

LOCAL 1321
DISTRICT COUNCIL 37
AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Bookshelf

JAN-MARCH 2023



Day of Action Sends Message to the City

Pages 6-7



JOHN HYSLOP PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I feel it necessary to acknowledge our parent union, DC 37. In 2022 and so far in 2023, we've had some significant victories that have made the work lives of more than 150,000 members better. Not every accomplishment has a direct impact on Local 1321 members, but when we can lift up the lives of our fellow union members, we lift up our own as well.

The most important and visible success is our five-year contract in which we achieved significant wage increases with no givebacks and we protected our health insurance. Frankly, this is one of the best contracts we've achieved since 1996 when I started working for the Library.

DC 37 had some successful wins with this contract and with legislation that ultimately benefits all our members:

- No one — not retirees and not active employees — will pay premiums for health insurance. This is a tremendous win for us. Our fellow DC 37 members who work for the state must pay \$288 per paycheck for their health insurance, and it is indexed to the Consumer Price Index, which goes up annually.
- The City will finally pay child care providers after months and months of delayed payments. This directly benefited our fellow DC 37 members who work for these providers. This is in stark contrast to the providers with non-union employees who have not been paid. DC 37 continues the fight with the City to ensure all providers get paid, because all workers are owed a salary.
- Layoffs were prevented in the latest round of budget cuts. In the face of these cuts, the City now has an extreme vacancy problem. Ironically, DC 37 played a pivotal role in helping the City hire by creating hiring halls for agencies to find potential candidates.


- The State's health care bonuses went to all the City's health care workers, not just the nurses and doctors, who worked and struggled through the worst of the pandemic surges.
- State legislation that is protecting our environment and climate and creating green jobs.
- We are working with our New York City Council members to reign in out-of-control hospital costs that will protect all New Yorkers. See page 16 for more about this topic.
- DC 37 worked with the City to stop a lawsuit from an anti-union organization that wanted to expose City employees' personal information.

The only reason we have had success is because DC 37 is back to being the power its members need. But power is intentional, not accidental, and needs to be sustained. Our Local's leadership is strong and our DC 37's leadership is strong. Combine that with an active union membership and we are a power to be reckoned with.

We saw that just now, when you photographed yourselves telling the City we need a raise now as part of the #DC37CONTRACTNOW Day of Action social media campaign on Feb. 16. Our members from Bellerose to Woodside, along with hundreds of other DC 37 members, posted photos of themselves wearing green to tell City leaders that our workers need and deserve a raise now. Photos could be seen on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. See some of those photos on pages 6-7.

In the coming year, we will undoubtedly have more challenges and success is not guaranteed. DC 37 and the Local's leadership will be fighting for us, but a membership that calls our representatives, that participates in social media, that attends rallies will be the forceful power all of us need.





Working Conditions Bargaining



Our working conditions contract, found on our website and the Library's staff page, is negotiated by the Library's Administration and Local 1321. It contains the working conditions the Administration and Union must abide by. They include a number of issues including:

- How we earn compensatory time and when we have to use it.
- Makeup of the bargaining unit
- Sunday service
- Bonus Day
- Transfers
- Bereavement leave
- Union's rights
- Administration's rights
- Grievance process

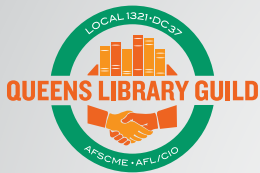
The contract that contains information about our salaries and benefits is the economic contract negotiated by DC 37 and the City.

Our working conditions contract expired Dec. 31, 2020, and was extended indefinitely initially because of the pandemic. Now we are actively negotiating it but that has become a long process.

Our bargaining process began as soon as the membership approved our last contract and started submitting demands for the next contract. In the spring of 2021, the Local's Bargaining Committee, consisting of the Local's Executive Board, formally solicited demands from the membership. We compiled everyone's demands and presented them to the general membership for approval at our September 2021 General Membership meeting. The Membership approved the demands.

The Union and Administration held our first session in November 2021 and have had five sessions since. This long process is made even longer because of the pandemic surge of 2021-2022. We have made progress on some issues and new ones have come up, including the comp time issue mentioned in this newsletter and a novel idea for compensating everyone for working through the pandemic.

We are actively pushing the Administration to the bargaining table to negotiate our demands so our workplace a better one for all.



www.local1321.org



[@www.facebook.com/groups/125831805023](https://www.facebook.com/groups/125831805023)

This is a private Facebook group for members only and requires sending a request to be admitted

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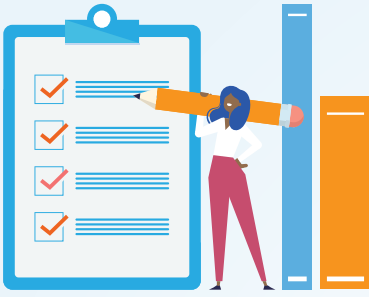
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2021-2026 Contract Summary

After 14 hours of negotiations that ended in the very early morning hours, DC 37 and the City of New York came to an economic agreement that resulted in the following:

- Annual pay increases for all (compounded)
 - May 26, 2021: 3.00% retroactive
 - May 26, 2022: 3.00% retroactive
 - May 26, 2023: 3.00%
 - May 26, 2024: 3.00%
 - May 26, 2025: 3.25%
- The contract's total compounded wage increase will be 16.21%.
- \$3,000 signing bonus for everyone on active payroll on the date of ratification.
- Additions to gross will increase (longevities, uniform allowances) by 3.25% on May 26, 2025.
- In 2023, we will get a raise of more than 9% plus \$3,000.
- Creation of a child care trust fund, the details of which still need to be worked out, but will be available to help us pay for our child care expenses. This is a new benefit and will be very helpful.
- An additional compensation fund of .5% that pays for adding money to additions to gross, e.g. longevity increases, uniform allowance increases, etc. This is considerably larger than the last one negotiated.
- \$50 per member per year contribution to the DC 37 Welfare Fund.
- The hourly rate earned by the DC 37 members earning the least will increase to \$18/hour.
- Agreed to a committee that will look into remote work, flexible and compressed schedules, and a transit benefit for people who must come to work. For Local 1321 members, since we have a remote work policy, we will explore the flexible and compressed scheduling options. We will be working to get any transit benefits members at City agencies get.
- Safety and Health agreement: We will explore what works for Local 1321 members.
- Equity Panel: The City has some titles that they are having an impossible time recruiting for and retaining. The three library systems have similar issues for certain titles. The four union presidents representing library workers will fight to ensure we address our hard to recruit and retain titles.
- This is a five year, five month, and 12 day contract. We agreed to add five months and 12 days to pay for the child care trust fund, the \$50 per member per year DC 37 Welfare Fund contribution, and everything else outside the wage increases.
- Our health care is currently being negotiated by the Municipal Labor Committee and City. The City's unions agreed to no health insurance premiums and no reduction in benefits. This is an amazing win for city union members.

These negotiations were an incredibly long process that involved two mayors, a pandemic, a financial crisis, and more. In the end, DC 37 got a contract that sets a pattern for other City unions and is comparable to other recent settlements. We protected our health insurance, ensured we got our raises, and improved our benefits.

One important factor in pressuring the City was DC 37's social media campaign. Thank you to all the branches who participated, it was great to see the photos. Special thanks goes to Bonnie Hodes, the Local's Publicity Committee Chair, for collecting and tweeting our photographs to let the Mayor know we need a contract now!

DC 37 has become a power our members need. The only reason we got this contract is because of that power. Your union leadership never gave up because DC 37 members never stopped providing the amazing services that kept our city running.

2023 Proposed Budget Cuts



During the past many months, we have been hearing dire predictions about the City's budget. Two independent agencies, and the City and State Comptroller's offices, are predicting positive revenue for FY 2024, but revenue losses for fiscal years 2025, 2026, and 2027. Furthermore, the federal stimulus money will no longer be available starting in FY 2025. Obviously, these are predictions and the City's finances may improve, but they have an impact on Queens Library because 85% of our budget comes from the City.

The City's Charter explains the City's budget process, summarized here. Every January or February, New York City's Mayor issues the preliminary budget. In the ensuing months, the City Council holds hearings on the budget's impact on City-funded services. In April or May, the Mayor will issue his budget for the coming year. In May and June, the City Council holds more hearings on the budget's impact on City-funded services. In June, the City Council and Mayor negotiate the budget and must come to an agreement by June 30. Then, during the fiscal year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) analyzes revenue to ensure the City is meeting its target. If it projects a deficit, the mayor will issue a Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG). This PEG is mandatory and agencies have to follow the directive.

An important factor we need to be mindful of is that a budget is a political document whereby those creating the budget fund their priorities. The mayor wants one thing, the City Council

another, and the public another, or they are all in alignment. A budget's funding priorities are subjective. The City's budget process allows for the public to influence this subjectivity. Library staff and supporters have an opportunity to voice our opinions and advocate for funding.

In FY 23, Queens Library received \$130,011,629. After OMB's analysis of quarterly revenue, the mayor issued a November PEG and cut our budget by \$3.9 million. In the mayor's FY 24 preliminary budget, he proposed \$117,758,965 — a cut of \$12,252,664 from what we received in FY 23. He said this will not cause union layoffs. However, this cut will have an immense impact on our services — less staff, reduced hours, reduced materials, etc.

We will not just accept this. DC 37 and Local 1321 will be advocating for us with the City Council and Mayor's office to ensure they know how important we are. Local 1321 members will work with the Library Administration on advocacy throughout Queens. We have done this before and we will do it again.

Libraries are a fundamental resource for our city. You know how vital we are to our neighbors, friends, children, teens, and adults. Fortunately, we have strong library advocates in the City Council, although we need to solidify that strength and communicate our value to them. We will keep the membership informed as the budget process continues. If need be, we will advocate for our budget to keep our libraries funded.

DC 37 Career Pathways



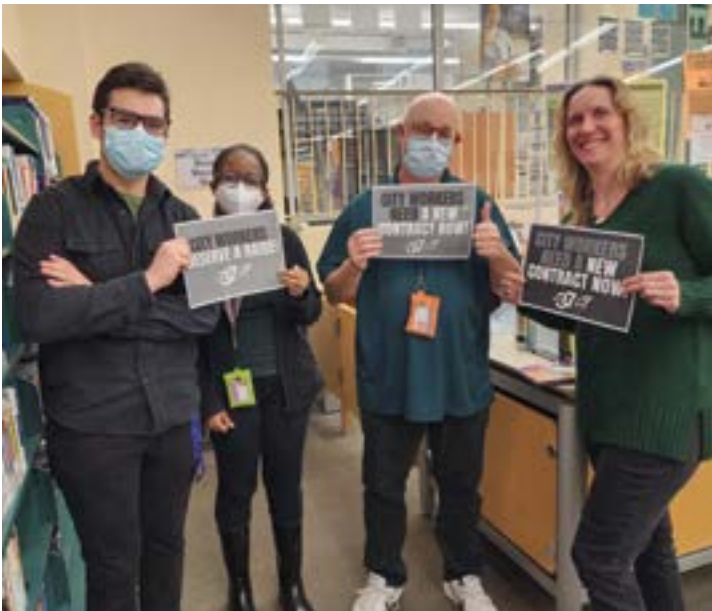
In 2022, the DC 37 Education Fund collaborated with CUNY's New York City Labor Market Information Service (NYCLMIS) to develop six career pathway brochures to help members explore and plan their careers. The career maps identify, illustrate, and describe opportunities for advancement for selected covered job titles.

- Administrative and Data-Focused Health Care
- HVAC-R
- IT Networking
- Parks and Recreation
- Patient Care-Focused Health Care
- Software Development

Each brochure provides an in-depth profile of the title and others like it, including a discussion of what the work is like, where it is performed, how to enter the field and advance, needed skills, education, and other factors for success.

For more information go to www.dc37.net/benefits/education/offerings/careermaps. For physical copies of the brochures, contact the DC 37 Education Fund at 212.815.1700.





Queens Library
Workers
Deserve
a Raise





Healthcare Stabilization Fund Explained



The city's administrative code dictates through Administrative Code 12-126-1 that the city must pay HIP/HMO for active members and retirees codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/newyorkcity/latest/NYCAAdmin/0-0-0-16182. In the early 1980s, the City and Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) created the Stabilization Fund to help stabilize health care costs. That Fund helped pay for our health insurance and allowed us to have GHI and HIP without premiums. The City offers a variety of health insurance options, including GHI, which is free.

For many years, the GHI rate was lower than HIP/HMO, and HIP would contribute the difference between the two rates to the Stabilization Fund. At some point, the GHI rate became more expensive than the HIP/HMO rate and the Stabilization Fund was required to cover the cost of keeping GHI premium free. That forced the Fund to lose its funding source.

Throughout the years, the MLC and City agreed to have the Fund pay for the PICA program that covered psychotropics, injectables, chemotherapeutics, and asthma medications, with City contributions of \$165/member to unions' welfare funds, wellness programs, mental health insurance, etc. Escalating health care costs then became an issue.

In the last decade, the MLC's actuaries and City actuaries discovered that the Stabilization Fund would go bankrupt in the near future. To protect the Fund and our health care, in 2014 and 2018 the MLC negotiated with the City to come up with savings (dc37blog.net/2016/03/29/new-york-city-and-municipal-unions-agree-to-health-benefit-changes). In the 2018 savings deal, the MLC and City negotiated an enhanced and unique Medicare Advantage plan for retirees, who had the option of keeping their current plan for a premium. In one of those deals, the City and MLC agreed to arbitration if the two parties could not come up with the savings.

Afer a number of years crafting this Medicare Advantage plan, bidding it out, and selecting a bidder, the City announced the plan. A group of retirees were upset with the decision and sued to keep their current health insurance. The judge ruled that the City must follow the aforementioned Administrative Code and only offer HIP/HMO, not their current plan (www.thecity.nyc/2022/8/10/23300095/medicare-advantage-worker-benefits).

This delay in saving the Stabilization Fund caused the Fund to go bankrupt on Oct. 1, 2022. Now, the Fund stopped paying \$165 per member to unions' welfare funds, and it is unclear who will pay for the program that pays for our injectable and chemotherapeutic medications. Since unions do not want our members to pay for the medications, DC 37's Welfare Fund may have to take up the cost, which will have a huge impact on our Welfare Fund.

Since the judge ruled the City is only obligated to pay the HIP/HMO, the MLC determined that the Administrative Code should be amended to provide choice for the retirees. Furthermore, to protect our health care from future unilateral changes, the MLC and City signed an agreement to negotiate all health care for its employees and that the City would not impose premiums.

As cases progressed through the courts, the Stabilization Fund's debts piled up, putting our health insurance in jeopardy. Since the MLC and City were unable to come up with funds to save the Stabilization Fund, the Arbitrator stated he will impose premiums on active members and retirees if the Administrative Code is not amended and Medicare Advantage is not implemented (www.thecity.nyc/2022/10/31/23433597/medicare-advantage-eric-adams-retiree-health-care-ultimatum).

A few months later, he modified his stance and said he would only impose Medicare Advantage without choice, as per the Court order, whether or not the Administrative Code is changed.

The City Council refused to amend the Code and said it will impose Medicare Advantage without choice. This imposition will save \$600 million for our Stabilization Fund.





Dues

In a letter dated Oct. 31, 2022 AFSCME's Secretary-Treasurer Elissa McBride informed AFSCME's District Councils and locals that effective Jan. 1, 2023, membership dues will increase by \$1.55 per month. Since we are paid bi-weekly the total per paycheck will be \$0.75. At Local 1321's November 2022 Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board voted to delay the increase for the members to the first paycheck in September 2023. Contact Local 1321 President, John Hyslop, for a copy of the AFSCME dues increase letter.

AFSCME's constitution Article IX Subordinate Bodies, found here, tinyurl.com/afscmeconstitution explains how dues increases are calculated.

Section 6 of Article IX determines if an increase should go into effect. "The dues of each local union shall be adjusted annually in accordance with the average percentage increase in pay of AFSCME members..." If AFSCME's members did not get an increase in the 12-month period ending July 1, then dues will not be increased in the coming calendar year. If AFSCME members did get an increase in that 12-month period, then dues will be increased.

Section 7 of the same article explains how the increase is computed.

"Each subordinate body shall submit a copy of any collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding or other agreements affecting the wages of its members to the International Secretary-Treasurer within thirty days after their ratification...From the above document and reports, the International Secretary-Treasurer shall determine, by September 30 of each year, the average percentage increase in pay received by AFSCME's members...Upon completion of this calculation, the International Secretary-Treasurer shall cause it to be audited by an independent certified public accountant not otherwise connected with AFSCME...Such audit shall certify the accuracy of the International Secretary-Treasurer's calculation...Upon receipt of such certification, the International Secretary-Treasurer shall notify the International Executive Board and each subordinate body of the resulting adjustment in dues and per capita tax required to be implemented..."

The audited calculation of all AFSCME members' pay increases over a twelve month period ending July 31, 2022 equates to \$1.55 per month and a \$0.75 per paycheck dues increase for Local 1321's members.

Throughout the decades AFSCME, DC 37, and Local 1321 have collectively bargained for free health insurance, salary increases, an amazing array of benefits, pensions, and more. As unionized library workers, sometimes we forget the struggles of previous generations - no health insurance, abysmal pay, very little benefits, arbitrary library rules. Over 50 years ago, when our fellow library workers formed Local 1321, they fought for and won us health insurance, consistent library rules, DC 37 benefits, consistent pay and more. Local 1321 stopped the library from contracting our security and custodial services; brought back forty-four staff who were laid off; negotiated a working conditions contract that improved our previous one; advocated that no staff get laid off during this pandemic crisis.

Workers from around the world have recognized our value and are taking action. Non-union workers from around our country are attempting to unionize at levels we have not seen in years. Union workers are taking job actions we have not seen in years. Unions are actively participating in the Federal funding legislation so that it benefits all its citizens. Unions are fighting for city funding so that no city worker loses their job through budget cuts.

Our fight to maintain our hard-won gains are constant. Currently, right-wing groups are actively working to take away your ability to preserve and negotiate your medical insurance, pensions, salaries, and other benefits. In Wisconsin public sector workers whose rights to organize and bargain collectively were stripped. They have lost their health insurance, had their pay cut, and experienced wholesale layoffs. That could be our future if we do not fund our union.

As a reminder, these are some of the ways our dues sustain our union:

- DC 37 representatives advocate for our members and file grievances on our behalf;
- DC 37 Negotiators negotiate new contracts with the City and Library;
- DC 37 lawyers file and argue arbitrations; and file lawsuits against the city and anti-union organizations;
- AFSCME lawyers fight anti-union lawsuits in all 50 states including Washington and New York;
- The DC 37 Help our Own Fund and Personal Services Unit staff help us in times of financial and emotional need;
- AFSCME and DC 37 Political Action staff advocate on our behalf to ensure libraries are funded; and other local issues affecting government workers;
- The Local's telephones so members can keep in contact with their representatives and;
- The Local's newsletter and other communication tools.

Facebook Page Change



In 2010, Local 1321 created a Facebook group for its members as another tool to communicate with members and have members communicate with each other. This page serves that function, allowing the Local to communicate important issues that impact the membership.

The page was **never** intended to replace the general membership meetings or the newsletter, because Facebook pages are limited to the people who have Facebook accounts. It is any member's choice to join the group, and then visit to post or review information.

Unfortunately, and throughout the page's history, some members took advantage of the freedom to post and violated the page's rules by attacking fellow union members, engaging in hate speech, and electioneering, and more. Although these posters were admonished by the page's administrator, some continued the disruptive behavior, while others ceased the negative posting. Members that continued to violate the rules were banned.

Many members shared that they either stopped posting out of fear of being attacked and even stopped accessing the page altogether because it had become too hostile. Some posts became so bad that the library's administration found out and warned the Union's leadership that they will take action. This hostile environment created the opposite effect of the page's intent as an informational and social resource.

To return the Facebook page to its original mission as a safe space for members to learn about the Union's activities and engage with their fellow members, the Executive Board agreed to the following:

- All posts will need to be approved by the Local 1321 Facebook page moderators and administrators prior to their publication. The moderators and administrators will follow the page's rules when considering posts.
- The moderators will be the Publicity Committee members.
- Comment alerts will be created to notify the moderators of comments violating the rules of the page and will be deleted if they are in violation.
- Finally, if members repeatedly violate the rules, or their comments are severe, they will be removed from the group for six months. Continued violations of the rules by any member will result in being permanently banned.

Please be aware, there could be a one- to three-day delay before posts go live due to the approval process. We hope that moderating the page's content will allow Local 1321 members to learn about Union benefits and activities and be comfortable engaging with our community in a more friendly and respectful environment.

Comp Time Explainer

We earn compensatory time (comp time) in a few ways - working in a location when the environment is above or below a temperature threshold, working between 35 and 40 hours, being awarded it in a grievance settlement, working on a holiday listed in our contract, volunteering to standby at home, and certain FLSA exempt members who work over 35 hours. All of the ways are detailed in our contract, except for the grievance settlement awards.

Our contract also specifies what happens with our comp time. Detailed in the Citywide Section Article IV Overtime, Section 10,

page 106 comp time earned must be used within four months. If it is not, it gets moved to sick leave, with one exception. The use of comp time is strictly voluntary. The earner requests from their supervisor to use their comp time. If their supervisor denies the request, then the comp time stays with the earner until it is used or cashed out. The supervisor must notify HR that this comp time was denied and must remain with the earner.

This was not an issue before Kronos. Comp time earned by many of us stayed with us for many months because we did not have a reliable method of tracking this time on the paper

Local 1321 Facebook Group Rules



- The group is for members in good standing of Local 1321, including retirees.
- All posts will be reviewed for approval by moderators to ensure they follow Local 1321 Facebook group's rules.
- Anonymous posting is not allowed.
- **Hate-speech, bullying, and harassment will not be tolerated.** Comments containing racism, homophobia, sexism, or any other form of hate speech are not tolerated and will be removed from the Local's Facebook page. Any individual that posts information similar to the above mentioned may be permanently removed from the page.
- All posts and comments must treat everyone with respect, civility, and courtesy. Comments must respect and value the views and opinions of others even though they may differ from our own. It is ok to disagree, but please do not be disrespectful, rude, and/or mean. Do not add comments that are personal attacks on anyone, including library administration, customers, and your fellow library employees, whether or not they are on Facebook.
- Comments that contain offensive, obscene, threatening, or abusive content is strictly prohibited. The Local will remove comments that contain abusive, vulgar, offensive, threatening and/or harassing language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive terms that target specific individuals or groups.
- NO SPAMMING or irrelevant posts. Think before you post (e.g. Is this more appropriate for your personal page instead of the Local's page?)
- No campaigning for elective office on behalf of oneself or another candidate in any elections: Local 1321, DC 37, local, state, or national.
- Report rule-breaking. If you see a post or comment that violates Local 1321 rules, report it to the Local 1321 Facebook page administrator and moderators. DO NOT verbally attack the author of said post or comment.
- The Local reserves the right to delete posts and comments that violate rules and, also remove/ban members who violate the rules. These rules are subject to change by the Local's Executive Board.

timesheets. Kronos uses its software to enforce the contract and any comp time not used within four months gets put into sick leave or if its use is denied then it stays with you. This is catching everyone off guard, including supervisors. We asked the Administration for a grace period to allow people an opportunity to adjust. We are hopeful that we can come to an understanding.

Until then, we recommend that if you want to use your comp time and it is denied by your supervisor, the supervisor needs to notify HR that comp time was denied. HR will then designate this comp time as being permanent.





Grievance Process

One of the many tools union members have at our disposal is the grievance process, where we enforce the contract the Administration agreed to; counteract excessive, arbitrary, and egregious discipline; enforce the Administration's own policies and procedures; and/or stop working out of title. When dialogue fails to resolve the issue, Local 1321 will file your grievance.

We have filed grievances on behalf of individuals and groups disputing the administration's actions over a number of issues, including Customer Service Supervisors working out of title, avoidance of overtime, miscalculation of our hourly rate, security and safety issues, excessive discipline, and so much more.

The grievance process is a formal process outlined in our Contract, Article XI. The following summarizes the article:


Section 1 states that a union member or union are the only parties that can file a grievance when the Administration violates the contract and/or policy and procedures, imposes excessive discipline, and/or forces someone to work out of title.

Section 2 provides a general description of the grievance process, including how they are initiated and conducted. This section also explains that grievances resulting from termination, suspension of five or more working days, or a group grievance can be filed at Step III.


Section 3 explains what must be included in a grievance and appeals.

Section 4 explains the timing of grievances. All grievances, except for the ones outlined in Section 2, must be filed within 30 working days after the violation. Grievance appeals are outlined in Section 5.


Section 5 explains the grievance steps.




All **Step I** grievances are submitted to your immediate supervisor who shall provide a decision, under consultation with their supervisors. If the grievant(s) do not agree with the Step I decision, they have a right to file a Step II grievance.




The **Step II** appeal is filed with the director or department head within five working days after the Union receives the Administration's Step I response.



The **Step III** appeal is filed with the Library President/CEO within 15 working days after the Union receives the Administration's Step II response.



The **Step III** hearing shall be held in front of the Library's hearing officer who will assess the merits of the case and determine whether the Administration will win in arbitration.



DC 37 must invoke arbitration within 30 calendar days after receiving the Administration's Step III decision. The arbitration process is outlined in our contract. Decisions made by the arbitrator are final.

If you believe you have a grievance, reach out to your union representative to discuss the matter.



Address Changes

If you change your address, please contact the Local at local1321@gmail.com or 718.849.4099 and let us know your new address!

QPL Literary Thursdays

By **Kacper Jarecki**

During the pandemic, QPL focused on virtual programs. Karen Vermut, who was the Adult Program Coordinator of the library, e-mailed me to ask if I would be interested in being a co-host of Literary Thursdays, a virtual weekly program, interviewing authors every week. I said sure, why not.

This was in 2020, and now it's 2023 and the Literary Thursday program is still going strong. My bachelor's degree is in television and radio, so when I host the program, I feel a little like Oprah! In the beginning, Karen would contact the authors and publishers so we would have guests every week. She would have the authors present, and even have them submit answers to some of our questions to make things easier for us. Karen has since retired, so I try to do those things now and continue in her footsteps.

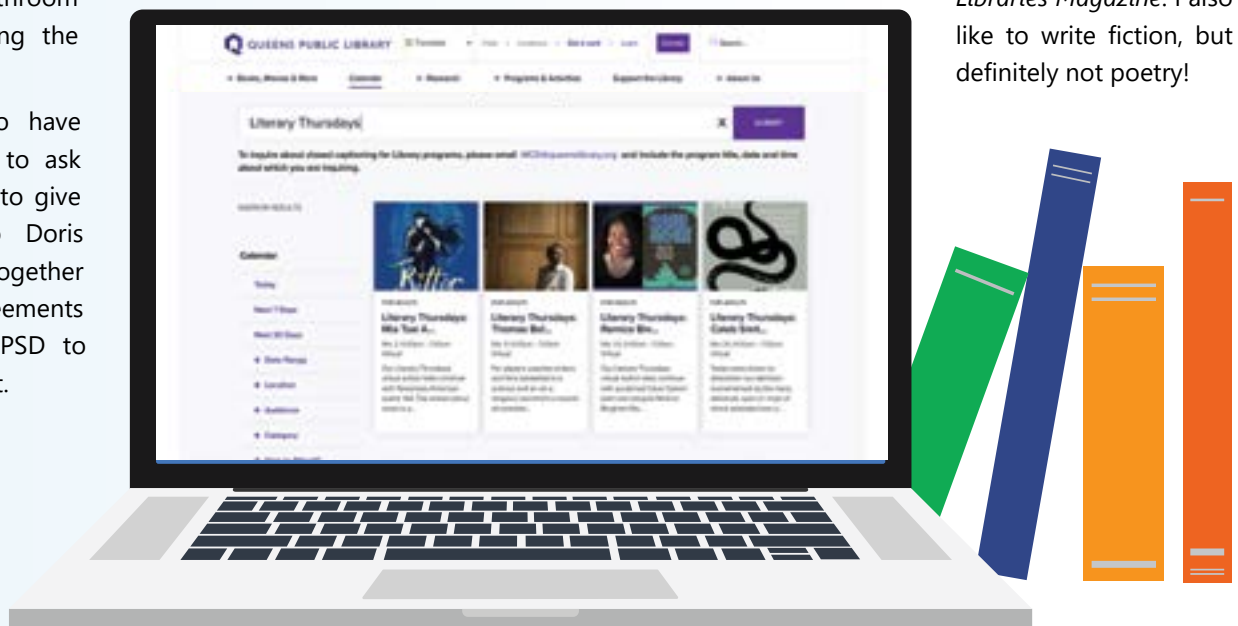
I am also lucky because we have great staff at QPL who also help out with hosting/cohosting sessions, including Simone Wellington, Myron Brown, Christine Degyansky, Kendra Kuszai, Matthew Allison, Mark Dondero, John Jenkins, and Jo-Ann Wong. Even my Assistant Manager Tejas Desai co-hosted a session. It's always better to have a co-host so if I need to, I can go to the bathroom for example during the program.

It's also good to have a mix of people to ask questions. I want to give a shout out to Doris Jones who puts together the speaker agreements and works with PSD to publicize the event.

Talking to authors every week is fun and helps break up my routine. It's also a learning experience. I always thought that being an author was a dream, and that authors have it made financially. However, after doing this program, I now realize that authors are basically regular people who have day jobs like journalists and professors. Very few authors are rich.

It's still a pleasant experience and last week, we interviewed Tao Lin, one of my favorite authors, and we talked about aliens. We like to have a mix of authors who write nonfiction and fiction. I try to read the works in advance so I've been reading a lot of cool books. Of course, we have great hosts and co-hosts so it's not just me.

You can check out our webpage at queenslib.org/LiteraryThursdays and you can also e-mail me at Kacper.jarecki@queenslibrary.org if you're interested in being a host or co-host. Working for a library is special because we have the flexibility to do so many different types of programs and events. In case you're curious, I also try to write sometimes, and I've always wanted to be a famous writer, so I hope you like this article. I also co-wrote an article in the latest issue of *Public Libraries Magazine*. I also like to write fiction, but definitely not poetry!





Union Benefits 101 Lunchtime Webinars

Webinar login information will be emailed to members who register prior to each virtual presentation

TIMES:

Noon | 12:30 p.m. | 1:00 p.m.

Local 1321, Local 374, Local 1482, and Local 1930 are sponsoring a lunchtime series of webinars about our various DC 37 benefits for library workers. Experts from DC 37 will explain them and be available to answer some questions in three, 30-minute sessions. Please join us to learn about DC 37 benefits.

March 28, 2023	Prescription benefits
April 25, 2023	Municipal Employee Legal Services (MELS) benefits
May 20, 2023	Personal Services Unit (PSU) benefits
June 27, 2023	Vision, disability, and death benefits
July 25, 2023	Introduction to the DC 37 Welfare Fund: what it is, how it is paid for, how it is administered; the struggles of managing the fund with rising prescription prices and other introductory topics
Aug. 29, 2023	Dental benefits
Sept. 19, 2023	Prescription benefits
Oct. 31, 2023	Municipal Employee Legal Services (MELS) benefits
Nov. 28, 2023	Personal Services Unit (PSU) benefits
Dec. 19, 2023	Vision, disability, and death benefits

Guidance on Reporting Customer Misconduct

After years of advocacy, Local 1321 finally convinced the Administration to implement procedures that enforce the Library's own policies to protect staff. While this is a good step, we will continue to advocate to ensure staff are protected from customers. The procedure was emailed to everyone Sept. 7, 2022, so staff understands their responsibilities in reporting customer misconduct and supervisors' responsibility when receiving reports. Please read this procedure and understand your role. The well-being and safety of staff depend on it.

This Guidance is intended to help QPL employees report incidents of disruptive behavior by customers or visitors that is often directed at Library staff or toward Library customers trying to enjoy all that QPL offers to the communities we proudly serve.

Sometimes this conduct by visitors can be highly aggressive, threatening or frightening. Any such conduct **is also prohibited by various Library policies**, including the Public Conduct Policy (Customer Code of Conduct) and the Workplace Violence Policy.

Examples of disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Racist or disparaging comments denigrating employees based on their race, national origin, or other protected status;
- Hurtful or offensive remarks based on an employee's sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation;
- Abusive, threatening, or intimidating statements that serve to place an employee in fear of their physical safety; and
- Disruptive and threatening conduct, such as throwing objects within a branch or invading the "personal space" of Library staff.

This type of inappropriate and disruptive behavior by customers or visitors has **no place** within our branches and **will not** be tolerated.

All Library employees have the right to be treated with respect within our workplace – and to feel safe, welcome, and secure within our buildings.

This Guidance raises awareness of customer misconduct for all Library staff, and **provides our employees with clear information about how to report any such conduct to the Library.**

Rest in Peace



Stan Nenov

Our beloved colleague Stan Nenov, manager of ITD's Help Desk, passed away suddenly on Nov. 11, 2022.

In his role, Stan interacted with many of us across our system. He never failed to respond quickly to our tech problems, both big and small, with unwavering patience, kindness, and

a quiet determination to find solutions, no matter the time or place.

His colleagues said his work gave him great joy because it provided him with multiple opportunities each day to give to us and by extension, to our customers. Every time someone thanked him for taking care of a tech issue, he invariably would say, "You are welcome. It is my job to help. Call me anytime." He truly embodied the Library's mission to transform people's lives.

Stan immigrated to the U.S. with his wife Milena Nenova, who is the manager of the Douglaston Library, in search of a better life. Raised in communist Bulgaria, Stan was a journalist and became a librarian when he moved here.

He started his new career at Brooklyn Public Library where he was a branch manager and a reference librarian. He joined QPL in 2007 as the electronic services supervisor in the Cyber

Center at Central and was promoted to Help Desk Manager in 2009, leading a team of five individuals.

Among his many accomplishments, Stan helped lead our transition into a virtual library when the pandemic started, making the switch as seamless as possible. He also authored all of the ITD emails alerting us to suspicious emails, viruses, and system maintenance work.

Stan had a lasting impact on every part of the Library. We will miss him tremendously.



Barry Fischer

As we all know, Barry Fischer passed away in early February. Barry could often come off as a bit brash at first, but once you got to know him, you realized he truly cared for you and the library. He always seemed happiest among his colleagues at the library and always called us his

family. He is survived by several cousins, nieces, nephews and extended family and friends. He has left a lasting impact and he is truly missed.

1. Employees who believes they have been subject to offensive, abusive, or threatening customer misconduct must immediately report any such incident to their supervisor.
2. All supervisors and managers have an affirmative duty to file an Incident Report with the Library's Department of Security & Investigations upon receiving any complaint from a member of staff alleging any abusive, threatening, or offensive conduct by a customer (whether that conduct is verbal, physical, or both).
3. **There shall be no retaliation** taken against any employee who reports a complaint of customer misconduct in good faith; or against any supervisor or manager who conveys any such complaint to the Library.
4. **Employees who believe they have been subject to any such customer misconduct (or who believe they may have witnessed such misconduct directed toward another staff member) should also report any such complaints via email directly to any the following individuals:**

- James Phelan (VP of Security & Investigations): James.Phelan@queenslibrary.org
- Jackie Martinez (VP of Human Resources): Jacqueline.Martinez@queenslibrary.org

- Sung Mo Kim (SVP & COO): SungMo.Kim@queenslibrary.org
 - Justin Deabler (SVP & General Counsel): Justin.Deabler@queenslibrary.org
 - Andy Wedmore (Labor Counsel): andrew.wedmore@queenslibrary.org
5. The Library's General Counsel, Vice President of HR and/or the Vice President of Security & Investigations (or their designees) will investigate complaints of alleged customer misconduct in a prompt and diligent manner. A written summary of the investigatory findings will be provided to the employee(s) who reported any such complaint, along with an explanation of what remedial action (if applicable) the Library has taken to address the underlying complaint/concern at issue.
 6. The Library specifically reserves the right to take appropriate remedial action against customers who engage in inappropriate and disruptive conduct toward QPL employees, **including, but not limited to, conducting home visits, banning customers from branch libraries and assisting applicable law enforcement entities as appropriate.**

Queens Library Guild, LOCAL 1321

DC 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
 125 Barclay Street
 New York, NY 10007



Healthcare Accountability & Consumer Protection Act

| Photo By Mike Lee, DC 37 |

More than 100 union activists and health care advocates joined NYC Council Member Julie Menin and other elected officials to rally in support of the Healthcare Accountability and Consumer Protection Act.

The Dec. 7, 2022 rally at City Hall was part of an ongoing campaign to reduce health care and hospital costs for working families by the Coalition for Affordable Hospitals, of which DC 37 plays a significant role.

The just-introduced City Council's Healthcare Accountability and Consumer Protection Act would increase oversight of what the New York City's private hospital systems charge for medical procedures. The creation of a first-in-the-nation Office of Healthcare Accountability would mandate that every NYC hospital publish the price for all medical procedures,

audit city expenditures on employee-related health care costs, and grade hospitals on their compliance with pricing transparency measures.

"We are here to say 'enough is enough.' We are tired of wealthy private hospital systems price gouging at our expense. We are here because these hospitals continue to charge us as much as 400% over the Medicaid rate," said DC 37 Executive Director Henry Garrido. "To give you one example, one of our private hospital systems charges city workers more than \$1,000 for a single COVID-19 test. This is outrageous!"

On Feb. 23, 2023, the City Council held a rally and hearing on the bill. New York City residents need transparency. We need this bill passed.