



CITY OF SALINAS News

www.seiu521.org

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(831) 784 - 2560

VICTORY!

City Takes a Step Forward in Supporting Bilingual Library Services



Patrons show their support for bilingual library services at the City Council meeting on National Library Worker's Day

After over a year of campaigning, and after over 3 years of serving the community without compensation for providing bilingual services to the community, our librarians at the Cesar Chavez Library have finally been authorized to test for and receive bilingual compensation for their work.

The Story

In 2012, five librarians were hired with the explicit requirement that they were bilingual in Spanish--but none were ever given an opportunity to test for and receive the bilingual pay benefit that had been promoted with the job position, with Asst. City Manager Pia later claiming the bilingual requirement was a "misprint," despite what the librarians were told in their interviews.

As a result, our members organized a number of actions this past year to put pressure on the City to do the right thing. Meetings were set up with City Council members, a petition of support signed by 46 library employees was delivered, and library workers and adult and children patrons spoke out at a City Council meeting on National Library Worker's Day.

Victory!

Finally, after 2 of the original 5 librarians left, after 3 bilingual certified employees at the Chavez library left, and with the entire library system now having not a single bilingual certified librarian in it, **the City finally agreed to authorize testing for bilingual certification for our 3 remaining librarians**, and as of Tuesday, December 2, **all 3 have passed and will be receiving bilingual pay.**

This is a victory for the Spanish-speaking library patrons that the Cesar Chavez library serves, and it could not have happened without the sustained efforts of our members who worked with the Union to keep this issue in the spotlight and put pressure on the City to do the right thing. We would also like to acknowledge the advocacy that director Cynthia Bojorquez put in as well to make this happen.



Librarians from left to right: Cristela Aguilar, Luis Manzo and Casandra Valdez

...but the Battle for Bilingual Services isn't Over.

It's worth noting that with every meeting the Union had with Asst. City Manager Jim Pia over this issue, he voiced the opinion that the 5% bilingual pay benefit was too generous and that it should be a flat, set stipend amount. We must continue to stay united as a Union to ensure that our employees are fairly compensated for their work, and that our patrons and community receives the library services it deserves and needs, as we proceed to bargain a new Union contract next year.

CAL - OSHA VICTORY FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Who is the Union? Union members are the Union.

Who has the power? We have the power.

What kind of power? Union power!

In April of last year, the city of Salinas illegally demanded that our Public Works department violate the homeless community's rights by demolishing the homeless encampment in Chinatown. Furthermore, the City refused to provide to our workers the training and adequate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) that they required. Upon being alerted by our members, the Union filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge (ULP) with the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB). The Union made a complaint with Cal-OSHA to hold city management accountable to our rights under the law.

As a result, we were able to secure for our members:

- Adequate training on bio hazard waste
- Improved Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to maintain safety during encampment removals

And in an effort to settle our ULP with the PERB board, the City and Union are currently in settlement talks to get the members who were sent in to the homeless encampment paid a hazard pay differential for work they performed during the encampment removal.

Additionally, as a result of the complaint, Cal-OSHA discovered other violations of safety that the Public Works Director had been neglecting and fined the City \$935.00.

Thanks to the work of our members and union staff, members have been empowered to stand strong together.

When we stand united, we win.

GET INVOLVED!

A Union is members standing together to demand improvements for themselves and their families. Be a part of the change you want to see. The time is now for us to be the leaders we have been waiting for. If not us, Who? If not now, When?

Our Union contract with the City will be expiring next year, on December 31, 2016. Now is the time stand up and get involved with your Union. Elections for bargaining team representatives will be announced soon.

Contact Jonathan Bernhardt at jonathan.bernhardt@seiu521.org or (831) 784-2563 or Mark Weirick at mark.weirick@seiu521.org or (831) 784-6568 if you would like to get involved



If you think your rights have been violated, contact your Union Steward first, you can find a list of stewards at www.seiu521.org.

You can also contact your Contract Enforcement Specialist Assistant (CESA), Christopher Cox at (831) 824-9268 or christopher.cox@seiu521.org