



Linda Hinton

Training Leaders for the Future

Hearing concerns expressed by members of color, the Communications Workers of America (CWA) began its own internal leadership program back in 1980, greatly expanding the available training. Previously, leadership training was limited to a single, yearly internship in a program run by another organization.

Every year since, CWA's National Minority Leadership Institute has provided intensive training to promising activists of color from around the country.

As the program has evolved, up to a dozen members each year receive two weeks of all-expenses paid training at the National Labor College, as well as a week of training in the field.

The training focuses on everything from the union constitution and the global economy to how to arbitrate, organize and lobby.

Over the years, many long-serving local leaders have participated, though the program was originally intended for rank and file members. CWA President Larry Cohen has

mandated that, in this respect, the program return to its roots.

Linda Hinton went through the training in the mid-1980s and found it "to be the best training I've ever had in more than 30 years as a CWA member. The classes were designed to be intensive and they really were."

Already the president of her largely female local in Cleveland, she says that the training "helped me to be a much better local president, really built my leadership capabilities and my confidence that I could do other things."

After serving more than a decade as a local president, she became a District 4 representative in 1996 and recently was promoted to be an administrative director. Given the vital role the National Minority Leadership Institute has played in her own development and career, it seems only fitting that among her areas of responsibility are: education, training and equity.