

# UCATS Momentum

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU, Local 3882, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Volume 44 2024 Issue 2



Marty Correia (standing) Hosts Contract Distribution Event for FAS Members on October 16.

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# Happy Birthday contract 2023 – Now what?

■ Stephen Rechner, Law School

Believe it or not, it is already almost a year since we reached an agreement with NYU for a new contract – December 14, 2023, to be exact. We have now received two of the raises we negotiated – 5.75% in 2023 and 3.75% effective September 1 of this year. In addition to these significant wage increases, 81 members will be receiving a childcare grant in 2025 from the \$190,000 fund we negotiated, an increase of \$10,000 from 2024, and beginning September 1, all members are accruing the 2 additional vacation days that we negotiated.

Happy Birthday Contract 2023!

## Now what?

Now we have to start building the leadership team that will negotiate the 2029 contract! It's only four years away and that's not a long time. It begs the question, "Who will be negotiating our contract in 2029?"

UCATS members will be asked to answer that question early next year when we hold elections for a new Executive Council (EC). UCATS holds elections for shop stewards and officers every two years. The members we elect to the EC in 2025 will likely be most of the members who will serve on our 2029 bargaining team.

More to the point, if you are interested in being on the 2029 bargaining team the time to join the EC is now. Yes, we will have elections again in 2027, but how many of the people negotiating on your



December 13, 2023, UCATS presented our petition for a fair contract to NYU President Linda Mills. The petition had over 1,400 signatures from members and supporters. We reached an agreement with NYU the next day.

behalf in 2029 do you want to be serving their first term on your EC? If you think you may want to be on the 2029 bargaining team you should consider becoming a UCATS shop steward now.

But there are other more immediate reasons to become a shop steward. Here are a few:

- All members have a better NYUwork experience when there is at least one shop steward elected to represent their college/administrative unit; NYU managers treat UCATS members better when they know there is a shop steward keeping the UCATS members in that area informed about the rights and benefits they have in the contract;
- Most members who become shop stewards serve multiple two-year

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## Momentum

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# UCATS – Electing our leaders for the next 2 years

**THE UCATS LEADERSHIP TEAM** is called the Executive Council (EC). The EC members are elected Shop Stewards and Officers who serve for two-year terms. All current terms expire on April 30, 2025. Before

then, we nominate to re-elect, or newly-elect, stewards and officers for the new term, which starts May 1, 2025. With our staff, the EC supports the administration of our organization as well as provide member services.

## Election Process – 2025 Calendar (tentative)

Date	Step/Stage	Description
2/3/2025	Election notice mailed to members; Election committee constituted.	The Election Committee is comprised of members not running for election.
2/10/2025 - 2/21/2025	Info/training sessions for first-timers	Zoom or in-person, as needed.
2/26/2025	Nominations meeting	Via Zoom. (Registration required via form or email: info@ucats3882.org). Only UCATS members attending the Nominations Meeting can nominate Shop Stewards and Officers. Members can self-nominate to be a Shop Steward. If they cannot attend in person, someone from their college/ admin. unit may nominate them. Members can self-nominate to be an Officer; if they cannot attend in person, any UCATS member attending may nominate them.
2/27/2025 - 3/6/2025	Election committee confirms nominee acceptance	The Election Committee, will contact each nominee (via phone) to confirm the acceptance of their nomination.
3/6/2025	Nominees announced to membership	
3/7/2025 - 3/14/2025	Protest nominations period	Member should be members may protest a nominee. The Election Committee will investigate and make a final determination about the nominee's eligibility to run.
3/17/2025 - 4/4/2025	Election period	Secretary casts the vote for all uncontested seats and those members are elected. Ballots mailed for contested positions only. For contested officer positions the Election Committee may have that election conducted by the American Arbitration Association (AAA).
4/4/2025 or 4/7/2025*	Ballot counting	AAA reports election results of contested officer position(s) to UCATS. Election Committee counts the votes of contested shop steward positions to determine the winner(s).
4/8/ 2025	Election results announced	
4/9/2025 - 4/16/2025	Protest period	Members have a 5-day window to protest election results.
4/17/ 2025	Final election results reported	
4/30/ 2025	Old term ends	Last day of service for out-going stewards and officers.
5/1/2025	New term commences	



# Activism starts at home: Resources and tips for financial resilience

■ *Marty Correia, FAS*

*“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.”*

—Angela Davis

**A**t the negotiation table for our latest UCATS contract, we told NYU about how rent and inflation were impacting you. We grappled with NYU, and together, we came through with a bonus, decent raises and minimal increases for our benefits. But, as my neighbor Jimmy McMillan says, “Rent is too damn high.” Debt is also a drain on our paychecks. Student loan debt and credit card debt plague many UCATS members as well.

While we are between contract negotiations, we hope that our members work toward financial stability with a multi-pronged approach. Activism starts at home. What do you need? What do you want? Most communities have resources that you can tap into and ones that you can help sustain.

I grew up in public housing, relying on food stamps and food pantries to round out my family’s grocery needs. Now, I’m keenly aware of the pantries in my neighborhood and donate whenever I can. If you or a relative needs food assistance, there are resources listed below. These are NYC-centric, and you can do an internet search to find similar places if you live outside NYC.

Sometimes our members’ paychecks are stretched thin by a senior relative, friend or neighbor who is in need. If this is the case, you don’t have to carry that alone. Call a food pan-



UCATS members Marie Honan, Anne Maguire, Kate Conroy, & Marty Correia at the The New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) 2024 Gala. NYCOSH works to extend and defend every person’s right to a safe and healthy workplace.

try or senior center and start getting meals or food from an organization set up for this very reason. Of course, you can still help your senior, but the extra help will ease the burden.

When members ask about how to help the union, I’ve often thought about writing this article. You can help the labor movement, and yourself, by getting involved with any organization that helps your community, advocates for the people, provides opportunities, etc. All the resources below are here for us, and can use your help if we have the resources.

If you take one thing away from reading this article, please, reach out for information and resources. When workers unite and advocate for ourselves and our communities, we improve our work lives, and more importantly, our financial, bodily and mental health.

► <https://tenantfederation.org> — A union of unions organizing tenants to wield power at a massive scale, to bargain for tenant protections, to disrupt the flow of capital to those who commodify our homes, to secure alternatives to the current housing market, to guarantee housing as a public good, and to establish tenants as a political and economic class that cannot be ignored.

► <https://debtcollective.org/> — A debtors’ union fighting to cancel debts and defend millions of households. As the first union of debtors, their aim is to abolish debts and advocate for a transformation in the way goods and services are distributed. I’ve benefited greatly from this organization’s outreach and informative Zoom meetings.

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# Resources and tips for financial resilience

(Continued from page 4)

- ▶ <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/> — NYC Housing Connect is a portal to find and apply for affordable housing opportunities in New York City. Through Housing Connect, you can find and apply for affordable rental and homeownership opportunities.
- ▶ <https://housinganywhere.com/New-York--United-States/nyc-tenant-rights> — Everything to know about NYC tenant rights and rental laws. Renting in New York? Find out everything about New York tenant laws — from the eviction process in NYC to who's responsible for property repairs.
- ▶ <https://nycommonpantry.org/> — New York Common Pantry reduces hunger and promotes dignity, health and self-sufficiency. Just about everyone in UCATS can get involved with food resources in their community.

Whether you need food or want to help others in need, there are pantries and food resources you can contact. NY Common Pantry is one of many. They also have a Senior Nourish program. Maybe you, your parent, grandparent or neighbor could use some healthy food to round out their groceries every month. Contact this pantry or other resources like them.

- ▶ <https://www.metcouncilon-housing.org/> — This organization has been fighting for 60 years by organizing tenants to stand up not only for their individual rights, but also for changes to housing policies.
- ▶ <https://millie.us/news-insights/career/how-to-juggle-a-second-job/> — Whether you call it moonlighting or a side hustle, sometimes a part-time job can help you reach your financial goals,

especially when those goals are paying for childcare, medical co-insurance costs and paying your rent. Just be sure to do all of your side-hustle work off the NYU clock.

These are just a few resources, but I hope they've sparked something in you. In his speech to the AFL-CIO in 1961, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress." Sometimes it's hard to muster energy to keep fighting for affordable housing, living wages and other basic needs, but together we can continue to work for greater hope and more progress.

## Happy Birthday contract 2023 – Now what?

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- terms because their experience is rewarding and they know they are having a positive impact for the members they represent;
- Shop stewards become better informed about their rights and benefits and they share that knowledge with the members in their area;
  - If you become a shop steward now there is a good chance that you will be on the UCATS bargaining team in 2029; it's only 4 years from now!

The time to build out our EC is now! The time to join the EC with no experience is also now, so that in 2029 you have experience. Currently, we have no shop stewards representing members in some of our largest districts which include Tisch, Steinhardt and Stern.

### This has to change

That made organizing members in those areas during our bargaining campaign last year much more challenging than in the districts that have steward representation. This

has to change, it needs to change in 2025 and only members in those districts can change it.

To that end, if you are interested in becoming a shop steward email UCATS at [info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org) with your questions or just speak to a UCATS shop steward/officer you know. If you don't want to become a shop steward yourself it is still up to you and your coworkers to elect a shop steward for your area. Find out how we can get your area represented by emailing [info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org).

# Member's questions and answers

**Q:** I contribute to my TIAA 403B and NYU does not match any portion of my contributions. I have heard from some new hires that NYU is matching their contributions, up to 10% of their salary. How can this be?

**A:** All members hired before Jan. 1, 2018, are enrolled in the NYU Staff Pension plan which is a defined benefit pension plan. What you are making contributions to is indeed a 403B, but it's technically called a Supplemental Tax Deferred Annuity (STDA), which, in pension lingo, is a defined contribution retirement plan – but it is not a pension. It is optional and is only available to members in the Staff Pension Plan. Consequently, you will have 3 sources of income when you retire:

1. Social Security
2. NYU Staff Pension which is fully funded by NYU
3. STDA – which is fully funded by you and the amount you receive in retirement will be determined by the present value of your portfolio of investment choices at retirement and how you choose to receive income from your account.

In 2017 we negotiated retirement choice for members hired after January 1, 2018. Those members can choose either:

1. All of the above **OR**
2. The NYU Retirement Plan which is what administrators/faculty have. NYU contributes 5% if the employee contributes nothing and NYU contributes up to an additional 5% if the employee contributes up to 5%. Employees who choose this option **have opted out of the NYU Staff Pension.**

Both are excellent choices and better than you will get with any private sector employer today. The key to a secure financial retirement from NYU with either choice is that you have to stick to the plan. With the NYU Staff Pension Plan you just have stay in a bargaining unit position for a minimum of 5 years. With the NYU Retirement Plan you have to make a full 5% contribution each year, you have to be a good picker of the available mutual funds, you must retire when the stock market is booming and interest rates are high, and you must never borrow or take early withdrawals for any reason.

Keep in mind that while the stock market is currently booming and interest rates are high, every 5-7 years it takes a stomach-churning nosedive for at least a year, sometimes longer. Most people can't time their retirement around that and unless they fully annuitize their entire portfolio at the top of the market, thereby giving up any opportunity for growth during retirement, their income in retirement from this source will fluctuate, in some years substantially.

The Staff Pension and SS on the other hand are guaranteed for life and whatever you draw from an STDA is icing on your cake. Furthermore, income from the Staff Pension and SS are both taxed more favorably in most states, including NY, than income from the NYU Retirement Plan or the STDA both of which are fully subject to federal/state/local income tax.

**Q:** I submitted a prescription from my doctor to CVS Caremark and they told me I had to try two other medications first and only if they both failed would they give me what my doctor prescribed. What gives!

**A:** On the face of it this sounded like the Step Therapy proposal NYU made in bargaining last year which we successfully fought back against for our members in the United Health Care Choice Plus point-of-service plan. Step Therapy does apply to faculty and administrators in that plan so we initially thought that CVS Caremark, was confused. It turned out what actually happened was that the medication prescribed for this member had been moved to the CVS list of medications requiring prior authorization at about the same time that it was prescribed to our member and the CVS Caremark representative they spoke with did not explain that effectively.

Once we identified the real issue, prior authorization was obtained and our member got the medication their doctor prescribed. If you experience this, or any issue using your health insurance benefits, you should contact Health Advocate at 866-695-8622 or go to their website from the NYU benefits web page. Health Advocate is a FREE benefit NYU provides that will help you sort out any issues you have with United Health Care, CVS Caremark, and MetLife Dental, and our members usually report good outcomes when using

*(Continued on next page)*



# The magic of compounding raises

■ Christopher Crowe, Bobst library

Last year our contract negotiating team bargained the largest schedule of raises this union has enjoyed in decades. However, it seems that not every UCATS member is entirely clear about the actual value of these raises, so a few words about that are in order.

As a reminder, these are the raises we have gotten or will be getting during the life of the contract, and their effective dates:

- September 1, 2023 - 5.50%
- September 1, 2024 - 3.75%
- September 1, 2025 - 3.25%
- September 1, 2026 - 2.75%
- September 1, 2027 - 2.75%
- September 1, 2028 - 3.00%

How much of a raise does this represent, from the first year to the last? It seems like it should be an easy question, just add up the numbers and there's your answer – 21%. Which, considering the raises agreed to in our 2017-2023 contract added up to 16% and those agreed to for 2011-2017 were 15%, is quite an improvement over what we've won in the past. BUT that's not how you calculate successive raises for the simple reason that raises compound on top of each other. In other words, if you start off at a given amount of pay and then you get a percentage increase your pay goes up so the next time you get a percentage increase it's calculated on your new, higher, pay. And then if you get another increase after that your base pay is even higher. And so on, through the life of the contract.

## Money in your pocket

So what's the real value of our raises? If you work out the math, it comes out to 22.9% (as compared to 17.1 and 15.97% in the last two contracts). It might not seem like there's a huge difference between the apparent 21% and the real 22.9% but there is. Consider this: if you start off at \$60,000 per year, by the end of the contract



UCATS VP Christopher Crowe

you'll be making about \$73,740 - and that's not taking into account any longevity bumps you might be entitled to. If you "only" got 21% over that same time you would end at about \$72,600 – so that odd 1.9% was worth about \$1100 to you.

There's a probably apocryphal story that Albert Einstein declared this compounding effect to be the most powerful force in the universe. And even if he never actually said it, the thought is very close to being true. Yes, it can be used for evil purposes – most credit card debt is compounded on a daily basis, which is why it can be so difficult to pay off. But when it comes to putting money in our pockets it can be a transformative force for good. Which is why your bargaining team fought tenaciously down to the very last decimal point in bargaining last year.

## Member's questions and answers

(Continued from page 6)

them. Note however, that if you are enrolled in the UHC Value Plan or the UHC High Deductible Plan, those plans are offered to UCATS members only on the same terms as they are offered to faculty and adminis-

trators so you won't get an exception to Step Therapy or any other exceptions that we have negotiated for the UHC Choice Plus plan. That's why the Value and High Deductible plans are cheaper – you get what you pay for.

# Helping out or being taken advantage of?

■ *Linda Wambaugh,  
UCATS Organizer*

**H**ave you been asked (or told) to “help out temporarily” and been given additional duties due to short-staffing or an increased volume of work? Did some or all of those additional duties eventually end up being permanently added to your job responsibilities? If so, you are not alone.

Increasingly, UCATS members throughout NYU face this situation and often experience stress and eventual burnout because of it. Making matters even worse, most members report that despite all the extra work, management claims they cannot provide any additional compensation.

That, of course, isn't true (see Article 8-Wages, section E of the union contract).

Not surprisingly, management likes having fewer people doing the work. They save money by dragging their feet on filling vacancies or hiring additional staff. They save even more money if they can get the remaining staff to permanently absorb the work of a colleague who left or to shoulder an increased volume of work. If all the

work still gets done, there is no reason for management to fill vacancies or hire more staff.

## What can you do?

Fortunately, you are protected as a UCATS member to advocate for yourself about extra compensation for additional duties. If supervision requires you to do all of the work of a higher-graded bargaining unit employee as a temporary assignment of ten workdays or more, then under the UCATS contract, Article 8-Wages, section D, they must pay you the higher rate or an additional \$15/week whichever is greater. If they don't, a grievance should be filed to enforce your rights (See Article 34).

If you are required to take on just part of the work of a co-worker of any paygrade, all the work of a co-worker in the same or lower paygrade, or if your workload is increasingly heavy for any reason, here is some advice for managing the situation to avoid being taken advantage of.

## Dealing with additional assignments and heavy workloads

Ask supervision to set the priority tasks among all the assignments.

Begin working on the priority tasks for the day or week.

Work at a reasonable pace to ensure accuracy.

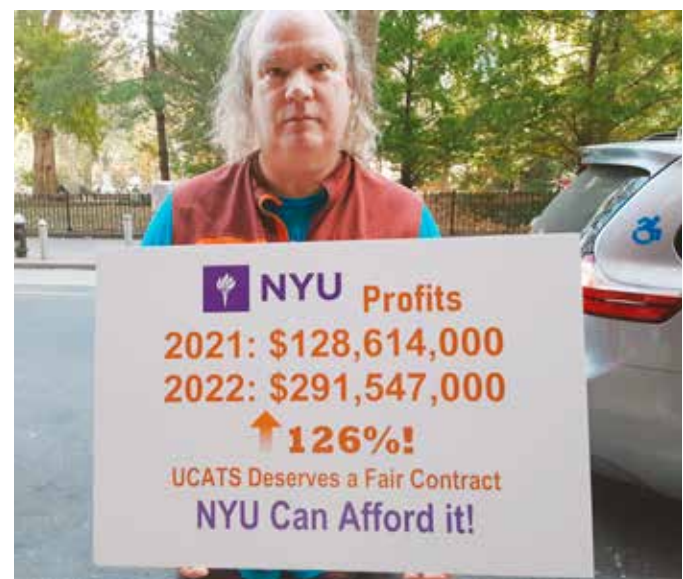
Email supervision in a timely manner with a report on your progress. Be sure to specify which assignments you haven't had time to get to and that you may not be able to complete by the deadline.

If all the work isn't getting done, management will need to do something such as authorizing overtime for you to do the extra work, redistributing some of the work to other people, having you just pick up the next day where you left off, or hiring a temporary employee. (Remember, temporary employees should not

work in a position for more than 3 months.)

Keep things in writing with supervision. It provides documentation showing you are following supervision's direction. It also documents you have let them know about things you are getting behind on because of the extra assignments.

As a UCATS member, you have protection from unfair discipline or retaliation, so you can advocate for yourself and manage your workload to avoid burnout when faced with an overwhelming workload. Be sure to enforce your rights if any contract provision is violated and contact your union steward or the UCATS Staff at [info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org).





# PSC-CUNY members arrested for demanding a fair contract

■ *Stephen Rechner,*  
*Law School*

**M**embers of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), which represents 30,000 faculty and staff at CUNY, were arrested on October 21 for blocking egress to the main entrance of John Jay College where members of the CUNY Board of Trustees were meeting. PSC members have been working under an expired contract since February 2023. On October 21st they held a spirited rally after work. They've been bargaining and rallying for over a year now and UCATS members have come out to support them every time.

The issues are sadly the same – management awarding themselves raises of 25+% (not a typo) and offering low single digits to the PSC members who do the work. There are also quality of work-life issues specific to PSC members that CUNY has, so far, refused to address. Issues such as job security for adjuncts, promotional opportunities and overtime.

Still, they found time on October 10 to celebrate retired PSC President Barbara Bowen when their current leadership team dedicated the PSC



union hall to Bowen at an after work celebration. James Davis, current PSC President, unveiled the plaque that will hang over the door of the union hall in the new PSC suite of offices at 25 Broadway in lower Manhattan. Bowen led the PSC for over 20 years and oversaw the transformation of the union into a powerhouse of progressive union organizing in the city and nationwide in her role as a Vice President with our national union the American Federation of Teachers.

The PSC executive officers and I all serve together on the New York State United Teachers Board of Directors and President Bowen has always been a strong UCATS ally and a mentor to me personally. When we submitted resolutions to the NYSUT convention Barbara would go to a mic and speak in sup-



PSC protests CUNY Board meeting at John Jay College just before being arrested on Oct. 21

port. When we requested amendments to PSC's resolutions so that the language included private sector unions/universities, Barbara would accept our amendments as “friendly” meaning that the convention delegates didn't have to vote on the amendment. When we had our final rally for our 2017 contract Barbara emailed me at 10 am that morning asking, “How can we help?” to which I replied, “Send bodies!” PSC members showed up with their signs that evening in front of Bobst Library to support

us and it was beyond uplifting for our members.

The fight for a fair contract for the PSC continues under new leadership but the legacy of Bowen's drive, vision and commitment to progressive union values and the labor movement continues under the leadership of PSC President James Davis, VP Jennifer Gaboury, Treasurer Falicia Wharton and Secretary Andrea Vasquez. All of them were arrested on October 21 including Bowen and over 30 PSC members from 15 CUNY campuses.

# UCATS in action

**U**CATS new contract with NYU was officially ratified on January 31, 2024, by a majority vote of the members working at NYU at that time. Incorporating all the new contract language into the document and getting hard copies published, however, took until June! Since then, UCATS shop stewards and officers have been hosting contract distribution events

in their areas. If you would like to work with a UCATS organizer to host a distribution event in your area email [info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org).

About the CoD event Sonam said: “We gave out over 60 contracts (not to mention t-shirts, hats, stickers, buttons, flyers), answered many questions, and  
*(Continued on next page)*



School of Professional Studies Midtown Center, September 25, (l to r): Sonam Singh, shop steward Ary Reich, UCATS secretary Rob Lesko



Bobst Library, September 26, (l to r): UCATS VP Christopher Crowe, member Valerie White, Rob Lesko and UCATS organizer Linda Wambaugh



School of Law, October 15, (l to r) Shop Steward Larissa McDowell, members Yesenia Alvarado, Diana Guevara, Denis To and Withney Barthelemy.



# UCATS...

(Continued from page 10)

identified ideas for new union campaigns. Looking forward to holding more of these in other units and schools soon.”

CoD shop stewards said: “It was a very productive Union Distribution Day!”

About the SPS event, Ary said: “The event for Midtown was a great success. We had somewhere around 9 of the 24 members at this location come through to grab a contract and chat, and then afterward I had another 3 people reach out to ask if they could also get a contract for themselves and their coworkers. Everyone who showed up was happy to see us and appreciated that this event happened. Overall, I think this event was a solid jumping-off point from which we can do more engagement with members.”



College of Dentistry, September 13, (l to r): shop steward Melonie Jones-Cummings, UCATS organizer Sonam Singh, shop stewards Vanessa Sejourne & Jason Singleton



October 10 - At table: Admin. Aides Alice Owen, Lauren Durling & Dana Philippe; UCATS Treasurer Sharmaine Griffin (center).

Standing: UCATS secretary Rob Lesko, SPS Admin. Aides Victoria Oluwole, Anne Maguire, Lahenza Lamour.



October 25-27, NYSUT School-Related Professionals Conference in Albany - (l to r) College of Dentistry shop stewards Melonie Jones-Cummings, Jason Singleton & Vanessa Sejourne. Also in attendance were UCATS treasurer Sharmaine Griffin, VP Christopher Crowe, shop steward Edmond Monchais and president Stephen Rechner. Over the course of the weekend we attended workshops on topics such as member engagement, NYSUT member benefits and responsibilities of shop stewards. Griffin and Crowe both serve on the NYSUT School-Related Professionals Advisory Committee which organizes the conference.



# Bulletin Board

## WAGE INCREASE

**GOOD NEWS!** Effective September 1 wages rose again by 3.75% and everyone began accruing an additional 2 vacations days over the next academic year.

## HAVE A NEW COWORKER?

**HELP US WELCOME** your new colleagues. NYU can be very slow in providing us the names of new hires, and sometimes they provide incorrect contact information. You can help: as soon as you meet a new coworker, call the union office (646-602-1485) and give us your new colleague's name and contact info, or send us an e-mail ([info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org)). We'll take it from there to give them a welcome call and invite them to join UCATS.

## UNION-NEGOTIATED CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR** 81 members who qualified for a union-negotiated childcare subsidy for 2025. This year's fund was \$190,000 as negotiated in our contract plus an additional \$3,275 in unclaimed funds from last year. The 2025 childcare subsidy is \$10,000 more than 2024 and will increase \$10,000 each year of the contract finalizing at \$230,000 for calendar year 2029, the last year of the current contract.

## AFT IDENTITY THEFT SUPPORT

**IN THE EVENT** you experience identity theft or resulting fraud, AFT members can receive a free 60-minute consultation with a professional fraud resolution specialist. Services include learning how to restore your identity and good credit, protect yourself against further fraud or loss, and communicate



with creditors and collection agencies. Other features include a free emergency response kit, assistance with the steps for disputing fraudulent debts, a free initial consult with an attorney and 25 percent off attorney's customary fees or hourly rates. Call 866-875-8385 for assistance. Have your AFT Member ID ready when you call.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

**EVERY TWO YEARS** UCATS members elect a new Executive Council (EC) who direct the course of our union for the next 2 years. We are having those elections in 2025. Several EC members will be moving on and some areas currently have no elected shop steward. An effective union is not a spectator sport! Email [info@ucats3882.org](mailto:info@ucats3882.org) to find out if there are shop steward positions open in your district and if there are, talk to a UCATS organizer or officer about getting those positions filled.

