

Membership Dues Guidelines

GAO Employees Organization, IFPTE Local 1921

Purpose

This document accompanies Article II of our Constitution on union membership and payment of union dues.

Membership Application Process

Membership in our union is voluntary. GAO employees within the bargaining unit (e.g., PDP, Band I, IIA, IIB, Specialists, and Auditors) who are interested in becoming union members must first complete a [Union Membership Application](#). The Membership Application, once signed, can be scanned into a PDF file and then emailed to gaounionmembership@ifpte.org, or dropped off or mailed/pouched to any [Assembly Delegate or Officer](#).

On this application, you will select a dues payment option. There will be two dues options: 1) automatic dues deduction or 2) personal check. The dues amounts, 0.3% (0.003), you will pay will be based on your **gross** salary; dues will not be assessed on cash awards.

Automatic Dues Deduction Option

Union members who elect to have their dues deducted from their salary must fill out a [GAO Form 676](#).¹ The options for returning your Form 676 to GAO's Office of Workforce Relations are as follows:

Headquarter Staff Options

- 1) Drop off a copy to either Ken Stockbridge (membership database programmer), one of the Assembly Delegates, or an Officer.
- 2) Print, sign, and scan your Form 676 into a PDF file and email to gaounionmembership@ifpte.org.

Field Staff Options

- 1) Print, sign, and scan your Form 676 into a PDF file and email to gaounionmembership@ifpte.org.
- 2) "Pouch" your signed Form 676 in a GAO envelope to Ken Stockbridge (membership database programmer)
- 3) Drop it off with your field Assembly Delegate.

¹ We have written agreement with management that your 676 forms, as well as your choice to become a union member, will not be shared with supervisors. Access will be limited to authorized union officials (e.g., Treasurer), GAO administrative and human capital personnel responsible for processing and maintaining this information, and other official bodies outside of GAO as indicated on the 676 form.

If you go on unpaid leave, dues will be waived for up to six months since you will not be receiving any pay. You will still be a union member with full benefits for up to 6 months. After 6 months, if you are still on leave without pay, we will request a personal check if you want to continue to be a union member with full benefits. Once you are back at work and receiving a salary again, the automatic dues deduction system will resume.²

Withdrawing from the Automatic Dues Deduction

Union members who would like to withdraw from the automatic dues deduction system must file a **GAO Form 677**, which we can obtain from our union's Treasurer and President. Please indicate whether you are resigning from union membership or changing to paying dues by personal check. Once you receive a Form 677, fill it out and file it with the Office of Workforce Relations, and at the same time, send a copy to our union's Treasurer and President. If you request to resign from the union, the effective date your membership ends will be when your automatic dues deductions stop. If you wish to retract your Form 677 request, contact our union's Treasurer and Workforce Relations.

If you file a Form 677, due to federal law [Civil Service Reform Act - 5 U.S.C. 7115(a)], GAO will be unable to process your request until the one-year anniversary of the date your Form 676 was processed. If a member wishes to withdraw after their one-year anniversary of filing a Form 676, then their Form 677 request will be processed on a yet to be negotiated date between our union and management.

Withdrawing from the Automatic Dues Deduction Examples

- Example 1: You Filed a Form 676 **Less** Than a Year Ago
 - If you filed a Form 676 in October 2008 to have dues deducted from your pay, and you file a Form 677 in June 2009 to withdraw, GAO will be unable to process your Form 677 until October 2009.
- Example 2: You Filed a Form 676 **Over** a Year Ago
 - If we negotiate the 1st pay period for all Form 677 requests to be processed, and you file a Form 677 on November 5, 2009, your Form 677 will be processed the 1st pay period in January 2010

This law is designed to protect our union members since union membership within the federal government is voluntary, as well to protect management from being overburdened with the administrative cost of processing those wishing to leave their union. If we did not have this law, for example, a group of non-members could sign up to become members right before a major election or ratification vote in order to influence the outcome, then withdraw right afterwards without contributing much money or time.

² Automatic dues deduction will resume even if you elected not to keep up your union benefits by sending in personal check after the six month grace period. Hence, you will become a member with full benefits once you are back at work receiving a salary.

Personal Check Dues Payment Option

We realize that some individuals might prefer to pay by personal check directly to the union. However, we strongly encourage bargaining unit employees to select the more cost efficient automatic dues option.

If you wish to pay by personal check, we offer the option to pay on a **yearly basis**. We require annual payments so that members paying by check make the same commitment as those paying through automatic payroll deductions. Under the law [Civil Service Reform Act - 5 U.S.C. 7115(a)], GAO is unable to process an individual's request to withdraw from the automatic dues deduction system until the anniversary of the date their Form 676 was processed. (See details on the withdrawing from the automatic dues deduction above.)

To officially become a member, you need to make your first annual payment covering a year's worth of dues. All future payments will be due before your anniversary date of joining. To figure out each yearly payment, take your annual salary at the time your payment is due and multiple it by 0.3% (0.003). The union will send an email reminder when your next payment is due. If a major vote (e.g., election, ratification, etc) is coming up, **you will not be considered a full member with benefits unless you are current with your dues.**

A **copy of your latest earnings statement**³ with your sensitive information blacked out (e.g., social security number) will need to be included in the envelope with your personal check to verify your dues amount. Checks should be made out to GEO Local 1921, and mailed to the following address, or hand delivered to our Treasurer.

GAO Employees Organization (GEO) Local 1921
Attn: Membership
P.O. Box 50236
Washington, DC 20091-0236

Payments will **not be prorated or reimbursed, except in special cases** determined by our union's Treasurer and President. One exception to this is if you leave the bargaining unit—e.g., if you are promoted, retire, leave GAO, or take another position outside of the bargaining unit—you can seek reimbursement of your dues on a pro-rated basis. It will be your responsibility to notify our union's Treasurer and President of such an action. Reimbursement will occur by check within a month after confirmation that you have left the bargaining unit.

If I pay dues by personal check and want to leave the union, notify our Union Treasurer that you would like to leave the union, and do not make another dues payment. Your resignation will be effective at the end of period covered by your latest check payment.

³ Your gross salary per pay period can be found on your **earnings statement**, which can be retrieved electronically from the National Finance Center's website: <https://www.nfc.usda.gov/personal/>