



CSEA Statewide President Mary E. Sullivan

For more than 35 years, Mary E. Sullivan has fought tirelessly for working people's interests at the grassroots, statewide, and national levels. By mobilizing workers and encouraging internal communication, Sullivan has helped strengthen CSEA's position as one of New York's largest and most influential unions.

Sullivan began her professional career as an employee of the Herkimer County Department of Social Services. She advanced through the union ranks, serving first as president of the Herkimer County Employees Unit and then as president of Herkimer County Local 822. She also served as treasurer and 1st vice president of CSEA's Central Region.

Sullivan was the first local government official to serve in CSEA statewide office when she was chosen in 1986 by the CSEA statewide Board of Directors to fill a vacancy as treasurer of the union. She went on to twice win overwhelming re-election. Sullivan was elected Executive Vice President in 1994. On Nov. 1, 2019, she became the second woman president of CSEA, and the very first CSEA member from our Local Government Division to serve in the role of president. In February 2020, she was elected to her first full term as Statewide President and was reelected Statewide President in February 2024.

Sullivan has also served as a founding trustee of CSEA's Political Action Fund since its inception, and previously served as both Vice-Chair and Chair of CSEA's Local Government Executive Committee. She has been a driving force behind CSEA's Labor Education and Development (LEAD) program, helping to mold and mentor the next generation of union leaders.

A key player in CSEA's International Union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), she was elected an AFSCME International Vice President (IVP) in 1996. In 2020, she was reelected to continue to serve as an AFSCME IVP, as well as being elected a Vice President of the New York State AFL-CIO.

Sullivan earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from SUNY College at Potsdam and is a graduate of the Harvard Trade Union Program at Harvard University. She is a member of the Capital District Chapter of Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) and Pride@Work (P@W).

An active community volunteer, Sullivan continues to serve on the United Way of New York State Board and currently is Board Treasurer of 211NY. She has received numerous awards

and recognitions for her service and achievement. Sullivan also served with distinction for many years as vice president and then president of the Capital District Area Labor Federation.

In 2012, Sullivan received the Frances Perkins Award from Eleanor's Legacy, an organization named in honor of Eleanor Roosevelt dedicated to building a new generation of New York women leaders. The award recognizes the leadership of a New Yorker active in the organized labor movement who is dedicated to improving New Yorkers' quality of life on and off the job.

Sullivan received the 2018 Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) New York Chapter's 'Woman of Valor' award, which recognizes women in labor unions for outstanding service and leadership qualities. Again, that same year, Sullivan was honored for her ongoing work in urging women to become labor activists and for her own union leadership with the American Labor Studies Center's Kate Mullany Medal, named for the 19th century Irish immigrant who organized and led the Collar Workers Union in Troy.

In 2020, Sullivan had the honor and privilege of serving as one of 29 members of New York's Electoral College, casting their ballots on behalf of the majority of New York voters for Joe Biden for president and Kamala Harris for vice president.

In 2022, Sullivan received the Capital District Area Labor Federation's President's Award for her union leadership and dedication to the labor movement.