

VOLUME 25 NO. 01 | SUMMER 2025

# Bookshelf

THE QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD, LOCAL 1321 NEWSLETTER

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## President's Message

**A very busy summer**

First off, I am honored that the members of Local 1321 elected me for another term. It is a privilege I do not take for granted, and I am committed to upholding Local 1321's principles.

As the newly elected Local 1321 Executive Board we uphold Local 1321's principles of representing all full-time union eligible Queens Public Library employees. All members are represented regardless of ethnicity, skin color, age, religion, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristics, and national origin. Representation is done with hard work, integrity, honesty, conscientiousness, and compassion through:

- Contract negotiations with Queens Public Library's Administration and the City to improve members work-lives, pay, and benefits
- Contract enforcement through advocacy and grievances
- Communication conducted via email, newsletters, text message, social media, virtual and in-person meetings, and other written and verbal means

- DC 37's prescription, dental, optical, legal, mental health, audiology, death, disability, and education benefits
- Advocacy for budgets, library workers, libraries, and the broader labor movement
- Empowering our members by proactively adapting to the evolving landscape of library work, ensuring they are equipped to meet future challenges.

Secondly, this has been a very busy summer for the members of Local 1321. We have been:

- Holding the Administration accountable and ensuring they follow the contract as HVAC systems fail throughout the system.
- Shepherding multiple arbitrations through their process.
- Meeting with auditors to go over the Local's audit.
- Arguing with the Administration over plexiglass barriers and security.
- Negotiating more appropriate classifications for the newly unionized Staff Analysts.
- Negotiating a Customer Service classification redesign.
- Preparing to negotiate a new contract.
- Holding an election for the Executive Board.
- Awarding Local 1321's scholarship.
- Assessing how the Trump Administration's budget will affect our library directly.
- And more

Yes, it has been busy, but we must be vigilant because our way of life is under attack. Every day the Federal government promulgates new rules, cuts funding, and eliminates federal agencies that protect workers and unions, among other directives.

Unions are the only protection for the vast majority of workers. Unions are the only reason why you have a pension, premium-free health care, salary increases, vacations and sick leave, and any say in the workplace. The Federal government is stripping those rights away as you read this. The only way unions will survive these attacks is by each and every union member committing themselves to the labor movement and really understanding who has your best interest at heart.

## Local 1321's 2025-2028 Executive Board



Congratulations to the 2025-2028 Local 1321 Executive Board. Each of us are honored that you have entrusted us to fulfill this great union's principles representing all full-time unionized Queens Public Library employees regardless of ethnicity, skin color, age, religion, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristics, and national origin.

Representation is done with hard work, integrity, honesty, conscientiousness, and compassion through:

- Contract negotiations with Queens Public Library's Administration and the City to improve members' work-life balance, pay, and benefits.
- Contract enforcement through advocacy and grievances.
- Communication conducted via email, newsletters, text message, social media, virtual and in-person meetings, and other written and verbal means.
- DC 37's prescription, dental, optical, legal, mental health, audiology, death, disability, and education benefits.
- Advocacy for budgets, library workers, libraries, and the broader labor movement
- Empowering our members by proactively adapting to the evolving landscape of library work, ensuring they are equipped to meet future challenges.

**President:** John Hyslop, 718-779-0787, 212-815-1188, 718-779-0788 (f), local1321@gmail.com

**Executive VP:** Margaret Gibson, 718-657-1057

**VP Librarian:** Sharon Diamond-Velox, 917-267-9514

**Librarian Representative:** Elizabeth "Pat" Eshun, 347-378-6902

**VP Clerical:** Roma Ramdhan, 718-526-5835

**Clerical Representative:** Barbara Halloway, 347-309-5047, hallowaybarbara@gmail.com

**VP Blue Collar:** Howard Goldsmith, 917-213-0054

**Blue Collar Representative:** Hezzie Green

**VP Professional & Technical (Non-Librarian):** Lisa Soler, 917-740-6768

**Delegates:** Chante Gaines, Kacper Jarecki, Startisca McGhee, Brie Taylor

**Secretary:** Ann Marie Josephs

**Treasurer:** Bonnie Hodes

**Trustees:** Sharla Emery, Abigail Goldberg, Carol Rance-Fisher

**Appointed Committees:**

**Publicity/Social Media Committee:** Jill Anderson, Dominic Diongson (Chair), Margaret Gibson, Bonnie Hodes, Leslie Huynh

**Scholarship Committee:** Jasmine Amely, Alexis Burgess, Margaret Gibson, Sharla Emery, Kendra Kuszai

# Customer Service Redesign



## 2nd Bargaining Session

On July 30, 2025, the Union represented by Executive Vice President Margaret Gibson, DC 37 Delegate and Chief Steward Brie Taylor, DC 37 Delegate Startisca McGhee, Clerical Vice President Roma Ramdhan, DC 37 Negotiator Leo Morris, and I met with the Administration represented by Danette Brown, Jonathan Lam, Sung Kim, Nick Buron, Danielle Gifford, Tatyana Magazinik, Thomas Maxheimer, and Andy Wedmore to continue negotiating the Customer Service Redesign.

As reported in the first negotiation's summary, the Administration stated they are no longer hiring Representatives and are replacing them with Specialists. This new directive has caused considerable confusion, disruption, and it forces people to do more work for less pay. The Union proposed that the Specialist and Representative roles be combined and supervised by the Supervisor and entailed paying people more for their extra work. This proposal would provide clarity at the branch and streamline the supervision. It would also acknowledge the affected staff's additional workload.

In the latest meeting the Administration provided a counterproposal and explained some of the costs involved.

Both sides agreed to continue this dialog in hopes of coming up with a solution.

We will keep you abreast of any developments.

## CALL FOR CONTRACT DEMANDS



Working Conditions Contract Expiring Soon: What do you want in your contract?

On December 31, 2025, Local 1321's working conditions contract will expire. Therefore, now is the time to start compiling demands in advance of negotiating a new contract. The current contract, here <https://www.local1321.org/contracts-side-letters>, codifies many of our work rules including:

- Annual-leave accruals
- Lunch periods for blue-collar employees
- Jury duty
- Floating holidays
- Operation of the library in the event of extreme temperatures
- Bereavement leave

Generally speaking, this contract does not cover anything related to members' salaries, health insurance, longevity payments, etc. DC 37 and New York City negotiate the economic contract. Local 1321's working conditions contract is negotiated periodically, and during the term of each contract; revisions and/or additions might be necessary prior to negotiating a new contract.

The first step in the process is to create demands. Thus far, members have submitted demands ranging from adequate staffing and AI protection, to timely travel reimbursement and changing the extreme temperature thresholds to something more appropriate.

The Bargaining Committee, which is composed of the Local's Executive Board members, is soliciting more demands. If you have any, you can submit them to one of the Committee/Executive Board members; email to [local1321@gmail.com](mailto:local1321@gmail.com); or send them to the Local's office at the Woodside Library. The deadline for submissions is August 31, 2025.

After receiving your submissions, the Committee will proceed to review and discuss the demands, and then present them to the membership for approval. The Local will reach out to the Library's Administration to create a schedule for the Local and the Library's Administration to start negotiating a new contract.

This is a long process, and with all the bargaining that is likely to ensue, no side gets everything they want. Throughout the negotiations, the Bargaining Committee is committed to including the membership with as much information as we are allowed. This is your contract, and we need your input.

## Staff Safety Following the Removal of Plexiglass Barriers



### Continued Calls for Holistic Approach to Safety

After months of waiting on the Administration's decision to allow location staff to make their own decision on whether the plexiglass should stay or go, the Administration disregarded your wishes and ordered the plexiglass removed.

In a July 10, 2025 email exchange that included members of the Board of Trustees, they believe that this is the right decision and are concerned about our security. To that end, they said that they are exploring adding more security staff and committing to a dialog about security.

We condemned their decision because those barriers are the only things protecting staff from projectiles. We said that the onus is now on the Administration to protect their staff from projectiles and reiterated our members need an holistic approach to security that includes many of the issues we brought to them before:

- Rules of engagement

- Training
- Emergency preparedness drills
- Banning process and procedures
- Empathetic and immediate responses after a traumatic event
- Structural designs that account for security
- High definition cameras for all locations.

On July 21, 2025, Executive Vice President Margaret Gibson and I met with Sung Kim and Andy Wedmore. We expressed our displeasure at the pace of security changes at the Library; their removal of the barriers; and that these decisions are being made by people who do not work the frontlines. They stated that they believe that the barrier removal is correct; they are creating a banning process and procedures; and received money in this year's capital budget to buy high definition cameras for locations that do not have them.

Creating holistic and robust security is difficult for an Administration to create at a public library, because we have little control over who comes through our doors. To help achieve this, the Union has offered many ideas that would make our workplaces safe and made numerous requests to collaborate on a holistic approach. The Administration has ignored our overtures and only reluctantly made movement towards doing something after we threatened them with lawsuits, grievances, and advocacy. Though, they have only said they are doing things.

We will continue to push for making our workplaces and keep the Trustees abreast on the progress.



The Library's Motor Vehicle Operators (MVO) work in extreme temperatures. Yes, sometimes a building's air conditioner breaks down, and eventually members get relief. But an MVO's truck does not have a working air conditioner.

In late July, the MVOs put forth a proposal that compensates them in cash or time one hour after the temperature gets above 85F or below 62F. This commonsense and compassionate approach recognizes their essential work under extreme temperatures. Furthermore, the Administration has told them that this is only temporary because new trucks are being purchased and the trucks' air conditioners are being fixed.

We look forward to a response from the Administration.

# Federal Government's Budget Impact on Libraries



President's cruel budget will impact Queens Public Library

President Trump's budget that passed Congress in July will have a direct impact on libraries, because the City and State will have to fund many of the Federal programs that are being cut and libraries' budgets will be affected. Here are some of the most onerous and obvious:

- Drastic and draconian cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, school funding, NYCHA, CUNY, H+H, DOT, and other city agencies
- Elimination of grants to Libraries, Health and Hospitals Corporations, and other city and state agencies and services
- Makes permanent tax cuts that disproportionately benefits billionaires and millionaires and not the people who desperately need it

Those are a summary of some of the very harmful cuts. I am sure you are aware of these and others.

The following is how our library will be impacted. In June, the Mayor and City Council agreed to a budget favorable to the Library. As the year progresses and the cuts start impacting the City and State budgets, they will have to move money around to cover the billions of dollars of Federal cuts but will not be able to cover the shortfall. Come November, as the City assesses its budget and revenue does not cover expenses, the City will be forced to cut budgets, including the libraries' budgets for the next fiscal year, which starts in July 2026.

These cuts are terrible and cruel. AFSCME at the national level and DC 37 at the local level started a campaign to fight them and hold the politicians who voted for them accountable. As always, DC 37 and the four New York City library unions will fight to protect our libraries and our jobs because libraries and their workers are vital to our city.

## 2025 LOCAL 1321 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER!



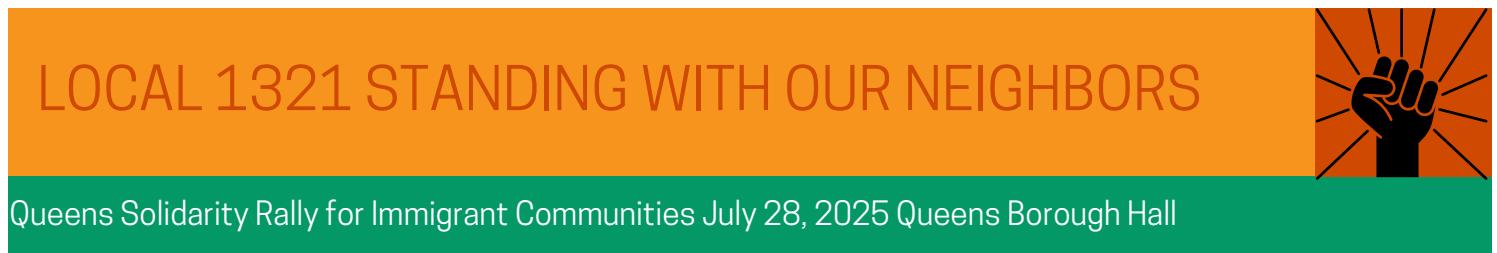
Congratulations to the 2025 Local 1321 Scholarship Winner Jeremiah Michel, son of Jeffery Michel, who is Laurelton's Customer Service Specialist. The Committee was very impressed with Jeremiah's commitment to his community and education. His grades, recommendation, and essay demonstrated to us that he is a caring individual who works hard to improve himself and others around him.

"As I read the application I kept repeating the words 'exceptional' and 'impressive.' By the time I finished reading, I was floored with all the accomplishments and felt without a question it was a winner!" — Scholarship Committee Member

"As a member of the scholarship committee, I am honored to recognize your outstanding achievements and potential. This award reflects not only your hard work and dedication but also our belief in your ability to make a meaningful impact in your chosen field. We look forward to hearing about the remarkable contributions you will bring to the world. Congratulations!" — Scholarship Committee Member

Congratulations again, Jeremiah and Jeffery.

Local 1321 Scholarship Committee



Assistant Director of NAP Fred Gitner and Local 1321's Clerical Representative Barbara Halloway, Librarian Representative Pat Eshun, and Blue Collar Representative Hezzie Green joined Borough President Donovan Richards and fellow community members in a rally supporting our immigrant communities.

