



Coalition of American Red Cross Unions

History:

In September 2014, the American Red Cross was in severe financial distress. The organization was losing hundreds of millions of dollars annually, and thousands of jobs were at risk. Recognizing the urgency, representatives from AFSCME joined with seven other international unions and their local affiliates in a joint labor-management meeting with the American Red Cross. Although the meeting was at times contentious, the Red Cross and the union representatives committed to working together in a bid to save the organization.

This commitment resulted in the ratification of the National Addendum, a national collective bargaining agreement supplementing all local agreements. The union coalition also joined with Red Cross to form a number of committees in a collaborative effort to improve the quality of life for employees and the financial performance of the organization.

Although implementation of many provisions contained in the National Addendum has at times been contentious and the union coalition has often been frustrated by decisions made by Red Cross management, the changes implemented through the National Addendum and collaborative process have contributed to significant improvements in Red Cross's financial health. Financial losses have decreased significantly and widespread layoffs are no longer a threat.

Today, more than 750 AFSCME members participate in the Coalition of American Red Cross Unions, a growing union coalition that represents more than 4,000 union members from nine international unions. With much still to be done, AFSCME members and staff are working with our union coalition partners to improve conditions for every employee working to fulfill the lifesaving mission of the American Red Cross.

National Addendum:

The National Addendum is intended to supplement local agreements. For all issues covered in the National Addendum, the language contained there supersedes and replaces local contract language. For all other issues, local contract language remains in effect. Issues addressed by the National Addendum include rest breaks and meal periods, staffing, scheduling, wage increases, overtime and premium pay, holidays, paid time off, health care, and other issues.

At the demand of the union coalition, the National Addendum also set a uniform contract expiration date for the Addendum and all local contracts: September 30, 2018. The common expiration date enhances our bargaining power in negotiating the next contract. The union bargaining team will be established in advance of negotiations in 2018.

Committees:

The union coalition operates according to the terms laid out in the Operating Agreement of the Coalition of American Red Cross Unions—an agreement signed by every union participating in the coalition—and under the oversight of an executive board. The executive board is responsible for coordinating negotiations and administration of the National Addendum, and for oversight of union participation in the various joint



labor-management committees. AFSCME members, along with council and international staff, participate on the committees, which include:

- Senior Partnership Committee: The Senior Partnership Committee (SPC) oversees the coalition-Red Cross labor-management partnership. In addition to directly addressing issues of concern to members that are national in scope, the SPC also establishes and oversees the other joint committees.
- Regional Joint Leadership Teams: Regional Joint Leadership Teams (JLTs) work together to address local operational challenges and labor-management issues, identify opportunities to improve performance, and support employee engagement. JLTs have been introduced in four regions, and the SPC will oversee the launch of JLTs in every region by fall 2017. Upcoming launch meetings will bring together labor and management to learn about the collaborative JLT process, develop a team charter, and identify and prioritize issues and opportunities for joint work.
- Joint Business Education and Communications Committee: Following ratification of the National Addendum, the coalition and Red Cross established a temporary committee to improve the sharing of information within Red Cross. Beginning in April 2017, the small temporary committee will be replaced by a larger standing committee that will establish new communication processes and support their implementation.
- Scheduling Advisory Group: Specifically addressed through contract language included in the National Addendum, the Scheduling Advisory Group (SAG) works to improve work-life balance for Red Cross union employees. The group was responsible for the development of policy changes providing staff with two consecutive days off, and continues to work on other priority work-life balance issues.
- Safety and Health Committee: The first meeting of the Safety and Health Committee will be held in March 2017. The committee will be responsible for identifying hazards, recommending changes to Red Cross practices, and conducting health and safety trainings.
- Cross-Training Committee: Flawed implementation of cross-training—which is being implemented at union and non-union locations—has created significant problems for Red Cross workers across the country. Although Red Cross management has unfortunately not accepted many previous union recommendations on addressing these problems, they have agreed to the union coalition’s request to establish a committee tasked with identifying problems and potential solutions. The first meeting of the committee is scheduled for March 2017.
- National Grievance Committee: The only committee that does not report to the Senior Partnership Committee, the National Grievance Committee (NGC) is responsible for handling grievances arising under the National Addendum (grievances arising under local contracts continue to be addressed through the procedures outlined in local contracts). Issues that the NGC is unable to resolve may be referred to a neutral arbitrator. Arbitration costs are paid through a combined coalition account funded by contributions from local unions. By pooling resources, the financial obligations for individual local unions are reduced.