

From the Treasurer

Dues power our union

Our union is how we advocate for members and defend public education.



By Alex Orozco
UTLA Treasurer

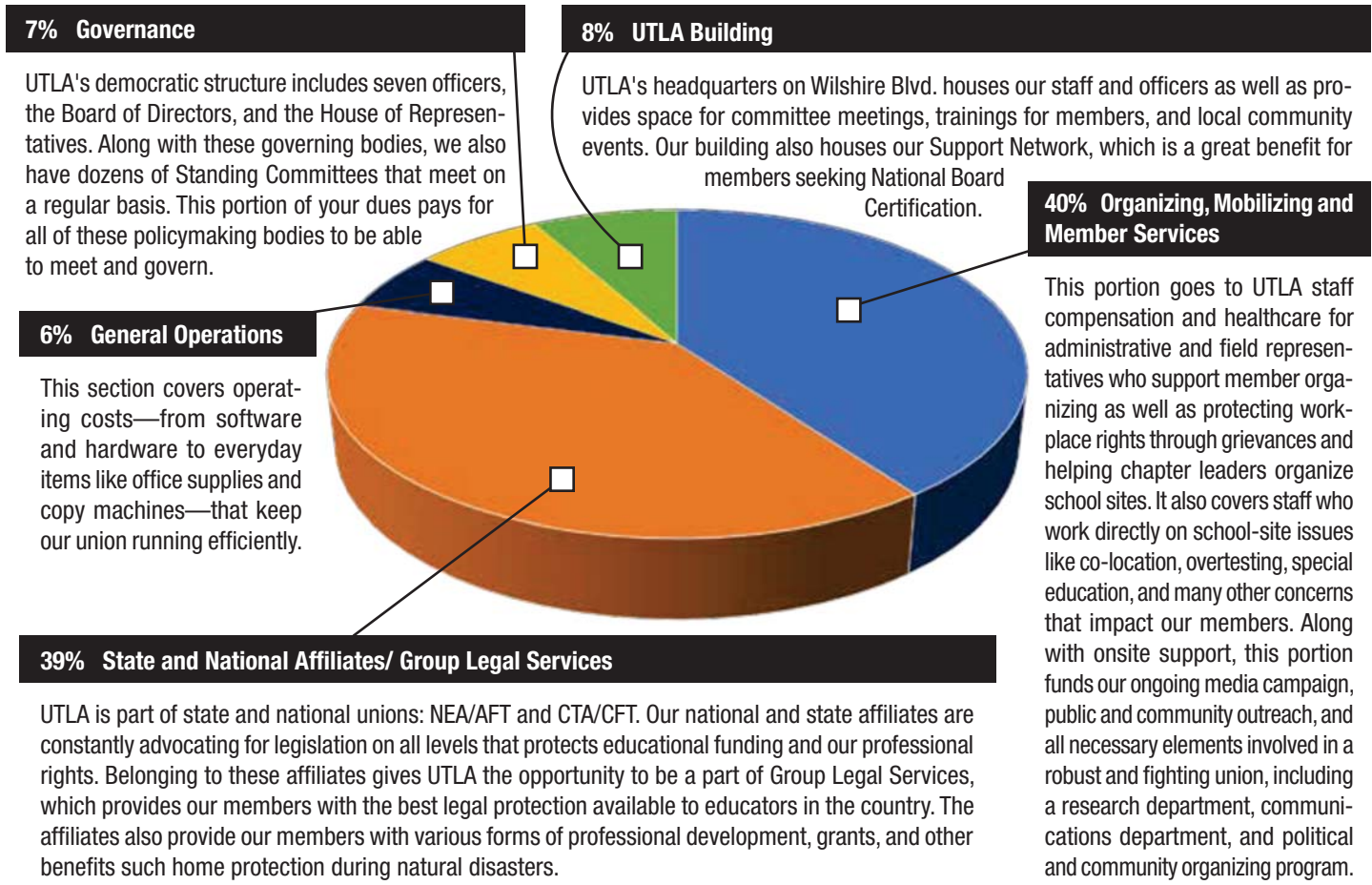
This summer the Supreme Court hit public sector unions hard with the *Janus* decision, but like in many other attempts by the anti-union forces to break us, UTLA is ready for the fight.

Months before the decision was handed down, we began asking members to recommit to the union, and the vast majority of members have done so by signing the UTLA "All In" membership card. To build on this, over the summer UTLA conducted a door-to-door campaign, during which UTLA officers, directors, members, chapter leaders, and organizers visited nonmembers' homes and talked to them about joining the union. Through these one-on-one conversations, we cut our number of nonmembers in half.

All over the nation, other unions are following suit and conducting similar outreach programs to protect collective bargaining rights. Now it comes to you.

As we open another school year, we ask that you join us in making sure that our union is a strong and vibrant one. If you haven't signed your "All In" card, sign it. If you have, talk to your colleagues

Your dues at a glance



and make sure they signed theirs too.

Our union needs to be strong organizationally to defeat the privatizers and ensure that we win a fair contract, protect our healthcare, and defend public education. This requires financial resources and tremendous capacity—your membership makes that possible by making sure UTLA's budget is a solvent and resilient one.

UTLA's budget is built on a framework of organizing and representing our members. It includes salaries and healthcare for staff, legal expenditures to represent members, and our affiliation membership with both state (CFT and CTA) and national unions (AFT and NEA). These affiliations on the state and national level are critical in the political turmoil that we are in, especially under U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, whose main mission is to implode public education as we know it.

The largest part of our budget is spent on staff and organizing members for collective action. We have area representatives who work with chapter chairs to organize their sites and to address school-site issues such as dysfunctional administrators, unfair evaluations, and class assignment problems. Along with area representatives, we have talented directors, regional organizers, and parent-community organizers, along with staff in the communications and research departments. These departments are leading the way in making sure our narrative is told through the "We Are Public Schools"

campaign. Our members have always wanted our story front and center, touching our communities everywhere, and UTLA is making sure that happens as we escalate our contract fight.

Being the second-largest educator union in the country, we also have many different constituent groups that we represent—groups like health and human services, counselors, special education, early education, adult education, and substitutes. All of these groups have area representatives organizing them and advocating for their contractual rights on a daily basis. These specialized constituent groups have different issues, and UTLA proudly fights to make sure your working conditions and rights are protected.

We are at the epicenter of the privatization movement, and we have an amazing charter organizing team that works with our unionized charter schools, as well as proactively fights to organize and unionize other charter educators who come to UTLA for support—charter educators like those at Alliance schools, who are moving closer to getting union contracts to give them a greater voice at their schools.

Our budget also allocates area funding. UTLA is divided into eight areas, and each area has a budget to conduct business, such as area meetings, special events, parent organizing forums, and other actions that give our members access and a voice. Along with areas, our budget allocates funding for dozens of committees that encourage educators

to participate in various decision-making spaces so that we can address the needs of all our members—committees like the Elementary Committee, Special Education Committee, and many more. To create these opportunities for our members' input and participation, we need to maintain our UTLA building. This requires resources as well, and our budget allows for it.

Right now, we are in a contract fight with the district over issues that are essential to all of our members, such as a salary increase, lower class sizes, less testing, and more charter accountability. These are just a few of the key issues that are impacting our schools and are drivers in the loss of enrollment, which leads to displacement and/or loss of employment for our members. We are also fighting for more school decision-making power, more special education funding, and Community Schools that provide wraparound services for our students.

Our union is our vehicle for collective action—it is how we harness our power to advocate for all of our members and to defend public education in Los Angeles. For all of this to be possible, we need the resources and capacity to be a strong, fighting, and organizing union that will survive any attack now or in the future. Be part of history and join the fight.

■ **Haven't signed the All In recommitment card?** Sign online at www.utla.net/members/membership-application.

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