

Union ★
Update

OPEIU
Local



for OPEIU Local 8 members at Northwest Justice Project

September 17, 2020

We held our quarterly Labor/Management Meeting on Tuesday, September 15th. The Union's notes are provided below.

Present from Union: Valarie Peaphon, Abbas Rizvi, Evan Purcell, Tanya German, Daniel Ediger, Matt Woods, JoAnn Ortiz

Present from Management: Karen Holland, Debi Perluss, Judith Lurie, Alma Zuniga, Lupe Artiga, Karla Carlisle, Luanne Serafin, Amy Vigorita

Update on new Lead Attorney role and NJP Management Redesign process:

The Senior Managing Attorneys have started to work on what the Lead Attorney position will look like. They are still identifying functions and will ultimately need to create a job description. They've consulted with the Managing Attorneys and still want to get input from other groups (including Attorneys and Legal Assistants). They need to iron out the determining factors for which office/programs will have a Lead Attorney position. They are in the proposal drafting stage and don't have a specific timeline in place but hope to be able to implement ASAP. Lead Attorneys will not have supervisory authority and will be in the bargaining unit (union). They will have greater leadership and mentoring responsibilities and will direct work rather than employees. There will be additional compensation but pay has not yet

been determined/negotiated. Once all of this is finalized, these new positions will be posted and employees will have the opportunity to apply.

As far as the overall redesign goes, NJP approximates being two-thirds of the way through the process. NJP has added two Assistant Managing Attorneys (one in Bellingham and one in Tacoma). There will be more to come depending on office size and complexity. NJP is moving forward with hiring an IT Director and will continue to try to replace the Deputy Director. They are also working with a short-term communications consultant to create a job description for the Communications position.

Approval of sick time in Paycom system:

NJP stated the manager "approval" task is a function of the new technology/system, not a change in practice or expectation. NJP reported they have always approved timesheets but that looked different in the past and was sometimes done by the Senior Attorney and sometimes performed behind the scenes by Steve. Approval isn't intended to say whether or not an employee can use sick time but instead to make sure an employee has the accrued time available and is using it for the prescribed purposes outlined in the contract. There was reference made to LSC requiring supervisor approval in the future but we didn't delve into that. The practice/expectation is still that employees notify their supervisor of the need to utilize sick time with as much advance notice as is practicable.

If there is an instance or circumstance where sick leave is denied, the suggested protocol is to first discuss the denial with the Managing Attorney, or Supervisor. If it is not resolved at that level, speak to a Senior Managing Attorney or HR to get further clarification or action. Employees can always consult with a Steward or their Union Rep to file a grievance if a violation to the contract occurs.

Use of SSNs in Paycom system:

NJP thinks this is a requirement of the system/software and referred to it as a "verification" as opposed to "solicitation." NJP believes this is permissible under the law. However, HR is going to check with paycom to see if it can be changed. NJP would support finding a workaround, if the system allows, since so many employees are uncomfortable with using their social security number to access the system.

Update regarding continued impact of COVID-19:

The majority of employees continue to work remotely and most employees still have "covid time" available. NJP is trying to be as flexible as possible and is following their return to work process/plan.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Valarie Peaphon
Union Representative
OPEIU LOCAL 8
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