

**Union** ★  
**Update**

**OPEIU**  
Local



*For Local 8 Members at Northwest Justice Project*

March 11, 2022

# Tentative Agreement Reached!

Our Union Bargaining Team secured a Tentative Agreement on a new 3-year contract with NJP and is recommending a **YES** vote!

[You can view the tentative changes we reached here.](#)

[You can view the 2022 Salary Scales here.](#)

There are a number of things currently developing that could potentially impact NJP's overall finances. We are aware of both a federal budget shortfall and state budget surplus. Ultimately, we believe NJP can make it work between the two (and must budget better for staffing in the future). We anticipate having more information on this early next week!

## Membership Meeting

- **Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 5pm via zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2505066115?pwd=eSt2RVVIMDRYUEJBaTF4ckFKUHZBdz09>

Meeting ID: 250 506 6115

Passcode: 9832543288

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,2505066115#,,,,\*9832543288# US

Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782 US

Meeting ID: 250 506 6115

Passcode: 9832543288

## Contract Vote

We will be conducting the vote virtually next week. You will receive an email on Thursday, March 17th with a link to your ballot. Voting will be open from 9am on Thursday, March 17 through 4pm on Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. Any votes cast after 4pm on March 18<sup>th</sup> will not be counted.

## Highlights Summary

- **Effective 1/1/22:** Across-The-Board flat \$3,200 wage increase (which represents the equivalent of an equalized 3.9% increase). The flat dollar amount will be pro-rated for part-time employees. This approach met our goal of approaching compensation with a lens toward equity so that those who are lowest paid will receive the biggest percentage increase. The increase will be paid out via a lump sum retroactive payment to January 1<sup>st</sup> and the percentage increase will be applied going forward, likely to be seen beginning on the April 8<sup>th</sup> paycheck if the contract is ratified.
- **Effective 1/1/23:** Cost of Living Adjustment based on the regional CPI with a minimum of 2.5% and maximum of 3.5%
- **Effective 1/1/24:** Cost of Living Adjustment based on the regional CPI with a minimum of 2.75% and maximum of 4%
- Add three new paid holidays: Cesar Chavez Day, Juneteenth, and Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Increase the amount of paid bereavement leave from 3 days to 5 days and add additional family members and other similarly close relationships
- Tighten up the Legal Assistant to Advocate ratio language and clarify process and timelines for making requests of additional staff
- Add a bi-lingual pay differential retroactive to January 1st

- Decrease the amount of time it takes to become eligible for the bonus longevity vacation from 10 years to 7 years
- Increase the amount of paid parental leave from 12 weeks to 14 weeks and decrease the amount of time an employee has to work at NJP to become eligible for paid parental leave from 12 months to 6 months
- Streamline the process for internal lateral transfers within a job classification and unit to avoid competition with external candidates
- Improve/clarify how employees are placed on the wage scale (determination of experience)
- Allow for compensation for lived experience
- Implement a one-time process for current employees to request their experience/pay be reevaluated
- Ensure there is transparency (written explanation) of how an employee is being placed on the salary scale
- Office closure/inclement weather language to allow employees with children whose childcare facility or school is closed to be paid for the working day. If the office isn't closed, employees with children whose school is closed will have the option to use sick leave
- Increase the frequency by which the Union receives employee rosters from NJP
- Three-year contract expiring on November 30, 2024
- Continued exploration of retirement plan to change contributions to quarterly rather than at year end and to reduce the eligibility to receive contributions from one year of employment to six months
- Commitment to finalize a telecommuting policy and bargain the impacts beginning in April of 2022



*Union Bargaining Team (listed in order from top to bottom, left to right):*

**Beth Helm**, Attorney, Seattle

**Valarie Peaphon**, Union Rep, OPEIU LOCAL 8

**M. Abbas Rizvi**, Attorney, Seattle

**Therese Norton**, Attorney, Bellingham

**Tanya German**, Legal Assistant, Aberdeen

**Brendan Haigh**, Paralegal, Tacoma

**Margaret MacRae**, Attorney, Spokane

**Brandi Li**, WA LawHelp Coordinator, Seattle

**Catherine Houser**, Attorney, Wenatchee

**Caroline Guess**, Screener, Seattle

**Dave Loeser**, Legal Assistant, Spokane

**Amy NoOneElse**, Attorney, CLEAR

**Contact Valarie Peaphon, OPEIU Union Representative, with any questions or concerns at [valarie@opeiu8.org](mailto:valarie@opeiu8.org) or (206)441-8880 x103**



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

1-800-600-2433 or 206-441-8880 ★ Fax: 206-441-441-0207 ★ [www.opeiu8.org](http://www.opeiu8.org)

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