

# Newsletter



September 2024

**Dear ATU 758 Members,**

We hope this message finds you well! This Office remain committed to protecting your rights and ensuring that your well-being, both inside and outside of work, is prioritized. In this month's newsletter, we're focusing on Wellness Days—an essential benefit that too many of us overlook but can play a critical role in maintaining our health and preventing burnout.

## **Why Wellness Days Matter**

Whether you're dealing with workplace stress, mental health concerns, or just need a break to recharge, wellness days are there to ensure you have the space to care for yourself. They aren't just a perk but an integral part of staying balanced in today's demanding work environment.

Using wellness days is about prevention—taking care of your body and mind before burnout or illness takes over. Here's why taking your wellness days seriously is important:

- **Prevent Burnout:** A few well-timed days off can be the difference between feeling refreshed and hitting a wall of exhaustion. Wellness days can provide the reset you need.
- **Improve Mental Health:** Stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges are real issues. Wellness days give you the opportunity to decompress and rejuvenate.
- **Support Physical Health:** Use these days for doctor's appointments, physical therapy, or simply to engage in physical activity that keeps your body strong.
- **Enhance Productivity:** Research shows that rested workers are more productive and effective on the job. Don't be afraid to take a day off—it's good for both you and your work performance!

## **How to Qualify for Wellness Days**

Wellness days are typically a union-negotiated benefit, so be sure to review the terms of your contract. Some employers may require a certain amount of time worked before you qualify, while others offer wellness days as part of your standard benefits package.

If you're not sure about your eligibility or need assistance understanding your wellness benefits, reach out to your union representative. We're here to help ensure you can make the most of this important benefit!

## **Tips for Making the Most of Wellness Days:**

1. **Plan Ahead:** While some days off are spontaneous, it's helpful to schedule wellness days during particularly stressful times or after major work deadlines.
2. **Stay Active:** Use your wellness day to engage in activities that recharge both your body and mind. A hike, yoga, or even a leisurely walk can do wonders.
3. **Disconnect:** Truly unplug from work. Put away your phone and email, and focus on activities that bring you joy and relaxation.
4. **Address Health Needs:** Wellness days are a great time to schedule routine checkups, dentist appointments, or other medical visits.

## **We've Got Your Back**

Your Union will continue to advocate for the protection and expansion of wellness days as part of your benefits package. Your health is our top priority!

*If you have questions about wellness days or any other aspect of your contract, don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support you every step of the way.*

In Solidarity,

John Hoheusle, President ATU 758

### ***Maximizing Your Deferred Compensation (457 Plan)***

One of the biggest questions about retirement myself and many of the members of the union has been “Will I be financially ready when I am old enough to retire?”. As good as PERS retirement is, many people have realized that it just isn’t enough by itself. This is where the 457 Plan comes in!

Pierce Transit will match dollar for dollar up to 4.25% of annual wages of represented employees who have completed probation and less than 10 years of service. The match increases to 5.25% from 10 to 14 years of service. Employees with more than 15 years of service will be matched up to 6% of annual wages!

Employees contribute by payroll deduction through 457 program manager ICMA with a wide array of investment instruments.

For example, a new Transit Operator who makes \$64,500 may choose to defer 4.25% of their earnings spread throughout 26 pay periods, saving a total of \$2,741.25, and Pierce Transit would also contribute \$2,741.25. At year’s end, the employee would have a total contribution of \$5482.50, and could choose to direct these savings in one or more mutual funds or fixed savings options. There is no bi-weekly minimum required for participation; therefore, an employee could contribute as little as \$5 per week, for example, with a Pierce Transit match. Increasing, decreasing, stopping and starting contributions can be done without fees or penalties.

By taking advantage of the Pierce Transit match, employees receive an immediate 100% investment return on their savings.

One other huge benefit to participating in this program is that the employee’s share reduces taxable income, thus lowering federal income tax. Also, the effect of compounding earnings on these investments can be substantial over a period of time.

In general, employees cannot withdraw their contributions until they leave employment with Pierce Transit with certain exceptions for loans and certain hardship conditions as defined by the IRS.

Since most Pierce Transit employees do not pay into Social Security, deferred compensation is a way to build a nest egg over their working years to supplement retirement income.

Take advantage of this benefit now! It’s free money!

Andrew Boring,

Financial Secretary

# THANK YOU!

I want to take this moment to thank you, our Union members, for your participation/generous donations for our first **Back-to-School supply drive "Stuff the Bus"**... & friendly competition against Management. Not only did we make an impact to our community, but we also won! This event could not have happened without your unselfish support which no doubt demonstrates we are ***Stronger Together*** and because of the positive results, this event will be held annually.

**Vicky Simpson,**

Executive Board Member

Event Coordinator

**2024 Back to School Drive Award -  
Donut presentation - September 4, 2024.**



## ATU 758's Ron Thornton Golf Tournament Memorial 2024



A big Thank you to all who participated in this year's Golf Event.

Thank you to all our Sponsors and especially to all our Volunteers!

Without you we could not make this fun event happen.

*Our wonderful Sponsors are: Sunrise Dental, Bright Now Dental & American Income Life.*

Thank you to Eagle's Pride Golf Course for hosting our event again this year.

**Jery Hardeman,** Executive Board Member, Golf Tournament Coordinator



**Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 758**

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**(253)474-3123 atu758.org**

**Weingarten rights**

*This statement could save your job! "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated I respectfully request that my shop steward be present at the meeting. Without Union representation present, I choose not to respond to any questions or statements."*

**UNION MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE**

**Executive Board meeting -Thursday, October 3th, at 3:30pm (EB only)**

(ATU Local 758: 6923 Lakewood Dr. B-1, Lakewood, WA)

**Charter Meetings**

**Thursday, October 10th at 6:30 PM & Friday, October 11th at 10 AM**

(ATU Local 758: 6923 Lakewood Dr. B-1, Lakewood, WA)

**Wednesday, October 16th at 7:15 PM in Longview,**

(upstairs lunchroom: 254 Oregon Way, Longview WA)

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**EMAIL ADDRESSES AND CONTACT NUMBERS**

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