



COVID-19 Update From Your Union

Greetings!

I'm writing to provide you with a Union update. As the COVID-19 crisis unfolds all over the world, we continue fighting to keep our members, families, and clients as safe as possible. Our stewards, officers, and union reps have been working extremely hard fielding your calls, text messages and e-mails while at the same time working with agencies to answer your questions. Unfortunately, at this moment there are far more questions than answers.

Last week we sent a letter to your agencies' CEO asking for their COVID-19 response plans and flexibility around both paid and unpaid sick leave, demanding that no worker lose pay or benefits due to COVID-19 Quarantine or closure.

We've been in contact directly with the Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services pushing for the state to provide emergency paid leave of at least 2 weeks for COVID-19 related closures or quarantine. We're asking that the state continue payment to employers who have been forced to shutdown services so that they have the funds available to pay employees affected. We're asking for guidance to make sure Private Sector Human Service employers know how to properly handle this crisis ([here is the most recent State guidance](#)).

In addition, we are working with our political allies on several relief measures for private sector workers. With Raise up Massachusetts and our elected representatives, we are working to expand the earned sick time law to immediately give people extra sick days on top of existing benefits. At the State House we are supporting a bill that would waive the 1 week waiting period for Unemployment insurance. Finally, we are working with our federal delegation in Congress to pass the Families First Corona Virus Response Act to provide emergency relief to workers.

As we deal with the fallout of this crisis, SEIU Local 509 has reduced operations to essential functions and all contract bargaining and member meetings have been postponed until April 13 or later for the safety of members and staff. We are solely focusing on this crisis and helping our members cope with the disruptions.

This is a stressful time for everyone and many of our clients are on edge, but please try to stay calm. The individuals in our care look to us for reassurance and comfort. Now more than ever it is important that we remain calm as we do our best to continue providing the best care to the most vulnerable in our society.

As we cope with these major disruptions it's important to remember that we are all united and now more than ever the strength of our community will be what carries us through. Please reach out to your Steward or Union Rep with questions and concerns.

Here are some important resources you may need during this crisis:

- [Click here for the most recent guidance to agencies](#)
- [State COVID 19 Update Page](#)
- [Public Health Prevention guidelines](#)

- [Unemployment insurance](#)
- [Department of Transitional Assistance](#)

Stay Safe,

Orlando Peña

Private Sector Chapter President
SEIU Local 509

LOCAL 509 COVID-19 RESPONSE

To get the latest updates for SEIU Local 509 members on the COVID-19 outbreak, [follow us on Facebook](#) and [check our COVID-19 Response page](#) on our website.

If you have any questions or concerns about changes at your worksite, contact your steward, [a union representative](#), or call the Member Action Resource Center at 1-800-632-8079.

SEIU Local 509

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