

Bad Faith with the Red Cross

AFSCME Wisconsin filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board, accusing the American Red Cross of bargaining in bad faith.

AFSCME Locals 1205 and 1558 represent 300 Red Cross employees in Wisconsin and northern Iowa. Their most recent contracts expired on September 30, 2021, yet Red Cross management has met with the two employee bargaining committees only once each. In total, they've canceled or rescheduled as many as 21 sessions.



“We have been requesting to negotiate the local contracts with the American Red Cross since August of 2021,” stated AFSCME Field Representative Neil Rainford. “The Red Cross has consistently either delayed or outright refused to meet. We’ve only met for the initial exchange of proposals in February.”

Collections Technician Lora Parker affirmed, “We have given many dates to accommodate the Red Cross. They cancel, and we start over again. We need some resolution. We are fair with them, and they need to be fair with us.”

Pewaukee Local 1558 member Eric Crocker added, “We are understaffed and underpaid for what we do and for what the Red Cross expects from us. Management is avoiding talking to us about these issues.”

The employees’ bargaining proposals prioritize making wages competitive and scheduling sufficient staffing levels. Workers have endured significant reductions in real wages over the past five years, and the Red Cross consistently schedules too many donors for the staff they have available. This creates a stressful and unsustainable work environment that slows operations, leads to canceled blood drives, and contributes to the shortage of blood available to our hospitals. The changes that the employees have put forward aim to improve these conditions.

“Without engagement from management, employees will continue to take action,” said AFSCME Organizer Issy Bilek. “American Red Cross workers are passionate about their critical role in healthcare, and they will make every effort to prevent the blood shortage from worsening and impacting even more lives. We hope the Red Cross will join them and negotiate a fair contract that allows their lifesaving work to continue.”