

Report of the Defense Fund Oversight Committee to the Biennial Presidents' Meeting



**Communications Workers of America
Washington, D.C.
June 1, 2026**

**Report of the
Defense Fund Oversight Committee
June 2026**

Through resolutions and rules adopted by various CWA Conventions, the Defense Fund Oversight Committee (DFOC) is charged with the responsibility to review activities associated with the Robert Lilja Members' Relief Fund (RLMRF), the Strategic Industry Fund (SIF), and the Growth Fund (GF). The DFOC is authorized to examine receipts, disbursements, investments, and the administrative policies associated with the funds. The DFOC may also, with a two-thirds vote, affirm CWA Executive Board actions that are consistent with the rules governing those funds. The DFOC is required to report its findings to each CWA Convention and make recommendations to the Convention, where appropriate. The DFOC also issues a report at the Biennial Presidents' meeting.

The DFOC met November 17–19, 2025, and April 29–May 1, 2026, in Washington, D.C. We reviewed new grant requests approved by the Executive Board, as well as reallocations, extensions, evaluations, and other emergent issues during our regularly scheduled weekly meetings held every Friday. The committee also reviewed activities associated with the RLMRF, SIF, and GF. On April 29, 2026, John Marco from the Segal-Marco Consulting Group (SMCG) met with us to review his report on investments for the period ending March 31, 2026.

INVESTMENTS

At the 80th CWA Convention held in August 2025, the delegates approved the following resolution.

CWA UNBREAKABLE – Today, Tomorrow, and in the Future

Delegates to the 2025 CWA Convention voted to approve the Executive Board's proposal to lower the RLMRF "floors" and to increase strike benefits, which is possible largely because we now have fewer members eligible to receive strike pay.

These changes, which were supported by a two-thirds majority vote of the DFOC, maintain a strong RLMRF while better meeting striking members' financial needs. They also ensure a more consistent flow of resources to the SIF and GF programs, which allow us to grow and strengthen our union to be prepared for all the challenges that we will face in the future.

Resolved:

1. CWA will revise its funding streams for the Strategic Industry Fund and Growth Fund as follows:

- a. Dues income and investment income from the Members Relief Fund will continue to be combined into a single funding stream. AFL-CIO and Canadian Labour Congress affiliation payments will be made from this stream, and the remaining funds will be divided equally between the Strategic Industry Fund and the Growth Fund.
 - b. Investment income will be set at \$14 million. In years when investment income is higher than \$14 million, any additional funds will remain in the MRF.
 - c. The “soft floor” of the RLMRF will be reset at \$350 million. Should this floor be breached, 50% of investment income will be retained in the RLMRF. The “hard floor” of the RLMRF will be reset at \$325 million. Should this floor be breached, 100% of investment income and dues income will be retained in the RLMRF.
2. On the fifteenth day of a strike, weekly benefits to strikers commence at \$400 per week and shall rise to \$500 per week beginning on the twenty-ninth day of the strike. Current policies on health care coverage shall not be changed.
 3. The CWA Executive Board will review these policy changes in four years and make necessary recommendations to the Convention.
 4. These policies will take effect on August 17, 2025.

In January 2026, the first quarterly distribution of \$3.5 million was made per the CWA Unbreakable resolution. Quarterly distribution will be in January, April, July, and October of each year.

THE ROBERT LILJA MEMBERS’ RELIEF FUND

Loans

The balance of the RLMRF Loan to the CWA General Fund stands at \$39,440,131.42 as of February 28, 2026, with all payments current to date. While there are no provisions in the loan agreement requiring the repayment of the principal balance, payments have been made to reduce the principal by \$959,868.58.

Mortgage Loans to Locals

The DFOC reviewed the current Mortgage Loans to Locals held by the RLMRF. All mortgages are current. The fund is the first lienholder. Loans may be up to 80% of current appraised value with a clear title.

Mortgage balances as of February 28, 2026, are:

Local	Current Balance	Original Loan Amount
1038	\$87,445.21	\$212,000.00
2108	\$62,630.11	\$698,000.00
3105	\$22,538.58	\$35,000.00
3106	\$24,358.14	\$50,000.00
3112	\$8,954.17	\$25,000.00
3412	\$31,223.14	\$40,200.00
3706	\$181,326.78	\$196,000.00
4100	\$96,094.94	\$334,000.00
4340	\$356,347.18	\$722,578.39
9003	\$223,520.25	\$303,246.24
9415	\$96,323.19	\$200,000.00
9509	\$36,850.26	\$850,000.00
9510	\$195,990.35	\$250,000.00
9586	\$517,752.53	\$600,000.00
9588	\$141,769.79	\$200,000.00
81455	\$240,095.74	\$260,000.00
83770	\$131,183.21	\$210,000.00
TOTAL	\$2,454,403.57	\$5,186,024.63

Expenditures — March 1, 2025–February 28, 2026

Strikes/Heroes of Collective Bargaining

During this period, there were four strikes and six Heroes of Collective Bargaining allocations.

Strike Related Expenditures:

Employer	Local	Amount
HOCB–Activision Quality Assurance	7250	\$42,700.00
TSG Ski and Golf LLC	7781	\$100,000.00
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	14827	\$19,201.20
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	14842	\$1,449.91
HOCB–Conde Nast	31003	\$66,400.00
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	38061	\$680,000.00
HOCB – Distrokid	51016	\$24,000.00
HOCB–Nexstar Media–WEHT/WTWV	54041	\$158,600.00
HOCB – Gray Media – WNEM-TV	54048	\$28,800.00
HOCB – Nexstar Media – KDVR	57052	\$60,000.00

The balance of the RLMRF as of February 28, 2026, was \$408,310,531.

STRATEGIC INDUSTRY FUND (SIF)

The SIF campaigns approved by the Executive Board and the DFOC continue to increase our leverage at the bargaining table and advance our major policy initiatives. Since we began approving SIF allocations in 2006, we have funded many successful projects and continue to incorporate insights from each success into our project management practices.

The campaigns operate with specific budgets and clear, measurable benchmarks with six-month evaluations. We currently, as of February 28, 2026, have fifty-four active SIF campaigns. The SIF also provides funds for the Support Members and Rebuild Together (SMART) program discussed later in this report.

NOTE: Any member wishing to review a SIF report should contact the Secretary-Treasurer’s office.

SIF INCOME and EXPENSES as of February 28, 2026:

Total Income, since inception September 2006	\$439,741,583
Total Expenses, since inception September 2006	\$397,717,722
Allocated SIF Balance	\$12,281,769
Allocated SMART Balance	\$9,169,151
Unallocated SIF Balance	\$20,572,941

The balance of the Strategic Industry Fund as of February 28, 2026, was **\$43,865,083**.

GROWTH FUND (GF)

At the 74th CWA Convention held in April 2013, the delegates approved this Committee’s recommendation for the establishment of the GF, which allocated one half of the RLMRF’s annual earnings to invest in campaigns that have the potential to change the course of our movement and our nation. With the establishment of the GF, the Defense Fund Oversight Committee’s responsibilities were expanded to include participation, with the Executive Board, in the approval and evaluation of GF requests.

The GF supports and enhances the Union’s movement building, organizing, leadership development, research, industry analysis, and efforts to achieve economic justice. The GF can be used to hire staff needed to launch new campaigns and support existing efforts.

The campaigns operate with specific budgets and clear, measurable benchmarks with six-month evaluations. We currently have twenty-seven active GF campaigns.

NOTE: Any member wishing to review a GF report should contact the Secretary-Treasurer’s office.

Growth Fund INCOME and EXPENSES as of February 28, 2026:

Total Income*	\$179,584,593
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Total Allocated	\$173,802,515
Total Unallocated	\$5,782,078

*Exclusive of investment gains/losses

The balance of the Growth Fund as of February 28, 2026, was \$28,646,435.

Our Mission

The DFOC was created to oversee the Robert Lilja Members' Relief Fund (RLMRF) and later assumed oversight responsibility for the Strategic Industry Fund (SIF) and the Growth Fund (GF). The delegates, elected by the members, through convention action, have entrusted us to support our collective goal of achieving better contracts. In the past, that meant striking. The RLMRF was designed to support strikes by minimizing the hardships placed on our members. We soon realized that we could achieve our goals without a strike if we acted smarter by acting strategically. This led to the establishment of the SIF to fund strategic organizing, membership mobilization, and political leverage to achieve good results at the bargaining table without striking; and the GF for building a better bargaining climate by promoting innovative approaches in building a movement for economic justice and democracy that supports growth in our union and the labor movement. In addition, these investments in growth are designed to find organizing targets in an ever-changing economy our members and union must adapt to.

We understand that the goal of all these funds is to ratify the best contracts we can for our members. A strike is not an end; it is a means to an end. Our goal is a great contract that offers our members the economic security they deserve for the contributions they make to the enterprises that employ them.

Conclusion

We wish to acknowledge and thank Mary Catucci and her staff for their support in conducting the business of the DFOC throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Defense Fund Oversight Committee

Ken McNamara	District 1	Monica Alvarado	District 9
James Gardler	District 2-13	Robin Blair-Batte	PHEW
Al Guillory	District 3	John Lewis	IUE-CWA, Co-Chair
Gary Kundrat	District 4	Jeffrey Heisey	Airline Sector
Nancy Brown	District 6	Bill O'Meara	Media Sector
Cecilia Valdez	District 7, Chair	Tammy Scott	Passenger Service