



# The Women's and Fair Practices Departments Action for Equality

**I**f you think the federal government is a model employer who protects equal rights in the workplace, think again. More than 10,000 federal workers who feel they have been discriminated against go to hearings before Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) judges every year. These men and women press charges against their agencies or supervisors for discriminating against them based on their disability, race, color, religion, age, sex, and/or nation of origin. AFGE's Women's and Fair Practices (WFP) Departments are here to help our members fight against these injustices. WFP offers free representation in discrimination cases brought by AFGE Councils, Districts and Locals on behalf of AFGE members. We provide three main legal services: consultation, direct representation, and co-representation along with the member's Local representative. Since January this year, we've received 66 requests for representation, and we currently have 146 active cases. Since 2005, WFP has closed over 169 cases, been awarded more than \$124,000 in attorney fees, won hundreds of thousands of dollars of back pay, and won more than \$600,000 compensatory damages for our members!

In order to empower our Locals, Councils and Districts on the representation front, WFP also offers EEO training. WFP and members of AFGE's Human Rights Committee, which is comprised of 24 National Women's and Fair Practices Coordinators, provide EEO training at AFGE's annual Human Rights Training Conference, council-sponsored trainings, District Coordinator/EEO Institutes, district trainings, and multi-district conferences upon request. The Department staff will also provide training to the stewards and officers within a Local upon request.

## WFP'S CASE EVALUATION CRITERIA

We take cases that involve unlawful discrimination issues such as age, race, sex, religion, disability, and national origin. These cases may be brought before an arbitrator, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB), the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), and D.C.'s Office of Human Rights. To receive representation, the case must be meritorious, precedential and/or substantially significant to AFGE as a whole. We ask that the Local investigate the case and provide the National Officers (i.e., National Vice President, National Women's Coordinator, National Fair Practices Coordinator, or Council President) with a

completed Request for Women's/Fair Practices Department to Represent an Employee in a Discrimination Case form and documentation. National Officers must recommend the Local's request for representation from WFP.

## HOW TO SEEK THE ASSISTANCE

**Step 1:** Complete the WFP request for representation form. The form can be obtained from WFP's Web site at <http://wfp.afge.org>.

1. Send the form and documentation to the National Vice President, Council President, National Women's Coordinator, or National Fair Practices Coordinator.
2. A copy of the completed Report of Investigation should be forwarded as soon as it is received.
3. Send a copy of all relevant documents, such as orders and motions filed, agency and administrative judge decisions issued, and documents included in the evidence and/or grievance file.
4. State the name and contact information for any representative assisting the member in this matter.

**Step 2:** Once WFP has received the request form and the relevant documents, including the ROI, WFP will send a letter of acknowledgment to the Local and member and may ask for more documents, if necessary. Evaluating the case could take only a few days or up to six weeks, depending on existing case commitments.

**Step 3:** WFP will contact you to let you know whether or not we can provide representation. If you have questions, please call (202) 639-6417.

## WHAT MEMBERS AND OFFICERS THINK OF OUR PROGRAMS

"For all the people of AFGE improving life for employees like myself, I would like to thank you. A special and sincere thank you goes out to the Women and Fair Practices Department; if it was not for [its] support, I would have given up and done what so many people have done before me: resign."

*- Inge Ogden, member of AFGE Local 2924*

"If you had not come along and assisted when you did, this case would not have prevailed. I am proud to belong to such a prestigious organization."

*- Donald Evans, member of an AFGE TSA Local.*

## *When Opportunity is Equal...Everybody Wins*