Brief History of Service Employees International Union:
The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has been in continuous existence since 1921, although its roots extend back to 1902. Originally chartered by the AFL, it became a member of the AFL-CIO when those two organizations merged in 1955. In 2005, SEIU disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO to lead a coalition of other unions to form the Change to Win Federation. In its early years, SEIU primarily organized janitors and window washers. In addition to these, it eventually organized a range of other service workers, including doormen, elevator operators, nonacademic school employees, health-care workers and public employees as well as service workers based in bowling alleys, stadiums and cemeteries, to mention just a few. Originally called the Building Service Employees International Union, the organization changed its name in 1968 to reflect a membership increasingly based in areas other than buildings.

Scope of Service Employees International Union:
The official repository of SEIU is the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University in Detroit. The Reuther Library, the largest labor archives in North America, holds the most complete collection of primary source materials regarding SEIU with over 1,000 linear square feet of the union’s records covering 105 years of history (1905-2010). The SEIU Collections include a variety of organizational, executive, photographic, and publicity materials along with many other additional record types. The relationship between SEIU and the Reuther Library began officially in 1992 and the collections have since been maintained by a dedicated SEIU Archivist on staff at the archives. Notable collections include SEIU Executive Office: John Sweeney Records, the District 925 Records, and materials documenting the Justice for Janitors campaign from SEIU’s numerous local affiliates.

Processed Manuscript Collections/Related Papers:
Adair Damman Papers
SEIU Administrative Services Department Records
SEIU Communications Department Records
SEIU District 925 Records
SEIU Education and Support Fund Records
SEIU Education Department Records
SEIU Executive Office Records
SEIU Executive Office: David Sullivan Records
SEIU Executive Office: George Hardy Records
SEIU Executive Office: John Sweeney Records
SEIU Executive Office: Microfilm
SEIU Executive Office: William McFetridge Records
SEIU Executive Vice President's Office: Patricia Ford Records
SEIU Healthcare Division Records
SEIU Historical Records
SEIU International Affairs Records
SEIU International Convention Photographs
SEIU International Jewelry Workers' Union Records
SEIU International Vice-Presidents Records
SEIU Local 1 Records
SEIU Local 31-M Records
SEIU Local 32B-32J Records
SEIU Local 517M Records
SEIU Local 535 Records
SEIU Local 79 Records
SEIU Morton H. Shapiro Papers
SEIU Organizing Department Records
SEIU Public Relations Records
SEIU Publications
SEIU Research Department Historical Records
SEIU Research Department Records
SEIU Retired Members Department Records
SEIU Secretary-Treasurer's Office: Constitutions and By-Laws Records
SEIU Secretary-Treasurer's Office: International Executive Board Records
SEIU Secretary-Treasurer's Office: Richard Cordtz Records
SEIU Secretary-Treasurer's Office: Subject File Records
SEIU Secretary-Treasurer's Office: Affiliate Officers Records
Ernest J. White Papers

Common Keywords/Search Terms/Subject Headings:
[Indicate Keywords/Terms and which collections should be consulted]
AFL-CIO
Collective bargaining--Service industries
Collective labor agreements--Janitors
Health care workers
Janitors
Nursing home--Employees
Public Service employment
Stern, Andy, 1950-
Sweeney, John J., 1934-

Audio-Visual Image Resources:
Conventions, Conferences, and Events:
http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/1520

Demonstrating, Campaigning, and Organizing:
http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/1522

Foundation of the Union: Janitors and Custodians:
http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/1978

SEIU Locals: http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/1977

Service Employees at Work: http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/1521

Local 535: http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/1636

SEIU: 925: http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/459

SEIU: The Organizing Union: http://reuther.wayne.edu/image/tid/20

Oral History Transcripts:
For more information on the Walter P. Reuther Library’s Oral History collections: http://reuther.wayne.edu/memory

The following list refers to oral histories relating to SEIU:
Patricia (Pat) Ford
Bill Cooper
Ralph Eliazer
Elinor Glenn
Elsie Hannon
George Hardy
Charles C. Levey
Arlene Neal
Albert E. Perry
Marchel Smiley
John Sorbie
Where We Come From Who We Are: Voices of SEIU Local 82 Members
Thomas Young
SEIU: District 925 Legacy Project
Serial Publications:
• *Building Service Employee*, 1938-1956
• *Service Employee*, 1957-1987
• *SEIU Leadership News* (later renamed *Update*, then *Dollars & Sense*), 1961-1979
• *Service Employees Union* (later renamed *SEIU Action*), 1989-2004

Related Materials in Reuther Library Vertical Files:
Labor Unions A-Z: Building Service Employees International Union
Labor Unions A-Z: Service Employees International Union: Local 254
SEIU
SEIU Locals: Local 99
SEIU: Local 226
Sweeney, John

Published Scholarly Works:


Related Collections in Other Repositories:

Service Employees International Union United Healthcare Workers-West Records, 1934-2010. Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.


External Web Links:

Service Employees International Union at Walter P. Reuther Library [http://reuther.wayne.edu/taxonomy/term/14]

SEIU Homepage [http://www.seiu.org/]

SEIU Twitter [https://twitter.com/SEIU]

SEIU Archivist Twitter [https://twitter.com/SEIUArchivist]

Justice for Janitors History Project [http://socialjusticehistory.org/projects/justiceforjanitors/]