

Friends of Youth Union Election Information

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Invitation to Upcoming Union Event: Discussion of Program Safety and Cultivating a Trauma Informed Workplace

Friends of Youth leadership did not respond to our request to voluntarily recognize our union, but we are excited to share that our vote to make our Union official through an NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) Election has been scheduled!

Ballots Will Be Mailed Thursday, February 1. The NLRB will mail ballots to the mailing address provided by Friends of Youth for all eligible voters on February 1 from their office in Seattle. If you are receiving this email, we have you listed as an eligible voter, and now the time to confirm that Friends of Youth provided your correct address. You should receive your ballot by February 8 at the latest. If you have not received a ballot on Thursday, February 8, you should contact the NLRB immediately at 206-220-6300.

Return Your Ballot Right Away. The voter packet you receive from the NLRB will include instructions and two envelopes: one is a security envelope to put the secret ballot in and the other one is for you to mail in your secret ballot to the NLRB. No stamp is necessary. **Mark your ballot, but do not sign or make comments or other marks on your ballot** as that is grounds to void a ballot. Your name on the return envelope is used by the NLRB to check eligibility. Don't remove it. How you vote will remain private as the envelope is separated from the ballot before they are counted.

For Therapists, Mental Health Therapists, Therapist/Internship Supervisors, SUDP/SUDPTs, and Psych ARNPs, the ballot will have two questions. First, it will ask if you wish to be included with "nonprofessional" employees in a unit for purposes of collective bargaining. Next, the ballot will ask whether you wish to be represented by OPEIU (Office and Professional Employees International Union) Local 8. Here is a [sample of what your ballot will look like](#).

For all other employees, the ballot will have one question. It will ask whether you wish to be represented by OPEIU (Office and Professional Employees International Union) Local 8. Here is a [sample of what your ballot will look like](#).

Ballots Must Be *Received* by 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 22. For your vote to count, your ballot must be at the NLRB office in Seattle by 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 22. Ballots received after that time (regardless of postmark) will not be counted.

Ballots Will Be Counted at 1 p.m. on Thursday, February 22. The vote count will take place at the NLRB office in Seattle. Each party is allowed to have an observer to witness the vote counting process.

Results of the Election Will Be Known Shortly After the Count. Results will most likely be known within an hour or so of the vote tally at the NLRB on February 22. It takes a majority *of those who vote* to determine the outcome.

If you have any questions about this process or anything else, please contact a coworker signer of the [open letter sent on 12/18/2023](#) or union organizer Corinne at corinne@opeiu8.org or 425-318-2650.

You're Invited! We want to try hosting a series of issue-specific meetings to share our experiences and ideas about how we might make improvements, and we're starting with the topic of Safety.

Join us for a discussion of Safety at Work via Zoom on Wednesday, January 24 from 6-7pm. Email corinne@opeiu8.org to request the link.

A union member from **Plymouth Housing** will also be joining us to share their experience advocating for safety improvements in a union workplace.

Here are some more questions we have asked ...

Should I still vote if I'm leaving Friends of Youth soon?

Yes! Only employees working during the eligibility period are able to vote, so future employees are counting on those of us working now to participate in making this important decision. It will be meaningful how many eligible voters turn out to vote in support of forming our union. We want to send a strong message about how important this is and that we are determined to win our union and a great first contract, and the higher the turnout, the stronger the message.

Why do some positions have two questions to vote on?

Under labor law, for "professional employees" to be included in a bargaining unit (meaning in the same union contract) with "non-professional employees," they need to vote to do so. Our goal is to have the strongest union possible, and all employees coming together accomplishes that. In some union environments like building trades, the different classifications prefer to have completely separate unions, but at Friends of Youth, although some of us are therapists and some of us are case managers or youth specialists, we belong in the same union. We can still negotiate terms that apply differently to different classifications if needed; you will see this, for example, at [Northwest Justice Project](#) or [Northwest Immigrant Rights Project](#), where attorneys, legal assistants, and all other nonmanagement staff are all covered under the same OPEIU union contract. If "professional" employees vote "**Yes**" and "**Yes**", we will all be covered under one union contract.

You can also see [this FAQ](#) and/or visit [this page](#) to find all previous updates and related documents.

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