

Union ★  
Update

OPEIU  
Local



*For Local 8 Members at Northwest Justice Project*

*December 17, 2021*

## Bargaining Update

To date, we've had nine bargaining sessions with Management and four more are scheduled on December 21st, January 5th, January 6th, and January 7th. The current contract has expired, but we have an extension in place through January 7, 2022 as we continue to try to reach agreement on various provisions ([signed extension here](#)).

**The Union Bargaining Team is holding the line! Being tasked with enhancing the Collective Bargaining Agreement and improving working conditions at NJP is one we all take seriously.**

We recently received NJP's economic proposal, and frankly, it was insulting and unacceptable. Not only did they propose a COLA (cost of living adjustment) that is less than what was received the previous three years, it doesn't even come close to keeping up with inflation. As such, it would effectively result in staff taking a pay cut. FYI: the current CPI measured for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue is at 6.3% ([Consumer Price Index](#))

### **NJP's proposal as of 12/8/21**

- **1/1/22:** All bargaining unit employees will receive a 1.5% wage increase. Possibly, if additional funding comes in, employees will receive another 1%.
- **1/1/23:** All bargaining unit employees shall receive a 2.5%-3.5% wage increase based on the CPI-W.

- **1/1/24:** All bargaining unit employees shall receive a 2.5%-3.5% wage increase based on the CPI-W.

**We are concerned with NJP's budgeting and the decisions being made about growth and pursuing new contracts if that makes it impossible for them to appropriately take care of staff. Employees have to be a priority consideration and management has had three years to plan for these negotiations and budget appropriately.**

### **Provisions We've Reached Tentative Agreements On:**

- Increase the amount of paid bereavement leave from 3 days to 5 days and add additional family members and other similarly close relationships.
- Increase the frequency by which the Union receives employee rosters from NJP

### **Outstanding Union Proposals:**

- Tighten up the Legal Assistant to Advocate ratio and clarify process and timelines for making requests of additional staff
- Add a multilingual pay differential
- Add three new paid holidays: Cesar Chavez Day, Juneteenth, and Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Increase leave accrual
- Decrease the amount of time it takes to become eligible for the bonus longevity vacation
- Allow for annual cash out of vacation leave
- Increase the amount of parental leave and decrease the amount of time an employee has to work at NJP to become eligible for paid parental leave
- Improve/clarify how employees are placed on the wage scale (determination of experience)
- Introduce a transportation benefit
- Streamline the process for internal lateral transfers to avoid competition with external candidates
- Make retirement contributions quarterly rather than at year end
- Have NJP pay the Long-Term Services and Support Trust Program premiums
- Increase wages
  - **2022:** 6.3% wage increase for all bargaining unit employees and increasing the non-attorney pay scales so that there is a uniform 2.5% between steps.
  - **2023:** 2.5%-5% wage increase based on the CPI-W.
  - **2024:** 2.5%-5% wage increase based on the CPI-W.

## Still Pending:

- Telecommuting
- Seniority/layoffs

## Union Bargaining Team

1. Tanya German, Legal Assistant, Aberdeen
2. Caroline Guess, Screener, Seattle
3. Brendan Haigh, Paralegal, Tacoma
4. Beth Helm, Attorney, Seattle
5. Catherine Houser, Attorney, Wenatchee
6. Brandi Li, WA LawHelp Coordinator, Seattle
7. Dave Loeser, Legal Assistant, Spokane
8. Margaret MacRae, Attorney, Spokane
9. Amy NoOneElse, Attorney, CLEAR
10. Therese Norton, Attorney, Bellingham
11. M. Abbas Rizvi, Attorney, Seattle
12. Valarie Peaphon, Union Representative, OPEIU LOCAL 8

**Questions? Contact Valarie Peaphon, Union Representative, 206-441-8880 ext. 103 or [Valarie@opeiu8.org](mailto:Valarie@opeiu8.org)**



**OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 8**

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