

KCLS Employees Waiting for Fair Contracts

How We Got to this Point

Local 1857 represents approximately 1,000 employees of King County Library System. In November 2015, we began bargaining three new contracts (Main Unit, Maintenance Unit, Page Unit) with KCLS and have yet to reach an agreement on any of them. Negotiations have been prolonged by KCLS continuing to insist on bargaining the contracts separately, and their apparent inability to commit to consistent and regular negotiation dates.

In September, KCLS unexpectedly came to the table with a “last and final” offer that contained only a portion of the cost of living increase that KCLS had been withholding since January 2016. This offer was contingent on an unreasonable and arbitrary deadline for our members to vote approval of the contract. At the same time, KCLS was proposing altered medical benefit plans requiring employees to assume more out-of-pocket expenses. These issues caused our members to reject the contract by 76%.

After five mediation sessions in November and December, KCLS and the Union are close to a tentative agreement that names the medical plans offered, recognizes the Union's right to bargain changes to medical benefits, and specifies an annual process and timeline for bargaining benefits well ahead of open enrollment. **In response to public pressure (thank you!), at the KCLS Board of Trustees Meeting on January 25, 2017, KCLS pledged to include a retroactive cost of living increase for 2016 in their next proposal.**

What We Are Asking For

- That changes to the medical benefits plans do not impose undue financial hardship on our members.
- That all three contracts be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by February 9th, 2017.

Our Pages: Benefits Denied

At approximately 30% of the workforce, Library Pages constitute the largest single classification of KCLS employees. However, only 6 of our 383 Pages have medical or retirement benefits. In a survey that we conducted in 2016, 81% of our members in the Page Unit told us that the ability to work 20 hours to qualify for benefits is important to them. As it is, 34% of those responding to the survey work a second job. Interestingly, only 13% of KCLS Pages are students. Historically, employees in these “entry level” positions at KCLS have been marginalized and denied opportunities that would help them advance, despite their work being so essential to providing good service to our patrons.

What We Are Asking for the Pages

- That KCLS recognize that Pages are worthy of receiving benefits and begin offering more Pages twenty-hour, benefited positions.

Why We Are Coming to You

The library belongs to you. We believe that you value the service that we provide in your community and care about how the KCLS employees that you interact with are treated. We have provided contact information below should you wish to follow up on our behalf. Thank you for your support.

Please send your comments to:

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Library Director

KCLS Board of Trustees boardoftrustees@kcls.org

You may also wish to contact:

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