

Union ★  
Update

OPEIU  
Local



*For Local 8 Members at Crisis Connections*

July 25, 2022

## **Our Union at Crisis Connections wants to welcome all recently hired employees!**



*To bring you up to speed, here's a glimpse into our journey to form a Union and our ongoing efforts to obtain a fair contract and have our voices heard:*

We stand firm in our shared commitment to pursue a better future for this agency and for all of us—its workers! We remain focused on improving our work environment, ensuring our agency operates in a consistent and transparent manner, and providing the best services possible to the community. This includes addressing recruitment and retention by providing fair, competitive pay, having proper staffing to perform the work, and receiving adequate support from management.

The employees of Crisis Connections unionized with OPEIU Local 8. **WE, Crisis Connections staff, are the Union!** As a Union, we have the power to negotiate more favorable wages, working conditions, and other benefits through collective action and

bargaining. A Union is not a third-party service; the office of OPEIU Local 8 is a resource to aid us in the process of improving our quality of life and establishing a more equal relationship with our employer. OPEIU Local 8 also provides expert support and representation, legal assistance, and other membership benefits.

We are proud to be part of OPEIU Local 8! As a unified group of workers who join together, we have more strength, more rights, and more power.

### **UNIONIZATION & FIRST CONTRACT TIMELINE:**

- **December 2019:** Burnt out and fed up with inadequate staffing, constant turnover, a lack of transparency and communication from leadership, chaotic working conditions, and poor morale after sending a letter to the board and having our concerns ignored – employees began having conversations about how we could improve our workplace and researching how to form a Union.
- **January 2020:** Employees started working with OPEIU Local 8.
- **March 2020:** Employees started a petition to unionize that ultimately collected the signatures of 90 employees (72% of frontline staff at the time)!
- **May 2020:** We filed for a union election with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).
- **July 2020** Our desire to make our voices heard was reflected in voter turnout. The support was overwhelming, with 90% of staff in favor of unionization!
- **November 2020:** We elected employees from different departments to represent us on the Union’s bargaining team while in contract negotiations with our employer. We identified bargaining priorities and developed initial proposals.
- **February 2021:** We held our first day of contract negotiations with management.
- **May 2021:** Michelle McDaniel became CEO at Crisis Connections.
- **September 2021:** We successfully negotiated a Remote Work Agreement, including reimbursement for internet up to \$50/month!
- **October 2021:** We sent a letter to CEO McDaniel with 91 employee signatures detailing ongoing and escalating issues with retention, training, turnover, lack of support, and plummeting job satisfaction.
- **November 2021:** OPEIU Rep Valarie Peaphon and CEO McDaniel sat down for an informal, candid conversation around employee concerns.
- **November 2021:** We launched a collective action to show employee support for our first contract. Employees continue to wear their union buttons proudly and publicly!
- **December 2021:** We successfully negotiated a COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate MOU!

- **February 2022:** We caught a payroll error associated with the Presidents' Day holiday and have been working to hold Crisis Connections accountable to fix it and accurately compensate employees. At least 8 employees were impacted and paid ...
- **May 2022:** We've reached a Tentative Agreement (TA) on many contract articles including the observance of Juneteenth as a paid holiday at Crisis Connections!
- **June 2022:** We are working to ensure shift differentials are accurately applied to holiday pay provisions.
- **February 2021-July 2022:** We continue to work toward a fair first contract. To date, we have had 37 bargaining sessions with the employer. We are currently working on increasing wages!

**Union Bargaining Team:**

*Holly Barton, King County Crisis Intervention Specialist, Crisis Department*

*Sonia Brown, Information & Referral Specialist, 211*

*Carol DeSalles, Information & Referral Specialist, 211*

*Carly Howard, Warm Line Mentor, Warm Line*

*SK Lewis, King County Call Screening & Coordination Specialist, Crisis Department*

*Darby Robertson, Youth Services Lead Crisis Intervention Specialist, Crisis Department*

*Jo Siesto, Crisis Line Expansion Call Screening & Coordination Specialist, Crisis Department*

*Sarah Welch, King County Crisis Services Clinician, Crisis Department*

*Have questions or want to get more involved? Reach out to the bargaining team at [ccbargainingteam@gmail.com](mailto:ccbargainingteam@gmail.com) or our Union Representative Tara Powell at [tara@opeiu8.org](mailto:tara@opeiu8.org).*

