

OFFICE FOR EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING STAFF FIGHTING LAYOFFS

After months of uncertainty it now looks like 9 filled positions at the Office for Employment and Training are slated for layoff. DSES is citing several reasons for lower revenues: steady decreases in Federal Workforce Investment Act grants; loss of ARRA monies and State law requiring greater allocations of grant money to On the Job training. However before any layoffs take place, the Board of Supervisors will re-evaluate the proposed layoffs at their Aug. 28, 2012 meeting.

Members are currently working hard to find alternative to any layoff and cost saving measures and are looking into many areas.

- ◆ Expenses such as rent at all three OET locations
- ◆ Securing new grants
- ◆ Finding short term sources of funding to bridge the gap
- ◆ New organizational structure

Join us August 28th at the Board of Supervisors meeting to protect the OET program.

“At a time when services we provide to the community are needed more than ever, cutting staff and services is the wrong message to send to the community.”



Carlos Martinez
WIB Employment Program Rep II

**Applications
Due Soon!**

Monterey County Chapter Board Looking to Fill Vacant Director Seats

The Monterey County Chapter Board of Directors is now accepting applications to fill the vacancies on the Board. For a chart of vacant positions and the application form, go to <http://521.seiu.org/comonterey/chapterboardapplication>, stop by the SEIU Local 521 Office, or call (831) 784-2560.

Interested members should fill out the application and petition on the back and return to the SEIU Local 521 office **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 10th**. The petition must be signed by at least ten (10) members in good standing or at least ½ members of the bargaining unit or category if there are less than 20 members in the unit or category. Member signatures must be in the specific unit and seat category they wish to represent.

Other Requirements for the Chapter Board of Directors

1. Must be a full member in good standing of the Monterey County Chapter of SEIU Local 521 for at least one continuous year prior to July 2012.
2. Must be from the same Unit and Department or Classification of the seat they wish to fill.
3. Must be committed to attending monthly Chapter Board Meetings (3rd Wednesday of each month)

HOW CAN WE PROTECT OURSELVES FROM WORKPLACE BULLIES?

Local 521 receives many reports of managers who abuse their power by intimidating, degrading or humiliating workers. This behavior is often referred to as workplace bullying, which is different than employment discrimination. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits harassment on the basis of race, sex, color,

So what can be done when the harassment is not based on one of these protected categories?

religion or national origin. But unfortunately, workplace bullying is not illegal. Filing grievances against workplace bullies may be one option. Some of our contracts contain clauses that management and employees will uphold professionalism in the workplace, or an assurance that employees will treat each other with courtesy and respect. But a grievance, by itself, is just a piece of paper. Individual grievances against bad bosses are ineffective unless a larger group of employees takes a unified stand. This has proven an effective tactic in our Region 5 of Local 521, where our CED team has filed 3 grievances against workplace bullies in the last 18 months. In one Fresno County case, over 50 employees took a stand by signing a grievance against the problem manager, who ultimately retired.



What if my contract does not have a professionalism clause, or what if I am the only employee being bullied?

Local 521 recently learned that managers in Monterey County have devised a creative way to use their workplace violence policy to discipline our own members for allegations of discourtesy in the workplace. Their policy prohibits acts of harassment, threats, assault and other abusive behavior. Most employers maintain similar policies, which apply to all employees, including managers. So we can use those same workplace violence policies to our advantage by reporting all managers who engage in bullying behavior.



As a first step, ask HR for a copy of your employer's workplace violence policy. Make sure the offensive behavior is documented. It helps to have witnesses who will corroborate your observations. Immediately report any workplace bullying to HR, and state your belief that your employer's workplace violence policy has been violated. **Your complaint must be factual. Do not file false complaints against managers or you could be subject to discipline.**

Send a copy of your complaint to your union steward. This will give you additional legal protection. Your employer will be obligated to investigate your complaint. If your employer refuses to investigate, you may have a valid legal claim.

Can I hire an attorney?

That is entirely your choice. Currently, the law provides limited recourse to employees who are bullied at work. In extreme cases, you might be able to sue your employer for intentional infliction of emotional distress, but you should seek the advice of a qualified professional.

Every situation is different. Your Local 521 stewards and worksite organizers are there to assist you in figuring out the best way to respond to each case of workplace bullying.