

July 17, 2017

## **We're Coming Together to Form a Union at Northwest Justice Project**

Our Secret Ballot Election is coming soon! We are waiting for the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board), the government agency that oversees union elections, to finalize details about how and when we get to vote on making our union official. We hope to know shortly.

In the meantime, we've continued to meet in small groups to discuss what to expect with a union at NJP. Here are some questions we have asked:

### ***What can we expect from management in response to us forming a union?***

Our goal is to foster a cooperative, respectful relationship with management. We hope that our employer will honor our right to form a union and remain neutral in this process rather than engaging in behaviors that could mislead or pressure us. Many employers have tried in the past to persuade employees that forming a union is a bad idea. This has included "education" efforts such as letters, mandatory meetings, one-on-one talks and other tactics designed to weaken employees' resolve to unite as one strong group. We hope NJP management would not do this, but if they do, we'll stick together and persevere.

### ***How much are dues?***

No one pays dues until *after* we negotiate and vote to approve a new contract which will have improvements, possibly to wages, benefits, or both. We wouldn't approve a contract that didn't make improvements; that's the whole point of forming a union! After that, OPEIU Local 8 dues are on a sliding scale based on 1.5% of our gross monthly income. (A quick way to calculate this is to figure \$7.50 for every \$500). New employees hired after we vote to approve a new contract would pay a one-time initiation fee, 50% of which would be refunded after attending one meeting.

### ***Will the large offices dominate our union?***

The goal in forming union is to make improvements across the board. We are all underpaid, and we can best address that and other issues by being united. It is OPEIU Local 8's practice in other workplaces with offices around the state to make sure and have representation from all regions on Union Bargaining Teams, Labor Management Committees and also on the [OPEIU Local 8 Executive Board](#). Not only is this fair, but it is important to be united rather than divided if we want to be successful in making improvements.

### ***How will this impact our clients?***

Forming our own employee organization, where staff have a way to address important issues, can have a positive effect on our morale, turnover rate and ability to provide services. Our clients are better served when staff feel supported and have a say over decisions impacting our work lives.

## Local 8 Members Share their Experience

*I'll start by stating that I love working at NWIRP. Nothing makes me happier than providing free services to our community. I believe in our mission and the good work we do at NWIRP.*

*I also believe that being part of a union is important. Our union provides us with the tools, resources, and support that we need to create a space where we can openly discuss concerns and find resolutions with management. I recently joined the Labor Management Committee to represent the Seattle Office. I am thankful that through this process, our union representative has been responsive and organized as we work together to bring our concerns up to the management team.*

*Without the union, I believe it would have been harder for our staff to organize, especially because life in general can get very busy for all of us. Having the tools and support to create such spaces is so important.*

*Power to the union!*

-Tania Santiago, NWIRP Legal Advocate

**Stay tuned for more information!** You can also find all the documents and information related to NJP Organizing [here](#).



**Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 8**

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