

More workers go union at Cascadia Behavioral Health

Over the last few weeks, 209 front-line behavioral health professionals with Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare's Respite and Residential programs have voted overwhelmingly to join Oregon AFSCME Council 75.

Mail-in ballot elections that took place over the past two months included registered nurses, residential counselors, crisis counselors, and others at one of the nation's leading Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs).

They now will join co-workers in the Project Respond, Street Outreach and Outpatient units who had previously won their union recognition to bargain a first contract.

"I have been with Cascadia for three years, which actually qualifies me as a veteran within the Residential unit," said Hannah Sloane-Barton, a skills trainer within the stabilization treatment preparation program, helping de-institutionalize clients so they can transition to life within the community. "Now, we can work together to minimize any blind spots when it comes to decisions that impact direct care. Cascadia is not a thing, it is a community made up of the workers and the clients we serve."

Since the launch of the "United We Heal" campaign in 2016, more than 1,000 behavioral health and treatment industry workers across Oregon have organized with AFSCME.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 Executive Director Stacy Chamberlain said the new members deserve respect, and that respect "comes in the form of reasonable caseloads and staffing ratios, safe working conditions, career development, living wages, and benefits — which we have seen workers win at the bargaining table."

Oregon Democratic Party staff unionizes with Painters

The Oregon Democratic Party is now a union employer. The party voluntarily recognized Sign Painters & Paint Makers Local 1094 in December, and signed a first union contract in early January. Local 1094 is an affiliate of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 5.

The new three-year deal locks in compensation and benefits for 10 full-time staff, as well as the dozens more that will be hired as political season heats up.

They join about 15 permanent staff at the Washington Democratic Party, who joined Local 1094 two years ago.

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Environmental justice group goes union ... on the spot

That wasn't so hard, was it? Six employees of the environmental justice non-profit OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon won union representation ... the moment they asked for it. In a video posted to the union's Facebook page, workers approach executive director Huy Ong Jan. 21 and read a statement announcing their decision to join Communications Workers of America Local 7901, asking for voluntary recognition within three days.

"I don't need time," Ong replied on the spot, adding that he'd happily recognize the union.

The reaction didn't come as a total surprise: Prior to leading Opal, Ong was Western Regional Field Organizer for the workers rights group Jobs with Justice.



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