



Yes! We're ready for a stronger voice at work!

Want to know more? You can find copies of all the previous communications along with lots more information on the YouthCare Organizing page at opeiu8.org.

Some of the Reasons we're forming a union:

Raising Standards for Social Service Workers— It's no secret we're underpaid. Workers at union agencies have been able to raise their wages year after year by joining together. The more social service and housing staff organize together, the greater power we'll have to push for fair compensation so that all workers can afford to stay in jobs like ours long-term.

A Voice on the Job— Advocating for ourselves so we can better advocate for our clients is critical. Only with a union can we be on a level playing field with management with legal rights and protections to push for bottom up change for greater equity and transparency. Without a union, management has the final word on every decision, and can take or leave our input.

Power to prioritize changes that will reduce turnover – safe staffing levels, consistent and job-specific training, traumatic event leave that doesn't come out of PTO, a fair discipline process, more substantial race-equity work, access to mental health support, ability to take vacation time we've earned – we have lots of ideas that could make YouthCare a better place to work.



Plymouth Housing staff voted Yes to unionize in 2014. This year they've been working on their second contract, and last week they reached a Tentative Agreement with management that includes 10%-21% increases this year, and another 3% next year, in addition to other improvements. They'll be voting on this contract next week, and if it passes, as of November 1 their Building Assistants will be paid \$18.13-\$20.02/hour and the Case Manager range will be \$22.00-\$24.30/hour.



*I've been at YouthCare for one year, and before I became permanent I worked on call for six months. I've noticed that, although on call staff are essential to the way YouthCare functions, their needs haven't seemed like a priority. It can be especially challenging to come into programs where you're not familiar and work by yourself, so on call staff need training, supervision and fair compensation just like everybody else. That's why I'm so happy we are **all** going to be included in our union to bring forward issues that are important to staff so we can best serve youth. I'm definitely voting Yes!*

– Deepa Ramdial, Youth Counselor, Passages

How is a union going to impact the flexibility I have in my schedule?

Our union contract at YouthCare will be developed by and voted on by the staff. What each contract says about flexibility and scheduling is different depending on what the staff and management wanted it to say. Flexibility in jobs where that's possible is important to staff, and we can propose to have the ability to flex your time in those positions guaranteed in your contract. Right now, without a union, that's something management would have the right to change at any time, and unexpected schedule changes have been an issue for staff in some YouthCare programs. Together with management, our Union Bargaining Team, made up of elected YouthCare staff from across programs and positions, can negotiate contract language that works for everyone and allows flexibility when it works for staff, but protects staff with a more rigid schedule from unexpected schedule changes that disrupt their lives. For example, Compass staff in their first contract negotiated language which says: "Schedule Changes: At the time of hire the Employer will designate the number of hours per week, shift start time and end time, and days of the week the employee will be scheduled including mandatory meetings. The Employer will give employees thirty (30) days advance notice for Employer initiated schedule changes unless otherwise mutually agreed to." In this example, Compass staff decided not to include anything about employee-initiated schedule changes, so that is left up to staff and their manager, but if the employer wants to change their schedule, it's fine if it's agreeable for the employee. The bottom line is, any changes to the status quo regarding scheduling or anything else will be driven by the needs and wants of staff.

What happens after the vote?

If the majority of those who vote say yes, we would get started with negotiating our first union contract. Our organizer Corinne has been keeping track of issues that have come up in conversations with staff from all the programs, but we'll also do a **survey** of all staff after the vote to identify priorities and also we will nominate staff at that time to participate in the contract bargaining.

We'll then have an election to choose from those nominees who will be on the **Bargaining Team** – we'll want representation from across programs, jobs, shifts etc. Our team then uses the survey responses and the information about issues that came up during the organizing to develop **proposals** and present them to management.

Then, along with union staff, our Bargaining Team will **negotiate** with management everything that will be in our union contract, talking through how it will work and communicating with their coworkers in program along the way. This part often takes months as there's lots to think through in a first contract.

Once we have a complete draft, called a Tentative Agreement, that will go back to all union-eligible staff for a **vote** to accept or decline it. If it's accepted by a majority vote, everything in the contract then goes into effect. It's at this point that we would start paying 1.5% union dues, along with receiving the increases that were negotiated.

But our voice doesn't end there – after the contract is in effect, we will still have the right to agree to changes if they are supported by staff, and we'll have a union rep from OPEIU staff to assist us in making sure the contract is enforced and that staff are supported in continuing to work towards making YouthCare the best possible place for staff and for the youth we serve.

**You are invited to the next Unionize YouthCare Meeting:
Wednesday, October 16, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Washington State Labor Council Office
321 16th Ave. S., Seattle**

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**Questions? Thoughts? Concerns?
Please contact Organizer Corinne Cosentino at
corinne@opeiu8.org or text/call 425-318-2650.**