

Union ★  
Update

OPEIU  
Local



*For Local 8 Members at Crisis Connections*

July 27, 2022

## Bargaining Update

We started bargaining the first ever union contract at Crisis Connections in February of 2021, and though it's been a slow and—at times—difficult process, we've maintained our resiliency and dedication to building a foundation for employees that we can be proud of and that will last.



Most recently, at bargaining sessions held on July 22nd and 25th, we exchanged **compensation proposals** with management that we hope will be transformative for staff. To assist with retention, recruitment, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life, it is the Union's goal to ensure wages at Crisis Connections are fair, competitive, transparent, and predictable. Among other things, our Union Bargaining Team is working to secure meaningful increases for employees!

It seems we have a shared interest with management in creating a new compensation structure at Crisis Connections that would provide for *two* pay increases per year: a general "across-the-board" wage increase and an individual anniversary "step" increase.

How would that work? Positions would be placed into pay grades that set minimum and maximum wage rates. Within each pay grade, there are steps with increasing wage rates which employees progress through based on tenure with the organization.

We are working to make sure that positions are properly graded (i.e., placed into pay grades that consider minimum education and licensure requirements, job tasks, scope of work, and comparable local market data).

Here’s a generic example of what that might look like (please note job titles, rates of pay, number of grades, and number of steps are for illustrative purposes only):

	STEP 0	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
<b>PAY GRADE 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Position A</li> <li>● Position B</li> <li>● Position C</li> </ul>	\$18.50/hour	\$18.75/hour	\$19.00/hour	\$19.25/hour
<b>PAY GRADE 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Position D</li> <li>● Position E</li> </ul>	\$20.00/hour	\$20.25/hour	\$20.50/hour	20.75/hour
<b>PAY GRADE 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Position F</li> </ul>	\$24.75/hour	\$25.00/hour	25.25/hour	\$25.50/hour

Our Union Bargaining Team believes the transition onto this new structure in the first year of the contract must be significant in order to incorporate market rate pay adjustments. **How that transition occurs and what the actual numbers end up being still have to be negotiated... but we know, the devil is in the details!**

	Management’s 7/12/22 Proposal	Union’s 7/25/22 Proposal
<b>Step Increases</b>	Management wants to create “a universal focal point” that would effectively reset all employees’ anniversary date to whatever month the contract is ratified. For example, if we are able to reach an agreement by	Employees would receive their annual step increase based on their individual anniversary date. For example, if an employee’s 2022 anniversary date has already passed, they would move directly to the corresponding step upon contract ratification.

	<p>September, then employees would be placed on the step that coincides with their number of full years of service at that time (no partial credit!). Step increases aren't adjusted again until the next September— regardless of an employee's actual anniversary date— meaning an employee whose anniversary falls between October-December would have to wait an additional 9-11 months past their anniversary (until September 2023) to receive a step increase.</p>	<p>Alternatively, if an employee's anniversary occurs after we approve the contract, they would move to the corresponding step at that time.</p>
<p><b>Across-the-Board Wage Increase</b></p>	<p>By creating a “universal focal point” of September, Management is proposing employees wait until September of each year to receive their general, across-the-board increases, starting in 2022.</p>	<p>Across-the-board increases would be applied in January of each year. The Union is also proposing retroactive pay to January 2022 for all employees, in alignment with what CC recently provided to Crisis Services Clinicians.</p>

**Additional Economic Items:**

Management has not yet responded to the improvements proposed by the Union on May 13th regarding **healthcare** (e.g., reducing employee cost share of the premium for dependent coverage) or **retirement** (e.g., providing automatic employer contributions to the 403b plan).

In addition to increased hourly wages, the Union is proposing other **compensation-based differentials** associated with atypical work schedules (e.g., swing shift), the ability to offer services in multiple languages, training new employees, short-staffing, and having lead responsibilities.

Management has emphatically stated they want to do away with waived lunch breaks, despite failing to provide any concrete plan to ensure continuous coverage and manageable workloads for our colleagues during our absence. We are fighting to hold on to the **waived break bonus** for the positions for whom it is not possible for staff to ethically step away for a thirty-minute lunch break without compromising services delivered to the community.



**Next Bargaining Date:**

We meet with management again on August 4<sup>th</sup> and look forward to receiving their response to our proposals. Our team remains committed to winning a fair contract that truly recognizes and supports the work of union-represented employees at Crisis Connections!

**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

**Valarie Peaphon**, Lead Negotiator, OPEIU Local 8

**Tara Powell**, Union Representative, OPEIU Local 8

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



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