

Communications Workers of America

# An Introduction to the CWA Convention

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New Delegate Training



# **An Introduction to the CWA Convention**

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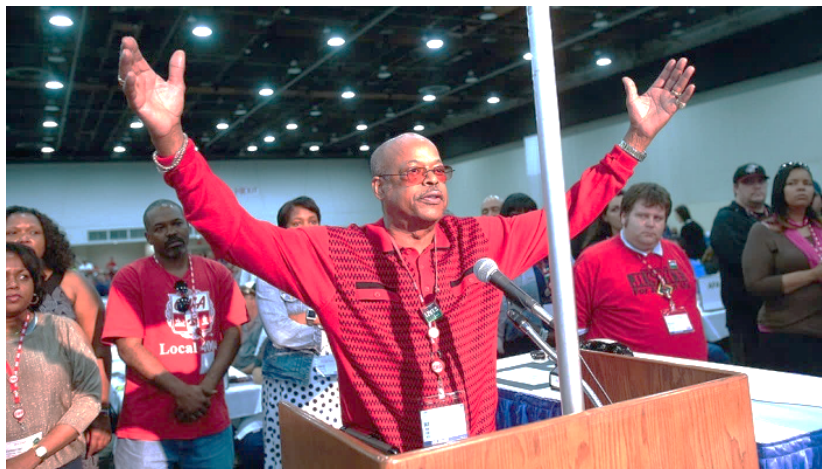
## Introduction

The CWA Convention is the highest governing authority of the Union. Once the convention makes a decision, that decision stands, and it must be carried out by every single officer and employee of the union – at both the Local and International levels.

## Democratic Unionism at Work

CWA is very proud of its reputation as one of the most democratic unions in the world. CWA members have a vote in every major decision in the union; the members elect their Local representatives and convention delegates, they vote on whether to accept or reject a union negotiated contract and, of course, they vote on whether or not to join CWA in the first place.

Every Local elects rank and file members to the convention. These elected delegates form CWA's highest governing body. The convention has the final authority over CWA's budget, policies, programs and dues structure. Once the delegates to the convention make a decision, it must be carried out by every member, officer and employee of the Union. Approximately 2,500 people – delegates and guests – attend our convention.



## Convention Powers

### Notes

Under of the CWA Constitution, the Convention has the power to:

- Pass upon the credentials and seating of delegates;
- Establish the policies to be followed by the Union:
- Interpret and amend the Constitution
- Establish the number of Locals and Districts, and determine their jurisdiction and boundaries;
- Cause the issuance and revocation of Local Charters;
- Determine the number of Vice Presidents and/or At-Large Executive Board Members;
- Cause the selection of delegates to the AFL-CIO and CLC Conventions;
- Do all things necessary for the proper disposition of any matter which may come before it for considerations;
- Act as the final court of review for certain types of appeals for Locals and/or members of decisions made at lower levels of the Union.
- Establish per capita dues
- Approve the budget

## Permanent Rules of Convention

The permanent rules governing conduct of CWA conventions can be found at the end of the CWA Constitution. Included are delegate certification and seating, voting strengths, alternatives and visitors seating, conduct during convention, microphones and hours of convention committees.

## Delegate Numbers Based on Membership

The number of delegates which each Local is entitled to is based on its paid membership numbers. Under Article VIII, Sec. 4 of the CWA Constitution, each Local is entitled to:

- 1 delegate if the Local has less than 200 members
- 2 delegates if the Local has 200 but less than 400 members
- 3 delegates if the Local has 400 but less than 601 members
- 1 additional delegate for each 400 members above 600



Notes

## Registration & Convention Badges

All delegates attending the CWA Convention must pick up their badge at registration from the Credentials Booth. A photo identification will be required to get your badge. At the Credentials Booth delegates are also responsible for confirming their per capita vote, also known as their “voting strength” or “voting weight.”



(See Section 13. Elections in this guide for more on voting strength) All delegates, alternates and guests attending the CWA Convention must display a convention badge.

Delegate badges include the delegate’s name, local, city and a blue bar with the delegate title. Alternate

badges will have a red bar. Delegate and alternate badges will also have a barcode on the front. In the event of a roll call vote or election, delegates will

Notes



**KRIS**

KRYSTA APPLEBY  
CWA LOCAL 1084  
WASHINGTON, DC



**ERIC**

ERIC BIRDIE  
CWA LOCAL 1084  
WASHINGTON, DC

**DELEGATE**

**ALTERNATE**



.....e  
voting station to vote on the issue at hand.

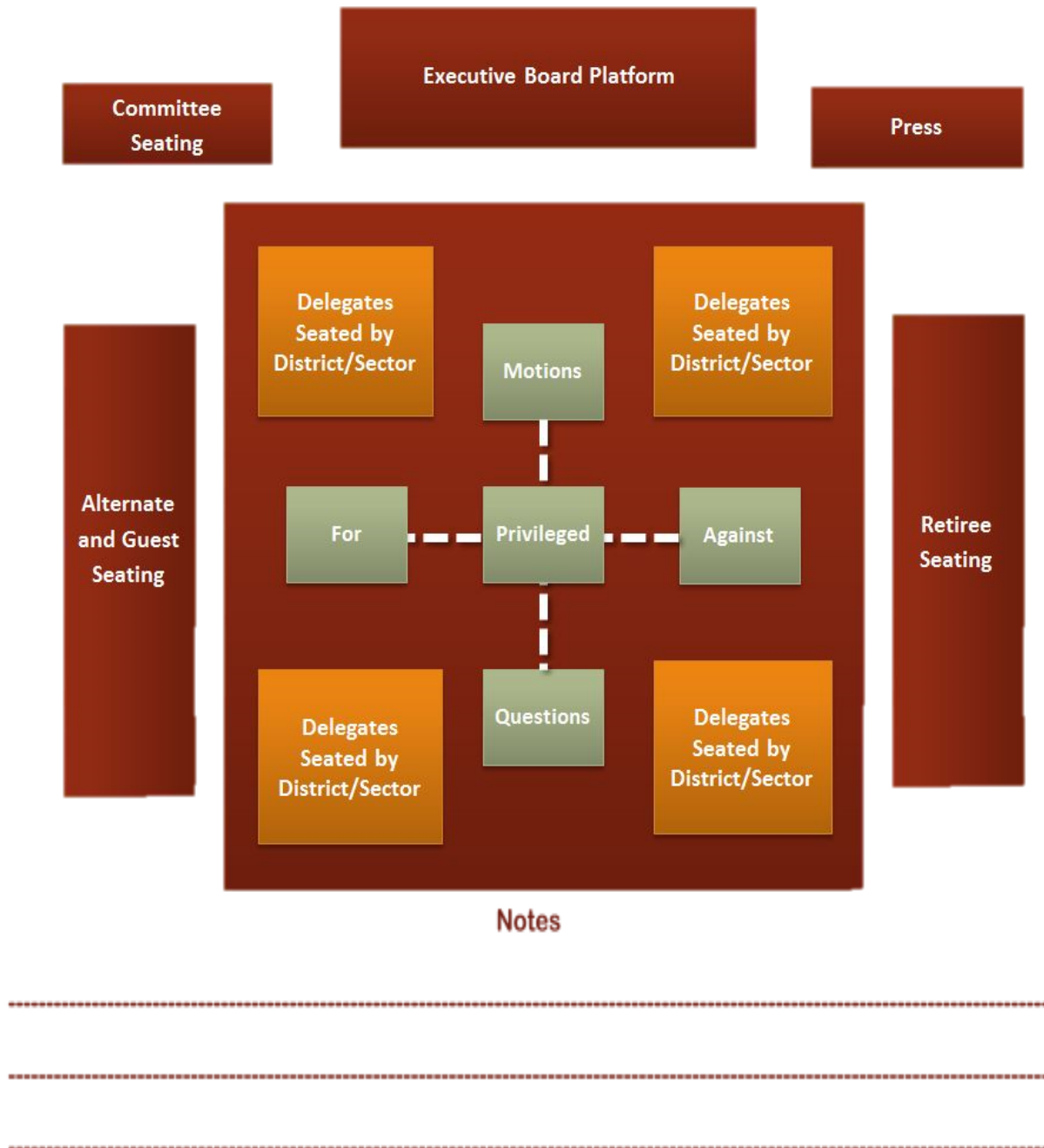
Only those wearing a delegate badge are permitted on the convention floor. CWA Staff serve as “Sergeant at Arms” and are stationed at every entrance to the convention floor to assure only delegates are on the convention floor.



## Physical Layout of Convention Floor

The convention's physical layout changes slightly each year depending on the convention site. The diagram below provides a general depiction of how the convention hall is set up.

### CWA Convention Floor Plan



## Convention Chair

## Notes

The President of the Union is the Chair of the convention. Parliamentary procedure (Robert's Rules of Order) is used to ensure orderly debates.

## Microphones on the Convention Floor

There are five microphone lecterns on the convention floor for delegates. Each microphone lectern has a telephone and scanner. Delegates must scan their badge and pick up the telephone and provide their name and Local prior to being recognized by the Chair. The microphones are designated as follows:

- **Motions Microphone** – This microphone is used by delegates desiring to make a motion including motions to close debate, amend, reconsider, table, etc. The telephone at the motions microphone is connected to the parliamentarians seated on the platform.

In order to be recognized, the delegate will pick up the telephone at the microphone, press the dial button, and give the parliamentarian your name, Local number and what kind of motion you wish to make.





- ## Notes

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- The telephone at the questions' microphone is connected to CWA staff seated on the platform. In order to be recognized, the delegate will pick

up the telephone at the microphone, press the dial button, and give the parliamentarian your name, Local number and what kind of motion you wish to make. Each delegate will be allowed two questions when recognized by the chair.

## Notes

## Speaking at Convention

- Delegates must scan their badge and pick up the telephone at the microphone both to provide their name and Local number.
- Once recognized by the Chair, remember to start by stating your name and Local number. This is necessary for the verbatim record.
- Write down what you want to say. Put your name and Local number on the top of the paper as a reminder.
- If you are offering an amendment or resolution, the Chair will ask for a written copy so you should have one prepared.



## Voting on the Convention Floor

There are three methods of voting at the convention:

- **Show of hands.** Each delegate has one vote.
- **Division of House.** Delegates stand on the right or left side of the convention hall depending on their position on an issue. This is done to help call a close vote.
- **Per Capita or Roll Call Vote.** Each delegate casts the number of votes assigned to him/her by the Local and approved by the



Credentials Committee and the convention. Your convention badge and photo id is required to vote. In order to have a roll call vote, 20% of the delegates must vote for it.

**Platform Observers:** Each day two delegates are selected to be platform observers. The Chair will call on them to help him/her determine the result of a close vote.

## Convention Committees

Some delegates are appointed to convention committees to review and recommend action to the convention on issues of concern to the Union. The CWA Constitution requires the following committees:

<b>Credential Committee</b>	The Credentials Committee consists of the Secretary-Treasurer and not less than seven (7) members appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. The Committee meets prior to the convention to examine delegate credentials to assure that all delegates have been properly elected.
<b>Resolutions Committee</b>	<p>The Resolutions Committee consists of not more than seven (7) members, none of whom are employees of the Union or members of the Executive Board. The committee members are appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board.</p> <p>It meets prior to the opening day of convention to give consideration to the form and substance of proposed resolutions submitted through the Locals and by the members for action at the convention.</p>
<b>Finance Committee</b>	The Finance Committee consists of the Secretary-Treasurer and four (4) members appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. The Secretary-Treasurer is the only committee member who is a full-time employee of the Union or a member of the International Executive Board and cannot serve as Chair.

	<p>The Committee meets prior to the regulation convention to review the Union's financial operations for the year preceding the convention, including audits of the books.</p> <p>The Committee submits a report of its findings to the convention and makes recommendations including a budget for next year's operations. Delegates voted on the Committee's report and have the power to amend the Committee's proposed budget.</p>
<b>Constitution Committee</b>	<p>The Constitution Committee consists of five (5) members appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. The Committee is responsible for considering and reporting to the convention and the Executive Board on proposals to change the CWA Constitution. Delegates vote on all proposals to amend the CWA Constitution.</p>
<b>Defense Fund Oversight Committee (DFOC)</b>	<p>The Defense Fund Oversight Committee consists of one elected representative from each District and one elected representative from the Public Workers sector, Airlines Industries, IUE-CWA division and Media sectors. The committee is responsible for reviewing the funds (receipts, disbursements, etc.), SIF and Growth Funds, and making a report to the convention delegates.</p>
<b>National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity</b>	<p>The National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity consists of one member from each CWA District and the Public Workers, IUE-CWA Division, AFA-CWA sector and Media sectors appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. Its mission is to promote the concerns of minorities in the Union. The committee reports on its activities and presents recommendations to convention delegates.</p>
<b>Women's Committee</b>	<p>The Women's Committee consists of one member from each CWA District and the Public Workers, IUE-CWA Division, AFA-CWA sector and Media sectors appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. Its mission is to promote the concerns of women in the Union. The committee reports on its activities and presents recommendations to convention delegates.</p>
<b>Appeals Committee</b>	<p>The Appeals Committee consists of five (5) members appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board. The Committee is responsible for review and reporting out to the delegates on all appeals before the convention.</p>

**Note:** Some Convention committee reports will be electronic posted at [cwa.org/convention-materials](http://cwa.org/convention-materials), others will be put on delegate tables.

Notes

## Election Voting

When Convention recesses for elections, delegates will attend their District Meetings for the purpose of nominating District Vice Presidents. Following the District Meetings, voting stations will open. The time allocated for District Meetings, and the time voting polls open and close will be announced before the Convention recesses.

Prior to entering the election area, delegates will have their badge and photo identification reviewed. Delegates must present their badge at the voting station. There, delegates will have their badge scanned, review their number of votes, and receive an access code they will use to vote in a private booth. Delegates will affirm they have received the correct ballot(s) with the correct per capita vote, or voting strength, before proceeding to a voting booth. If a delegate believes they have received an incorrect ballot this concern should be presented to the Credentials Committee located in the election area.

Proceed to a voting booth and be sure to follow instructions provided on the screen to properly cast your ballot. A confirmation screen will appear indicating that the ballot has been submitted. The delegate can then exit the election area and dispose of their access code. Note that an access code is unique to each delegate and cannot be used more than once.

## Schedule of Events

The convention Schedule of Events is posted along with other convention materials at [cwa.org/convention-materials](http://cwa.org/convention-materials). It is also available in the convention section of the CWA App. The Schedule of

Events lists the order of the convention proceedings and any other meetings or events that are scheduled during the convention.



## Verbatim Convention Record

A verbatim record of the convention is transcribed and made available to Locals. This is why it is important for all delegates to state their name and local number when speaking at a microphone.



## Notes

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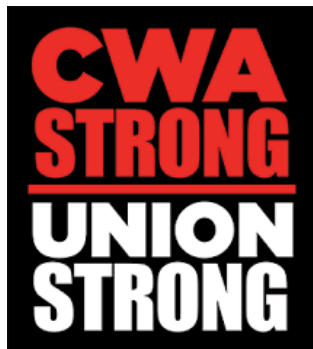
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**Communications Workers of America**  
**Education Department**  
**501 Third Street NW**  
**Washington, DC 20001**  
**[www.cwa-union.org](http://www.cwa-union.org)**  
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