

MTA Assistance to Affiliates: Workplace Health and Safety Issues

The Massachusetts Teachers Association is committed to helping local unions organize for health and safety on the job, for our members, students, and communities. MTA provides training and support for local union health and safety committees, and the MTA statewide Environmental Health & Safety Committee (EHSC) develops tools, resources, and policies, together with allies in Occupational Safety and Health organizations, the NEA and the AFL-CIO, and other organizations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the EHSC continuously developed recommendations based on science and member action.

The MTA website, massteacher.org, and the [webpage for the EHSC](#) contain resources for Health & Safety Committees, and your field rep or regional organizer can provide additional support and resources including training/education, assistance making and organizing strategy, bargaining and access to legal support. In making an organizing plan, the Committee should be clear on the nature and scope of the problem, how many people (members, students, community) it affects, whether the employer has been asked to address the problem, and what collective action the membership is prepared to take.

Locals are strongly encouraged to have an active union Workplace Health and Safety Committee of at least three members, and a process to communicate with and engage members through building reps or a communication action team to reach all members in all buildings. If there are multiple locals affected in the same workplace, the H & S Committee should include all the locals.

The Committee should be willing to:

- a. Reach out to members about the issue, including distributing information, engaging members in collective action, and providing updates to affiliate leadership and the members.
- b. Share training/information with members on their right to a healthy and safe workplace, and facts about indoor air quality and other workplace health and safety issues.
- c. Meet with the employer, (or the employer's designees), regarding the issues, either independently or with other union officers, the assigned field rep or organizer.
- d. Interface with the assigned consultant or attorney regarding the air quality/workplace health and safety issues.
- e. Be available for training on issues related to indoor air quality and other workplace health and safety issues.
- f. Work with any assigned or contracted consultants or/and field staff.

Assessment and testing for hazards:

Grants for financial assistance to obtain expert consulting services on indoor air quality may be requested by MTA affiliates, upon the request of the affiliate president. Indoor air quality includes COVID mitigation measures (such as air exchange and filtration), mold, particulate matter, HVAC and temperature issues. Certain other workplace health and safety issues may also require consultation by an expert.

All **grants for financial assistance** are for assistance to a local union health and safety committee and should arise out of an existing indoor air quality or workplace health and safety issue(s). A local union Health & Safety Committee should develop a grant application (attached below) in consultation with their assigned field representative or organizer. The grant application must be reviewed by the local president then submitted for MTA approval and assignment.

Grants provide up to \$3,200 for approved consulting and/or legal advice or other approved use relative to a workplace health or safety problem arising in a school or campus building and affecting unit members. It is

expected that the local Health and Safety Committee will request that the employer bear the costs of testing, equipment, repairs, mitigation, and training, although MTA and allies such as MassCOSH and the state Department of Labor Standards may also be involved.

Grants for financial assistance above and beyond the base grant shall require additional review and approval by the Director of Field & Organizing and shall require dollar-for-dollar matching funds from the affiliate to a maximum amount of an additional \$2,600 (supplemental grant).

**REQUEST FOR SERVICES
MTA Health & Safety Consultation**

Name of Local Association:	
Association President:	
Telephone Number:	Home Email Address: (please do not use work email)
Please explain the nature of the health and safety issue. What's the problem, who does it affect? (Please specify if the problem is in a specific worksite location or local-wide) Are members willing to get involved?	
<p>MTA can provide free help assessing the problem, developing an education and organizing plan, bargaining, and taking action. Costs for testing materials, lab processing, and mitigation are generally the responsibility of the employer or the local association (or in combination)</p> <p>Our request is for (check all that apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain above)</p>	
This grant requires that your Local Association has an active Health and Safety Committee	
<input type="checkbox"/> We request assistance starting a committee <input type="checkbox"/> We have a Health and Safety Committee (contact person below)	
Contact Person for Health and Safety Committee:	
Name:	
Worksite:	
Phone(s) (cell, home)	
Non-work email address:	
Date evaluation is needed: (please note urgency)	
Approved:	Date:
Field Representative or Regional Organizer	
Approved:	Date:
Regional Manager	
Approved:	Date:
Field Director	

Please save the document and rename with the name of the local association first, then email it to the next person whose signature is required. So a request filed by the Belmont Education Association, for example, would be named BelmontHealthandSafetyGrant.pdf. The form should be completed and signed by the local president, field rep and regional manager.