

Introduction to the SEIU Archives and Instructions for Sending Records to the Walter P. Reuther Library

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The Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs is the official archives of the Service Employees International Union. Since 1993, an executive mandate from the International President has designated the Reuther Library as the location to deposit the union's records of enduring value. A fulltime, dedicated SEIU Archivist oversees these historical records, maintaining their preservation and providing public access to them.

What Is an “Archive”?

An archive is an organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations, maintaining and facilitating access to these records of enduring value. Archivists are the professionals at the repository that oversee preservation measures and researchers open access to the records. The Walter P. Reuther Library is the largest archive specializing in labor records in North America. It also focuses on collections related to the Detroit area and Wayne State University.

What the SEIU Archivist does for SEIU

More than just a storage space for records, the Reuther Library is an active resource for the union that performs a variety of tasks on its behalf. The Archivist enhances SEIU's records of enduring value (arranging and describing them in an easy to understand order, preserving at risk documents, and digitizing analog materials), ensures SEIU's role in the labor movement by making sure their accomplishments are documented for future generations, assists SEIU staff in incorporating historical records into current union campaigns, and advises the union on records management issues (record retention schedules and ensuring personal information isn't publicly available).

If you have any questions about archive and would like to discuss SEIU's collections, please feel free to contact Gavin Strassel, the SEIU Archivist (strassel@wayne.edu, (313) 577 0199)

You can also follow the SEIU Archivist on twitter at [@SEIUArchivist](https://twitter.com/SEIUArchivist).

Instructions for Sending Records to the Walter P. Reuther Library

What We Collect from the Service Employees International Union

The most common question donors have is, "What types of records do you want?" Listed below are general types of records we collect from the labor movement. This list offers guidelines but is not definitive. Because records vary from one organization to another, you should still speak directly with an archivist to share more details about the records you would like to donate.

The Walter P. Reuther Library seeks originals of most record types. If your organization wishes to keep the originals of some documents, such as constitutions and bylaws, copies can be substituted. If you have record types not on the list, please feel free to ask about them.

WANTED: Researchers often find the following types of materials most helpful.

- Articles written by or about the union, organization, or its members
- Audits and year end financial summaries.
- Charters
- Committee files
- Constitution/bylaws
- Contracts and negotiation files
- Correspondence/memoranda
- Director s and officers' files
- Event, program, and union action files
- Field staff and organizing files
- Films/videos/audio tapes (labeled and identified) produced by the union, organization, or its members
- Meeting minutes and agendas
- Membership records
- Photographs, preferably with identifying information like names of people, date, location, and event
- Press releases
- Project files
- Publications by the union
- Reports/white papers
- Transcripts, testimonials, speeches, and speech notes

* Legal files, grievance files, and collections of books, videos, or artwork not produced by the union, organization, or its members must be discussed with an archivist before shipment.

NOT WANTED: The following materials have minimal historical value or cannot be opened for research due to privacy concerns. If you have record types listed below that you believe have value, please discuss them with an archivist.

- Applications for jobs, scholarships
- Audio recordings that are inaudible and/or unlabeled
- Bank statements
- Blank stationery
- Cancelled checks and/or check stubs
- Cash journals
- Conference planning files and registration forms
- Routine correspondence (thank you notes, dues statements, hotel reservations, etc.)
- Duplicates
- Files of newspaper clippings and magazine articles not specifically about the union, organization, or its members
- Invoices
- Personnel or human resources files
- Petty cash slips
- Photographs with no identifying information
- Plaques, trophies
- Videotape recordings that are inaudible or unviewable and/or are unlabeled

Preparing an Inventory

We would greatly appreciate a rudimentary inventory, as it will help us to make your collection available to researchers more quickly. With this inventory we (and researchers) will know how your files were arranged. The inventory can be as simple as this:

- Box 1: Meeting Minutes, 1960 1980
- Box 2: Meeting Minutes, 1980 1985
 - Reports, 1970 1985
 - Correspondence, 1980 1987
 - Speeches, 1978 1983
- Box 3: Memoranda, 1960 1970

Send the inventory to the archivist with whom you have been communicating. Additionally, within each box, place the inventory for that box on top of the files.

Sending Digital Records

The Reuther Library is constantly building its capacity to preserve and provide access to electronic records. Records on data storage devices (such as external hard drives and flash drives) and optical discs are welcome. Digital records can also be transferred through cloud services, though please discuss this with the SEIU Archivist before sending anything this way. Many of the document types that make up an organization's history were once on paper but are now electronic (press releases, meeting minutes, etc.). For this reason, we seek the same types of materials though digital and analog formats differ in many ways. Where we might have collected correspondence files in the past, we now seek pertinent emails.

Packaging the Records

Following are recommended methods of packing your records so that the papers are not damaged in transit. If you have any questions about packing your records, please ask an archivist.

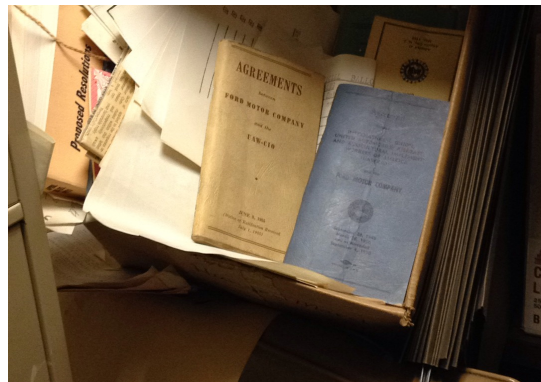
Your records should be in folders within the box. We discourage hanging folders since they are expensive and will damage the box in route. We also discourage packing loose materials because without folders, the papers are unprotected and unorganized.

For organizations, the material in the boxes should be in sequential order. For example, if you have six file cabinets of materials: Box 1 should contain records from Cabinet 1, drawer 1; Box 2 should contain the remainder of drawer 1 and begin drawer 2, and so on. The last drawer of Cabinet 6 should be in the last box in the numerical sequence.

For individuals, if you have a filing system, please pack the boxes so as to maintain the order of the records as described in the paragraph above.

All materials should be packed securely, but not tightly, in strong packing boxes that are 12 in. x 15 in. x 10 in. only. Fill up empty space with newspaper so that materials do not slide, bend, or experience further damage in transit. Tape the boxes with strong tape.

DON'T pack your box like this, with loose, disorganized papers, poorly stacked, and folded:



DO pack a box like this with folders labeled, papers in folders, and an inventory of the box in the front:



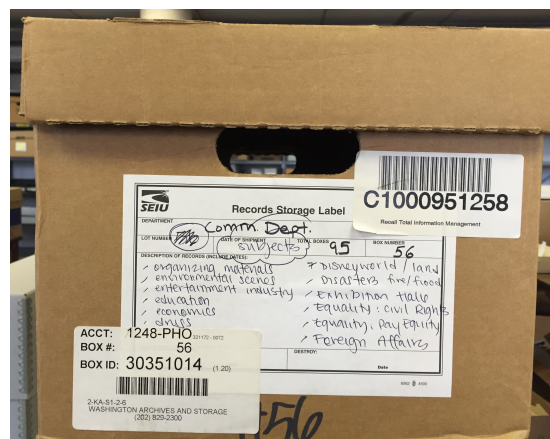
For organizations, on the short side of the outside of the box, indicate which box of the total number it is, e.g., Box 1 of 6. Also indicate general information like dates for the material inside the box, e.g., 1967-1972; from which department within the union or organization the materials originate, e.g., Organizing Department; and general topics covered, e.g., State files, Alabama Louisiana.

For individuals, on the short side of the outside of the box, indicate which box of the total number it is, e.g., Box 1 of 6, and if known, indicate general information like dates for the material inside the box, e.g., 1967-1972, and general formats included, e.g., yearbooks, letters.

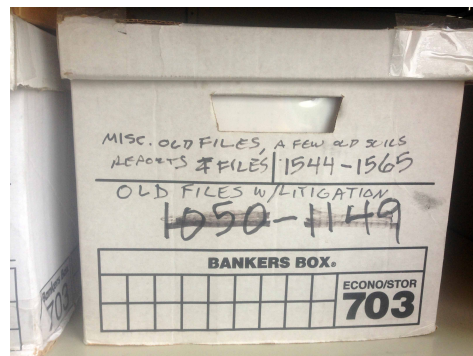
On the top of the box, place a shipping address label that reads:

Wayne State University
Attn: Gavin Strassel, Archivist
Walter P. Reuther Library
5150 Anthony Wayne Drive Detroit, MI 48202 (Box 1 of 9)

DO label a box like this:



DON'T label a box like this:



DON'T use an oversized box without a labeled description of the contents. If possible, we prefer you pack your papers in a standard sized box with dimensions of **12 in. x 15 in. x 10 in.** that can handle both letter and legal size folders.

How do I ship my records to the Reuther Library? **USE SEIU MAIL ROOM PROCEDURES.**

Anything larger than a packet should be sent via ground shipping. Again, please call or email the archives to inform us of what and how much you are sending.