

First Contract Negotiations Have Begun

Our Bargaining Team met with management for our first bargaining session on Thursday, January 23. After introductions, our Union Bargaining Team presented some initial proposals (*more details on back*). We expect management to respond to many of these proposals at our next session on Wednesday, February 12 and our Bargaining Team will present additional proposals. The Union has not proposed any economic proposals at this time.

Over the next months, our Union Bargaining Team will be meeting with management every couple of weeks to work on our first contract. In these meetings, our Union Team will present language that we want included in our Contract and share with management why it is important. We then have an opportunity to discuss and answer questions on the specific right/topic. Once both sides have shared, we break into what is called a “caucus,” where each team meets separately to develop responses. When we come back together, either later that day or at the next session, management formally presents their responses, which can include agreeing to our language, “countering” with different or modified language, or rejecting our proposal altogether. We then go back and forth until we come to a “Tentative Agreement,” which is when both sides have agreed to the same language. Once we have agreed on all sections of the contract, the entire contract will be put to a vote of all Union members at YouthCare. Once the Contract has been ratified, it is **legally binding** and enforceable for the term of the agreement.

Our Union Bargaining Team

Back Row, Left to Right: Doug Tousley, Youth Counselor, Hope Center; Tremmell Collins, On-Call Youth Counselor, Over 18 Housing; Thomas Petrik, Residential Counselor, Jackson Street Shelter; Paris Chapman, Employer Engagement Specialist, Orion; St. Ennah Akudihor, Housing Navigator Case Manager, UDYC; Emily Penna, Program Coordinator, Employment & Education.



Front Row, Left to Right: Craig Gibson, Volunteer & Community Engagement Specialist, Development; Meredith Clark, Case Manager, Casa; Arren Lenau, Youth Counselor, Pathways; Deepa Ramdial, Case Manager, Passages; Katrina Go, Care Coordinator, Prevention; Niki Sebatware, Youth Counselor, U Commons.

Joining them at the Bargaining Table were OPEIU Staff Diane Arnold, Union Representative, Corinne Cosentino, Organizing Director and Phoebe Feldsher, Membership Support Representative.

In the event a member of the Union Bargaining Team is not able to continue to serve on a consistent basis, the alternate may be called to step in. Our Union Bargaining Team Alternates:

Kathia Nunez, Alpha Khan and Marina Ortiz, Casa
Hannah Mandala, Catalyst, and Hunter “Leo” Galicia, ISIS house
Sarina Shames, E&E
Emily Piccard, Prevention
Erin Halligan, Development

Other employees may also join the Union Bargaining Team at the table from time to time when an issue where they have specific experience is being discussed to provide expert testimony.

Management’s Bargaining Team participating at the table is Karen Jones, Chair of YouthCare Board of Directors; Melinda Giovengo, CEO; Degale Cooper, Chief Program Officer; Whitney Eich, Assistant Director – Casa de los Amigos; Charese Jones, Senior Program Manager – Engagement Services; Danee Smith, Program Manager – Adolescent Shelter; Emma York-Jones, Director of Compliance & Program Quality; Semone Andu, Program Manager – Engagement Services; Allison Barber, Senior HR Generalist.

Here are the Highlights of the Union Proposals Discussed

- **Union Recognition:** describes which employees at YouthCare will be Union members and in the bargaining unit.
- **Union Membership and Dues:** states that employees must become Union members within 31 days of their date of hire and describes the Employer's obligation in deducting dues and remitting it to our Union.
- **Present Conditions:** protects current employees who have a more generous arrangement than the contract that's ultimately agreed to from reductions or schedule changes as a result of the contract.
- **Union Activities:** states that Union Representatives and Union Stewards are authorized to resolve grievances; describes when Union Stewards will be paid and when they can conduct Union business, and requests time during All Staff meetings for a Bargaining Unit Caucus.
- **Management Rights:** describes what the Employer can do to manage its business and direct its workforce.
- **Employer Policies:** states that our Union will be notified in writing of new Employer policies that impact mandatory subjects of bargaining and our Union can request to bargain over the changes.
- **Notification of Funding:** describes communication with employees in positions tied to a specific funding source regarding the funding status.

Future Bargaining Dates: Wednesday, February 12; Thursday, February 20 and Wednesday, March 18.

What are our rights while we're negotiating the first contract?

During this time period while the first contract is being negotiated, wages, benefits, and working conditions are supposed to continue under the status quo unless something different is negotiated with the Union. This means, for example, if your schedule has been flexible, it should continue to be flexible. If something needs to be changed in the meantime, management is supposed to notify our Union so we can negotiate it. If you are told that something has to be done differently or can't be done because of the Union, please let us know so we can work with management to make sure the law is being followed.

Union staff are also allowed to talk amongst themselves about Union-related topics the same way you are allowed to talk about any other non-work related subjects, such as the weather, sports, a vacation, etc.

Know Your Rights!!

You have the right to Union representation any time you face a meeting or discussion with a supervisor that could potentially lead to discipline. Your employer should inform you of your right so you can arrange to have a Union representative present. Your employer must give you time to contact a Union representative and allow the representative to be present at the meeting. **In case management does not notify you of your right to representation, here is what you can say,**

"If this meeting is an investigation that could in any way lead to discipline or termination, I request that my steward or Union representative be present before continuing."

Questions? Contact OPEIU Local 8 Organizer Corinne Cosentino at 425-318-2650 or corinne@opeiu8.org, Membership Support Representative Phoebe Feldsher at 206-441-8880 ext. 119 or phoebe@opeiu8.org or Union Representative Diane Arnold at 206-441-8880 ext. 115 or diane@opeiu8.org.