

MARCH-APRIL 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



A MESSAGE FROM SEIU 721 PRESIDENT BOB SCHOONOVER

For years, SEIU 721 members have told the press, the politicians and the powerful that we are the front lines. We are the safety net. We are the workers that keep society going.

Now the pandemic is here. More than one-half of humanity is on lock-down. The billionaires, the CEOs, the anti-government ultra-conservatives who rail against public workers — all of them are quarantined at home as “non-essential.” Meanwhile, thousands of SEIU 721 members — nurses, health care workers, Children’s Social Workers, DPSS workers, sanitation workers and countless others — are on the job, holding our society together.

I know it’s cold comfort for us to say “we told you so,” but we did.

I want to take this moment to salute you, my brothers and sisters, for all you are doing. This is your moment to make a difference and to help those who need it most.

You are the union and the union has your back. The union is fighting and will continue to fight to ensure:

- Every front-line worker who needs and wants Personal Protective Equipment gets it.
- All front-line workers receive available pay premiums and

bonuses earned during the crisis

- No worker will be forced to choose between their income and the health and well-being of their family.
- All eligible workers receive the maximum allowable emergency paid sick leave and paid family medical leave during the crisis.
- All workers able to telework are granted the ability
- All worksites are cleaned and sanitized to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect workers.
- Any worker that falls ill from COVID-19 receives quality care and the maximum available benefits.

Most importantly: Our union is using every tool at its disposal to change the way California procures protective equipment for essential workers so we protect the heroes on the front lines of the pandemic!

In solidarity,

Bob Schoonover



COVID-19 SPECIAL REPORT



SEIU 721 DELIVERS ON PPE FOR LA HEALTH CARE WORKERS



Nothing symbolizes the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic like the protective facemask. A nationwide shortage of N-95 filter respirators and other Personal Protective Equipment has put tens of thousands of doctors, nurses, health care workers and other essential frontline workers at risk of death or serious illness at precisely the time we need them to care for the sick and hold our society together in the face of one of the worst health crises in modern history.

SEIU 721 steps in to protect frontline health care workers

When nurses and health care workers sounded the alarm about PPE shortages, our union, SEIU 721, swung into action, filing a Cal-OSHA complaint on March 24 to stop LA County health officials from assigning nurses and health care

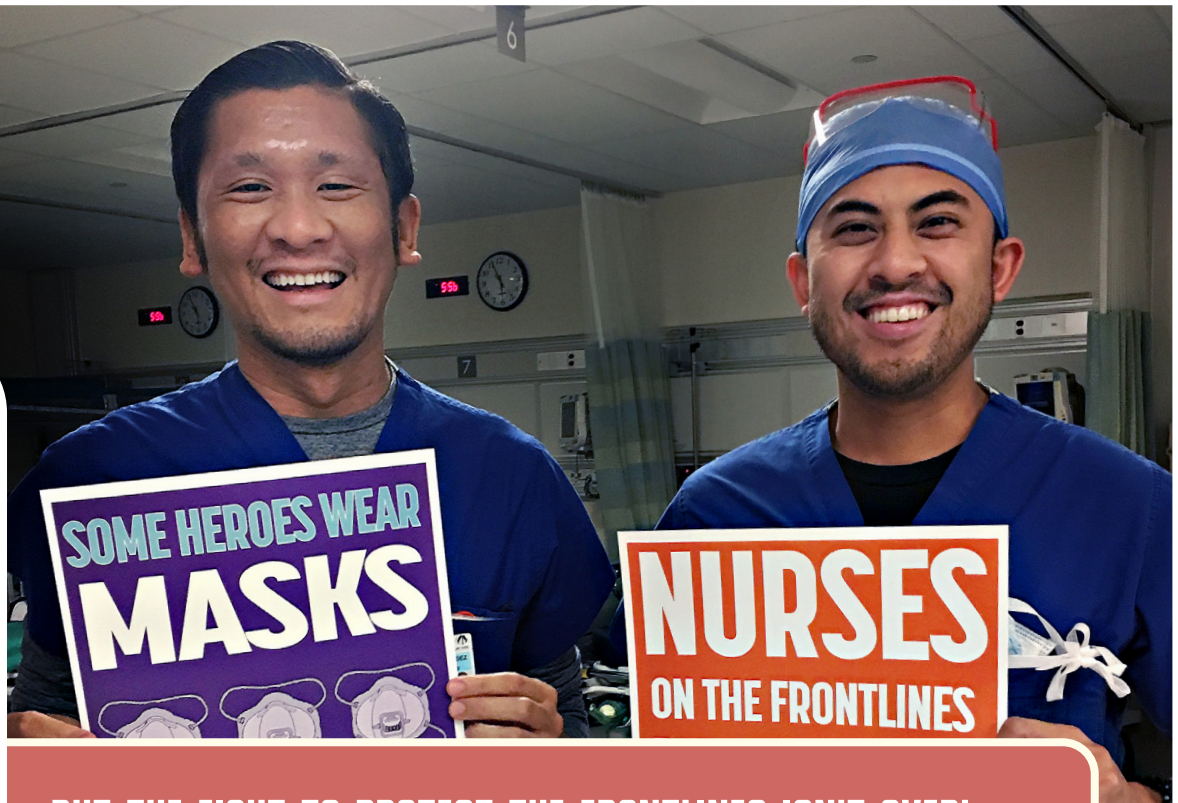
workers to COVID-19 cases without protective equipment and marshalling every resource at the union's disposal to locate protective gear for workers.

"It is utterly disappointing that LA County would put frontline healthcare workers like myself in this kind of danger when it's precisely in times like these that we desperately need all medical staff in top condition," said Cynthia Mitchel, a Supervising Registered Nurse at LAC+USC and SEIU 721 member, in a statement to LA media.

"We're experiencing a worldwide health crisis like we've never seen before and instead of being proactive, the County is setting us up to become super spreaders while the Coronavirus is brewing in our hospitals."

COVID-19 SPECIAL REPORT

PROTECT US
SO WE CAN
SAVE LIVES
MASKS NOW!



BUT THE FIGHT TO PROTECT THE FRONTLINES ISN'T OVER!



SEIU 721 delivers on masks and PPE for LA County employees

SEIU 721 member leaders sat down with county officials to fight for policy changes to protect frontline staff. Behind the scenes, staff bypassed the county procurement process and began contacting brokers and manufacturers of protective gear to source additional supplies. Members' unity and determination paid off.

Days after the Cal-OSHA filing, Los Angeles County Health Services issued a new policy providing N-95 masks and other protective gear to all frontline nurses and health care professionals.

In a letter to Registered Nurse Katarina del Valle Thompson, SEIU 721's

chief negotiator for LA County RNs, the deputy director of LA County Health Services complimented the efforts of SEIU 721 in shaping the dialogue about protecting the safety of nurses and health care workers and recognized SEIU 721 Chief of Staff Gilda Valdez for helping DHS source a supply of millions of N-95 masks.

The fight to protect frontline workers is far from over

SEIU 721 member voices helped protect our frontline health care workers at the outset of the crisis, but supplies of PPE are dwindling as infections continue to rise. It's time to join with others and take the fight for sufficient supplies of N-95 masks and other PPE to Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

SEIU 721 FIGHTS

While millions of LA residents shelter at home, SEIU 721 City of LA members are working hard to keep the city moving. Making sure families and children are fed, keeping LAX flying, cleaning streets, and more.



Keeping LA Moving at LADOT

As first responders, LADOT traffic officers are key to keeping COVID-19 pandemic response efforts moving:

- LADOT officers are keeping traffic flowing at 60 LAUSD “Grab n’ Go” centers. Run by Los Angeles Unified School District with help from the American Red Cross Los Angeles Region, the centers provide two daily meals for every child while the district’s nearly 1,000 campuses remain closed in response to the novel coronavirus crisis.
- LADOT officers helped coordinate access to the USNS Mercy hospital ship on March 27.
- LADOT officers are managing long lines at COVID-19 testing stations and ensuring the safety of staff and community members.

“These ‘Grab n’ Go’ centers help people that don’t have jobs. Sometimes these meals are the only food these kids will get,” says SEIU 721 E-Board member and LADOT Captain Victor Vasquez.



Keeping LAX Secure and Flying

While millions of Americans are under stay-at-home orders, thousands of domestic passenger and cargo flights still fly everyday. At LAX, the third-busiest passenger airport and tenth-busiest cargo airport in the world, SEIU 721 members — ranging from security guards and mechanics to warehouse workers, carpenters, gardeners and other maintenance personnel — are ensuring the airport keeps operating so we can maintain vital passenger and air cargo flights.

Even after several outbreaks of COVID-19 at LAX terminals, SEIU 721 mechanics are keeping everything from airport police and fire emergency vehicles, employee shuttles, special operations vehicles and lawn mowers running during the pandemic.

Pictured above: Jose Martinez; Julio Moraga; Pablo Leon; Memo Rodriguez; and Justin Ruiz.



COVID-19 IN LA

Members and other LA cities members are at work:
sanitizing the streets and protecting the homeless.



Making Our Own Sanitizer

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating supply chain issues throughout the world, making access to N95 masks, ventilators and sanitizers nearly impossible.

SEIU 721 members working in the labs at the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant jumped in to save the day, making 450 liters of ethanol-based sanitizer for LA Sanitation co-workers who work out in the field without access to washing stations.

"We're pitching in any way we can for LA Sanitation and for the City of Los Angeles," says SEIU 721 E-Board Member and Lab Manager Stacey Karnya.

The supply of hand sanitizer made it possible for LA City Sanitation Workers to continue regular waste collection and the city to keep its four sewage treatment and water reclamation plants staffed and running.

The city collects an average of 6,600 tons of refuse and treats 580 million gallons of wastewater a day.



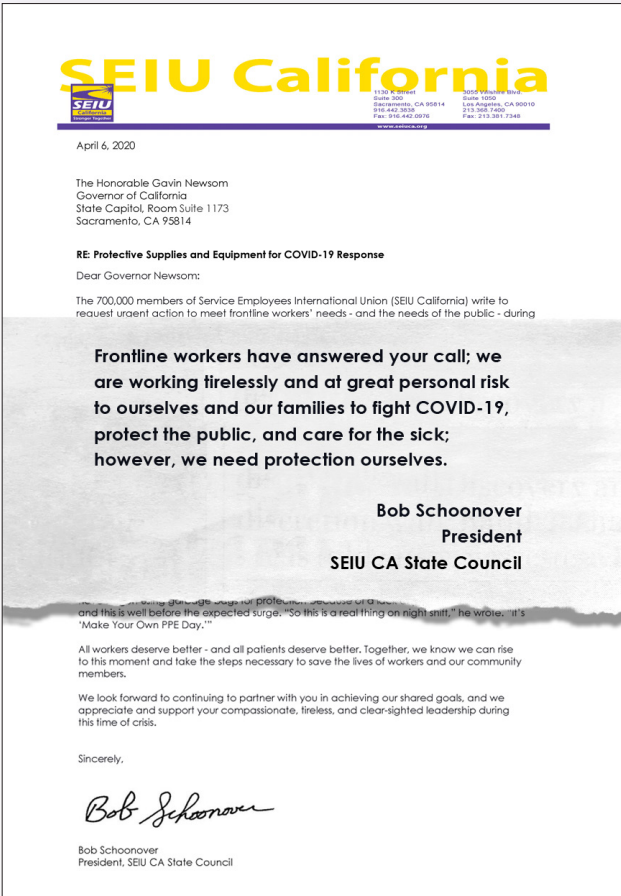
Protecting Homeless Angelenos

As Skid Row reported its first confirmed case of COVID-19, outreach teams from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) fanned out to cities around LA County to inform unhoused people about social distancing and best practices.

SEIU 721 LAHSA members helped install mobile toilets and sanitation stations around LA County and clean up around encampments to improve sanitary conditions to reduce the spread of the virus.

LAHSA workers plan to move thousands of unhoused Angelenos into hotel and motel rooms during the pandemic as part of "Project Roomkey." Their priority is finding shelter for highly vulnerable seniors and unhoused people with chronic illnesses — populations that are particularly at risk with COVID-19.

SEIU CA Asks Newsom to step in to secure protective gear



SEIU Local 721 President Bob Schoonover wrote to Governor Gavin Newsom to urge him to take over and centralize purchasing of N-95 masks and other protective gear after shortages and price-gouging put front-line workers at risk.

After nurses and health care workers sounded the alarm about shortages of N-95 filter masks and other Personal Protective Gear, SEIU 721 swung into action, pushing local elected officials and agencies to acquire and distribute more masks and — when those efforts fell short — bypassing government purchasers and directly obtaining millions of masks for workers.

Their experience with ineffective federal efforts, shortages and price-gouging by PPE brokers led SEIU 721 and other SEIU locals around the state to appeal directly to California Governor Gavin Newsom to step into the fray to immediately procure safety

equipment for front line workers.

SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover, in his role as President of SEIU California, wrote to Governor Newsom on April 6 to urge him to implement plans to centralize purchasing of PPE.

Newsom told MSNBC's Rachael Maddow on April 7 that the state will take over purchasing and spend nearly \$1 billion to buy nearly 200 million masks per month to distribute to workers around the state. "We decided enough of the small ball. Let's use our purchasing power," Governor Newsom said.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH-APRIL 2020



WORKERS BLAST LA SUPERIOR COURT FOR USING CRISIS TO RUSH PAY FREEZE

SEIU 721 ORGANIZES TOWN HALL FOR DPSS AND DCFS TO ANSWER CONCERNS

Recently, SEIU 721 LA County DPSS members raised urgent concerns about workplace policies during the COVID-19 crisis, such as a lack of social distancing, difficulty getting telework assignments approved and denial of paid sick leave and FMLA emergency leave. SEIU 721 wrote to LA County DPSS Director Antonia Jiménez to ask her to step in improve workplace safety and respond to workers' concerns.

SEIU 721 also secured LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis' help in organizing a virtual town hall meeting April 16th, from 9:30am – 10:30am with DPSS Director Jiménez and LA County DCFS Director Bobby Cagle, so employees can ask questions directly.

Visit [SEIU721.com](https://seiu721.com) for details.

LA Superior Court workers are blasting court managers for trying to rush through a pay freeze during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Up and down the state of California, Superior Courts are responding to the Governor's Stay At Home and local public health orders by putting in place policies to keep essential court functions operating, while allowing as many employees as possible to stay or work at home. But only LA Superior Court has attempted to extract contract extensions in exchange for implementing these common-sense

measures. Originally they came to SEIU with a demand for an 18-month extension with no salary increases!



LA County Workers Safer at Home



**SEIU 721 FIGHTS FOR NON-ESSENTIAL WORKERS
TO WORK FROM HOME AND TELE-COMMUTE**

On March 19, Los Angeles County officials issued a month-long “Safer at Home” order for the county’s 10 million residents to reduce the spread of the coronavirus that requires retail businesses that are considered nonessential to shut down and bans gatherings of 10 or more people.

The same day, the City of Los Angeles issued a “Stay at Home” order for the city’s 2 million residents that requires them to remain at home and shuts most businesses that require in-person attendance.

In response, SEIU 721 called on the County of Los Angeles to direct all non-essential workers to work from home and to place any non-essential workers unable to work from home on full pay administrative leave.

“Allowing non-essential workers to remain in their homes will help to safeguard their health and the health of the community,” wrote SEIU 721 President Bob Schoonover in a letter to County Chief

Executive Officer Sachi Hamai. “It will also allow for greater social distancing among those essential employees who continue to report to work.”

In response to the Union’s demand, the County CEO agreed to direct all county department heads to place all non-essential employees in telework status and allow employees to work from home during the Safer at Home and Stay at Home orders. If the Department is unable to assign work that can be done remotely, non-essential employees will still be placed in telework status and will still be allowed to remain at home.

All LA County workers who are deemed non-essential are advised to speak with their direct supervisor to confirm telework assignment or telework status. If you have any issues with having your telework status confirmed, please contact us via the SEIU 721 online incident form:

<https://www.seiu721.org/2020/03/43696.php>

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH-APRIL 2020



SEIU 721 PUSHES VENTURA COUNTY TO CLARIFY PROTECTIONS FOR COUNTY WORKERS

Radiology Tech Neal Cowen, Principal Respiratory Therapist Tom Adelman, and Coder Nick-Blinoff at Ventura County Medical Center.

Coronavirus is on everyone's mind — especially front-line workers battling the pandemic. Our union has been pushing the County CEO, department executives and agency heads to protect the health, safety and workplace rights of Ventura County workers and for clarity on how to submit an 80-Hour Attestation Form:

- Ventura County workers DO NOT have to exhaust their vacation or sick leave banks before being eligible for these hours.
- They DO NOT have to pay back these hours once they are used.
- These hours are only available up until April 4th, unless extended by the Board of Supervisors.

However, Ventura County workers are allowed to use partial hours as part of these 80 hours when they work partial days. For example: If an employee works 4 hours of a shift but takes 4 hours to attend to childcare or other needs, 4 hours can be claimed.

If you want to submit an 80-hour Attestation Form and you are able to check off one of the stipulations, please submit it to your supervisor or department manager for final approval. All of the

other reasons listed on the Attestation Form that apply to your situation are also allowed with approval by your manager.

Remember: There are no other requirements other than those listed on the form. But you will still be required to request a leave of absence if the absence will extend beyond 3 consecutive days. This will ensure that all leave entitlements are tracked and communicated properly.

If you test COVID-19-positive you will be required to submit a medical certification stating that you have recovered and are able to return to work once the quarantine period has ended.

Feel free to forward any memos or instructions you have received to SEIU 721. It's important that our union is aware of potentially conflicting directives so we can get you clarity quickly.

As always, feel free to contact your Worksite Organizer, Regional Director Danny Carrillo at danny.carrillo@seiu721.org or Regional Coordinator Akemy Bon-Flores at Akemy.Bon-Flores@seiu721.org for any questions or concerns you may have about this program.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH-APRIL 2020

MWA FIGHTS TO PROTECT DRIVERS DURING PANDEMIC

LA Lyft driver and MWA member JEROME GAGE said in an interview with the New York Times he has lost most of his business to COVID-19 and faces difficulty collecting unemployment benefits and paid sick leave.



MOBILE WORKERS ALLIANCE HOSTS CA RESPONSE CALL

LA Lyft driver and MWA member JEROME GAGE said in an interview with the New York Times he has lost most of his business to COVID-19 and faces difficulty collecting unemployment benefits and paid sick leave due to his misclassification as an independent contractor.

Nearly a thousand drivers from SEIU 721's Mobile Workers Alliance and SEIU 1021's driver organizing project, We Drive Progress, hosted a statewide COVID-19 Response Call on March 31 to share how COVID-19 has impacted drivers, outline resources available to drivers and launch a campaign to escalate our demands for better protection from this outbreak from Uber, Lyft and other gig companies.

This was a first of its kind call stands as proof that even as the rest of the world shelters in place, we're continuing our fight for driver rights!

Drivers Rosa Mendoza, Jerome Gage and Hector Castellanos were joined by several allies in our fight, including Pastor Cue Jn-Marie of the Church Without Walls; Bob Schoonover, President of SEIU Local 721; Joseph Bryant, President of SEIU Local 1021; and CA Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez.

Drivers spoke emotionally about the impact of the pandemic.

"I'm tired of the situation," Rosa said, her voice cracking. "I'm so scared to come home and bring a disease or get infected. I have to wait hours for a passenger. I'm always behind, I don't have enough earnings. What if I get sick? Who's going to take care of me?"

Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez, the author of the landmark AB5 law, encouraged drivers to file for unemployment in California and from the federal government.

"This is the reason we passed AB5. In no way could we have anticipated something like the Coronavirus, but we knew that every worker deserves basic labor protections on the job. That's what AB5 was about," Gonzalez said. "Right now, Uber and Lyft continue to misclassify you. I care deeply about the consequences and so do my colleagues in the legislature."

Every speaker touched on how massively Uber and Lyft have failed their drivers. They exploited us when times were good, now they are doing the bare minimum during a global crisis. To add insult to injury, they're continuing their \$110 million ballot measure to roll back AB5 in the middle of the crisis!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH-APRIL 2020

COVID-19 Q&A: IS MY PENSION SAFE?

SEIU 721 Members can rest assured their pensions are protected, says LACERA Board Member David Green

The 721 President's Report talked with SEIU Treasurer David Green, one of nine elected members of the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association Board of Investments, about the COVID-19 Pandemic and SEIU 721 members' concerns about their pensions, given recent turmoil in the stock market.

Q: David, for those who aren't familiar, what is LACERA?

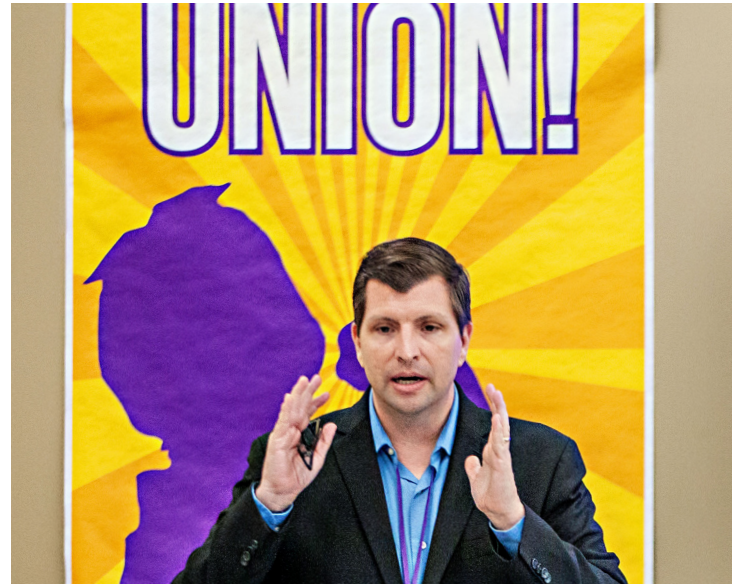
A: LACERA — the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association — is an independent agency, governed by two elected Boards representing more than 165,000 active and retired members. It manages nearly \$60 billion in pension investments, directs all retirement benefit plans, and administers the retiree healthcare program for the County.

Q: Let's cut right to the chase — Are LA County workers' and retirees' pensions and retiree medical benefits safe?

A: Yes, absolutely, for several reasons. First, LACERA is governed by workers and retirees who depend on these benefits themselves, so we closely watch every decision LACERA staff makes to protect the members' retirement. Second, LACERA's investments are very diversified across many asset categories. Third, LACERA learned from the 2008 financial crisis and has taken many prudent steps to manage risk and safeguard members' money in both good and bad times.

Q: It doesn't take an expert to see that the stock market has been hammered by the pandemic. What is LACERA doing to weather the storm?

A: Well, I'm not going to sugar-coat it, every pension fund in America has lost money in the stock market because of the pandemic. But LACERA is better positioned than most to weather the storm because of good planning. LACERA is more than 80% funded, meaning we right now hold enough cash and investments to pay for 80% of the annual pension benefits for all 165,000 LACERA members even if they all retired at once.



SEIU 721 Treasurer David Green serves on the LACERA Board of Investments

Q: Can you explain how LACERA can afford to pay out pensions and benefits right now and over the long term?

A: One way is the liquidity of our fund. LACERA holds \$2.2 billion in cash and nearly \$32 billion in easily convertible securities. Our cash position means we can afford to pay all of our current pension and retiree medical benefits without having to sell stocks in a down market. We also have money to invest to take advantage of opportunities. If the pandemic turns out to be shorter and less severe than the worst-case scenario and markets come back, we are positioned to act fast.

Q: What would you say to active employees and retirees worried about their retirement security?

A: Our mission is to provide, preserve and protect retirement security. We're in this for the long haul, and we prepare for the worst. To put things in perspective, LACERA's total holdings are worth more right now in the wake of the stock market drop than they were after the 2008 financial crash. We're on the case and working to protect retirement security.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH-APRIL 2020

FIGHTING TO PROTECT THE FRONTLINES IN RIVERSIDE



By April 7, Riverside County had reported more than 1,000 COVID-19 infections and 28 deaths, including Sheriff's Deputy David Werksman, a 22-year veteran.

SEIU 721 IS PUSHING MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT WORKERS IN THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE AND RIVERSIDE COUNTY

SEIU 721 representatives held meet and confer sessions with management in Riverside County to secure protections for frontline workers, like Department of Public and Social Services employees, who continue to engage with the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. SEIU 721 also engaged with management in the City of Riverside about special precautions for frontline workers, modified work schedules and expanded telework. Here are some of the key demands and outcomes:

Riverside County

- More sanitizing items available for DPSS workers. The department head will circulate a list of contacts for each region for members to access supplies.
- Expanded Telework to all staff able to work from home to do so. Members having trouble getting telework approval should escalate their requests. The goal is to have 75% of members teleworking soon.
- No out of state & county travel visits for all departments .
- No disciplinary actions for employees while out sick, with no doctors note required.
- The department will issue a policy for how to administer drug tests safely.
- SIU investigators will be outside with staff at all times to reduce

crowding in the Self Sufficiency Centers.

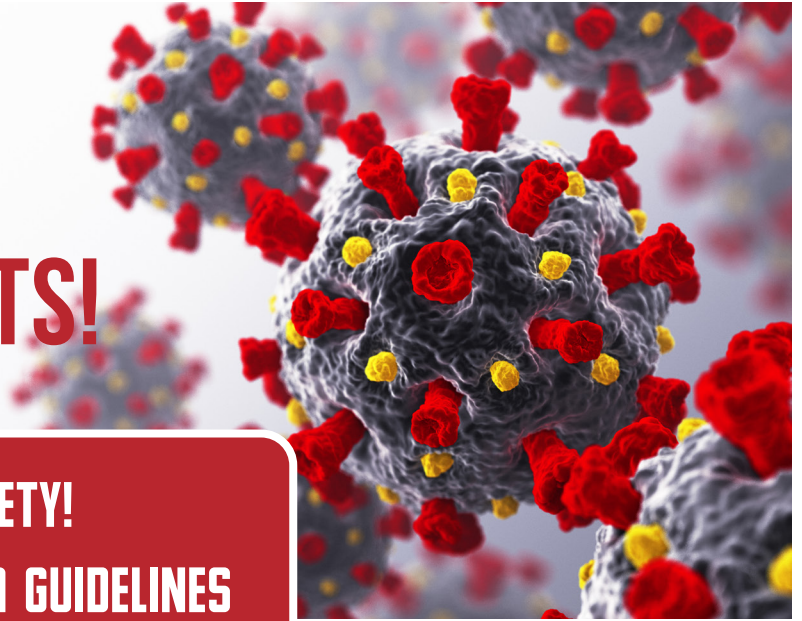
- Paid sick leave time for members who are exposed and have to be out and additional sick leave time for members

City of Riverside

- Employees will remain in full paid status during facility closures or service interruptions in response to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Employer must provide all necessary personal protective equipment and supplies to frontline workers to avoid the contamination of public buildings with the COVID-19 virus.
- Communication: We expect the employer to communicate regularly with employees and their representatives about expanded telecommuting opportunities, access to personal protective equipment, emergency procedures, and steps to be taken in the event of confirmed cases of contamination.
- Employers will make every reasonable effort to promptly approve appropriate requests for telework.
- We expect employers to consider employee requests for modified work schedules to meet child-care challenges resulting from school closures.

For more details, Riverside County and City of Riverside members should visit [SEIU721.org](https://seiu721.org) to sign up for COVID-19 updates.

COVID-19 KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!



PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY! KNOW YOUR RIGHTS UNDER OSHA GUIDELINES

If you believe working conditions are unsafe or unhealthful, we recommend that you bring the conditions to your employer's attention. You may file a complaint with OSHA concerning a hazardous working condition at any time. However, you should not leave the worksite merely because you have filed a complaint. If the condition clearly presents a risk of death or serious physical harm, there is not sufficient time for OSHA to inspect and, where possible, you have brought the condition to the attention of your employer, you may have a legal right to refuse to work in a situation in which you would be exposed to the hazard. (OSHA cannot enforce union contracts that give employees the right to refuse to work.)

Your right to refuse to do a task is protected if ALL of the following conditions are met:

- Where possible, you have asked the employer to eliminate the danger, and the employer failed to do so; and
- You refused to work in "good faith." This means that you must genuinely believe an imminent danger exists; and
- A reasonable person would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury; and
- There isn't enough time, due to the urgency of the hazard, to get it corrected through regular enforcement channels, such as requesting an OSHA inspection.

You should take the following steps:

- Ask your employer to correct the hazard or to assign other work;
- Tell your employer that you won't perform the work unless and until the hazard is corrected; and
- Remain at the worksite until ordered to leave by your employer.

If your employer retaliates against you for refusing to perform the dangerous work, contact OSHA immediately. Complaints of retaliation must be made to OSHA within 30 days of the alleged reprisal. To contact OSHA call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) and ask to be connected to your closest area office. No form is required to file a discrimination complaint, but you must call OSHA.



"Our number one concern is the health and safety of our members. Know your rights and protect yourself!"

**Linda Dent
Vice President
SEIU 721**

A call to action at DCFS



SEIU 721 ADVOCATES FOR BETTER PROTECTIONS FOR LA COUNTY CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS

SEIU 721 CSWs with DCFS Director Bobby Cagle.

Social Workers need better protection from Coronavirus to keep themselves and the families they serve safe! And with the Coronavirus pandemic upon us, SEIU 721 is advocating hard at every level of government to secure better protections for us as we continue to do our duty on the frontline.

As a result of our union's work — and in cooperation with the LA County CEO and DCFS management — the department recently announced some new policy changes:

- Anyone ages 65 and up with health risks — or individuals of any age with major health risks — should go home immediately.
- Members who are able to telework from home should request to do so; however, in cases of severe emergencies, abuse or neglect, in-person assessments may still be required.
- Medical notes are not required to telework.

SEIU 721 leadership has made repeated demands for an additional 29,000 sets of masks and protective gloves. We know you need this equipment immediately and we will continue fighting for it.

Our union requested — and was granted — a state waiver that allows all ER workers investigating five-day referrals to extend referrals to ten days.

In addition, in-person visits for children in out-of-home care now be done remotely.

SEIU 721 leadership is also advocating that:

- Non-emergency, face-to-face contact be done by video-chat or telephone.
- The federal government grant a waiver for all home visits — or issue a “blanket order” waiving visits.

However, these requests have not yet been approved. We will notify you immediately if and when they are.

We fully recognize and respect that DCFS support staff and Human Services Agency (HSA) personnel are a vital part of keeping children and families safe, too. SEIU 721 will have a more tailored update soon for LA County DCFS members who provide services outside of social work.

In the meantime, know that our union is here to help and support you. Please continue to communicate with us so we can get you what you need on the frontline. We, as social workers and county workers, are united to keep LA County's children and families safe. Together, we rise!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MARCH-APRIL 2020

LA COUNTY EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE AND FMLA LEAVE FAQs

LA County members of SEIU 721 had lots of questions after we announced that our union advocated for, and won, 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave to help us weather the Coronavirus pandemic. Here are the answers!

Q: *I heard that we are getting 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave. When will I be able to use it?*

A: The Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) will be made available to eligible employees beginning on Wednesday, April 1.

Q: *How do I know if I'm eligible?*

A: There are several criteria listed in the guidelines. If any of them are met, the employee would be eligible:

- They are subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
- They have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19; or,
- They are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking a medical diagnosis.

So, if your health care provider has advised you to stay at home, or if you are seeking a diagnosis, you may use EPSL.

Q: *Would I have to produce a doctor's note?*

A: No. The County has waived medical certification during the COVID-19 emergency.

Q: *Can I use EPSL to care for a family member?*

A: Yes. Employees are entitled to EPSL at 2/3 regular rate of pay if they are unable to work or telework because they are:

- Caring for an individual who is subject to an isolation order or who has been advised by a health care provider to self-isolate; or,
- Caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed due to COVID-19 precautions.

Q: *Are there any dollar limits on EPSL?*

A: Yes. It is \$511 per day, if using the EPSL for oneself, or \$200 per day if using the EPSL for the care of a family member.

Q: *What about part-time employees?*

A: Part-time employees are entitled to a pro-rated share of EPSL. For example, a 20 hour/week employee is entitled to 40 hours of EPSL; a 30 hour/week employee is entitled to 60 hours of EPSL.

Q: *What about FMLA Leave?*

A: Beginning on April 1, the County will also make available to eligible employees up to twelve (12) weeks of FMLA Emergency Leave which

can be used for the care of a child under 18 years of age if the child's school or place of care has been closed due to COVID-19, or if their child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.

Q: *What is the rate of pay for an employee on FMLA Emergency Leave?*

A: An employee is required to use another form of leave, such as EPSL, for the first two weeks. During the next ten (10) weeks, the employee is entitled to 2/3 regular rate of pay.

Q: *Are there any dollar limits on FMLA Emergency Leave*

A: Yes. It is \$200 per day, up to a maximum of \$10,000 total.

Q: *If I am home with my child because his or her school or place of care is closed, or a child care provider is unavailable, do I get paid sick leave, expanded family and medical leave, or both — how do they interact*

A: You may be eligible for both types of leave, but only for a total of twelve weeks of paid leave. You may take both paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave to care for your child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons. The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act provides for an initial two weeks of paid leave. This period thus covers the first ten workdays of expanded family and medical leave, which are otherwise unpaid under the Emergency and Family Medical Leave Expansion Act unless you elect to use existing vacation, personal, or medical or sick leave under your employer's policy. After the first ten workdays have elapsed, you will receive 2/3 of your regular rate of pay for the hours you would have been scheduled to work in the subsequent ten weeks under the Emergency and Family Medical Leave Expansion Act.

Q: *May I take my paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave intermittently while teleworking?*

A: The law doesn't prohibit this. For example, if your Department allows it, you could telework and use EPSL on alternating days or weeks, as long as you are otherwise eligible for EPSL.

Q: *Are the paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave requirements retroactive?*

A: No.

Q: *Are there pay codes for EPSL and FMLA Emergency Leave?*

A: Yes. We will notify members when we receive them — so stay tuned.

HOW CALIFORNIA CAN PROTECT THE FRONTLINES



One recent night, at the end of a marathon day of tangling with employers trying to send our members to the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis without sufficient protective gear, I stumbled on an article that said I should be using the quarantine to “develop useful skills and learn new lessons.” As it turns out, I have.

The useful skill I developed is navigating the complex and often shady world of brokers and middlemen who procure N-95 filter masks and other Personal Protective Equipment, mostly from factories in China, for public health agencies and private hospitals.

When LA County began assigning nurses and health care workers to care for COVID-19 patients, our union stepped in to block them, while working overtime to source enough protective gear to equip them. I wound up working the phones to locate it.

I learned two valuable lessons. The first, when SEIU 721 members put

their heads together, pool their creativity and speak truth to power with one voice, they can do anything — even get their hands on the most sought-after protective clothing in the world.

The second lesson I learned is that 721 members shouldn't have to. Our nurses, health care workers, sanitation workers and other essential front line personnel should be focusing on their jobs so we can keep the wheels from coming off our society, not worrying about getting sick because they don't have the basic tools to do their jobs.

That's why SEIU California is stepping up to change how the state procures PPE for front-line workers during this crisis — so they don't battle the pandemic without the protection they deserve!

Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff



Gilda Valdez

Want to verify that you are receiving all the benefits and protections of union membership?

Call the SEIU Local 721 Membership Department at: 1-877-721-4YOU.