

**UNION ORGANIZING**

**Multnomah County opposes on-call/temp union effort**

Temporary and on-call employees of Multnomah County want to join the same bargaining unit as their coworkers who are represented by AFSCME Local 88 — but the normally union-friendly County leadership is standing in the way.

On Nov. 8, a delegation of county employees showed up during the public comment portion of a County Commission meeting to ask the chair and commissioners to recognize temporary and on-call workers as part of the union. They got no response from Chair Deborah Kafoury or the three commissioners present. [Commissioner Loretta Smith was absent.]

Oregon AFSCME organizer Eben Pullman says the temporary/on-call group fluctuates from 200 to 300 workers, depending on the season. They're in departments all over the county such as the library, the animal shelter, corrections, and social service and election offices. They're used to fill in for regular employees who are absent or on leave, or when county departments need to temporarily staff up. They do the same work as permanent year-round employees, but with lower pay, none of the benefits, no job security or path to permanent status, and no union representation.



**TAKING THEIR CASE TO THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY COMMISSION:** From left, on-call youth librarian Jane Corry, on-call library assistant Lauren McKinsey, former temp aging and disability specialist David Gruber, and former on-call bridge tender Kristian Williams. All want Multnomah County to admit temporary and on-call workers into the ranks of the county's regular AFSCME-represented bargaining unit.

Hoping to use collective bargaining to improve their conditions, a majority of the workers signed union authorization cards in early 2017 seeking to join Local 88's existing county bargaining unit. Under Oregon law that should be all that's needed to unionize. But the Multnomah County human resources department challenged the filing, saying the on-call workers were casual workers, that the temporary workers lacked a reasonable expectation of continued employ-

ment, and that both groups lacked a "community of interest" with the AFSCME unit employees.

An administrative law judge ruled in favor of the County, but the union appealed, and in April, the Oregon Employment Relations Board ordered that another hearing be held to determine whether the on-call workers have a "community of interest" with their permanent counterparts. The hearing is scheduled for Jan. 8, 2019.

—Don McIntosh

**UNIONIZATION → SEP-OCT 2018**

The following are Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces where workers have decided whether to be represented by a union. The thumbs-up symbol means workers will be union-represented. The information comes from the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

**Union election results**

Employer (Location) Union	Yes-No	
<b>MTRWestern/CC Rider</b> (St. Helens) ATU Local 757 ■ 22 bus operators	13-7	👍
<b>Food Services of America</b> (Woodburn) Teamsters Local 324 ■ 5 quality control employees	3-2	👍
<b>Columbia River VetERinary Specialists</b> (Vancouver) ILWU Local 5 ■ 70 veterinary technicians, housekeepers, receptionists, and support staff	55-1	👍
<b>Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare</b> (Portland) Oregon AFSCME ■ 82 non-professional employees at four clinics	43-23	👍
<b>Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare</b> (Portland) Oregon AFSCME ■ 137 professional employees at four clinics	71-34	👍
<b>Operations Management International</b> (Gresham) OE Local 701 ■ 11 wastewater equipment operators, mechanics, lab analysts and utility workers	11-0	👍

**Unionization by majority signup**

Employer (Location) Union	Yes-No	
<b>Redmond Fire and Rescue</b> (Redmond) IAFF Local 3650 ■ 4 firefighter chiefs		

**Workers vote to unionize at Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare**

About 270 mental health and addiction recovery workers at non-profit Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare unionized with Oregon AFSCME in a series of elections held in October and November. The newly unionized workers staff a mobile mental health crisis response team and five outpatient clinics in Portland and Milwaukie, Oregon. Cascadia is the area's largest behavioral health provider, but workers say low pay and heavy case loads contribute to high turnover.

Mathias Quackenbush, for example, manages a case load of 70 clients as a counselor and case manager, and earns \$44,500 a year in a position that requires a masters degree in social work. He says burnout is high and turnover is rampant: When he arrived, one client told him he'd seen three clinicians in a year. Workers hope with a union to improve conditions and have more of a say in client care.

The union campaign has been under way for two years, and is part of United We Heal, a union-initiated effort to raise standards industry-wide.

Cascadia managers didn't welcome the union. They held multiple anti-union meetings,



Coworkers are calling for the reinstatement of union supporter Daneen Pray, who was fired for an inadvertent infraction after 17 years at Cascadia.

and may have even fired one union supporter unlawfully, according to charges filed by AFSCME. Daneen Pray, a 17-year employee, sent a picture of her workload to a union organizer and was fired Sept. 17 because the image contained a patient's name. To generate that pretext, an AFSCME spokesperson says, Cascadia managers had installed a camera and were surveilling Pray. But workers weren't intimidated. When it came time to vote, the union won by big margins: 71 to 34, 43 to 23, and 32 to 0.

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