

2026

ERIE-CRAWFORD CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL Scholarships Essay Contest

The modern United States labor movement emerged in 1886 with the foundation of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrialized Organizations in 1955. As an affiliated member of the AFL-CIO, the Erie-Crawford Central Labor Council works to protect people from unfair and unsafe working conditions.

Essay Question:

Please describe the impact of unions and relevant laws in one of the following areas:

40-hour work week

Workplace safety

Support for retired workers

Living wages

Job security

Health benefits

Worker compensation

Application Process:

Write a 500-word essay answering the essay question above.

Essays should be void of identification.

Complete the next page, including checking the box for the scholarship(s) for which you are applying **and** signature verification for union affiliation.



Return your essay and your completed application by mail to:
Erie-Crawford Central Labor Council
32 West 8th Street, Suite 502, Erie, PA 16501

The deadline for postmarks is Monday, June 1, 2026

Your application must be postmarked by Monday, June 1, 2026 to be considered.

Presentation will be at our Legislative Picnic at Picnicana on Tuesday, September 2nd, 2026.

Scholarships

Tom Wagner Memorial Scholarship

\$500

About: *I am applying for this scholarship.*

Tom Wagner (1952-2010) served as President of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 101, now part of IAM 1968. Shortly after becoming a delegate to the Erie-Crawford Central Labor Council, Tom served as the CLC's Corresponding Secretary. He passionately supported the Community Service Committee as a co-chair. A "kid at heart," Wagner's favorite community service activities were the annual Christmas programs for children, which included the distribution of dozens of wrapped presents. Due to his college study in communications, Wagner served capably as the editor and published of the Erie-Crawford CLC newsletter. His hours of effort to perfect the publication (including many late nights) reached well beyond the members of the CLC. Tom's skillful writing and insights helped the wider community understand the important role which labor plays in the region.

Wagner's death, after a short illness in March 2010, represented a sad loss for the Erie-Crawford CLC and the region.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be a union member, a dependent of a union member, or a grandchild residing in the home of a union member in good standing of a local union member in good standing of an affiliate of the Erie-Crawford CLC **AND** a student who will graduate from high school in 2026 **AND** is accepted, registered, or enrolled as student in a post-secondary program.

Theo Sabin Meyer Memorial Scholarship

\$750

About: *I am applying for this scholarship.*

Theo Sabin Meyer (1890-1986) began her career in teaching and found success later as a union organizer. Theo founded the Erie, PA chapter of the Women's International League, which attracted the attention of leaders in the AFL-CIO. The Women's International League is the oldest active peace organization in the world. She challenged the practice of sending children to jobs instead of school. She was also a spirited and courageous speaker. It is reported that she delivered remarks to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as he led the United States out of the Great Depression and through World War II. Meyer's 20th Century efforts to champion the rights of workers, women, and children inspires social justice reform even today.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be a union member, a dependent of a union member, or a grandchild residing in the home of a union member in good standing of a local union member in good standing of an affiliate of the Erie-Crawford CLC **AND** a student who will graduate from high school in 2026 **AND** is accepted, registered, or enrolled as student in a post-secondary program.

John "David" Dever Memorial Scholarship

\$500

About: *I am applying for this scholarship.*

David Dever (1942-1981) graduated from Cathedral Prep in 1960 and attended Gannon University.

He joined Fenestra Corporation and became a member of United Steel Workers Local 3872.

Dever's photographic memory, love of debate, and commitment to labor led him to serve as a union steward. He served for 12 years as a USW 3872 President before coming a staff representative and organizer. He also served as delegate to both the Central Labor Council and Industrial Union Council, AFL-CIO. Dever encouraged community support through public service and was a member of the United Labor Leaders, a member of the Community Service Committee with his local and council organizations, and executive board member of the United Way.

He worked with the Pennsylvania State Police in Erie and Crawford Counties for 27 years, served as a National Guard Reservist for 14 years, and volunteered with the PA Public Interest Coalition. Dever's efforts were both pragmatic (he helped found the Erie Community Credit Union) and symbolic. He advocated for a labor monument to memorialize workers who were injured or killed at work. That monument would come to life as the Workers Memorial in Perry Square, but because he died at age 39, he never saw the monument dedicated. David truly *made a difference* for all of us.

Eligibility:

Applicants must be a member or a dependent of a union member of a member of an affiliated local union of the Erie-Crawford CLC **AND** current or incoming undergraduate at Gannon University in 2026.

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____

High School: _____ Address: _____

Post-Secondary Institution: _____

Union Member Name: _____ Union Affiliation: _____

Union Member Signature: _____