



SEIU's Fast Food Strike Hidden Agenda

The "Fight for \$15" Is Actually a Fight for Union Paychecks

The Service Employees International Union is organizing the effort in numerous cities to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, roughly double the current federal minimum. The SEIU has invested heavily into these campaigns, with millions of dollars in contributions flowing through local "worker centers."

Based on an analysis of the SEIU's annual filings with the Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), SEIU made the following substantial grants to organizations coordinating the ongoing fast food strikes.

- SEIU International Headquarters funded New York Communities for Change, an ACORN-linked group involved with the Fast Food Forward, in the amount of **\$2,447,126** in 2012. That grant nearly doubled their operating budget.
- SEIU International Headquarters funded United for New York, another group involved with Fast Food Forward, to the tune of **\$2,157,568** in 2012.
- Chicago front group Action Now received **\$3,016,713** in total grants from SEIU headquarters in 2012.

SEIU's Self Interest in Raising the Minimum Wage

A detailed analysis of SEIU collective bargaining agreements reveals that a number of the SEIU's current contracts are pegged to the statutory minimum wage. Some SEIU contracts contain provisions guaranteeing premiums above the minimum wage, and many SEIU-represented employees currently make less than the desired \$15 per hour.¹ That means the SEIU and many of its current members stand to benefit handily from any such increase.

The available contract provisions that have been negotiated by the SEIU guaranteeing a wage premium above the applicable legal minimum wage are detailed below. (See footnote #1.)

- **SEIU Local 32BJ's** contract with the Washington (DC) Service Contractors Association [stipulates that](#) "The minimum hourly wage rates set forth in each Economic Rider shall exceed any statutory applicable minimum wage rate by 50 cents (\$0.50)."
- **SEIU Local 1877** has concluded multiple contracts with such provisions, requiring that "[Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement](#), employees shall make at least thirty (30) cents per hour over California or Federal minimum wage rates" and [in a separate deal that](#) "All

¹ Since the OLMS database of collective bargaining agreements contains a limited, non-representative sample of agreements, it is not possible to determine the prevalence of these provisions.

employees covered under this Agreement shall be paid no less than twenty five cents (\$0.25) per hour above the Federal Minimum Wage or California State Minimum Wage, whichever is higher.”

- **SEIU Local 21LA**'s [contract with Aramark provides](#) that the “Employer will pay Employees at least \$0.25 an hour above the applicable minimum wage set by the state or federal government.”

The following example contracts are from the OLMS database and contain at least one wage level in the schedule of compensation that is less than \$15 per hour:

- **SEIU Local 668**'s contract with the [Community College of Allegheny County](#) provides that a new hire at pay-grade A (defined as a custodian/laborer) would receive \$13.57 per hour.
- **SEIU Local 21LA** [concluded a contract with Aramark](#) for the New Orleans Recovery School District that paid entry-grade food service workers \$8.85 per hour. No employees in the wage scale, which included higher-grade food service workers, cooks, and drivers, were paid a \$15 per hour base, according to the chart in the contract.
- **SEIU Local 503 OPEU**'s [deal with Lincoln City, LLC](#) provided that certain aides, maintenance workers, and housekeepers would be paid \$10.80 per hour. According to the hiring matrix in Exhibit A, an employee would need to show 8 years' experience for any applicable job class to receive \$15/hr.
- **SEIU Local 615** and the Maintenance Contractors of New England [concluded a schedule of wage rates](#) for cleaning staff and similar employee classes with provisions for a \$9.50/hour rate for buildings in suburban Rhode Island.
- **SEIU Healthcare Minnesota** and [Regina Medical Center set base wages](#) for X-ray aides at \$10.72 per hour; these aides would not cross the \$15 threshold until they had 4 years' experience.
- **SEIU Local 1877** agreed with [SBM Site Services](#) to pay newly hired employees in a bargaining unit of janitors and window cleaners \$9.90 per hour.
- **SEIU Local 87**'s [contract with the San Francisco Maintenance Contractors Association](#) provided an entry-level wage of \$12.89 per hour for certain janitorial positions.
- **SEIU Local 721** [agreed with the Tri-County Regional Center](#) that “Peer Advocate Specialist” clerks would be paid a wage of \$8.46 per hour.
- **SEIU Local 32BJ**'s [current contract with the Washington Service Contractors Association](#) pays workers in the nation's capital's Virginia suburbs \$9.80 per hour for part-time work, \$10.30 per hour for full-time work, and \$10.60 per hour to work as porters. Even in 2015, no employee class will be at \$15 per hour base pay.