

Union ★
Update

OPEIU
Local



For Local 8 Members at YouthCare

August 12, 2024

Advocating for a Safer YouthCare – Sexual Harassment Response

At YouthCare’s May townhall meeting, disturbing allegations about a former staff member came to light. While many of us had come forward to leadership with our concerns, our complaints were not heard and were not acted upon. This inaction created an unsafe environment for us and our clients. This is unacceptable.

We’ve since met with YouthCare senior leadership, and they agree. Several impacted employees shared their stories with senior leadership and are working with them to identify what went wrong, and to listen to us about how to fix it.

Because of our advocacy, senior leadership has been alerted to breakdowns in YouthCare’s reporting process. In response, YouthCare is rolling out a new anonymous whistleblower line, a new whistleblower policy, and a ‘see something, say something’ campaign.

Before we unionized, we were not heard. Serious issues were left unaddressed, and our suggestions went nowhere. Now, we have a voice on the job.

We want to see leadership at our programs more often, so they understand the issues we’re facing and see the work we do with their own eyes. We want to see accountability when our leadership fails, and we want that failure to be acknowledged and improved upon.

We want our leadership to investigate serious allegations quickly and thoroughly, to ensure the least disruption to our lives and the program's function. While no one wants to be falsely accused of a serious infraction, we do expect the agency to take all allegations seriously and investigate them to the fullest extent possible.

We are our union, and we care deeply about our own safety and that of our clients. We are amazing advocates, and when we use our voices together nothing can drown us out.

As we continue to work to improve processes and policies, we need more of us involved. If you've experienced sexual harassment, inappropriate behavior, or bullying you're invited to work with us on improving sexual harassment and other policies. Please email our Union Representative Phoebe Feldsher if you're interested in joining the conversation.

From Taylor Pioli-Oster, Family Engagement Case Manager:

"In the meetings, I've felt heard by management. I appreciate their words and need to see follow through on their promises. We still have a long road ahead of us and we can't fully do the work without your voices, too."

Program Closure – Call for Bargaining Team Members

The closure of Catalyst & Home of Hope is approaching – August 31, 2024. Shortly thereafter, UDYC & SSYC will close in January 2025.

As Union members, we have the right to negotiate over anything that impacts our wages, benefits, or working conditions. As such, we have the right to negotiate over the impact of these program closures. Our Union Representative is working to recruit a bargaining team of impacted employees to negotiate over the impacts of Catalyst, Home of Hope, UDYC & SSYC closing. Management has been slow to provide the necessary information. If you're impacted by any of the upcoming program closures and are interested in serving on the bargaining team, email our Union Representative Phoebe Feldsher to get involved.

2025 Wage Negotiation Update

We announced our preparation for wage negotiations last month, shortly before YouthCare announced the closure of Catalyst, Home of Hope, UDYC, & SSYC. Since

then, we've identified our bargaining team, met to go over our survey results, and reviewed management's financial information.

Program closures and the negotiations surrounding those closures will impact YouthCare's budget and therefore our wage negotiations. YouthCare sends their budget to the Executive Board for approval around December, and our hope is to conclude before then.

We have yet to schedule our first bargaining session with management and intend to schedule the meeting for the end of August or early September depending on management's availability. We will continue to send updates as our bargain progresses.

Last year, we successfully negotiated a \$2.50 across-the-board increase. This was a meaningful step in the right direction, but we must continue this progress. A 2023 study by the University of Washington shows that non-profit human services workers are underpaid for the work they perform (see report [here](#).) The report recommended a 7% increase for human services workers in 2023 and a total 59% increase by 2030. We're relieved to see inflation has lowered since its peak at 10%, but we continue to feel the impact of high inflation in our rent, groceries, and ability to save.

Questions or comments? Reach out to our Bargaining Team or Union Representative.

Our Bargaining Team:

Aaron Shay, Community Street Outreach Worker
Taylor Pioli-Oster, Family Engagement Case Manager
Jon Charles, CSTP Program Coordinator
Valerie Maganya, Early Intervention Resource Navigator

Upcoming Events

Membership Assembly
Saturday September 28, 2024, 10:00am-4:00pm
In-person at **Olympia Community Center**
222 Columbia St. NW
Olympia, WA 98501

OPEIU Local 8's Membership Assemblies happen twice a year - they are where we conduct the business of our Union. Come and meet other Local 8 members from all over the state! If you have to travel over 50 miles travel stipends or limited hotel rooms may be available. **If you're interested in a hotel room, email our Union Representative Phoebe Feldsher as soon as possible for availability.** All reimbursements must be in accordance with the OPEIU Local 8 Reimbursement Policy.

To participate, please RSVP by Wednesday, September 25, 2024 [online](#) or to Richard@opeiu8.org.

Questions? Contact your Union Representative, Phoebe Feldsher, at phoebe@opeiu8.org.



OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 8

1-800-600-2433 or 206-441-8880 ★ Fax: 206-441-0207 ★ www.opeiu8.org

Find us on social media:



@OPEIULocal8

liuna#242/afi-cio