

PUBLIC DEFENDER UNIONS WORK!

Nationally, union workers earn 10-20% more on average than non-union employees. Average gains are even bigger for Black and Hispanic union workers. Unionized women are closer to pay equity with men (from \$0.74 to \$0.90 for every dollar men earn). Union workers are more likely to pay less for better core benefits, such as a healthcare coverage, and also more likely to have better fringe benefits, such as vacation time and parental leave.

And, **PUBLIC DEFENDER UNIONS ARE WINNING NATIONWIDE.**

In Minnesota...

- Workers negotiated a **NEW 10-STEP PAY SCALE** and everyone in the system won a **40-50% PAY RAISE** in 2023. Pay steps and cost-of-living increases must be re-negotiated every two years.
- The contract the union won mandates that new employees start with **MORE VACATION TIME**, and many employees now have **MORE ALLOWABLE REIMBURSEMENT** for work expenses.

In Colorado...

- After formation of the union, and even before collective bargaining began, the state government authorized **\$16.1 MILLION** in pay increases for public defender workers. Starting attorney salaries jumped from approximately \$64,000 to \$82,000 after unionization.

In Maryland...

- Unionized attorneys won **PAY-STEP INCREASES**, hourly employees won **OVERTIME RECOGNITION**, and bilingual employees **DOUBLED THEIR SKILLED PAY**.
- The union also secured an agreement for **TRANSPARENT, MEMBER-DRIVEN INTERVIEWS** of job candidates.

In Los Angeles County...

- In anticipation of a new 3-year contract, management has agreed to union demands for a **DETAILED CASELOAD LIMITS STUDY** conducted through an unbiased outside organization.

In Philadelphia...

- During contract negotiations, the city authorized **\$5.8 MILLION** in pay increases for all workers.
- The union's first contract with management distributed that increase so that many hourly employees could quit the second jobs they were working to survive.

In Louisville...

- When the city's public defender agency refused to bargain and work in good faith, workers took the fight to court and **WON**. A federal judge found that management violated federal law, and the city defender is now joining the state system, which provides access to better funding, benefits, and institutional support.



*Kansas Public Defender Organizers
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