

CWA Calling for an End to Union-Busting at Federal Call Centers Run by Maximus



Maximus, Inc. is a major federal contractor specializing in outsourcing government services such as call centers. In 2023, it received \$2.4 billion in revenue from the federal government.

Maximus workers face poor working conditions and are organizing with CWA to fight back. This includes Maximus call center workers who handle Medicare and Affordable Care Act (ACA) calls under a \$6.6 billion contract with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Around 10,000 workers answer calls on this contract at twelve locations, largely in right-to-work states in the South. In November 2023, Maximus workers staged the largest federal call center strike in history, when 700 workers across seven states went on a one-day strike to demand living wages and better working conditions, and to protest the company's unfair labor practices. Maximus has responded to workers' organizing with fear and intimidation to try to silence workers and prevent them from achieving a better future for their families.

CWA is calling on Maximus to put an end to its union-busting activities and agree to remain neutral as Maximus workers make their own decision about forming a union.

Unacceptable Working Conditions at Maximus

Frontline workers at Maximus struggle to provide the bare necessities for their families due to their low pay. More than 8 in 10 Maximus workers in households with children report that their household uses one or more safety net programs to make ends meet.

Even though workers spend their days helping millions of Americans access affordable health coverage, they don't have affordable coverage for themselves and their families because of the high deductibles and high costs in Maximus' health plan. A survey of Maximus call center workers found that 9 out of 10 respondents have medical debt and have avoided or postponed medical treatment due to concerns about cost.

Labor Rights Abuses at Maximus

Maximus workers are joining together to improve their working conditions by forming a union with CWA. But Maximus has attempted to thwart these efforts, at times resorting to illegal practices. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is currently investigating 10 unfair labor practice (ULP) charges that CWA has filed against Maximus alleging violations of workers' rights. These ULP charges include allegations that Maximus discharged employees in retaliation for engaging in protected concerted activity and union activity (including speaking out against racial disparities at Maximus), and threatened employees with layoff and worksite closure in connection with employee protected union activity; granted special benefits to non-striking employees while depriving strikers of those same benefits because they chose to engage in strike activity; coerced and threatened a union supporter; summoned the police on workers while they were engaging in a

lawful strike and disciplined an employee in retaliation for participating in the strike; and retaliated and discriminated against a union supporter.

Striking for Justice at Maximus

Maximus call center workers have gone on multiple strikes because they felt they had no other choice due to the company's poor working conditions and union-busting. In November 2023, Maximus workers staged the largest federal call center strike in history, when 700 workers across seven states went on a one-day strike to demand living wages and better working conditions, and to protest the company's ULPs. This was the largest strike of non-union workers in the South in recent history. Maximus call center workers have also gone on strike to protest unfair layoffs; and to demand protections from abusive callers, especially racist and sexist abuse; downtime between calls to provide relief from the crushing pace of back-to-back calls; and fairer attendance and bathroom break policies.

Racial Inequity at Maximus

CWA and NAACP released a report last year exposing significant racial inequities at Maximus. The report showed that Black and Latina women made up almost 50% of the company's frontline workforce, but only 5% of its executives. White men, on the other hand, make up only 9% of frontline workers, but account for nearly 50% of Maximus executives. The report found that workers interviewed at Maximus' CMS call centers felt they have no clear paths to career advancement, keeping their careers stagnant in the lowest-paid roles.

Wage Theft at Maximus

Maximus has a history of paying millions of dollars to settle lawsuits by federal call center workers alleging wage theft, including for failing to pay employees for all hours worked.

Excessive Executive Compensation at Maximus

Last year, CEO Bruce Caswell was paid over \$7.3 million in total compensation, a raise of more than \$1 million, or 17 percent, from the previous year. It would take a typical Maximus federal call center worker more than 205 years of work to earn as much as CEO Caswell earned last year.