



THE UNITED COUNCIL ON WELFARE FRAUD

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT



UNITED COUNCIL ON WELFARE FRAUD

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



First, I want to say how honored and humbled I am to have been elected as the 46th President of UCOWF. I want to thank the immediate past president, Andrew Pettit and other past presidents including Dawn Royal and Jack Heacock for all of their support and advice as I transition into my new role.

One of my primary goals as President is to strengthen the bonds within our membership and foster an environment of collaboration and shared vision. I am committed to promoting transparency, open communication, and inclusivity. Together, we can build on the rich history of our organization and work towards a future that is marked by progress and success.

As we come off a very well run and successful 50th National Training Conference held in beautiful Virginia Beach, VA, we should take a few minutes to reflect on some of the accomplishments of the organization in the past year.

First and probably foremost, thanks to members of the Intergovernmental Committee, Past President Dawn Royal testified in Washington D.C. before the U.S. House of Representatives on several of our priorities, including faster implementation of N.A.C. (the National Accuracy Clearing) project, higher monetary fraud collection retention rates for the states, and of course newer technology with a higher level of security for EBT cards. This was and is a real coup for UCOWF as it is the first-time members of Congress have asked us to testify and have recognized us as subject matter experts in the area of welfare fraud. The Intergovernmental Committee followed this impressive feat up with several important interviews with various national news organizations. As your incoming president I fully support these efforts and look forward to the Intergovernmental Committee building on them during the coming year.

Also, during the past year, the ad hoc Only Co. committee entered into a major contract for not only building us a new and much more functional website but also for marketing and better positioning our organization and brand. This work included a complete redesign of our logo and insignia which was much needed and long overdue. With the intention of moving us forward, advancing our goals and increasing membership, the Only Co. Committee worked long hours and had many meetings designing and coming up with a viable strategy that should serve the organization for years to come.

Also, this past year, both the Site Selection and Conference Committees both did outstanding jobs with the Conference Committee pulling off an extremely well run and organized 50th National Training Conference that was very educational and meaningful to the members. The site selection worked hard in identifying Las Vegas for next year's conference with both committees recognizing our expanding needs for bigger and better venues. We will keep these valuable lessons in mind as we move forward in planning larger and more effective conferences to better accommodate our members.

I am excited about the journey ahead and the positive impact we can collectively make. Your ideas, input, and support are invaluable as we embark on this united effort to defend the integrity of public assistance programs and ensure the responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

I look forward to working with each of you. Again, please visit our new website and we'll look forward to hopefully seeing you in Las Vegas in August!

Sincerely,

CARROL CHRISTIAN

President, The United Council On Welfare Fraud

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2023-2024 was a watershed year in the United Council on Welfare Fraud's existence. It marked a turning point of sorts in UCOWF history that coincided with the celebration of its 50th national training conference.

UCOWF contracted with OnlyCo, LLC, a marketing and business development organization, to provide three key deliverables. First and foremost was a revamping and modernization of the UCOWF website. Second was a marketing strategy created from an in-depth analysis of UCOWF. Lastly, OnlyCo was to develop a business development model to grow UCOWF consistent with the current standards of non-profit organizations.

OnlyCo delivered a new website with many enhancements and a clean, modern interface. The new website reflects the professionalism the organization has always held dear and is the slick launching pad for the delivery of all member benefits.

Its analysis distilled the activities of UCOWF into three functional areas: Education, Collaboration, and Advocacy, giving the organization a focused set of fundamental benefits UCOWF brings to the table. These three fundamentals reflect the benefits of a UCOWF membership and value the organization adds to the fight against welfare fraud nationally. From those three fundamentals, a marketing strategy was developed that included a new logo designed for UCOWF and an array of branding materials and messaging guides to better tell UCOWF's story.

To bring UCOWF into current standards of businesses, OnlyCo guided UCOWF into the era of tiered memberships, providing varying levels of benefits at varying price points. This was done with the intent of increasing revenues for UCOWF without it being overly dependent upon its national training conference for operating funds.

Having been born from the merger of the Eastern Regional Council on Welfare Fraud and the National Welfare Fraud Association, UCOWF celebrated its 50th National Training Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia in September 2023.

Unveiled during the celebration were its new membership structure, its three organizational fundamentals, and its professionally designed logo and color scheme that was part of the new branding materials for UCOWF.

Over the past twelve months, UCOWF has made substantive changes to its bylaws and organizational structure to be more efficient, more focused, and more results oriented. Those changes provided benefits that will continue in the years to come. Underperforming and outdated committees were eliminated, and their responsibilities incorporated under another committee or position. To improve efficacy in UCOWF business practices, the Site Selection Committee was re-established as a board with semi-permanent members. The executive committee was changed with the removal of the President-Elect position and addition of the UCOWF Parliamentarian position. Further changes continued as the President and Vice President terms were extended to two-year positions, allowing for better continuity in directing efforts on organizational initiatives. The Business Manager role was amended to add limited committee oversight duties to improve the overall visibility of committee work and make organizational initiatives more likely to be completed. The changes have generated more engagement between members of the board of directors and better accomplishment of goals established by the president.

As UCOWF moves beyond its first full year as a revamped organization, members and leaders at all levels are encouraged to find creative and effective ways to expand membership, share best practices, and strengthen UCOWF's voice in advocating for safeguards to protect taxpayers and our nation's most vulnerable citizens against the threat of fraud.

2023—2024 UCOWF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President – Carrol Christian (KS)
Vice President – Christopher O’Neil (FL)
Secretary – Ellis D. Bryson (WV)
Parliamentarian – Tommy Fowler (AR)

President-Elect – Ashley Wilkes (FL)
Treasurer – Andrew J. Petitt (WV)
Business Manager – Laura Lindsey (KS)

PAST PRESIDENTS IN ADVISORY ROLE TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jack Heacock (FL)

Shelia Dorsett (NC)

Dawn Royal (WY)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

REGION 1 - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio

Terri Linehan

Robyn Battle

Pam Shank

REGION 2 - Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands

Richard Carr
Julie Baldwin

Greg Matthews
Mona Castile

Flo Brown
Andrew McClenehan

REGION 3 - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

Megan Kiefer
Keith Miskie

Laura Lindsey
Tommy Fowler

Brian Anschutz
Kim Scheer

REGION 4 - Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico

David Krasnow
Mary Vasquez

Robbyn White
Glenn Allen

Brandin Seibel
Heather Smith

REGION 5 – Alaska, Idaho, Washington, Hawaii, American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and Provinces, Canada

Bradley Germann

AT LARGE DIRECTORS – (One year term)

Edgar Buster

Melissa Williams

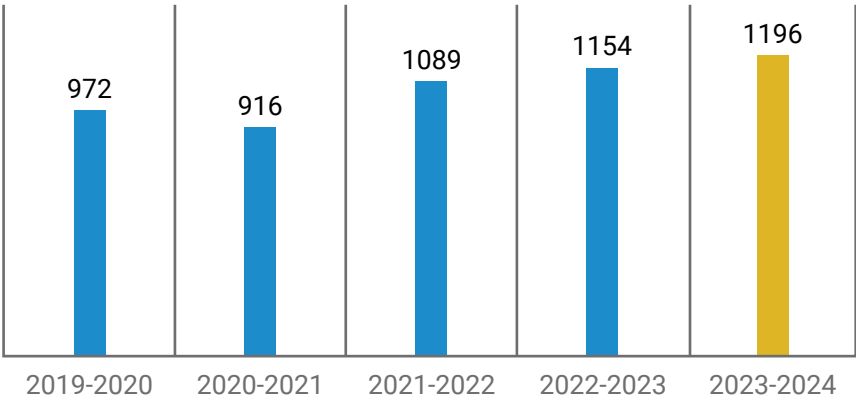
OVERVIEW OF 2023—2024

A not-so subtle shift in the operations of the nation’s oldest nonprofit organization combating welfare fraud occurred in the 2023 – 2024 operating year. Heretofore, the United Council on Welfare Fraud (UCOWF) operated under a strict interpretation of its organizational by-laws that only saw occasional cosmetic changes since its early beginnings as the National Welfare Fraud Association (NWFA) in 1971. For better or for worse, these by-laws served as guardrails for UCOWF as it traveled along a narrow scope highway, keeping it from running afoul of problems that occasionally plagued other non-profit organizations.

Prior to the 2023 – 2024 operating year, asking a seasoned UCOWF member what UCOWF’s mission was would have likely elicited a one-word response: training. Providing education in the form of training specific to welfare fraud investigators across the nation had always been considered the founding purpose of UCOWF and kept it safely defined as an IRS Section 501c (3) tax-exempt charitable organization. Through lengthy discussions among the leadership, former presidents of UCOWF, and its Board of Directors, both in board meetings and in conference calls, the need for change was recognized. To be relevant, UCOWF had to be more than just a national source of training for welfare fraud investigators. Among its ranks, members collectively possessed the expertise, experience, creativity, and desire to be more than solely a training resource. This determination set the stage for changes to UCOWF that would impact the 2023 – 2024 operational year.

BY THE NUMBERS

MEMBERSHIP



The year-over-year change in membership is 2.66%, increasing from 1,165 on July 1, 2023, to 1,196 on June 30, 2024. The addition of 42 members marks a 30.6% rebound in membership from the low point during COVID.

FINANCIALS

UCOWF financial situation is strong, although a year-over-year drop in strategic reserves would give a different impression. In 2023 – 2024, UCOWF paid the remainder of the contract with OnlyCo, LLC for web, marketing, and business development work. Additionally, UCOWF spent money to secure trademark protection for our new logo and some branding materials. Those expenses are done and UCOWF continues to be in a strong position to earn sufficient revenue annually to meet normal expenses and put a small amount into its strategic reserve funds. The year-to-year breakdown of funds is shown below:

OPERATING YEAR	2022-2023	2023-2024
CHECKING BALANCE	\$112,398.90	\$105,651.26
SAVINGS BALANCE	\$96,917.72	\$97,159.92
TOTAL REVENUE	\$209,316.62	\$202,811.18

The \$242.20 increase in the UCOWF savings account represents a 0.116% increase year-to-year. The decrease in the UCOWF checking account is the result of nonrecurring expenditures associated with the completion of the OnlyCo, LLC contractual obligation and a non-recurring cost for legal services pertaining to trademark protection for UCOWF branding materials.

PENDING COMPLETION

TRADEMARK APPLICATION

In November 2023, an attorney specializing in trademark applications was contracted to review UCOWF marketing and branding material and file for trademark protection. Principally, executive committee members and directors wanted to protect the logo designed for UCOWF by Onlyco, LLC to prevent it from being used by other parties without UCOWF consent. The attorney recommended that our logo and the acronym, "UCOWF" be protected. The trademark action was initiated, and this contract is being overseen by current UCOWF Treasurer and former president Andrew Pettit. The trademark ruling and securing of those branding materials is expected before the end of 2024.

CERTIFIED WELFARE FRAUD INVESTIGATOR SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATION

The Board of Directors approved the creation of a Certified Welfare Fraud Investigator (CWFI) Supervisor certification. In discussions among members and the board, there have been several anecdotal instances of individuals being placed in supervisory positions over welfare fraud investigation units but having no practical experience actually performing welfare fraud investigations.

The board determined that a supervisory certification would fulfill three purposes.

- 1 It would provide prospective supervisors with a course of instruction culminating in a certification to provide to officials considering the selection of a supervisor for a welfare fraud investigative unit or group.
- 2 It would provide another level of instruction and proof of competency, similar to that which the CWFI certification provides line investigators.
- 3 It offers a means for someone with no experience but having been selected to perform a supervisory role over a group or unit of welfare fraud investigators a course of instruction to more quickly orient him or herself to the unique demands and nuances of welfare fraud investigations.

CWFI Board Chair Jana McDonough is nearing completion of the examination and study materials. The expectation is that the exam and study materials will be available shortly after the start of 2025.

The study materials and examination would be offered to any person currently in or selected to perform a supervisory function over a welfare fraud investigative unit or group, or any CWFI in good standing who wants to add the CWFIS certification to his or her resume for professional or career-building purposes.

NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

ONLYCO, LLC CONTRACT

Under the leadership of former UCOWF President Andrew J. Petitt (WV) and with the dedicated support of its Executive Committee members and Board of Directors, UCOWF contracted with a private agency to move UCOWF beyond the status of a national source for specialized training and into what its leadership believes will be recognized as the pre-eminent source for lawmakers, policy-makers, program administrators, and state officials charged with preventing, detecting, investigating, and prosecuting fraud in the federal taxpayer-funded public entitlement programs.

In the fall of 2022, UCOWF contracted with **OnlyCo, LLC**, a marketing and business development agency headquartered in Sheridan, Wyoming, that offered an exciting opportunity to expand UCOWF's reach, recognition, and voice of its membership.

AN AD-HOC COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED

An ad-hoc committee was established by order of President Petitt to help shepherd the process of reinvigorating UCOWF to become the organization it had always envisioned itself to be. Members of the ad-hoc committee contributed hundreds of hours of work, providing information, ideas, background, review, oversight, and a collective vision for its partners in OnlyCo to use in their efforts build, brand, and create a business strategy for UCOWF.

Through hundreds of hours in group and individual meetings between the ad-hoc committee members and OnlyCo developers, contract deliverables began to take shape. As our OnlyCo partners learned more about UCOWF, they viewed the organization through a different set of eyes that made the eventual outcomes clearer and more focused as the process went along.

But beyond the obvious need for a modern and functional website were the deliverables of creating a marketing strategy and a business development plan.

MARKETING STRATEGY UNVEILED

The marketing strategy included the creation of a professionally designed web video, professionally designed logo, and related branding material that were unique and recognizable solely to UCOWF. Once approved, the website incorporated those marketing materials and a filing for trademark protection was initiated.

Discussions of the various branding materials included official colors, fonts, verbiage, and variations of the official UCOWF logo and seals. In the end, distinct and professional-looking marketing and branding materials were created and adopted for use.

A NEW UCOWF WEBSITE LAUNCHED

At the core of the contract was the obvious need to build a functional and professional-looking website from which its member benefits would be delivered. The website at the time was a 'do-it-yourself' operating platform limping along with a backbone made from a patchwork of applications that had become mishandled, outdated, dysfunctional, and a visual embarrassment to the organization.

In the beginning of the 2023 – 2024 operating year, the new website was launched with its visually appealing palette and a clean, organized look befitting a professional organization of UCOWF's stature.

NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN – TIERED MEMBERSHIP IS INTRODUCED

The business development component of the contract concluded with UCOWF transitioning into a tiered membership structure. Under the tiered membership structure, the basic membership provided all the existing benefits that were available to all members at the time of the transition. However, additional levels of membership were established to provide enhanced benefits at a higher cost per year. Those benefits were aimed at individuals in increasingly higher levels of responsibility in organizations whose mission included program integrity requirements.



During the 2023 – 2024 operating year, UCOWF worked to develop all benefits established at the various tiers. Although some organizations have attempted to purchase a membership at a higher tier than the basic (Traditional) level, until such time that all benefits are available at the higher levels as well as the benefits offered at levels below it, UCOWF will not accept payment for any membership above Traditional. It is expected that those benefits will be in place before the end of the 2024 – 2025 operating year.

Pictured Left - UCOWF Tiered Membership marketing brochure

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A CHANGE TO THE AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Among the changes created by the new tiered membership was the change to the Affiliate program. The affiliate membership was the most debated aspect of the move to a tiered membership.

Under the by-laws at the time, a member of an affiliated state organization was recognized as a full member of the United Council on Welfare Fraud, entitled to all benefits and privileges a regular member enjoyed. When the affiliated membership was first established, affiliate members paid a membership fee that had been reduced by \$5.00 while the organization itself paid nothing. When UCOWF shifted to web-based delivery of member benefits in 2004, the affiliate

membership fee was paid by the affiliate organization at the rate of \$5.00 per member. This allowed UCOWF to show a larger number of members annually while giving affiliate members full access to member benefits.

The decision was eventually reached to charge a fixed affiliation fee set at the Contributors level and members of the affiliated organization could obtain a full membership for a discounted price. UCOWF leadership is confident that state organizations established for welfare fraud investigators will be attracted to UCOWF as a national organization capable of helping to share the voice of its members in combating fraud in our nation’s welfare programs.

NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

RESTRUCTURING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF UCOWF

Energized by the business model and marketing strategy OnlyCo had developed, the 2023 – 2024 UCOWF leadership team with President Carrol Christian (KS) at the helm wasted no time adopting and enacting changes to its organizational structure and bylaws to remain true to its original purpose but positioned to be more effective and relevant in the development and delivery of member services and benefits.

The prevailing opinion among many on the Board of Directors and Executive Council was that UCOWF had long been a lethargic, slow to react organization that did not effectively leverage the talents of its membership or their enthusiasm for participating in strengthening the organization.

Over the past ten years, there had been much debate among members of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee concerning the one-year term for the UCOWF President, President-Elect, and Vice President. The three-year progression from Vice President to President seemed logical; it was synchronous with every regular director's term on the Board of Directors. But given the status of board members as unpaid volunteers with competing demands for their time and energy, the time needed to develop and implement sorely needed initiatives or reforms often surpassed the term of any one president and more often than not, ultimately fell by the wayside with the annual change of administration.

In the previous five years, two UCOWF presidents served two-year terms for varying reasons. Both Shelia Dorsett (NC) and Dawn Royal (WY) spent two years as UCOWF President and their ability to move issues to conclusion and implement improvements and initiatives provided the results that those who advocated for longer presidential terms needed in order to press for the change.

At the urging of President Christian during the 2023 –

2024 Board of Directors meeting, a motion was presented to lengthen the term of service for the President and Vice President to two years and eliminate the position of President-Elect effective with the beginning of the operational year 2024 - 2025.

The motion was carried on a voice vote by the Board of Directors.



NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

RESTRUCTURING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF UCOWF

The elimination of the President-Elect and the extension of the President and Vice President terms did not include other members of the Executive Committee. The Secretary and Treasurer positions would remain a one-year term, eligible for reelection each year for as long as the incumbent wanted the position. It did, however, create an issue regarding the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee numbered five members but with the pending implementation of the extended terms, the committee would be reduced to four members and the potential for tie votes during Executive Committee meetings posed a problem as a mechanism for breaking a tie was no longer present.

The solution was found in establishing a permanent position in the form of a UCOWF Parliamentarian. The position had been a position in name only; no such position had been established in the bylaws. The function, however, had been performed over many years by Director Tommy Fowler (AR) and the need for a consistent, knowledgeable parliamentarian was recognized by the Board of Directors.

A subsequent motion was made to establish the Parliamentarian position in the Executive Committee, thus providing an essential resource to the executive leadership of UCOWF and resolving the tie-breaking issue in the Executive Committee. The motion was made to establish the non-advancing position of UCOWF Parliamentarian with an undefined term of service, allowing consistency in parliamentary procedure.

The motion was carried by an online vote of the Board of Directors.

A subsequent motion was made to nominate and approve regional director Tommy Fowler as the UCOWF Parliamentarian effective January 1, 2024.

The motion was carried by an online vote by the Board of Directors.

In the end, the Executive Committee was strengthened by the moves President Christian had orchestrated. Extending the terms of the president and vice president will give a president more time to implement his or her initiatives and synchronize efforts for the completion and implementation of any long-term planned initiatives between two administrations over a four-year period. Creating a parliamentarian in the Executive Committee solved two problems in a single action. Yet, a final piece of restructuring involved the UCOWF Business Manager and her duties relative to the overall functioning of the Board.

Historically speaking, the period between the end of a national conference and a mid-year board meeting often sees ideas and initiatives born from fruitful discussions at the national conference wither due to lack of oversight and committee members falling victim to other demands outside of UCOWF.

NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

RESTRUCTURING THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF UCOWF

Discussions about this point between past presidents, President Christian, and former President Petitt found support for the idea of creating a UCOWF Executive Director (ED) position. In that role, an individual performing executive director duties would oversee charges to the committees given by the president as well as multi-year initiatives ongoing in UCOWF. The ED would work with committee chairs to nudge projects and efforts along while keeping the president advised of progress being made. While most agreed the idea had merit, funding a position like an Executive Director required more revenue than UCOWF currently generates.

In response, President Christian amended the duties of the Business Manager, giving her an administrative oversight role as a means of monitoring the activities of the Board of Directors and UCOWF committees to which they belong. Activity within committees can be monitored through monthly committee activity reports, allowing the leadership to remain apprised of activities and progress toward set goals. The effectiveness of extending additional duties to the Business Manager to monitor committee work relative to charges and goals appears to have value. Overall, the processes will be evaluated at the annual Board of Directors meeting in August 2024 to determine if any adjustments are needed.

CHANGES IN UCOWF COMMITTEES

There were several changes in the UCOWF committees that were voted on during the annual board of directors meeting in Virginia and finalized in the mid-year board of directors meeting in March 2024. The following changes were approved:

ETHICS COMMITTEE.

The Ethics Committee was eliminated. In the past fifteen years, there have been no issues requiring action by an Ethics Committee. Its elimination was approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. In consideration of the authority vested in the president, the board decided that any ethics-related issues arising could be adequately resolved through an ad-hoc committee appointed by the president.

SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE.

The Site Selection Committee was eliminated, and a Site Selection Board was approved as a substitute. The establishment of the site selection function under the control of a board allowed for the semi-permanent appointment of director-members to perform this function. Conferences are the major source of revenue for UCOWF. Rotating directors in this committee did not lend for having a well-trained and experienced core of personnel to perform the function. Establishing it as a board eliminated the annual turnover in the site selection function and provides greater stability and experience for those performing the function.

NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

BYLAWS CHANGES

Following the annual board meeting in September 2023 in which the Site Selection Committee was replaced by the Site Selection Board, subsequent discussions with President Christian generated additional issues requiring board approval and bylaws changes. Those motions are summarized as follows:

- 1 A motion was made to formally establish a UCOWF Parliamentarian as a standing member of the UCOWF Executive Board in a non-voting capacity.
- 2 A motion was approved to select Arkansas director Tommy Fowler to serve as the UCOWF Parliamentarian.
- 3 A motion was made and approved to amend Article V, Section 1 A to eliminate the position of President-Elect, extend the terms for President and Vice President to two-year terms with only the Vice President advancing at the end of his or her term. The Secretary and Treasurer remain as one-year non-advancing officer positions.
- 4 A motion was made and approved to add the Business Manager position as a voting Council officer whose term runs concurrent with his or her contracted term.
- 5 A motion was made and approved to remove the Ethics Committee from the bylaws and move wording on referral of "issues of conduct" for review previously in the Ethics Committee section to Section 5.B which addresses conduct detrimental to the best interest of the Council, or violation of the Bylaws, rules, or regulations.

Upon approval, the Bylaws Committee implemented the changes and corrected several numbering errors in Article III, Section 5.B, and Section 9, which apparently resulted from previous deletion of sections in which numbering was not changed, or from typos. All changes were finalized and approved by an online vote of the board.

UCOWF NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

The 50th National Training Conference was held in Virginia Beach, Virginia, at the Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel, from September 11 – 14, 2023.

It was the culmination of a considerable amount of work and planning by Conference Chairs Kimberly Scheer (KS) and Flo Brown (KY) and their committee members. Their hard work and initiative paid off as the 50th National Training Conference was attended by over 285 members and was exceptionally well rated by those in attendance.

The keynote address was given by Ms. Jennifer Tiller, Deputy Staff Director to U.S. Representative Glenn Thompson (PA). Training was provided by a variety of sources to include Shelly Pierce, Director of the SNAP Issuance Policy and Innovation Division and Rachel Frisk, Director of the SNAP Program Administration and Nutrition Division, FNS; Judge Loren Snell, Kansas Administrative Law Judge; Mr. Christopher Nelson, Interim Inspector General, West Virginia DHHS OIG; Mr. Tony Paixão of Wicklander-Zulawski; Dr. Mark Haskins, Patrick Hayden, Alexander Wright, and Jerry Tuggle, USDA FNS Special Investigations Unit; and Matthew Hamel, Supervisory Special Agent, FBI.



The Annual UCOWF Awards Banquet was held and included a special address by Mr. Haywood "Woody" Talcove, Chief Executive Officer, Government, LexisNexis Risk Solutions. Among the significant events of the evening was the transfer of leadership for UCOWF. This year, outgoing president Andrew Petitt (WV) transferred the presidency to incoming president, Carrol Christian (KS).

UCOWF's highest honor, the Dorothy Forney Memorial Award, is given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to the field of fraud control. The 2023 Dorothy Forney Memorial Award was awarded to Ms. Kristen Lewis of the Florida Department of Children and Families. Due to the impact of Hurricane Idalia in the Big Bend region of Florida, Ms. Lewis could not attend the conference and accepted the award in absentia.



UCOWF NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

The UCOWF Distinguished Service Award is presented annually to up to three members, chosen by the Executive Committee, to recognize sustained and selfless service to UCOWF by an individual member. This year, a decision by the Executive Committee led to renaming the award The Jack Heacock Distinguished Service Award. At the Annual Awards Banquet, the newly minted award was presented to Mr. Jack Heacock (FL), Ms. Dawn Royal (WY), and Mr. Thomas Fowler (AR).



The National Training Conference not only gives attendees job-specific training but also the opportunity to form new friendships from people across the nation. To encourage building networking among attendees, the conference committee included an after-hours pool party and added an exclusive networking ballroom in which attendees could congregate and build their network of contacts from across the country.



SUMMATION

UCOWF will continue to build on its core imperatives of Education, Collaboration, and Advocacy, strengthening its value to its members and to policy and lawmakers nationally.

UCOWF will continue providing one of a kind, skill-specific training opportunities and certification testing for members. Expanding its testing to include a soon to be launched supervisor certification will provide career-building credentials. The newly launched website is the platform for expanding its collaboration beyond its national directory. Through the launching of a new web-based members forum, members can discuss, learn, and get help from members across the nation in a live forum specifically for UCOWF members.

As an advocate for improving the safeguards of taxpayer dollars in the nation's welfare programs, UCOWF will continue to make annual visits to lawmakers to provide facts, first-hand experience, and advice about fraud in the public assistance programs. It will continue to comment on proposed federal program rule changes and pending legislation that either helps or hinders the work performed by our members.

UCOWF will remain a vibrant and active organization, supporting its members, their work, and offering expertise to state and federal administrators charged with the responsibility of protecting resources intended to help our nation's most vulnerable citizens.



**UNITED COUNCIL
ON WELFARE FRAUD**

UNITED FOR INTEGRITY.
UCOWF.NET