

What About AFSCME?

Compared with most other unions, AFSCME is way ahead of the game. We started the AFSCME Retirees back in 1980 and immediately established a strong organizing agenda. As a result, the Retirees has added an average of 10,000 new members every year.

Today, AFSCME counts over 235,000 dues-paying retiree members in 40 retiree chapters and more than 250 local subchapters across the country. Our retiree members are active politically and legislatively, and are also involved in community services. They have made the AFSCME Retirees the largest organization of public retirees in the nation and the fastest-growing retiree group in the labor movement.

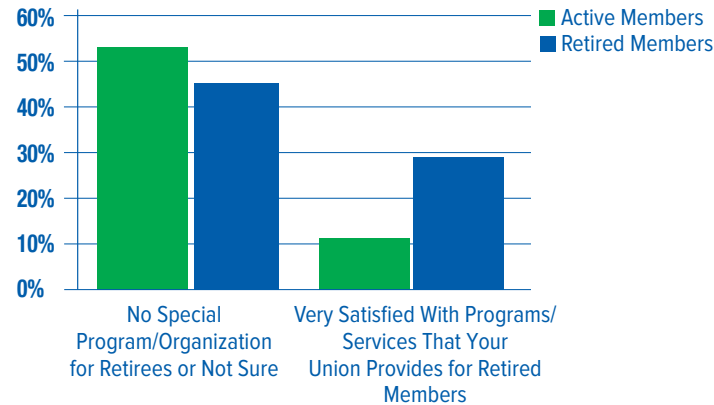
It is a good thing we have come so far so fast: The average age of AFSCME's working members is 48 — slightly older than the general workforce. Because we've built a strong retiree structure that is part of our union's fabric, AFSCME is in a good position to retain our baby-boom members in the 21st century.

The Rest of Labor

Out of more than 60 international unions, only a dozen or so have retiree programs of any kind. Few of these are as structured as AFSCME's or as well publicized within their unions.

This will have to change in the near future if the American labor movement is to build its strength. Many more unions will need to make retiree organizing a priority, and the AFL-CIO will have to encourage every affiliate to step up to the challenge. If we fail to heed this call, organized labor could lose its powerful voice on behalf of America's working families — not only at the worksite, but also in the halls of Congress and in the political arena.

Union Retiree Programs: Awareness is Low



Source: AFL-CIO

Organizing Union Retirees

Change is already underway. In 2000, the AFL-CIO launched the Alliance for Retired Americans, which unites the retired members of all affiliated unions. Every international union has been asked to participate and many have already signed up, including AFSCME. As a result, the labor movement is building the most dynamic grassroots senior citizen network in the nation. If it continues to grow, the Alliance and its participating unions can help ensure labor's strength for decades to come.



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Exiting the Workforce

The retirement of the huge baby boom generation will challenge the labor movement.



Retirement:

A Challenge for Labor

Between 1946 and 1964, Americans gave birth to the largest generation in history, known as “the baby boom.” In order to educate the boomers, the country doubled national spending on public schools in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. It was a huge national investment that has paid off in a big way. Today, the baby boom generation is at the height of its earning power.

But the baby boomers are getting older. The generation’s vanguard is now over 50 and nearly all the boomers will be eligible to retire within the next 20 years. By 2030, they will **double the size of the current senior population** to 73 million people. Twenty percent of all Americans will be over 65.

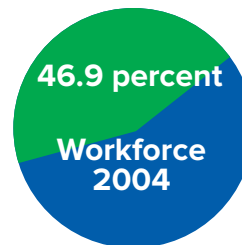
The generations just behind the baby boomers are much smaller. Today there are five people age 20 to 64 for every person over 65; by 2030, there will be slightly fewer than three people in the younger age group for every older person.

Can you imagine how this will affect the future strength of the labor movement? **Millions of union members will retire** at a time when there will be fewer younger workers to replace them in the rank and file. The boomers’ retirement promises to be an enormous challenge for organized labor — similar in scope to industrial globalization or the privatization of public jobs.



The Workforce is Getting Older

69 Million
Aged 45 +



83 Million
Aged 45 +

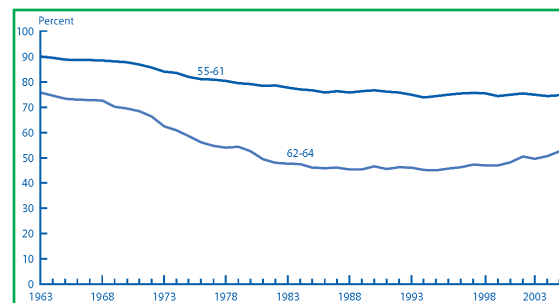


Source: Administration on Aging

- By 2014, 51.2 percent of all workers will be 45 and older.
- In the last 20 years, union members age 25-34 declined from 30 percent of membership to 20 percent.
- At the same time, union members age 45-54 increased from 20 percent of membership to over 30 percent.

Workers are Retiring at a Younger Age

Labor force participation rates of men age 55 and over, by age group, annual averages, 1963-2005



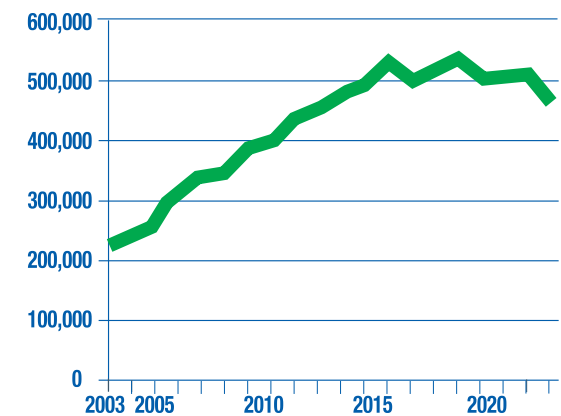
Source: Administration on Aging

Retirees Today

- Currently, there are more than four million retired members of unions.
- Less than a third of these retirees maintain a relationship with their union.

Outlook for the Future

Projected Increase of Union Retirees



Calculations based on 1996 Consumer Population Survey

- By 2010, the number of retiring union members will exceed 500,000 a year.
- Within the next decade, the total number of retired union members will be 5,000,000.
- Significant trends: Union members are retiring earlier and living longer than ever before.