

Union Structure

International and Local 556

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Have you ever wondered about the background of TWU International? Or what each TWU Local 556 Executive Board Member's official responsibilities entail? Being a part of such a large organization can be confusing, so let's take a look at some of the basics of our Union structure. For additional resources, visit:

www.twu.org - AND - www.twu556.org

TWU International History

The Transport Workers Union of America (TWU) was founded by Michael Quill - a fierce labor leader who fought for working people. After his death, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. hailed Quill as "a man the ages will remember", and praised his leadership stating he was a "fighter for decent things all his life -- labor organization and racial equality." The TWU was built on the core belief that workers rights are human rights.

The Transport Workers Union of America (TWU) represents more than 150,000 Members across the country, organized into three divisions: 1. Air, Rail and Transit, 2. Universities and 3. Utilities and Services. Our Members are governed by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the Railway Labor Act (RLA) and public sector statutes. The newest Members of the Transit Division are new-model transportation workers at urban bikeshare programs.



TWU International Structure (International Constitution Article IV)

International Administrative Committee (IAC)

President,
Secretary-Treasurer,
International Executive Vice President and two Administrative Vice Presidents

International Vice Presidents

Currently consists of 15 Vice Presidents, including one TWU Local 556 Member

International Executive Council (IEC)

Currently consists of the International officers and nine (9) Members

International Executive Board (IEB)

Currently consists of 33 Members, including three (3) TWU Local 556 Members



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Q: “What are the benefits of being a part of TWU International?”

A: Being a part of an International Union provides essential strength and backing from not just the International Union itself... but all the TWU Locals. TWU uses the strength of it’s 150,000+ Members to lobby and fight for labor, civil and human rights for all. When in Contract negotiations, TWU International has provided expert strategists, top-notch economists and additional resources to assist our Membership.

TWU Constitution

The TWU Constitution is one of two Governing Documents used for the day-to-day operations of all TWU Locals, including TWU Local 556. Amendments to the constitution are presented and voted on at the TWU International Convention. If you would like to view our TWU Constitution, it can be found on the TWU 556 App and website:

www.twu556.org > Members > Union Admin > TWU Constitution

TWU International Convention

Every 4 years, TWU International hosts a convention where elected delegates for all TWU Locals convene. At the Convention, TWU International Leadership is elected, TWU Constitution amendments are presented and voted on and the delegation determines the direction of our Union as a whole.

The number of delegates TWU Local 556 sends to the International Convention is dependent on the Membership size. Per the TWU Constitution and Local 556 Bylaws, Executive Board Members are required to attend as delegates.

For Example: For the Convention in 2021, TWU Local 556 is allowed 53 voting delegates. The Executive Board is made up of 22 people, so the Membership elected 31 voting delegates to represent TWU Local 556.



Interested in learning more about TWU International? Visit www.twu.org.

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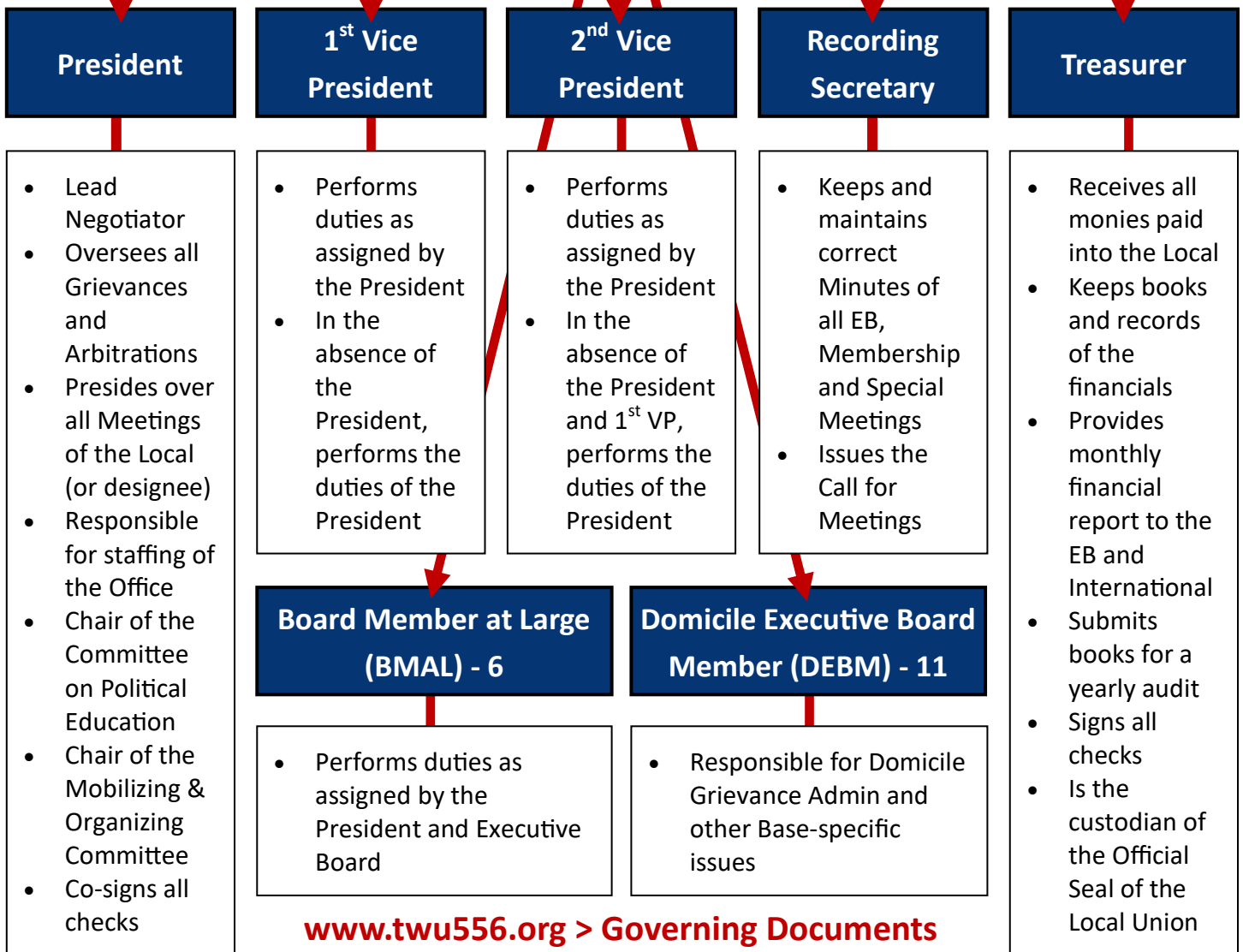
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Have you ever wondered what the responsibilities of our TWU Local 556 Executive Board are officially? Let's take a look at our International Constitution and the 556 Bylaws for the specifics.

TWU Local 556 Executive Board (EB)

National Officers



www.twu556.org > Governing Documents

Union Structure

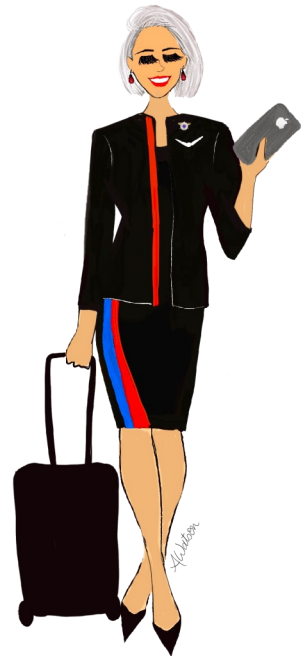
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TWU Local 556 Bylaws

The TWU Local 556 Bylaws govern the operation of the Local and the conduct of its Members. The bylaws must conform to the provisions and the principles of the TWU International Constitution and all applicable labor laws. Each Local under the TWU umbrella has specific custom bylaws to ensure a functioning Local Union. For example, the TWU Local 556 Membership is geographically spread across 11 domiciles - therefore we need provisions in our bylaws to ensure proper representation for Members by requiring Domicile Executive Board Members. As stated in the TWU Constitution, Article XXI: Structure, “the supreme authority in the Local Union shall be the Membership of the Local Union...” This language is important to note because we, the Membership, are responsible for creating, voting on and amending our Local Bylaws every odd ending year. Our bylaws are the contract we have between the TWU Local 556 Executive Board and the Membership, thus it is vital to the function of our democratic institution that we participate in this process.



www.twu556.org > [Members](#) > [Resources](#) > [Archive](#) > [Governing Documents](#)

Standing and Special Committees



Q: “What is the difference between a ‘standing’ and ‘special’ committee?”

A: “Standing Committees” are permanent tools established by the TWU Constitution and the 556 Bylaws. A “Special Committee” is created by the Executive Board for a limited and specific purpose (i.e. Emergency Sick Call Procedures Committee and Bylaw Committee).

TWU Local 556 Standing Committees: Civil & Human Rights, Committee on Political Education (COPE), Communications, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Education, Flight Attendant Drug & Alcohol Program (FADAP), Grievance, Health, Mobilizing/Organizing (MOB-ORG), New Hire, Information Technology (IT), Professional Standards, Safety, Scheduling, Scholarship, Shop Steward, Survey, Uniforms, Veterans and Working Women’s Committee.

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Negotiating Committee

Q: “How is the Negotiating Committee established and how long are elected/appointed negotiators in their role?”

A: Our Negotiating Committee is made up of five Flight Attendants. Per the TWU Local 556 Bylaws, the lead negotiator is our President. Two of the Negotiating Committee members are appointed by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the Executive Board. The other two members are nominated and elected by the Membership. The President is our lead negotiator as long as they are the sitting President of Local 556. Elected and appointed negotiators remain in place until a Contract is ratified by the Membership.



Grievances

The TWU Local 556 Grievance Committee works to ensure that Members' rights are protected both contractually and in regards to discipline. They file contractual, discipline and group grievances, and manage the case from the onset until there is resolution. The Grievance Team assist Members through the grievance process, present cases to the Executive Board for review and fight for Members' rights in arbitrations.

The Grievance Committee works closely with Domicile Executive Board Members and Shop Stewards to schedule fact-finding, mandatory and Step-2 meetings. The two committees (Grievance and Shop Steward) collaborate to ensure that our Members are best protected against unjust discipline and receive proper representation.

Shop Stewards

TWU Local 556 Shop Stewards are the first line of protecting Members against unjust discipline. These important Local representatives are considered an extension of the Executive Board and Grievance Committee. The primary role of a Shop Steward is to represent Members in fact-finding, mandatory and Step-2 meetings, but they wear many hats - communicator, educator and a reliable source for factual Union information. These elected Leaders also work closely with their DEBM to provide additional resources in their domicile. Per the TWU Local 556 Bylaws, Shop Stewards are nominated and elected by domicile peers at “the first regularly scheduled Membership Meeting following the swearing in of the new Officers.”

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Member Responsibilities

We have seen the responsibilities of our elected Leaders within our Local and International... but what is required of us, the Members of TWU Local 556? The TWU Constitution requires that a Member conduct themselves “at all times as becomes a Member of the Transport Workers Union of America.” In Article XIII, the Constitution also outlines the requirement of maintaining a “Good Standing” by the payment of dues (amount determined by the current number of Members). Our TWU Local 556 Bylaws have a more extensive list of responsibilities for the Membership in Article IV (Page 4). These responsibilities include (but are not limited to): not joining or participating in an organized group which purports to make decisions on behalf of the Membership, maintaining confidentiality, providing updated contact information, making an effort to attend Membership Meetings, and adhering to the Constitution, Bylaws, CBA and working rules of the Local.

There Is No UNION Without U!

Too often we hear “the Union” or “the Executive Board”... but that terminology isn’t correct. ***WE*** are the Union! The Membership is the driving force of both the TWU International and TWU Local 556. It’s important to remember that our Officers and Committees work (with our direction) for the betterment of the Membership. It is ***OUR*** Union... and ***OUR*** Local.

1. Attend Membership Meetings

Meetings happen three times a year and are the best way for direct communication with our Leadership. At these Meetings, Members can review the financials, hear the latest updates on our Union’s activities and ask questions of our elected Leaders.

2. Read Union Emails

The quickest way for our Local to get important information to the Membership is via electronic communication... namely email. If you aren’t receiving emails from TWU Local 556, make sure your personal email is on file with our Local on the website (www.twu556.org) or contact the Local Office (800-969-7932).

3. Wear Your Union Pin

The easiest way to show unity and solidarity is an approved uniform piece... your Union pin. If you need a new pin, please reach out to your Domicile Executive Board Member (DEBM).



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Q: “What is the AFL-CIO?”

A: The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) is a voluntary federation made up of 56 national and international labor unions. The 12.5+ million Members work together to collectively improve the lives of working people across the globe. The AFL-CIO advocates for, and actively advances, legislation that supports living wages, job protections, infrastructure investments, protecting pensions and Social Security, and so much more!

*****Interesting Tidbit *****

The current, and recently elected, President of the AFL-CIO is Liz Shuler. She is the first female leader of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)! President Shuler spent a large portion of her career organizing with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and has served as Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO (2nd in command to President Richard Trumka, who passed in 2021) since 2009. She has announced her intention to run for re-election at the 2022 AFL-CIO Convention.



As a Labor organization, we proudly work with multiple constituency groups whose focus is to address challenges that workers from diverse backgrounds face.

“These groups reach out to the communities they serve, build solidarity, help out with organizing efforts and ensure full participation in our movement.”

www.AFLCIO.org

- A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI)
- Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)
- Pride At Work (PAW)
- Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)
- Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU)
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
- Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA)

