

Road Map to Action

Save Social Security - Fund it to fix it campaign

Thank you so much for considering an action outside of your local Social Security Office! This document will help you to set up and hold a successful “*Save Social Security - Fund it to Fix it*” actions outside of your local field offices.

These events are a fun and energizing way to bring our issues forward!

Why are we engaging in this work?

The work of holding public events will bring awareness of the solvency, staffing, and operational issues facing the Social Security Administration to the public. Events bring media attention, in addition to interest from those who are driving and walking by. Events also provide an opportunity for AFGE members and the public to take action.

How these events look

Overall, the aim will be to hold a short (1 hour or less) event on the public sidewalk in front of or near Social Security Field Offices within the jurisdiction of your local or state. Participants will gather outside, hold signs, chant, and demonstrate for about 45 minutes and then hear from speakers.

First Steps - make decisions and a plan

The first steps for your AFGE Local or community organization to take is to decide on the number and location of your events. More events will allow for more participation and a broader geography, but will also involve more preparation, travel, and expense. Gathering the people who are interested in these events (such as like-minded people from the local union) will allow you to hold a meeting to make these decisions. In the end, there is no “right” number of events. We recommend, at minimum, holding one action outside of a SSA office in each Congressional District in your state, in larger cities and SSA offices with high traffic streets. For a list of SSA offices and their Congressional District, please contact AFGE Council 220 President Jessica LaPointe lapointe4afgec220@gmail.com (cell 608-239-3281). Choose the locations, dates, and a consistent start time for each action. We recommend starting at noon for each action, and we recommend no more than two actions per week. This will be accessible for retirees and SSA workers, who can attend during their lunch break. Holding the events after the workday is also an option. Check with local authorities for any necessary permits for any rally or informational picketing.

Additionally, please reach out to a community partner organization such as the state chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans. The list of ARA state chapters can be found by [clicking here](#). These community partner organizations can help at every stage of the planning, preparation, and implementation of the event.

It is important to give your Local time to prepare. We recommend setting the first action date at least three weeks out from when you decide to hold them.

Have AFGE National print and mail you rally sings and action flier material found at <https://www.afgec220.org/> under Action tool kit. Request printing here <https://www.afge.org/printrequest> contact Benji King for assistance benjamin.king@afge.org if needed.

Order your T-shirts, buttons, folder stickers, folders, pens, etc. found at <https://www.afgestore.org/category/ssa.html>

Next Steps - generating turnout and media attention

Now that your team has made a decision about the number, location, and dates for each action, you will need to start generating turnout and media coverage of the event. Please start by contacting all leaders, activists, and members of your AFGE Local. Then, with your community partners, set up Facebook events for all actions. Create a flier as well please contact Delia Trevino Deliatrevino777@gmail.com for assistance with creating a flier. When the flier is done, please email it to Mark Rogers mark.rogers.mba@hotmail.com for Council promotion on our social media and website and then, please promote the event far and wide! Use your local's facebook page to make periodic posts about the events and send emails to all your members. Please contact your local elected officials, local Central Labor Council, other unions, progressive organizations, and neighborhood groups. Please make as many phone calls as you can and record who has said they can attend. Also, please directly contact the workers at each designated SSA office where demonstrations will be held so they can plan to participate as well.

You should also contact AFGE National action alert coordinator:

michael.newberger@afge.org to send out an AFGE action alert in your area of action.

***Contact the AFGE Communications Department at press@afge.org for assistance with reaching out to press. Be sure to provide the name of a local press contact who will be in attendance and can speak on the record (this can be AFGE staff, if available).

Here is the link to the AFGE Comms media tips:

<https://www.afge.org/leaders-activists/education/communications-training/engaging-your-community-media-tips/>

Holding the event

Now that the events are approaching, you will need to prepare for the action itself. The day before the event, please make reminder calls to everyone you have confirmed for the action. The phone calls will provide another reminder that will ensure people do not forget.

Print all the materials you need including: action alert flyers, talking points, and rally signs from <https://www.afgec220.org/>

A few hours before the event, arrive at the designated SSA office, Working from the break room, hold conversations with the SSA employees and AFGE members so they know what is happening outside of their office and can participate on their lunch break, if they have not made a plan to participate already. You can also bring and promote union issues and listening sessions during office visits that day. For mobilization materials such as bulletin board materials, event intake forms, and membership forms please visit <https://www.afgec220.org/> “mobilize tool kit.” Do not forget to have a sign in sheet if you are serving food as this is a DOL requirement. You can contact your District AFGE NVP to request a national organizer attend with you to assist with this and stay in the office break room over the lunch hour to continue conversations while you are at the action.

As the event starts, make sure to have everyone sign in outside as well! Recording who turned out to the events will help you know who the strongest supporters of this campaign are so we can mobilize them in the future when the new Congress is seated. As people sign in, welcome them individually and make sure they have a sign to hold. Let them know that you will all be demonstrating for 30-40 minutes and then hearing from speakers, so they are free to stand where they would like and have conversations with other attendees. As you are standing there, cars passing by may honk - this is a great way to generate energy and excitement! Chanting is also a good idea, but not necessary for the entire duration. Examples of chants are the in the “Do’s and Don’ts” section.

If any media is present, please assist them by bringing AFGE Local leadership over to the reporter for an interview. Also help community partner representatives to have an interview as well. Please avoid having workers or community supporters who are not currently in leadership or working closely with you holding media interviews - *as we are not positive they will stick to the message!* Please take as many photos and videos as you can with your own device so AFGE can share out pictures as well! This is a great task to assign to a member who wants to be involved.

Approximately 30-40 minutes into the event, please invite all attendees to gather together and hear from speakers. The AFGE Local leadership should speak for a few minutes, and representatives from community partners should speak as well.

After speakers, wrap up the event! Thank everyone for attending and take a group photo! Hold one last chant, and dismiss everyone. Please make sure everyone has signed in before they leave.

Alternatives to in-person “Save Social Security” Actions

If setting up an in-person demonstration is not something you are able to do, then we would recommend an online event over zoom. This could be a virtual town hall, where AFGE Local leaders and community partners could speak and provide details on solvency, staffing, and operational issues within SSA. For an example of an online town

hall, please watch the video recording of the Wisconsin Alliance's online town hall on January 10, 2024: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3q_4NkCN2o

Action Dos and Don'ts

Make sure to DO the following:

- Check with local authorities for any necessary permits for any rally or informational picketing.
- Have AFGE National print and mail you rally sings and flier material found at [AFGEC220.org](https://www.afgec220.org) under Action tool kit.
- Order your T-shirts, buttons, folder stickers, folders, pens etc. found at <https://www.afgestore.org/category/ssa.html>
- Contact your local Central Labor Council for turn out.
- Actions should be held over the lunch hour or after the workday ends.
- No SSA employee should be on duty time (official time, or agency time) during the action.
- You can request to flex your lunch to have a full hour of participation.
- Plan a demonstration series (multiple office visits over the course of the summer into the fall) and create a schedule and a flier.
- Notify the Regional offices, Area Directors, and office managers of the plan and purpose ahead of time and request support. If you encounter issues, contact your Union leadership.
- Keep these demos pro-Social Security events. The actions' purpose is not to protest individual office management or the agency. The purpose is to bring public awareness to the underfunding and understaffing crisis at SSA and benefit solvency awareness.
- Ask participating interested community partners (e.g. ARA) to discuss program solvency concerns, the need to protect, expand, and modernize the program.
- Contact the AFGE National Broad stripes team to help you set up Broadstripes for your local.
- Use Broadstripes to send text and email messages to the members and BUE of your local for turn out to actions.
- Use Broadstripes to phone bank to members for turn out to actions.
- Ask the community partner to help with turn out from their contacts and constituents.
- Contact David Cann cannd@afge.org with the AFGE Mobilization and Organization department to help train you how to map your local.
- Map your local for members and non-members and levels of engagement by office.
- Contact your AFGE national organizer and Legislative political coordinator for help to send out an action alert. Contact Benji King benjamin.king@afge.org if you need help coordinating this.
- Send local media alert: Contact the Council (your RVP, Greg Dorsey, Jessica LaPointe) for help with media alerts.
- Contact the office manager shortly ahead of the action to remind them you are coming and your ETA plan of arrival. Ask if you can station in the lunch room to talk to employees on break or lunch and to let employees know the union will be

there for the day if anyone wants to talk privately to let them know ahead of time to be excused from duties to talk to the union.

- Bring all relevant materials (e.g. rally signs, office rosters mapped out, sign in sheet (must have if spending money on lunch for members), issues intake forms, community distribution flyers, materials for bulletin board refresh, folders, pens, 1187s) Bring a team (AFGE organizers, legislative political organizers, board member, stewards)
- Arrive by morning break and set up in the break room
- Talk to employees on break or lunch. Spend your time getting to know them and what they care about. Rank them on the roster 0-5 (0=no interest whatsoever in the union and almost hostile, 1- some interest but not member, 2- member but not active, 3 – active union member, 4- rep, 5- on the Local leadership board)
- Sign up new members where appropriate and encourage members to be more active.
- Remind workers that the union is not an outside organization. It is them and you and the average worker trying to better conditions of employment for all.
- Bring treats (e.g. donuts in am, pizza for lunch, PM snacks) with a sign that says “please enjoy, courtesy of your Union AFGE).
- Encourage the employee to join the demo on lunch to listen and participate in the action and conversation - even for just a few minutes.
- Actions should be at 12 noon or after work.
- Leave one person behind to continue to talk to employees during the action.
- Take pictures.
- Do some chants (e.g. “When Social Security is under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back.” “Who are we? AFGE (or the union)”, “whose Social Security? Our Social Security.”
- Hold signs and face the street to encourage public interaction.
- Talk with interested bystanders about the issues. Do not make it adversarial, keep it to the issues, and encourage a shared concern for the people’s earned Social Security benefits and earned access.
- Gather and do speeches after about 20 minutes of demonstrating.
- Do media interviews.
- Keep actions to about 45 minutes to leave time for conversations after.
- Go back into the office to talk with employees until the end of the day.
- Follow up post- office visits with employees you talked to continue to address concerns with management and bring them more into the union.
- Post the event on social media.
- Fill out the Council participation google sheet.
- Follow up on contacts you made and further interest for event participation as a result of the networking you did at the action.

Make sure you DON’T do the following:

- hold actions on Federal GSA property leased or owned (e.g. stay on the front public sidewalk).
- Violate the hatch act, see Hatch act flier in the action tool kit.

- Make it adversarial.
- Worry if you do not get a huge turnout. Every event and level of participation is different.
- Forget to have fun!
- Forget to inquire with the council on organizing rebates and reimbursement of eligible action expenses.
- Forget to fill out the participation sheet found at AFGE.c220.org