

Adding More Pieces to the Puzzle



Why Do We Organize Workers at Non-Union Facilities?

As long as a worker down the street or in a neighboring town is doing a job similar to yours for less money, your job and your salary are not safe. Organizing others in our industry who don't have the benefits of Union jobs and raising their standard of living is the only way we can improve and protect our own jobs. That's why every SEIU member must also encourage other RNs and healthcare workers to join the Union. We can make a better life for our families – better healthcare, better pay, better retirement, job security and safety on the job – if we stand together and organize for strength in our workplaces and in the healthcare industry as a whole.

When we organize Registered Nurses and/or Professionals at another healthcare facility, those members, along with guidance from Union staff, then negotiate their own collective bargaining agreement with management at their facility.

Contact 121RN Organizing Director Al Chavez at (626) 375-0623 or chaveza@seiu121rn.org for information on organizing Registered Nurses and/or Professionals who are currently unrepresented.



SEIU Local 121RN represents more than 8,000 Registered Nurses and Healthcare Professionals working in 22 facilities across Southern California.

Our headquarters are located at 1040 Lincoln Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103.

Phone: (626) 639-6200 Fax: (626) 395-7538

If you are unable to reach your Union Representative or feel your issues are not being addressed adequately, please contact:

Chief of Staff Rosanna Mendez (626) 639-6159 / mendezr@seiu121rn.org



“Management can't fire you just because they don't like you. There is a due process and a contract that management must follow.”

Catherine Kaiser-Reeves, NICU RN
Northridge Hospital Medical Center

For more info, visit:
Seiu121rn.org

Welcome to SEIU Local 121RN, Southern California's Registered Nurse Union! We hope this brochure will help you understand how our Union works and what role you can play within it. If you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact a Union Steward or your Union Representative. You can find your Union Representative by going to www.seiu121rn.org and clicking on "Our Hospitals" at the top of the page. Then click on your facility.



What is a Union?

Think of our whole Union as a complete puzzle, and each RN or Professional member is one piece of that puzzle. As just one "piece" of the puzzle, you can't do much. But when you put all the "pieces" of the puzzle together (all the members of the Union), the puzzle is fully functional and much more valuable. When Union members stand together for a voice on-the-job, to right a wrong, or to push for legislation that will keep our patients or ourselves safer, we can achieve much more than just one person or a small group of people.

Membership involvement is central to the power and influence of Local 121RN. Chapter officers, stewards, and active members are in the best position to solve problems and improve working conditions for nurses. The Local 121RN Executive Board meets the second Tuesday of each month to discuss issues affecting all members, and to present membership, finances and other issues related to running the Union itself.

SEIU Local 121RN is a democratic organization with an Executive Board that sets policy and provides operational and program oversight based on the interests of our members. Each hospital chapter elects their own leadership (president, vice president, secretary-treasurer) and meets regularly to address worksite issues.



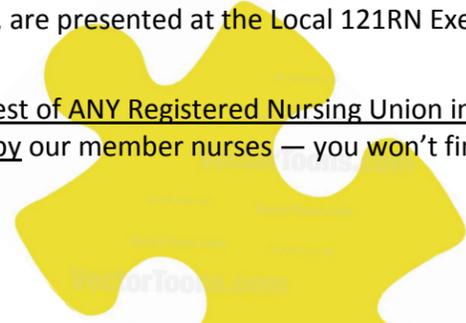
“As a 121RN member, you know that you're secure! Hospital management can not abuse you, and the contract our Union negotiated is going to protect you and your wages.”

Mateo Montoya, ER RN
Encino Hospital Medical Center

What Do Our Dues Pay For?

Dues pay for the union's activities that give us more power at the bargaining table, in the political arena, and in the community. Dues pay for the salaries of staff representatives, organizers, attorneys and other staff who assist members in negotiations, grievances, arbitrations, research, training, and communications. The improvements we make in our pay, benefits, and working conditions are worth far more than the cost of dues. Financial statements, detailing how dues money is spent, are presented at the Local 121RN Executive Board and are available for review.

Also, at 1.65% of your salary, SEIU 121RN dues are the lowest of ANY Registered Nursing Union in California, and likely in the nation. Local 121RN is for nurses and run by our member nurses — you won't find better representation for your hard-earned money.



Contract Negotiations

Contracts negotiated at the bargaining table with management determine our pay, benefits, and working conditions. Dues money pays for a comprehensive analysis of the employer's budget, workplace meetings, bargaining surveys, and all the other resources needed to keep our elected Bargaining Team at the table as long as it takes to win a fair contract. Dues pay for lost time wages for Bargaining Team members, meeting room rentals, printed materials to keep members informed about negotiations, research, legal advice, and so on.

A contract, also called a collective bargaining

agreement, establishes ground rules for labor/management relations in the workplace. While most problems are solved through discussion and compromise, our contracts outline a "grievance procedure" to resolve conflicts and, when necessary, an "arbitration process." Arbitration is a quasi-court proceeding in which a neutral labor "judge" agreed upon by both side decides the case.

Time off, breaks, overtime pay, Clinical Ladder programs, funds for continuing education, and training are other important aspects of a collective bargaining agreement.



"All of the 121RN nurses and professionals are the 'Union' and you need to speak up to be heard."

Karen Pelone, L&D RN

Providence Tarzana Medical Center

Become a Union Steward!

Representing members is an important task, especially if an RN's job is on the line. 121RN is always looking for members to become Union Stewards. Union staff and experienced members train new stewards on current laws affecting workers, how to interpret our contracts, and how to represent members effectively.

A Union Steward:

- Investigates complaints and concerns to determine if members rights are violated
- Represents members in grievance and disciplinary meetings
- Assists with and implements mobilization projects to empower members and to effectively address workplace issues
- Educates workers on labor issues, legislation, politics and organizing
- Assists members in problem-solving efforts even if a formal grievance does not exist



"We represent members not only in discipline issues and wage and hour disputes, but we also lobby for or against legislation that affects nursing and our patients. We helped pass laws on nurse-to-patient ratios, needle-stick prevention, safe patient lifting, and we're now working on a workplace violence prevention standard. I am so proud to be a member of Local 121RN representing Registered Nurses and Professionals!"

SEIU 121RN President Gayle Batiste, Operating Room RN, CNOR
Northridge Hospital Medical Center

What is Your Role in Our Union?

Membership involvement is central to the power and influence of Local 121RN. Chapter officers, stewards, and active members are in the best position to solve problems and improve working conditions for nurses. You may choose to become an officer, steward, political activist, or simply participate in the Local's democratic process by voting in Union elections. Our Local will train you and provide all the resources you need to be an effective officer or steward. If you're interested, just tell your SEIU Local 121RN staff representative and he or she will start the process.

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Member Rights & Responsibilities

- The right to have opinions heard and respected, to be informed of union activity, to be educated in union values and union skills.
 - The right to choose leaders of the union in a fair and democratic manner.
 - The right to a full accounting of union dues and the proper stewardship over union resources.
 - The right to participate in the union's bargaining efforts and to approve union contracts.
 - The right to have members' concerns resolved in a fair and expeditious manner.
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- The responsibility to help build a strong and more effective labor movement, to support the organizing of unorganized workers, to help build a political voice for working people, and to stand up for one's co-workers and all workers.
 - The responsibility to be informed about the internal governance of the union and to participate in union's affairs.
 - The responsibility to contribute to the support of the union.
 - The responsibility to treat all workers and members fairly.
 - The responsibility to offer criticism of the union.