

OCEA NEGOTIATIONS FAQs

What are we negotiating for?

We can negotiate over any terms and conditions contained in our Memorandum of Understanding, or our contracts, which include wages, hours and working conditions. We have a very mature contract with many rights and benefits, including layoff protections, retirement security, the disciplinary procedure and more. So, in addition to asking for improvements on wages and benefits, we will also be working to protect what we already have.

How much are we asking for?

Our goal is to secure every last cent that is available this year. As we formulate a strategy for achieving that, we look at factors such as market, cost of living, the budget, workload, efficiencies and more. Make no mistake, we are fighting for raises.

When will negotiations end?

If the employer comes with a bag of money tomorrow, negotiations will end tomorrow. If they don't, they'll end when we push as hard as we can to get as much as we can in terms of a fair deal. Our goal is to negotiate an MOU that is fair for all members. We are fighting for fair wages, benefits as well as dignity and fairness on the job. Our team will continue negotiating until we achieve those goals. We will send out updates throughout the negotiations process to your home email. You can also get more information from your OCEA leader.

What happens when the MOU expires?

All terms and conditions of our MOU's remain in effect. The bargaining team will continue to meet regularly in an effort to reach fair and equitable contracts.

While we want to achieve an agreement as soon as possible, the most important objective is to get the best agreement possible. As long as we continue progress towards an agreement that is beneficial to members we will continue negotiations.

How does the negotiations process work?

Once bargaining commences, we will make proposals regarding wages, hours and working conditions. The employer will also make proposals, based on direction from the elected officials. We

will continue to meet until we are able to reach agreement. During the process, members may also be asked to take actions outside the bargaining table to strengthen our position. Actions can include signs of solidarity, such as wearing a union t-shirt, or actions of protest, such as speaking out at a meeting. Once a tentative agreement is reached, members will have an opportunity to vote on the agreement. Remember, only members can vote. Non-members can't. After a contract is ratified by our members, the elected officials then must approve the contract.

Who sits at the bargaining table for us?

There are leaders representing every bargaining unit who will be at the table, along with a team of professional labor relations representatives.

Who sits at the table for the employer?

The employer is given direction and authority from the elected officials. At the table, the employer is usually represented by a member of executive management or Human Resources.

I want to help!

Taking direct action is the essence of the union movement! The best way to do that is to build strong workplace leaders. Since you have so much energy, we need you to join our Union Action Team or Steward program. (Time and Structure can vary)

Some have a misguided notion of a union. A union is not a consumer product you shop for online. It is an active movement where workers have the power to change their lives by building power. A union is working people standing together. Together we are the union. The way we achieve our power is through exercising it. Like a muscle, it must be used.

Why can't we see the proposals from the Union or the employer?

The specifics of this and all proposals are kept confidential within the negotiations team. This is critical to protect the collective bargaining process, permit each side to build trust and have open dialogue with the other, and avoid having sensitive information fall into the hands of those who might have motives harmful to your best interests.