

My name is Kevin Block and I use he/him pronouns. I am a coordinator II in the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. I am also a current member of the CPPW Organizing Committee (OC). As a member of the OC my work has mostly been focused on workplace organizing and stewardship. You may have seen me facilitating info-sessions in your bureaus or answering questions in our union Discord.

Personally, I grew up in a family of union educators and factory workers in a small town in Central Illinois. This experience taught me about the power of organized labor to improve the lives of workers themselves, but also the communities they serve. I also learned about the harm that can be done when unions lose touch with the rank-and-file workers who are the backbone of any labor movement.

After getting my degree in electrical engineering in 2016 I worked in the auto industry for about 4 years. Right around the start of the pandemic I decided to change careers and returned to school to get a degree in city planning. Ultimately, this decision led me to a job with Transition Projects here in Portland where I was trained and served as a union steward for AFSCME Local-88. The experience could be roughly summed up as trial by fire. I did a ton of learning on the job and often had to navigate managerial incompetence and institutional stagnation. As a steward I took a very active approach to my work and positioned myself as someone who could help my coworkers navigate both the union as well as be a general office information source.

In mid-2023 the poor pay, and emotional stress associated with houseless services work prompted me to accept a position with the city. When I learned about CPPW I immediately approached them to inquire about becoming a steward. At the time, I had no idea how new the union was or that I would be motivated by the other members involved to become a member of the OC. Specifically, I was inspired by the OC's commitment to equity, democratic unionism, and desire for the union to not only fight for its members' paychecks but for the communities we serve.

As Chief Steward my goal is to lay the groundwork for a robust and active steward network that will serve the union well into the future. I also want to ensure that any CPPW member interested in becoming a steward isn't left to learn on their own the way I was.

*I am proud to be running for Chief Steward as part of the **Build Strong Slate** of candidates. We are a group of people who have been working together for the better part of 2023 to build this union as a democratic-minded, member-driven, and equity-centered organization. We work well together, share common values, and have a clear vision of the future of CPPW. Build Strong is a proven leadership team for our union.*