



CODE Cincinnati Organized &
Dedicated Employees

CODE Gazette Newsletter

March 2026

"Spring: a lovely
reminder of how
beautiful change
can truly be." –

UNKNOWN

ABOUT CODE

Cincinnati Organized and Dedicated Employees (CODE) is an independent labor union certified by the State Employment Relations Board since November 2003 as the exclusive collective bargaining representative of approximately 1,000 professionals employed by the City of Cincinnati.

**Have a general question?
Need union representation?**

**Scan the QR code or visit us
online at:**

[Codegroup.org/contact](https://codegroup.org/contact)

Scan me



CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6 March 2026



On October 16, 2025 the general membership body voted for new CODE board members. The response was overwhelming. A huge thank you to all of those who ran and another big thank you to everyone who voted. The winner(s) of the election officially joined the board in January of 2026, where the entire board voted for officers.

We are pleased to announce the CODE executive board for 2026-2027

2026-2027 Board Members

President: Kathy Schulte: president@codegroup.org

First VP: Jenny King: jennyking@codegroup.org

2nd VP: Sam Kloss: samkloss@codegroup.org

Treasurer: Angel Taylor: treasurer@codegroup.org

Secretary: Courthney Calvin: secretary@codegroup.org

Board Trustee: Mike Poggemann: mikepoggemann@codegroup.org

Board Trustee: Tim Lawhead: timlawhead@codegroup.org



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CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6 March 2026



Board Member Highlight Kathy Schulte-President

Department:
Senior Real Property Specialist-
Metropolitan Sewer District

Years of Service:
36 years this month!

Favorite Food:
Seafood

Interests/Hobbies:
Traveling to Chicago and being
“KiKi” to my two grandsons

Residence: Cincinnati’s Westside



36



CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026

The history of Labor Unions

The first labor union founded in the United States was the Federal Society of Journeymen Cordwainers (leatherworkers and cobblers), founded in 1794. Unions existed prior to that elsewhere in the world, though. In fact, the earliest recorded strike action was in ancient Egypt. In 1152 B.C.E. artisans in the Royal Necropolis walked off their job after the government of Ramesses III failed to pay them their full wages in a timely manner. The strike ended when the workers were paid the wages they deserved.

The power of a unified body of workers is a force to be reckoned with. This is exactly why the CODE union was formed over 20 years ago. Employees at the 911 call center had not received a raise in many years, and were then being forced to work overtime, for which they weren't being paid. They said "enough is enough" and got together with other technical professionals, supervisors, and mid-level folks at the City and formed the Cincinnati Organized and Dedicated Employees union.

Our greatest strength is our unity. United, we bargain, divided, we beg.





Please join us in welcoming our newest CODE members.

Sharmayne Moore	Ellen Smith
Jacob Stevens	Renee Thomas-Kabin
Matt Forsythe	Curtis Young
Brianna Wogenstahl	Russell Elliott
Michael Von Hoene	Ronald Hampton
Shawn Caruso-Taylor	Cole Stines
Isabel Harney-Davila	Elizabeth Crable-Means
Scott Pavone	Corey Corbin
Oluwaseun Oladimeji	Rickey Booker
Keshawn Thomas	Melissa Bilkasley
Timothy Holman	Hannah Burck
Lanesa Molden	Bemnet Melaku
Michael Caravantes	Ellen Smith
Logan Little	Sydney Reyna
John Dumford	

CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026



Below are some frequently asked questions that our board members are often asked. Going forward in each newsletter we will answer a few questions.

When will CODE membership receive their Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) and Pay increase?

March is when our union receives its COLA increase, so be on the lookout for a **4%** raise effective March 15, 2026 which is pay period #7, and will be paid out on **April 7, 2026**

March is also when CODE members will receive our **\$1500** supplemental payment that was negotiated in the last contract cycle. This one-time payout will effective March 29, 2026 which is pay period #8, and will be paid out on **April 21, 2026**



CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026

What is the status of the flexible work location policy?

FWL – the Flexible Work Location policy is NOT a CODE contract policy. It is a City of Cincinnati policy which is outlined under HR P&P 6.8. Please contact your personnel department for more information as they may also have supplemental attendance policy statements, with which you should familiarize yourself as they may affect when and how you are able to utilize the FWL policy. For more information or further questions, please check with your individual department heads.

What is FMLA and who qualifies?

FMLA – this acronym stands for the Family Medical Leave Act, which is a package of laws that protect workers and their jobs and benefits for up to 12 weeks for specific family and medical reasons. To make sure there is no confusion over your use of FMLA, please complete the WH-380-E (Employee) or WH-380-F (Family Member) form. You and your care providers can complete this form, providing information about your specific situation and allowing your HR department to make a determination regarding your FMLA eligibility. Everyone's situation is unique, so it is important to work with your HR liaison to make sure they have all of the relevant information. Reasons you might take FMLA leave:

The birth or adoption of a child

Caring for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition

Your own serious health condition, for example: undergoing treatment for a major illness or condition like cancer or Multiple Sclerosis, recovering from surgery, physical therapy due to injury, migraines, insomnia, period pain, IBS and Crohn's disease, anxiety, and any other situation where your medical condition requires treatment and/or interferes with your ability to be at work.

****You have to be employed for at least a year and worked at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months to qualify for FMLA

CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026



Common Leave Types and Acronyms

SWP (Sick With Pay)

Granted when an employee is physically unable to work due to illness or off-duty injury, or official quarantine, or for routine medical and dental appointments. Sick leave must be approved by the supervisor.

MDL (Medical/Dental Leave)

Full-time bargaining unit Employees shall be granted SWP-MDL (Medical/Dental Leave) not to exceed a total of 24 hours per payroll year for 34 medical and dental appointments for the employee or a minor child. To be eligible for MDL, Employee must provide a note from the medical or dental provider that confirms attendance at the appointment.

CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026

Let PEAP Help

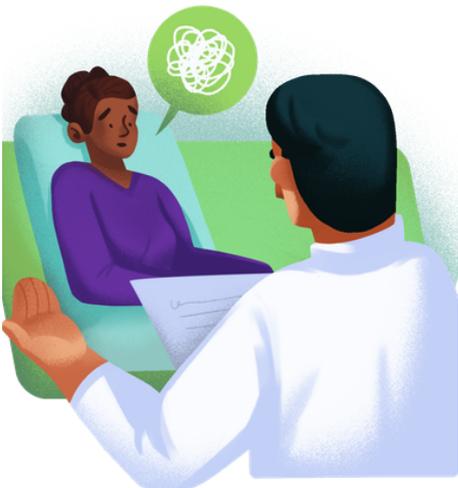
Feeling down, depressed or hopeless?

Angry or hostile?

Nervous or uptight?

The Public Employees Assistance Program (PEAP) can help you and your family members. Call 513-421-7600 to schedule an appointment with a PEAP counselor. It is completely free and confidential.

DID YOU KNOW? You can earn Healthy Lifestyles points for completing a Depression Screening (500 points) and/or a Mental Health Check-Up (2000 points) through PEAP!



CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026

The team at Stokar Law has been providing legal representation to CODE since 2016. In addition to representing CODE, Stokar Law has a robust civil practice including workers' compensation, personal injury cases, and wage and hour matters. As a benefit to CODE members and their families, Stokar Law offers free, no obligation consultations on any legal issue you may have. If Stokar Law cannot handle your concerns, Stokar Law will work to put you in touch with a lawyer who can. Please feel free to contact Stokar Law for all your legal needs at 513-500-8511.



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CODE Gazette Newsletter

Issue 6-March 2026

We hope you have enjoyed this latest issue of the Gazette.

Your Newsletter Editors:

Angel Taylor
Sam Kloss
Courtney Calvin



Have an idea for newsletter content?

We welcome any and all ideas for future newsletters.

Please email secretary@codegroup.com with your thoughts!



FYI.....

All new membership forms will be sent to Central HR on Fridays of the week received. Please allow up to two pay periods for processing.

Previous issues of the Gazette have been posted on the CODE website.