What Is AFA?

AFA Compass

A Brochure Provided to New Hires
AFA Overview – Compass Flight Attendants are ‘Power in Numbers’

The Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) is the world’s largest labor union ‘organized by flight attendants for flight attendants’. AFA represents nearly 60,000 flight attendants at 19 airlines, serving as a voice for flight attendants at their workplace, in the industry, in the media and on Capitol Hill. Simply put, the goal of flight attendants who become part of AFA is to negotiate better pay, benefits, working conditions and rules, and to improve their safety while on the job at their airline.

- **AFA** negotiates the best flight attendant contracts in the industry, maintaining and improving wages, benefits and working conditions for flight attendants.
- **AFA** has strength in numbers and a professional staff to assist flight attendants with workplace, career and interpersonal concerns.
- **AFA** is a democratic union representing flight attendants at every type of carrier. All AFA officers are flight attendants who solicit member input on policy and financial decisions.
- **AFA** is the only flight attendant union that solely represents flight attendants’ concerns within the AFL-CIO, the 13-million-member American labor federation.
- **AFA** shares information and strategies, working in solidarity with flight attendant unions around the world through the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

Mission Statement for the Association of Flight Attendants

The Association of Flight Attendants – CWA (AFA-CWA) was founded in 1945 as a democratic member driven union. AFA-CWA’s mission is to unite all professional flight attendants in order to achieve fair compensation, job security, and improved quality of life through organizing, bargaining and political action while serving as the leading voice for a safe, healthy and secure aircraft cabin for passengers and crew alike.

It is a core value of AFA-CWA to promote economic and social justice for all workers through education and action. We are committed to the broadest employment of our members regardless of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

AFA-CWA will continue to preserve and build upon the proud history of our struggles and accomplishments.

(Board 2013)
Where Do My Dues Go?

As an AFA member, you can be assured that 100% of your dues dollars are allocated to priorities that provide Flight Attendant representation. There are four distinct areas where dues money is spent:

1. Locally and Carrier-wide

Each domicile has a Local Executive Council (LEC) with elected Officers who provide direct representation and deal with local issues. These Local Officers will answer your phone calls and make sure your interests are represented in front of domicile management. For example, in the event of discipline or a contract violation, Local Officers will attempt to right the wrong. Additionally, all the Councils elect Master Executive Council (MEC) Officers that provide representation at the corporate level. At both the LEC and MEC there are committees that solve problems in such areas as safety, schedules, hotels, grievances, etc. These committees enforce the contract, produce newsletters, and conduct union meetings. The role of your LEC and MEC Officers and committee representatives is to represent you, and to negotiate with management and develop and maintain the relationship between the airline management and the Union.
2. Negotiations

Bargaining for pay and working conditions is one of the core representation activities performed by the Union. We start with a membership survey, schedule meetings with management, conduct caucuses with the committee, work with AFA professional negotiators to develop contractual language, and directly negotiate with management. The end result is improved contractual language to provide members with higher pay, better working conditions, and improved benefits.

3. System Board (Grievances)

The first step in any grievance is to try to resolve the matter locally. If that fails, then the final stage for resolution, whether disciplinary or contractual, is an appeal to a neutral arbitrator. When it comes to this, then an AFA attorney will work with our Grievance Committee to present our side to the neutral arbitrator. This is the way we protect your job security and defend the contracts we negotiate.

4. International Office Support

While your LEC is the face of the Union to local management and the MEC to corporate management, the International Office is the face of the Union to Congress, governmental regulatory agencies, and the public. Additionally, the International Office maintains the professional staff of attorneys, negotiators, and other personnel that provide services to members and elected leaders.
AFA Has Industry Experts on Staff

AFA Director of Safety, Health and Security Chris Witkowski serves on the Aviation Security Advisory Committee (ASAC) which TSA Administrator Pistole credited with leading him to change his position and keep the ban on knives. Chris Witkowski, an attorney, is considered a safety and security expert throughout the aviation industry. His technical work behind the scenes and the industry relationships he has fostered contributed significant weight to achieving what many believed was impossible – reversing national security policy. AFA has industry experts on staff because, over the decades, AFA members have demanded effective and well-respected programs that shape our profession and our day-to-day experience on the job.

Flight Attendant Certification

AFA’s insistence that flight attendants be recognized as safety and security professionals led to the 2004 FAA requirement that flight attendants be FAA-certified.

Smoking Ban

AFA took on Big Tobacco and pushed legislation that banned smoking on domestic flights. In 1989, AFA worked closely with key allies to pass this legislation, pioneering the trend of smoke-free workplaces.

OSHA for Flight Attendants

- In 1999, AFA formed the OSHA NOW coalition which sought OSHA coverage for AFA members. Working together in a broad-based coalition with allies from the labor movement, women’s organizations and the medical community, AFA persuaded the Clinton Administration to provide Flight Attendants with the same health and safety protections that other workers already enjoy. In December, at an FAA headquarters public hearing, AFA and five of our members testified about serious injuries they sustained and illnesses they contracted in the aircraft cabin, as well as hazards faced by all Flight Attendants.
- The Clinton Administration responded in 2000 when the FAA and OSHA sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to enhance safety and health in the airline industry. The committee met and
published the first report identifying several areas where existing OSHA protections could be implemented. The report called for creating a working group to look for other areas where OSHA could be applied. The appointees under President Bush discontinued this work.

- AFA pushed back and sought political appointments that would support continued work for OSHA in the cabin. The announcement in September 2013 that we have a final policy statement for specific OSHA standards is a culmination of AFA’s deep, persistent work. From AFA members to the experts on staff – AFA never gave up and never will when pursuing issues that matter to Flight Attendants.

**Whistle Blower Protection**

AFA pushed for and achieved Whistle Blower Protection that provides Flight Attendants a way to report safety concerns to the Federal Aviation Administration that are not being appropriately addressed by airline management, without fear of reprisal or job loss.

**Flight Attendant Fatigue**

AFA has worked tirelessly to tackle Flight Attendant fatigue. In 2007, under intense pressure from AFA activists, Congress funded the first comprehensive Flight Attendant fatigue study in the history of our industry.

**ICAO**

AFA Air Safety, Health and Security plays an active role in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), most recently pushing for international standards on air quality and child restraint seats. AFA’s safety experts on staff are well respected around the world and provide us an authoritative voice on these issues.

**Seniority Integration**

AFA’s seniority integration policy sets the gold standard for the industry. Date-of-hire promotes unity as it recognizes what each Flight Attendant brings to an airline merger and allows the focus to remain on unity in support of the best possible contract and conditions on the job. AFA makes a real difference for Flight Attendants.

**Stabilizing Effect on the Industry**

Following the events of September 11, 2001, AFA Government Affairs Committees organized for government-backed loans to help stabilize the airline industry, strict security standards and extended unemployment benefits for Flight Attendants. AFA was successful in each case and made a real difference for Flight Attendants.

**Monitoring for Safety during the Shutdown**

Throughout the 2013 government shutdown, AFA closely monitored its impact on our industry for any potential repercussions for aviation safety. As accident investigations conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) came to a complete halt, including an aviation hearing on the Asiana crash, a JAL Boeing 787 battery fire in Boston, a Southwest Airlines 737 hard landing in LaGuardia and 1500 other open accident investigations, AFA kept watch. AFA informed members that air traffic controllers were on the job, but without the normal support staff and no ability to train new controllers. The FAA had to furlough over 90 percent of its Aircraft Certification Staff and suspend its development, operational testing and implementation of NextGen technologies that are critical to the infrastructure of our industry.
AFA maintained daily communication with members of Congress and the skeleton crew of “essential employees” in federal agencies who handle issues related to our work, benefits or safety, health and security. AFA kept members informed and helped them contact their members Congress to urge an end to the shutdown.

**EPA Drinking Water Rule**

As active participants in all public meetings to develop the new EPA airline drinking water rule, AFA was instrumental in ensuring stronger provisions in and continues to monitor airline compliance with the new rule.

**Reciprocal Cabin Seats**

In 2006, the AFA Board of Directors unanimously adopted a resolution to launch a strategic campaign focused on achieving reciprocal cabin seat agreements throughout the industry. While there were a few agreements that existed prior to this action by the AFA BOD, it was the focus, resources and coordination of AFA leaders and members that pushed these agreements forward and succeeded in providing massive relief to commuting Flight Attendants throughout the industry. These benefits were achieved by Flight Attendants working together. In addition to building power at the negotiating table, this is one example of the tangible results we achieve by promoting AFA's first objective to unite all Flight Attendants.

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*Power in Numbers – AFA Compass Committee Members and Elected Officers are Volunteer Compass Flight Attendants that fly the Line for a Living*
Milestones

1945 Airline Stewardesses Association wins recognition as first union for flight attendants.

1946 First union contract raises United flight attendants’ monthly pay to $155, limits duty hours, sets rest periods and establishes a grievance procedure.

1947 ALSA President Ada Brown, 30, marries and becomes a victim of United’s no-marriage rule. Retires from career and union presidency.

1949 ALSA merges with the Airline Pilots Association affiliate, the Airline Stewards and Stewardesses Association (ALSSA).

1951 ALSSA represents 3,300 flight attendants. Pilots’ opposition to union shop and flight attendants’ desire to acquire a charter with the American Federation of Labor threatens ALSSA’s relationship with ALPA.

1952 Civil Air Administration requires flight attendants on commercial aircraft as cabin safety professionals.

1960 ALPA creates two divisions, the Pilots Division and the Steward and Stewardesses Division. Nearly half of the nation’s 8,700 flight attendants vote to affiliate with ALPA’s S & S Division.

1964 Civil Rights Act passes. Flight attendants use Title VII of the act to challenge discriminatory policies based on gender, race, age, weight, pregnancy and marital status.

1968 Average career for flight attendants lasts 18 months. Mandatory resignation at ages 30-35 struck down.

1971 Pressed by AFA, courts prohibit airlines from refusing to hire males, find United’s no-marriage rule illegal.

1973 Modern AFA is born when ALPA’s S & S Division becomes the Association of Flight Attendants.

1974 Court rules Northwest Airlines must pay female flight attendants same scale as males.

1975 In court, AFA challenges requirement that flight attendants stop working upon pregnancy.

1978 Congress passes the Airline Deregulation Act, giving airlines unlimited authority over routes, scheduling and fare pricing.

1979 AFA litigation results in liberalizing airlines’ weight policies.

1981 Nationwide AFA campaign helps kill FAA plan to reduce the number of cabin crew members.

1982 AFA represents 22,000 flight attendants at 18 carriers.

1984 Fulfilling a quest by AFA leaders since the union’s founding in 1946, AFA is granted a charter by the AFL-CIO. AFA prodigies results in new FAA rules requiring floor-level exit lights, less flammable cabin interiors and other cabin safety breakthroughs.

1987 Years of pressure from AFA prompts FAA to issue policy limiting number of passenger carry-on bags.

1988 Lobbying before Congress results in smoking ban on domestic flights of two hours or less.
1990 - AFA petitions FAA to apply OSHA standards to flight attendants. Smoking ban goes into effect on all domestic flights.

1991 - AFA hosts first international flight attendant symposium, sharing ideas with flight attendants from Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, South Korea, Norway, Singapore, and Sweden.

1994 - AFA CHAOS campaign of intermittent work stoppages upheld in court; results in landmark contract settlement at Alaska Airlines. USAir weight program suspended following litigation by AFA. FAA issues duty-time regulations for flight attendants.

1995 - Representing 36,000 flight attendants at 23 airlines, AFA celebrates its first full century of union achievements.

1996 - AFA's aggressive pursuit of safety issues following the Everglades VolsJet crash provokes major changes at FAA, shifting the agency's focus to safety and resulting in closer scrutiny of safety issues at start-up carriers.

1997 - AFA Board of Directors makes major commitment to organizing, creating new organizing fund to unionize all flight attendants in AFA.

1998 - AFA fights to limit carry-on baggage, sponsors an industry conference on the problem and introducing a proposed rule to the FAA restricting size and weight of carry-ons.

1999 - America West flight attendants achieve victory with a solid first contract on the eve of a CHAOS strike after nearly 10 years of struggle with a recall-laden employer. AFA membership tops 46,000 members at 36 airlines, residing in every U.S. state and many countries around the world.

2000 - After intensive lobbying efforts, AFA wins four major legislative victories: whistleblower protection, increased penalties for overcrowded interference, study of cabin air quality, and an international smoking ban.

2001 - In the wake of the September 11 attacks that killed 25 flight attendants on four hijacked aircraft, AFA members and leaders descend on Capitol Hill to lobby Congress for airline security legislation. AFA fights to protect thousands of furloughed flight attendants who lost their jobs as a result of the terrorist attacks.

2002 - AFA members continue to lobby for improved security, including certification for all flight attendants, and press airlines to provide mandatory safety training. Nearly 50,000 flight attendants at 26 airlines bring AFA to its largest and most influential level to date.

2003 - Decades after AFA leadership set forth their objectives in the AFA Constitution & Bylaws and after nearly a year-long battle on Capitol Hill, Congress passed flight attendant certification legislation on November 21.

2004 - A majority vote of AFA members results in a merger with the 700,000-member-strong Communications Workers of America (CWA). The merger results in member access to greater resources as well as significant expansion in the union's ability to influence legislation critical to the preservation of flight attendant jobs.

2006 - Northwest Airlines flight attendants vote to join AFA-CWA, expanding membership to a total of 55,000 flight attendants under the AFA-CWA umbrella.

2007 - AFA-CWA convinces Congress to pass legally-binding seniority protection for airline workers involved in airline mergers. The law protects one group of airline workers from being bumped in favor another group of workers to the bottom of a seniority list and provides a process for equitable seniority integration.

2008 - AFA-CWA pressures Congress to enact and fund the first comprehensive flight attendant fatigue study in the history of our industry.

2009 - In the second week of 2009, Ryan International and Lynx Aviation flight attendants vote for AFA-CWA representation. Flight attendants at US Airways and Compass join AFA-CWA in October and November, respectively.

The Office of Management and Budget, in conjunction with its interagency Standard Occupational Classification Policy Committee, grants AFA-CWA's petition to reclassify flight attendants from personal care and service workers to transportation and material moving occupations in the Federal government's Standard Occupational Classification. This reclassification moves flight attendants into the same category as pilots, mechanics and other certified aviation workers.

In the first 100 days of the Obama administration, former AFA-CWA President Linda Puchalski is appointed to the National Mediation Board (NMB)—a promising move toward restoring the Board's integrity. The NMB's mission is to protect the right of employees to engage in free and fair collective bargaining in the rail, aviation and trucking industries.

Following a rigorous and persistent campaign, AFA-CWA finally wins FMLA coverage for flight attendants. Congress adopts technical correction to the Family and Medical Leave Act that previously excluded many flight crew because of the unique way in which our hours are counted.
AFA GENERAL INFORMATION

Q. CAN I WEAR THE AFA PIN WHILE ON PROBATION?

You can wear the AFA pin as soon as you receive your wings and after graduation. You will be an apprentice member of AFA.

Q. WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE AS AN APPRENTICE (PROBATIONARY) MEMBER?

You are covered under all sections of the contract except for disciplinary grievances. Union representatives are available to answer your questions and concerns. You will receive all union publications. Your voting privileges begin at the end of your probationary period. You are encouraged and invited to attend local meetings.

Q. CAN THE UNION FILE A GRIEVANCE FOR ME DURING MY PROBATION?

The union can file a grievance on your behalf covering contractual violations only. The union cannot represent you in any disciplinary hearings during your probationary period; however, please contact a union representative if you are involved in any situation that could lead to discipline -- AFA can offer advice.

Q. WHEN DO I HAVE TO PAY UNION DUES AND HOW MUCH ARE THEY?

Dues are $48.00 per month and will not begin until completion of your probationary period.

Q. WHAT IS THIS ABOUT AN INITIATION FEE?

A one-time initiation fee of $60.00 is due at the completion of probation. The $60.00 can be paid at one time or in $10.00 increments during probation. If, for some reason you leave the airline and are hired by another AFA carrier and have already paid your initiation fee, your initiation fee would transfer.

Q. WHAT IS A “DCO”?

“DCO” stands for dues check-off authorization. It authorizes the airline to deduct dues from your paycheck each month. This is the easiest way to meet your dues responsibility and prevents you from falling behind in your payments. If, for some reason you did not fill out the DCO, please contact your AFA representative.
www.afacompass.org

AFA Safety Hotline: 1-800-424-2401

AFA Compass Committees

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