-on-one contacts in all publications
- Announce Member Resource Center launch to all members in all publications

PILLAR 2: COMMUNICATIONS



ASEA aspires to empower chapters to communicate effectively with members in an effort to inform and mobilize members quickly. ASEA chapters are armed with a communication's plan that is implemented through stewards, ACT Team, VMOs, and executive boards.

By 2022, raise awareness about our Brand Value of Who We Are through social media, personal contacts, and one on one interactions. We have a communications plan that is implemented through stewards, ACT, VMOs and E-Board.

Goal #1: Multi-pronged plan to sign up 75% of union members personal contact form for contact and information about union issues.

- Create a 1-page communications handout/flyer for Business Agents, Stewards, Chapter Presidents, ACT members, VMOs, and E-board members for sharing all the ways ASEA communicates with members, including our Action Network
- Launch our 'Budget/Legislative' campaign with a link to the Tele Town Hall which will be another method of collecting information
 - This effort will present members with a message of solidarity from ASEA/AFSCME as well as provide numerous ways for them to engage/advocate for their jobs including a Who We Are Stories campaign
- Create a follow-up process for members that have checked any box on the MOM cards ('engage coworkers at the workplace, 'build power with other members,' 'social media' and 'attend worksite meetings and trainings')
- Streamline data input and processes.
 - Add EID fields to the Action Network (if possible) and VAN so that all databases can 'talk' to each other
 - Input member data from worksite meetings, trainings, MOM cards, and other sources into our data bases (VAN, AN, etc.)

Goal #2: Increase member engagement in ASEA Communications

- Create an easy process for collecting photos, videos, and bios of members (including signed releases from members) for story collection
- Strengthen communication channels and formalize communication process for various campaigns between the communications coordinator and ASEA advocates and active members including:
 - Chief Stewards
 - Chapter Presidents
 - VMOs
 - ACT members
 - E-Board members



- Business Agents
- Etc.
- Conduct a communication training at the Biennial Convention to increase member confidence in sharing stories and propping themselves and their co-workers up
 - Host a stories booth at the convention to collect stories and videos
- Capture member stories at as many member events as possible by working with abovementioned counterparts
- Increase social media audience and engagement by members by continuing to get the word out at trainings and meetings (for those that use it)
- Continue to send out weekly digests – spotlighting members and featuring E-board member messages and a president’s message monthly

Goal #3: 100% of chapters receive training and plan by December 2022

PILLAR 3: POLITICAL POWER

ASEA members are engaged in fights to identify and elect representatives who respect and defend our rights as workers and union members. ASEA has the power to elect our own members to political office. It is essential and achievable that members at every worksite are informed and engaged in our political fights.

Goal #1: Double PAC contribution and participation to 30% of membership.

- Approximately 18% of ASEA members contribute to the ASEA PAC currently. Use communications, organizing, and training to raise PAC to 30% of membership participation.
- Use 2020 legislative and municipal elections to increase the urgency of member participation and frame the opportunities and consequences that PAC membership can influence
- ASEA PAC Directors have authorized a letter to PAC contributors seeking new members on the committee and providing steps to enroll others as PAC contributors
- Incorporate PAC Contribution ask and training into steward trainings, and new member orientations

Goal #2: Develop and implement a united political education program to elect ASEA members and pro-union candidates by 2022.

- Identify and support legislation that impacts ASEA members
- Hold 3 lobby days before 2022 to advocate for issues impacting ASEA members



- Identify and hold meetings to foster relationships with other unions, grassroots organizations, and advocacy groups that share ASEA member values
- Create an “ASEA Scorecard” of key elected officials up for re-election to rate how elected officials vote on issues that impact ASEA members

Goal #3: Develop an ASEA political ambassador program

- Feature PAC directors in ‘Member Spotlight’ section of newsletter/digest email
- Follow up PAC letter soliciting new PAC directors (see above) with an infill strategy for districts unrepresented by a director
- Develop information from PAC members for new members to be included in the ASEA new hire booklet—along the lines of “I’m a PAC contributor because...”

PILLAR 4: ORGANIZING

ASEA has active structures and leaders in place to maintain and grow strong membership levels. ASEA members run consistent and effective New Member Outreach programs at each worksite to recruit new members. Members actively seek new organizing opportunities by building lists and identifying targets to grow our union power.

Internal

Goal #1: Reach 90% membership in each chapter by identifying and recruiting 5% of the chapter to become active

- Identify 5% of the chapter by spring of 2020
- Reach 90% membership by 2022
- Activate current leaders and activists in each chapter – target less active chapters
- Utilize handbook and new hire list as an opportunity to engage new members and non-members
- On site work leaders to welcome new members and engage nonmembers - Provide list of employees attending orientation to stewards to follow up within 48 hours after orientation
- Touch base with the leaders of each chapter to address their needs and concerns
- Action plans for each chapter – coordinate with Chief Steward or their designee for outreach, assessments and tracking
- Develop ways to connect with short term non perm, seasonal, and long term non perm employees and identify worksites that have seasonal workers and connect with worksite leaders at the start of each season. Obtain 100 % personal emails

Goal #2: Grow and create ACT by 5% in each chapter by the end of 2020



- Start with engaging Stewards, officers, leaders identified in Goal #1 and new members by utilizing stewards and activists at member orientation

Goal #3: Gain 5 new alliances outside of Labor each year; a total of 15 by the end of 2022

- Create lists of possible alliances
- Outreach from leadership and committee groups
- Identify connections of membership with possible alliances
- Identify those that align with our mission to protect Alaska's working class
- Proud of Public Service workers
- Utilize social media for growing public support

Goal #4: Create a robust VMO program across the state

- Identify campaign and organizing needs for VMO programs
- Recruit and train member leaders through the VMO program
- Develop VMOs to work on campaigns to further targeted goals and programs laid in the Strategic Plan, and other opportunities to build ASEA membership and organizing
- Develop communications component into VMO training

External

Goal #4: Expand the membership by the end of 2022 (B)

- Add 1-2 new bargaining units
 - Identify groups to unionize
- Outreach from active members

STRATEGIC PLANNING Retreat Participants

**Planning sub-committee*