

Welcome to the first edition of The Stewards Corner, a quarterly newsletter for public sector workers, created and brought to you by a statewide group of stewards. Our mission is to empower and strengthen you in the role of steward. We will provide content that will help keep you connected to issues, organizing efforts,



and actions across the state and across agencies. We hope you enjoy this first edition, and we look forward to bringing you content of interest in future editions. *Oly Wallenfels, EEC, Chair*

★ STEWARD SPOTLIGHT ★

“Don’t be afraid of your own power.” – Dan Moss

We spoke with Dan Moss, a Human Services Coordinator II who provides substance use counseling at DMH’s Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center. Dan wears many 509 “hats” not only as a steward, but also as Metro Boston VP for DMH, JEB and COPE Member, Co-chair of the Committee on Environmental Justice, Recording Secretary for AFRAM Massachusetts, and member of the Indigenous Peoples Caucus.

Raised in a family dedicated to service, he has long been drawn to sharing and understanding the stories of others. “Sometimes the best prescription is a bit a humor and compassion to cut into the challenges we all share. We need to embrace each other because our collective voice can change the world.”

His days are full, balancing clinical rounds, treatment team meetings, one-on-one counseling, group facilitation, paperwork, and his 509 responsibilities. Beginning as a 509 steward three years ago, he acknowledges significant growth as a leader and better understanding of his members’ hunger for equity, inclusion, and respect.

What he finds most meaningful is building trust with individuals who may not offer it easily and having the courage to ask difficult but important questions. Outside of work, he enjoys painting, writing poetry, cooking, the English Premier League, and working towards a Labor Studies Master’s Degree at UMASS-Amherst. Dan’s advice to fellow stewards: challenge your assumptions, embrace less-traveled paths, and don’t be afraid of your own growth -- or your own power.

Interview by Annie Kelley, DMH

★ WEEKLY STEWARD MEETINGS ★

Are you a new steward, an only steward in your workplace, or a long-term steward without a support system? Well, if you are, we have a place you can go to get support, answers, and learn how to become more effective in the role of steward. Join us every Friday at noon for the Weekly Stewards Meeting. This is a virtual meeting where you can meet other stewards, learn how to organize your workplace, and bring up issues affecting members at your workplace. Jerry Levinsky, SEIU 509, Internal Organizer, has been hosting and moderating this meeting for the past four years. On many Fridays Jerry reminds us, “This is not a training,” but a meeting for stewards lead by stewards. He encourages us to bring issues, concerns, and questions to the meetings for discussions. The discussions can take place in large group format and in small breakout rooms, allowing participants to meet and get to know each other. Discussions topics include advocating for safe working conditions, the grievance process, our contract, and organizing and mobilizing the workplace. As workers face a widening wealth gap, attacks on immigrants, and cuts to social programs, we are fighting back- and you can be part of our fight to workers’ rights in the Commonwealth. Use [this link](#) to join us each Friday from 12:00 to 1:00, and feel free to eat your lunch while we meet!

Lawrence Muttly, DYS

★ A MOMENT IN TIME ★

This year, Lobby Day took place on April 8, 2026. It is a day on which members of SEIU Local 509 - alongside other unions - go to the State House to address issues affecting the daily lives of the Commonwealth citizens and to urge legislators to take appropriate action to allocate funding for key issues such as healthcare, education, the creation of well-paying jobs, and many others.

We had the opportunity to meet in person with legislators and speak to their staff. We received a warm welcome and were able to skillfully articulate the day-to-day conditions faced by workers in Massachusetts.

As we told our story and shared our life experiences, legislators were able to see who we are as members of Local 509, the strength we represent, the importance of our work, and the necessity to stand by our side on the issues that matter most.

We hope that we have been heard, and that they will introduce legislation aimed at protecting workers and funding the services we provide day in and day out. We had a record-breaking turnout for Lobby Day 2026. You can help make a difference by joining us, in solidarity next year, for Lobby Day 2027.

Jean T. Voltaire, MassAbility

DID YOU KNOW?

Your Union Contract vs. Supplemental Agreements

When we talk about our union contract, most people think of it as one big document that covers everything about our jobs. But did you know there is more to it than just the main agreement?

The Union Contract (a.k.a. the Master Agreement): This is the foundation. It outlines the core terms and conditions of employment for all members covered under the agreement. Things like wages, benefits, grievance procedures, job protections, and working conditions are all defined here. Think of it as the rulebook that ensures fairness, consistency, and accountability across the board.

Supplemental Agreements – What Are They? Supplemental agreements are additions or modifications that address specific situations, job classifications, departments, or locations. They do not replace the main contract—they build on it. These agreements are often negotiated to clarify language in the main contract, address unique workplace needs, set up added protections or expectations, and to resolve ongoing issues not fully covered in the master agreement.

Why Do They Matter? Supplemental agreements allow your union to be flexible and responsive. Not every role or worksite runs the same way, and these agreements help ensure that your specific working conditions are represented fairly.

Here is the key difference:

- The main contract applies broadly to everyone in the bargaining unit
- Supplemental agreements apply to more specific groups or situations within that unit

The Bottom Line: Both the union contract and supplemental agreements work together to protect your rights on the job. Knowledge is power and can help transform the workplace. Strong contracts protect workers—but informed members make them even stronger.

Lyndsey Mewa, DMH

