

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BASICS

WHAT IS A CONTRACT?

Our contract (also known as a collective bargaining agreement or CBA) is a legal agreement between the company and our union. Our contract covers terms and conditions of employment, including wages, hours of work, paid time off, benefits, safety, job security and protections against unfair treatment or discharge.

WHY IS HAVING A CONTRACT IMPORTANT?

Bargaining a contract is the best way to ensure we have a strong and united voice at work. A contract means that management cannot simply decide, on its own, to make changes such as cutting wages and benefits, firing employees, or changing schedules and holidays.

Our contract guarantees we have certain protections on the job and allows us to use our union strength to address issues at work. If management violates the contract, we have a grievance and arbitration procedure that protects members.

DOES OUR CONTRACT EXPIRE?

Contracts are in place for a set term. The dates are listed in your contract book. Before our contract expires, we will begin to negotiate our next contract.

While we always aim to settle a new agreement before our current agreement expires, sometimes negotiations extend beyond expiration. The Union and St. Luke's have signed a contract extension which means all terms and conditions of the contract remain in place.

HOW DO CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WORK?

Negotiations happen at the bargaining table where our bargaining committee and representatives from the employer meet in blocks of time called bargaining sessions. During these sessions, both sides put forth and discuss proposals, caucus (meet separately), make counter proposals, test out ideas and look for ways to bridge differences.

The goal is to reach an agreement that will be acceptable and beneficial to both the employer and union members.

When the bargaining committee reaches a tentative agreement (TA), it is submitted to the membership for a vote. The bargaining committee may make a recommendation regarding the proposed agreement. Union members in good standing may then vote to accept or reject the agreement.

WHAT KIND OF PROPOSALS ARE DISCUSSED IN NEGOTIATIONS?

Generally, contract proposals fall into one of two categories:

1. Economic proposals, such as wages, paid time off, health insurance, retirement; or
2. Non-economic items, such as safety standards, seniority, and the grievance and arbitration procedure.

WHO REPRESENTS ME AT THE BARGAINING TABLE?

You are represented by our bargaining committee which includes your stewards; Jeff Mowry, Brenda Rolonson, Paula Siveny, NicholeZafft-Longaker and leaders from our local union

HOW DO WE WIN A FAIR CONTRACT?

It is our members who demand a fair contract. The employer is not going to simply "give" us anything. **To be successful, we need to build our bargaining power.** Bargaining power is our ability to achieve our goals in the face of opposition from the employer. It comes from our solidarity – our determination and willingness to stick together.

Displaying solidarity improves our ability to address our issues and is a decisive factor in shaping the final agreement. Sharing information and taking part in solidarity activities shows management we are united and willing to fight for a fair contract, top-quality patient care and dignity at work.