

Union ★
Update

OPEIU
Local



For Local 8 Members at Friends of Youth

October 1, 2024

Solidarity Makes Us Strong

We had our third meeting with FOY on Friday, September 27th. We are slowly making progress as we pass proposals back and forth with management. As we continue the important process of negotiating our first contract, our Union is centering these key foundations:

- **Fair compensation with truly livable wages and wage transparency**
- **Adequate staffing that ensures continuity of services, preventing burnout, and promoting a safer workplace**
- **Respect for workers at all levels of the agency and a clear, transparent process of accountability in any instance in which this basic right is violated**
- **Equitable treatment for all staff including those with marginalized identities**
- **Clear process to challenge/contest changes to working conditions**

During contract negotiations, we will continue to push for fair staffing practices that respect full-time, part-time, and relief workers while keeping compensation, health, safety, and well-being front and center.

If you hear FOY blaming “the union” for policy or other changes during this process, we encourage you to be skeptical—ask yourself whether what is being said is true or if management might be deflecting responsibility or trying to shift focus away from their own decision—and reach out to us (your Union Bargaining Team or Union Reps) to confirm the accuracy of the information being provided. We understand how frustrating it must have been to be falsely told that the union was responsible for delayed wage increases, the elimination of positions, or for the new timekeeping

system. We are relying on you to let us know when things like this are said so that we can set the record straight!

Our continued support and solidarity make us strong. By standing united, we will secure a contract that reflects the value of all workers.

Union Bargaining Team:

Leslie Beckman, Jenny Buehler, Rinn Cronin Kleinman, Anna De Long, Tahni Nikitins, Beckett Weeks, Valarie Peaphon, Phoebe Feldsher, and Byram Simpson

A note from Bargaining Team Member, Tahni Nikitins



“To my fellow workers, I want you to know this agency exists because YOU are here making this happen. To my fellow direct service staff, YOUR WORK is this agency's purpose. To my fellow relief staff, I want you to know YOUR PRESENCE ensures our programs are able to stay open and render services to our clients even in the face of extreme staffing instability.

I started with Friends of Youth as a full-time staff member of Youth Haven but eventually dropped down to relief status. In that transition I experienced the stark difference with which relief staff are regarded. There is little to no acknowledgment of

the important role we play in our programs, or the rich and dynamic work we can do with clients due to the uniqueness of our roles. We often fill gaping holes in staffing to ensure services are rendered and programs do not lapse in licensing requirements, but we experience little recognition for this.

This is one of the many reasons I've been so involved with union organizing and continue to be involved as a member of the bargaining team. Since day one I've been advocating for better pay and protections for all staff—including reliefs—and for revised policies that ensure Friends of Youth as an agency is just as accountable to us as we are to them.” -Tahni Nikitins

Questions? Contact Union Representative Phoebe Feldsher at phoebe@opeiu8.org or 206-441-8880 ext. 119.



OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 8

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