

# SEIU 521 2024 Santa Cruz County Bargaining Principles

## RAISES • REST • RESPECT

### SUMMARY

Santa Cruz County, the most expensive county in the U.S., is plagued by chronic short-staffing, burnout and exhaustion driven by unrealistic workloads, destroying our public services infrastructure. Our health and behavioral health clinics, roads, public works and social services are bending under the weight of understaffing, leaving some departments up to 40% vacant, worsened by blatant mismanagement of services and a hostile environment.

Other counties used federal COVID funds to reinvigorate the public service sector while Santa Cruz County maintains an oppressive furlough system, devastating the emergency workforce. Rather than repair the damage inflicted, management chooses a path of aggressive bargaining, letting our workforce fall even further behind.

County workers are always essential and invaluable to hundreds of thousands of residents. Santa Cruz County **CAN address the vacancy crisis; CAN combat our stagnant wages and rising costs forcing our community to struggle for access to care and public services; CAN prioritize career opportunities, and training to end the abuse of Extra Help workers.** We are united and committed to addressing and repairing detrimental issues impacting Santa Cruz County's public services. We must **fight** to make sure our community's needs are addressed through sweeping and impactful changes.

### Our 2024 Bargaining Principles

#### RAISES

**ADDRESS** the vacancy crisis devastating county services through fair pay.

**PROVIDE** a cost-of-living adjustment ensuring wages are not devalued by the spiraling cost of living.

**NO TAKEAWAYS** to healthcare or other negotiated benefits.

**PRIORITIZE** market adjustments to ensure a competitive workforce in agencies experiencing unprecedented vacancy rate and turnover increases.

**PROVIDE** On-Call compensation for time that workers sacrifice. On-Call "callouts" are rising sharply, risking our community safety and ability to grapple with disasters and weather events.

**FIX** our broken bilingual pay system by expanding languages for which the county will compensate workers.

#### REST

**LEAD** as the first public agency in California to win the **32-hour workweek, at 40 hours pay**—a proven way to increase productivity and reduce staff burnout—allowing County workers to reclaim their personal time.

**ADDRESS** dangerous fatigue for On-Call essential duties and Disaster Service Work through a Fatigue Allowance, which prevents late-night callouts from becoming a tiresome and dangerous extension to a worker's workday.

**PROTECT** and expand the retirement system that guarantees rest after decades of work. As attacks on retirement occur, we must prevent any changes and expand our benefits that have not improved in 14 years.

#### RESPECT

**RECLAIM** our ability to strike and hold the County accountable during the life of our contract.

**STRENGTHEN** our worker committees by creating consequences for the County's lack of follow-through.

**REIN IN** location transfers, arbitrary schedule changes, and other methods the County uses to punish workers.

**CREATE** a hiring and transfer system that respects employee seniority.

**PROVIDE** a pathway to permanency for our extra-help workers and expand the rights afforded to our temporary workforce.

#### In solidarity, your SEIU 521 Santa Cruz County bargaining team:

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**SEIU 521**