

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SEIU 721



HOW DO WE SOLVE LA'S HOMELESS CRISIS?

THE BIGGEST BARRIER TO SOLVING LA COUNTY'S HOMELESSNESS CRISIS IS CHRONIC SHORT STAFFING

Homelessness is at crisis proportions in LA County. According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 30% of all unhoused Americans live in California — almost half of them in Los Angeles County. Last month, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority estimated 69,144 people experienced homelessness in LA County during 2022 and 41% are “chronically homeless.”

LA Mayor Karen Bass has vowed to combat homelessness, promising to move 17,000 homeless Angelenos into housing during her first year in office.

Bass has moved swiftly to blow up city-imposed bureaucratic barriers that have driven the average cost of building a single affordable housing unit in LA above that of a luxury condo in most of the country. She's got LA County's elected leaders working to bring together under a unified task force the patchwork of county agencies responsible for delivering direct services to tens of thousands of unhoused Angelenos.

But the biggest problem we face in addressing LA's homelessness crisis is chronic short staffing in our local governments. We've declared a righteous war against homelessness in America's second-largest city, but homelessness is a regional crisis, and we simply don't have enough motivated, trained troops on the frontlines in city and county government.

LA City must fill vacancies holding up service delivery and the development of affordable housing. Mayor Bass appealed in her inaugural address for applicants for hundreds of vacant positions in city government. City agencies can't fast track permitting of affordable housing without personnel, and City Planning has a 27% vacancy rate.

LA County should be recruiting prospective social workers and mental health professionals directly out of graduate school, appealing to them to help address one of the major humanitarian crises of our time. We should be offering signing bonuses, assistance with student loans and competitive pay and benefits in exchange for a commitment to a period of public service.

LA County must train, mentor and support the frontline workers serving the hardest to serve. Social workers, healthcare workers, mental health professionals and first responders see humanity at its worst and must help the victims of unspeakable abuse. Ongoing mentoring and support reduces burnout and attrition to combat short staffing.

Bottom line: It's time to staff up the City of LA and LA County. We can't solve the defining crisis of our time if we don't staff the frontlines.

David Green



PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023



“Congratulations to SEIU 721 North LA County Regional Center Members! Your hard work and focus brought home the biggest compensation increase for NLACRC workers in a decade.”

Simboa Wright, Vice President, SEIU 721



Contract Victory at NLACRC!

Workers at North LA County Regional Center Win Biggest Increase in 10 Years

On February 17, SEIU 721 North LA County Regional Center (NLACRC) members voted to ratify a five-year contract that secures raises, bonuses and other hard-fought wins.

After months of negotiations with NLACRC management and members' organizing efforts, the bargaining team secured a new contract that values and honors NLACRC employees' tireless work. Members' on-the-ground campaign delivered the largest compensation increase at NLACRC in more than 10 years.

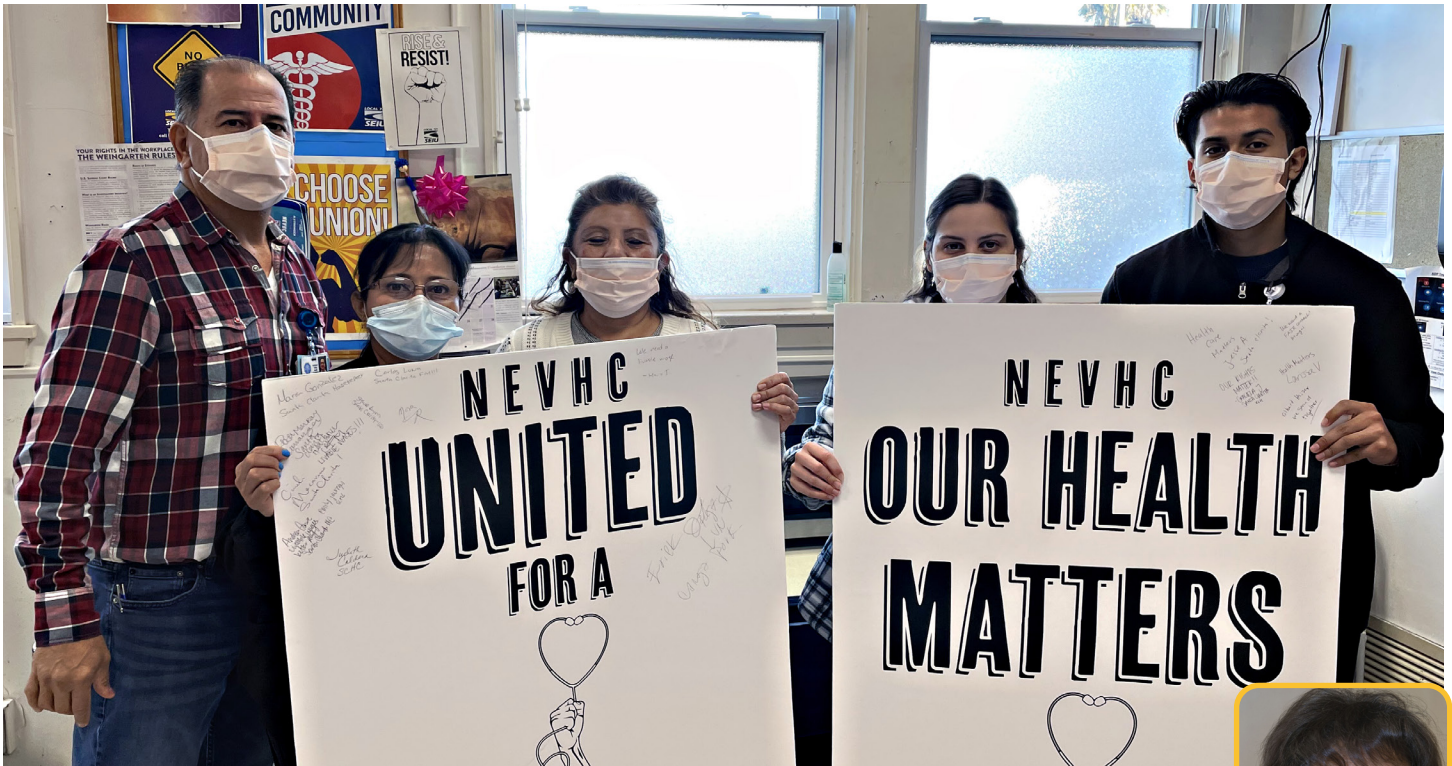
The new contract includes wage increases totaling 15% or more, a one-time 8% bonus, two new paid holidays, improved health and vision benefits, and more.

We demanded better pay, benefits and we won. Our victory is a testament to the power of unions to improve the lives of workers.

While we're ecstatic about ratifying this contract, we know the fight is far from over. Now the bargaining team will focus on preserving the contractual agreement that protects workers' anniversary date. We'll also push NLACRC to reform job descriptions for Office Assistants and address the grievance on recreational reimbursement.

Stay tuned as we continue the fight for better working conditions at NLACRC. Together, we win!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023



“ Clinic workers at NEVHC and Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero flexed their union power and secured strong contracts. When clinics workers fight, they win! ”

Lillian Cabral, Secretary, SEIU 721



SEIU 721 Clinic Workers Score Big Wins

Clinic Workers Secure Strong Contracts at NEVHC and Oscar Romero

Workers at Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero ratified a groundbreaking 3-year contract with a \$19/hr minimum wage, an across-the-board 12% raise, increased longevity pay and education benefits and stronger contract language. We held the line on insurance premiums and even won an extra set of uniforms every year.

Members at Northeast Valley Health Corporation ratified a strong new 3-year contract with an across-the-board 16% wage increase and increased bi-lingual pay premiums. Management tried to increase our health premiums, but we told them “Hands Off Our Healthcare” and held the line on premiums.

When clinic workers fight, we win!



SEIU 721 Members at Clínica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023

UPDATES FROM AROUND OUR UNION

SEIU 721 RISING



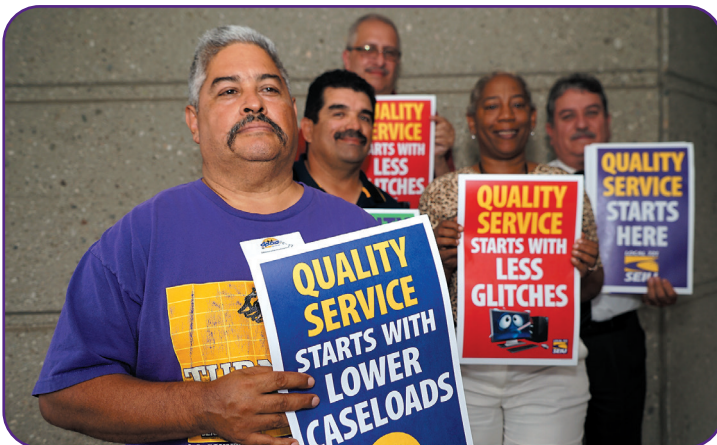
SEIU 721 WINS RELEASE OF \$10 MILLION TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN COURT REPORTERS

After months of advocacy by SEIU 721, pressure from state legislators, the LA Superior Court has agreed to dedicate nearly \$10 million to several Court Reporter recruitment and retention incentives. After weeks of negotiations with the Court, the Los Angeles County Court Reporters Association (LACCRA) and SEIU 721 secured a \$15,000 Finder's Fee, \$20,000 Signing Bonus, \$17.5K Retention Bonus and several other incentives. Learn more at www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lasc



HARBOR WORKERS PREPARE TO BARGAIN

SEIU 721 President David Green and Vice President Simboa Wright joined SEIU 721 City of LA Harbor Department workers for a packed worksite meeting to discuss upcoming contract negotiations. The 7,500-acre Port of Los Angeles is the top container port in the United States and the busiest seaport in the Western Hemisphere. The port is operated by the City of Los Angeles' Harbor Department and employs nearly 1,000 city workers.



SEIU 721 DPSS MEMBERS MEET WITH DPSS LEADERSHIP TO DISCUSS NEEDED REFORMS

SEIU 721 President David Green and LA County DPSS members are meeting regularly with new DPSS Director Jackie Contreras and her executive team to improve communications and address members' concerns with work schedules, workplace safety and training. DPSS management has committed to convene a workgroup on alternative schedules and telework, redesign the training curriculum and increase security at DPSS offices.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023



Clinic Workers Rally for \$25 Healthcare Minimum Wage

This month, members of SEIU-Community Clinic Workers United joined State Senator Maria Elena Durazo and scores of essential healthcare workers from across California to introduce AB 525 — legislation that would establish a first-in-the-nation statewide minimum wage for healthcare workers. California clinics and other healthcare facilities struggle to attract and retain enough qualified workers, leading to short-staffing, exhaustion and burnout. A minimum wage of \$25 an hour for California healthcare workers is critical if we're going to recruit and retain the workers we need to deliver quality care.

AB 525 will be a game-changer in California's effort to keep experienced healthcare workers on the job and attract the next generation of workers our state needs to care for Californians. AB 525 will extend the \$25 minimum wage to all healthcare workers. Whether you work for a large urban hospital system or a rural community clinic, whether you provide direct patient care or perform clerical work or maintenance — this landmark bill will ensure that everyone involved in delivering healthcare services in our state receives a living wage of \$25 an hour.



Community Clinic Workers United rally for \$25/hour February 15.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023

BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH

SEIU 721 CELEBRATES OUR UNION'S BLACK ACTIVISTS



SIMBOA WRIGHT

City of Los Angeles Wastewater Collection Worker II Simboa Wright has been a member of SEIU 721 for more than 20 years and in 2022, he was elected to serve as our Vice President.

Simboa has championed groundbreaking efforts to lift up our community, including the \$15 minimum wage, the Targeted Local Hire program and 1,000 Strong, a labor-led project that helps Black workers find jobs with public works, and other efforts to help underserved groups access good jobs and higher education.



SAUNDRA DIXON

It all started with an untucked shirt.

A tyrannical new manager at the LAX custodial department where Saundra Dixon had worked since 2007 issued an edict: all shirts had to be tucked in. Saundra researched the contract, teamed up with a worksite organizer and launched a winning petition campaign. The experience propelled her to become a steward and later an elected member of our union's Executive Board, where she works to ensure that all workers receive equal respect, recognition and opportunity.



LINDA DENT

A lioness of labor and a warrior for justice, Linda Dent worked as a clerk in the LA County Tax Collector's Office and rose to become the first Black and first woman president of our union. She helped build the community coalitions that power our union to this day. Linda passed in 2021 after battling cancer, but her legacy lives on. From the activists she inspired and mentored, to the community leaders shaped by her work, to the millions of Californians she helped lift out of poverty, Linda's commitment to dignity and justice for all remains the heart of SEIU 721.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023

SEIU 721 ARMENIAN CAUCUS HOSTS LA LEADERS AT VALENTINES GALA



On February 19, the SEIU 721 Armenian Caucus held an epic Valentines Day celebration, hosted by SEIU 721 President David Green and Armenian Caucus Chair Rita Josephbek and Vice Chair Silva Kechechian. The event drew top LA area elected officials, such as LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian, State Senator Anthony Portantino and Glendale Mayor Ardy Kassakhian.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023

CALIFORNIA GIG WORKERS UNION HOSTS SUPPORT HUB FOR DRIVERS AT LAX



Drivers with the California Gig Workers Union (CGWU) hosted a support hub at Los Angeles International Airport outside the rideshare drop-off area on February 23. Drivers visiting the hub grabbed coffee and food and met up with fellow gig workers to discuss joining the union campaign. Gig workers are advocating for support hubs at LAX with clean restrooms, phone-charging stations, rest and break areas and electric vehicle charging.

USC Drivers Seek Justice with SEIU 721



“USC shuttle drivers want to join SEIU 721 because the union difference is obvious: Union shuttle drivers are earning up to double what they’re paid. USC leadership needs to do the right thing.”



Adolfo Granados, Treasurer, SEIU 721

A coalition of students, labor allies, and community members rallied at USC’s campus on February 28 in support of USC shuttle drivers and dispatchers who will vote to join SEIU 721 on March 23.

The supporters made a key demand of USC President Carol Folt and other top university leaders: Do not interfere in shuttle drivers and dispatchers’ union election later this month and refrain from all anti-union tactics.

Community, labor, and student supporters included members of Fight for \$15, ACCE, Eastside L.E.A.D.S, The Trojan Left, the USC Student Coalition Against Labor Exploitation, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, and the Los Angeles Tenants Union, among others.

In their coverage of the action, the *Los Angeles Daily News* highlighted why USC drivers want to join SEIU 721.

“USC shuttle drivers start at \$18 an hour, considerably less than unionized drivers at UCLA, who earn a starting wage of

\$22.74 an hour and top out at \$30.58 an hour. Unionized drivers at Los Angeles International Airport earn even more, with a maximum hourly wage of \$39.34.”

Shuttle drivers and dispatchers know that by joining SEIU 721 they will be able to negotiate periodic salary increases and bonuses, better benefits and fair grievance and disciplinary policies with union representation. A union is also an important vehicle for gaining management respect and an end to favoritism on the job.

As Shuttle Driver Sonia Olivarez told the *LA Daily News*, “We’re fed up with being underpaid and undervalued despite our critical role in keeping students, staff, faculty and visitors moving.”

“USC President Carol Folt needs to know that we emphatically support joining SEIU Local 721 to finally have a strong voice on the job to advocate for ourselves and our passengers,” Olivarez said.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023



SEIU 721 City of Ventura members

TRI-COUNTIES SEIU 721 MEMBERS LAUNCH BARGAINING CAMPAIGNS

SEIU 721 members across the Tri-Counties region are launching their bargaining campaigns after choosing their bargaining teams.

SEIU 721 members at the City of Ventura, City of Moorpark, City of Santa Paula, and Conejo Rec and Park District submitted their nominations, and all teams are now ready to meet with our SEIU 721 staff in caucus to prepare for bargaining.

During the next phase, bargaining teams will comb through their contracts and identify proposals that will improve working conditions and services for their communities. Each bargaining team will review the results of bargaining surveys returned by members to help guide their preparations.

Each bargaining team will put together a campaign plan to build support in the field and in the community to win a strong contract. Each will include field, communications, community outreach and political strategy to build support. With these preparations, bargaining teams will schedule sessions at the table with city and district negotiators.

Stay tuned for more Tri-Counties bargaining updates.



SEIU 721 City of Santa Paula members



To win good contracts,
we need Digital Union Voices.
Text VOICES to
721721 today!



Shop Stewards: Do You Know Your Contract?

Knowing the Contract is the Key to Winning for Members

Our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or union contract, is our written agreement between the boss and our union that spells out the binding terms and conditions of employment. Managers often aren't familiar with the terms of our contracts, so it's vital that you know them.

As a shop steward, knowing the MOU can make the difference between winning and losing. Our union contracts are specifically written to protect the rights of our workers and to outline the issues negotiated during bargaining. If stewards know the MOU, we can refer to specific articles to show the boss that their actions are out of compliance and that we are owed a remedy.

SEIU 721 shop stewards are encouraged to attend training to help you maximize your knowledge of your MOU. Our "Know Your MOU" training provides stewards with best practices on finding language to resolve issues and tips for educating members on their rights at work. These trainings will be offered to all members, not just shop stewards:

- **Know Your Contract – Saturday, March 15, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**
- **Know Your Contract – Monday, March 27, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

- **Know Your Contract – Wednesday, April 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**
- **Know Your Contract – Saturday, April 15, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**
- **Know Your Contract – Monday, May 8, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**
- **Know Your Contract – Saturday, May 20, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

Trainings are offered all year, and you can RSVP by visiting www.seiu721.org.

Remember, the official SEIU 721 Policy for Stewards states that to maintain your steward status as a Certified Shop Steward, you must invest in your development by attending at least one training per calendar year.

We will continue to report back on the work of our shop stewards and their victories. If you want help with your PE, talk to a shop steward, and if you do not know who your steward is, call the Member Connection at 877-721-4968.

When we fight, we win!



SEIU 721 Members Do Well When We're Doing Good How "Common Good" Bargaining Benefits Union Public Employees

Across America and right here in Southern California, union public employees are using new collective bargaining strategies to win higher pay, better benefits and safer workplaces by building coalitions with faith-based and community organizations to address communitywide problems.

During the pandemic, workers at our sister union, SEIU 1199NE, served on the frontlines, caring for Connecticut's most vulnerable residents and keeping local and state governments running. 1199's workers — disproportionately Black, Brown and women — put their lives on the line for a state and an economy that treated them as disposable. In response, local 1199NE members helped organize a statewide "Recovery For All" coalition that won groundbreaking racial and economic justice demands, including:

- Expanded funding for mental health services, including mobile crisis units to respond to health crises without police involvement;
- Funding increases for long-term care, public education, and public services; and

- Expanded services for undocumented Connecticut residents. SEIU 721 City of LA members employed the same strategy in their FixLA 2014-2015 contract campaign. Our union joined with a coalition of 33 LA area organizations to expose how the City of LA spent more taxpayer money paying fees to Wall Street firms marketing municipal bonds than it spent maintaining city streets or providing job training for disadvantaged residents.

As a result, our coalition won a strong city contract that included the creation of the Targeted Local Hire Program. TLHP created an alternate job pathway into City of LA civil service jobs via full-time, paid, on-the-job training for entry-level positions for Angelenos from vulnerable and under-served communities, including city residents who are veterans, homeless, disabled, formerly incarcerated, or former gang members. The program directly resulted in the hiring of more than 1,000 Angelenos from disadvantaged communities. This is how we do well by doing good.



Gilda Valdez, Chief of Staff

Gilda Valdez



FOLLOW US ON TWITTER AT @
SEIU721



"LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK
FACEBOOK.COM/SEIU721



VISIT US ON THE WEB AT
WWW.SEIU721.ORG