

Union ★
Update

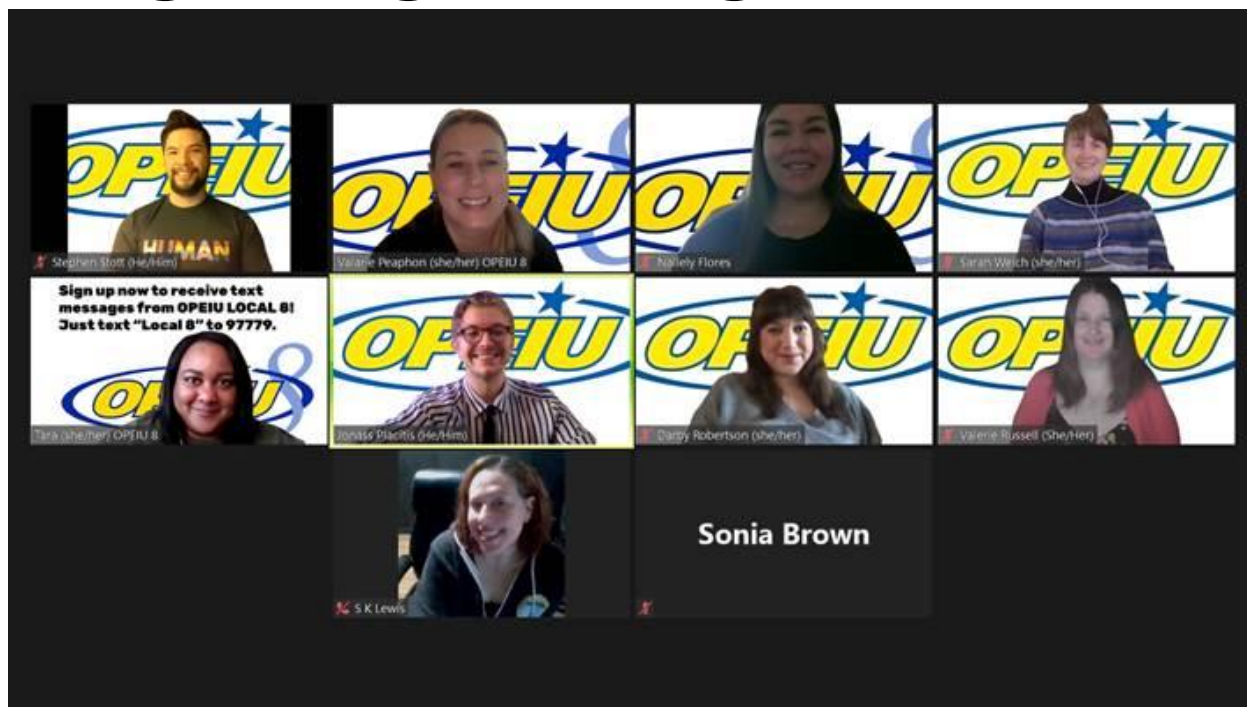
OPEIU
Local



For Local 8 Members at Crisis Connections

February 26, 2021

Bargaining has begun...



Our first contract negotiation meeting took place on Tuesday, February 23rd. We met with Management, shared some preliminary proposals, and tried to work out basic logistics. The tenor of the meeting was tense, and at times, we were met with aggression and hostility. Unfortunately, Crisis Connections didn't want

to engage in a fair and meaningful conversation about how our bargaining team's time would be recorded or how we would be compensated. They responded to our questions and reasoning with multiple threats in an attempt to try to shut down the dialogue all together. Nonetheless, we will persist. We are committed to standing up for what we deserve and fighting for a fair contract. We have already proposed several more bargaining dates for the month of March.

“The long-awaited conversation has begun; We, the workers, spoke when we voted to form a union, and shall continue to speak as we now have a seat at the decision-making table. After being provided a glimpse into the tactics and demeanor we can expect from Crisis Connections during contract negotiations, this statement should suffice: no amount of aggression, or condescension, shall ultimately derail the workers' steady march toward an equitable and agreeable contract for all.” - Jonass Placitis

“I feel incredibly fortunate to be actively involved in the beginning of the collective bargaining process. As the only Call Screener on the Bargaining Team, I seek equitable wages and conditions for Crisis Connections' front-line workers who are paid the least yet are the first point of contact for every caller. I take my responsibility to my co-workers seriously and am grateful for the chance to represent our unique interests within this strong, vibrant, and active union.” - SK Lewis

“I didn't know what to expect when attending our first bargaining session. Things started off well and then it felt like we were met with some unnecessary force. To some extent this is to be expected and, as a team, we will meet that force with supporting one another and continuing to advocate for us, as a community. One of the disconcerting issues that came up during our first meeting is that the management team is being paid by Crisis Connections to participate in this process while they want members of our bargaining team to go unpaid or use up our PTO. Even when our union reps proposed to reimburse Crisis Connections so that we did not have to lose two days of pay, the Crisis Connections' lawyers

adamantly said no. It is unclear whether or not the management team agrees with this, as they didn't speak directly. Our hope is that moving forward we can work collaboratively together because we deserve respect, equity, and having the ability to meet our basic needs." - Stephen Stott

More Bargaining Members Needed

We want to make sure the different service lines are represented on the Union Bargaining Team. We need one from each of the following departments: **Warm Line, Teen Link, and the Recovery Help Line**. If you are interested, please email Tara Powell at Tara@opeiu8.org by 8am on Monday, March 8th. If we have more volunteers than spots available we may need to hold an election.

Membership Meeting

Stay Informed. Make sure you know how the bargaining process works, what we're up against and what we can do to help us all achieve the best contact possible. Join us on for our next Membership Meeting on Thursday, March 4th from 6pm-7pm. Zoom invite:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82640450192?pwd=c21Xd0xzSThoeWFuUzcxS0g0VU90dz09>

Meeting ID: 826 4045 0192

Passcode: 970724

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,82640450192#,,,,*970724# US (Tacoma)

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+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
Meeting ID: 826 4045 0192
Passcode: 970724
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kjd7OR5xg>

Work From Home Agreement

The Union has told Crisis Connections to stop instructing employees to sign this agreement as it has not yet been negotiated or agreed to. We heard from many of you and understand there are serious concerns with the document as it currently exists including but not limited to: it allows the employer to rescind remote work without notice and without reason, it is unclear who is eligible, it sets an expectation that employees should provide their own equipment and then grant access to IT to personally owned computers and laptops, it opens the door to invasive visits to an employee's home, it lacks any sort of compensation for internet, electricity, heat, etc.

We Have Rights

Q: Can we talk to each other about our working conditions, including issues such as safety and pay?

A: Absolutely. It is important for employees to communicate with one another and to share information. The 1935 National Labor Relations Act protects employees' rights to discuss conditions of employment. This is considered protected concerted activity. It is illegal for an employer to ban, forbid, or prohibit employees, either verbally or in written policy, from discussing salaries or other job conditions. If this happens to you, please let us know!

A Brief History On How We Came To Be Here:

Unionization at Crisis Connections has been a journey, but we've never wavered in our shared commitment to a better future for this agency and its workers!

- Dec 2019** Staff- fed up with inadequate staffing, burnout and constant turnover, a lack of transparency and communication from leadership, chaotic working conditions, and poor morale from having concerns ignored- began having conversations about how we could improve our workplace and researching ways to join together to form a union.
- Jan 2020** Staff started working with OPEIU LOCAL 8.
- Mar 2020** Staff started a petition to unionize that ultimately collected the signatures of 90 employees (around 72% of frontline staff at the time)!
- May 2020** We filed for an election.
- July 2020** Staff's desire to make our voices heard was reflected in voter turnout. The support was overwhelming, with 90% in favor of unionization!
- Nov 2020** We elected Bargaining Team members to represent the union
while negotiating our first contract.
- Feb 2021** We held our first day of contract negotiations.

Lunch Breaks

There is a history at Crisis Connections of some employees being able to waive their lunch break, depending on business needs. Essentially, instead of being compensated for working a 7.5 hour day and taking .5 hour unpaid lunch break, employees that waive their lunch break are paid for a full 8 hours of work, plus .5 hours additional pay for agreeing to waive their break. We have heard the employer may be modifying this policy or now actively discouraging this practice in roles where it has historically been implemented. Please help inform our action by taking this [quick online poll](#) ASAP but no later than 8am on Monday, March 8th (insert link):

Please contact OPEIU Local 8 staff members with questions and concerns:

Nallely Flores, Union Organizer: Nallely@opeiu8.org, (206) 441-8880 x109
Tara Powell, Union Representative: Tara@opeiu8.org, (206) 441-8880 x106
Valarie Peaphon, Union Negotiator: Valarie@opeiu8.org, (206) 441-8880 x103

Text Messages

Opt-In about union negotiations, membership meetings, and actions in your workplace by texting **Local 8** to **97779** (message and data to receive information rates may apply).

