

**Union** ★  
**Update**

**OPEIU**  
Local



*For Local 8 Members at YouthCare*

July 2, 2024

## **Wage Increases for 2025**

The end of the year will be here before we know it, and some may be wondering – what will our increase for 2025 be? That has yet to be decided!

We negotiated wage openers in our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), also known as our union contract. A wage opener is a negotiation *just* for wages. You can read about this in Section 14.4(b) of our CBA.

Last year, we won substantial increases - \$2.50 across-the-board! We know that human services workers are underpaid, and while this is a great start in the right direction, we know our work isn't over. This July, we return to the bargaining table to negotiate our increases for 2025.

### *How do negotiations work?*

There are over 100 people in our union at YouthCare. To understand our priorities for bargaining, we use surveys. Then, using the survey results, a team of our fellow union siblings meet with management to try and get the best deal possible for everyone. Once an agreement between management and our team is reached (called a tentative agreement), everyone in our union votes to either accept or reject the agreement.

Please fill out [this survey](#) by July 8<sup>th</sup>!

### **Program Closure & Layoffs – What are our rights?**

On Friday June 28, 2024, YouthCare announced that Catalyst Transitional Living Program and Home of Hope – Bridge Program will be closed effective August 31 and that Engagement & Shelter Services will be consolidated to the Orion Center by January 1, 2025, effectively closing the University District Youth Center and South Seattle Youth Center. Some of us may be wondering, what are our rights in the face of these changes? While we hope never to face layoffs, we address layoffs in Article 7 of our Union contract (pages 10-11).

In situations where layoffs are a result of a reorganization initiated by YouthCare, impacted employees will receive as much notice as possible but no less than sixty (60) days. If sixty (60) days' notice is not given, the employee will be paid for the full sixty (60) days. Our contract also states that YouthCare will work collaboratively with us to explore alternatives to elimination of hours/positions.

If there are open positions in the same classification, impacted employees will have a choice whether to be laid off or move into the other position in order of seniority. Laid off employees go onto a recall list, which means that YouthCare will contact these employees when a position for which they are qualified becomes open. If the laid off employee is recalled within a year of their lay off, they'll get preference over external applicants.

These are the most relevant details of Article 7 to the recently announced program closures, but this summary is not exhaustive. Read all of Article 7 to be fully up to date on your rights around layoffs.

If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to our Union Representative Phoebe Feldsher as soon as possible. If there is a contract violation, we have fourteen (14) calendar days to bring it to YouthCare's attention before we lose the right to challenge the decision through our grievance procedure (Article 18 Grievance Procedure page 31).

## **Labor-Management Update – June Meeting Notes**

Our LMC meets quarterly (every three months), and our last meeting was on Thursday June 20. We spoke about creating a Work from Home (WFH) policy, issues with our job descriptions, and bilingual differential advocacy.

There isn't a uniform policy for granting telework or work-from-home. Each manager has a different approach, leading to potential favoritism and bias. Management shared

that they have drafted a policy which they will send to us for negotiation. By law, our employer must negotiate with us over anything which impacts our wages, benefits, or working conditions. The option to work from home is a working condition and therefore a mandatory subject of bargaining. We have yet to receive the policy and will continue to send updates as our conversations continue.

Several of us noticed some issues with the Engagement Case Manager job description, particularly CEA certification. We want to make sure that our case managers don't become overloaded with work or start to do housing navigation work instead of the case management they were hired for. Again, job descriptions are working conditions and therefore subject to negotiation. This doesn't mean we get whatever we want in our job descriptions, but that management must engage in conversation with us about it.

At our last wage opener and during our first contract negotiations, we proposed that the bilingual differential be applied to anyone who speaks multiple languages for their work at YouthCare. We know that many of us are utilizing these skills without proper compensation. At our 2023 wage opener, management agreed and stated a commitment to advocate to funders to increase funding so that they provide such a differential. Management shared that they have not made progress and are doubtful that they'll be able to expand this differential in the near future. We will continue to propose this and fight for this at our upcoming wage opener.

## **Upcoming Events**

**Shop Steward Training** Tuesday, July 16 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

All OPEIU members are invited to our Shop Steward Training. We will be covering the basics that Shop Stewards and active leaders should know about our Union, our contracts and our representation rights.

To participate, please RSVP by noon on Monday, July 15 [online](#) or to [richard@opeiu8.org](mailto:richard@opeiu8.org) (please mention New Shop Steward Training).

## **Union in the Park**

Join your Local 8 siblings as we enjoy a fun, family friendly gathering to celebrate #hotlaborsummer!

There will be food, games, swag treats, and more!

Tues. July 9 - Bellingham 5:30 - 7 pm – Cordata Park 4510 Cordata Pkwy, Bellingham, WA 99226

**Sat. July 27 - SeaTac 11 am - 1pm – Angle Lake - Shelter A 19408 International Blvd, SeaTac, WA 98188**

Saturday August 10-Vancouver 11:00am- 1:00 pm- Marine Community Park- 4501 SE Columbia Way, Vancouver WA 98661

**Questions? Contact your Union Representative, Phoebe Feldsher, at [phoebe@opeiu8.org](mailto:phoebe@opeiu8.org).**



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

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