

Airport Workers are Winning Living Wages and Union Rights

For too long, major airlines have boosted profits by decimating jobs, slashing wages, and taking our tax dollars. That's why airport workers are coming together across the country to call on airlines to support good union jobs. And we're winning.

Since our movement began, nearly 126,000 airport workers have won raises and other improvements.

- In 2019
 - Passenger Service Assistants at Portland International Airport won \$15 an hour after sharing their stories of struggling to pay rent and buy food and pushing the Port of Portland to improve jobs.
 - More than 6,000 baggage handlers, catering workers, cabin cleaners, wheelchair attendants and others won a \$15 an hour minimum wage at Denver International Airport in an ordinance that was passed unanimously by City Council.
- In 2018
 - Airport workers in 32BJ SEIU made history when the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey [voted unanimously to raise wages to \\$19 an hour](#) by 2023—the highest minimum wage in the country—for 40,000 airport service workers at JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark airports.
 - Thousands of airport workers in SEIU-USWW at [SFO won a minimum wage of \\$17](#) an hour.
 - More than 2,000 workers at O'Hare and Midway in Chicago won their union with SEIU Local 1.
 - More than 1,500 airport workers in Philadelphia voted unanimously to ratify their first-ever union contract. Workers won paid time off, job protections, and a minimum wage of \$13.60 an hour—more than double what airport workers made before they began organizing with 32BJ SEIU.
- In 2017
 - The [Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to raise wages for 10,000¹ LAX workers](#) to a minimum of \$17/hour by July, 2021 and to require fully-paid emergency response training.²
 - Nearly 8,000 people at Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports, won a raise to \$13.80, the right to join a union, and emergency training in an [ordinance unanimously passed by Chicago City Council](#).
 - Roughly 5,000 airport workers at Reagan and Dulles airports [won a living wage policy](#) that raises wages to a minimum of \$12.75/hour by 2019—a raise of more than \$4/hour for some workers.
 - Approximately 1,500 workers at Boston's Logan International Airport won an increase in the minimum wage to **\$13**/hour beginning in January 2018. The minimum had already increased to \$12 the year before. (The Massachusetts minimum wage is \$11).
- In 2016
 - [Miami-Dade County increased](#) its living wage for county contractors in 2016. [Current rates](#) are **\$13.23** for workers with healthcare and **\$16.40/hr** for those without, affecting approximately 9,000 airport workers³ and 11,000⁴ other service workers.
- In 2015
 - 4,700 workers at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport won a raise to **\$15.24** when the Washington Supreme Court ruled that the City of Sea-Tac's 2013 minimum wage ordinance

¹ SEIU analysis of airport badge information.

²

<https://westsidetoday.com/2017/12/11/city-of-los-angeles-amends-airport-living-wage-ordinance-thousands-of-airport-workers-to-see-wage-increase/>

³ SEIU analysis of airport badge data

⁴ SEIU data.

- o applied to the airport.⁵ (In 2013, airport workers drove and won a ballot initiative in the city of Sea-Tac for \$15/hr.⁶)
- o 2,300⁷ Ft. Lauderdale [airport workers won a living wage](#) ordinance that sets wages at **\$12.03** with health benefits, **\$13.59** without.
- o More than 2,000 workers at the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport won a raise after urging the Airport Commission to raise the minimum wage to **\$10/hr.**⁸
- o More than 2,000 Portland Airport workers won greater job security and other benefits through a new policy issued by the airport.⁹
- In 2014
 - o More than 41,000¹⁰ workers at JFK, Newark International, and LaGuardia airports won a minimum of **\$10.10/hr** with paid time off through a policy passed by the Port Authority.
 - o Philadelphia voters passed a ballot referendum extending the City’s living wage law to cover subcontractors at the Philadelphia International Airport.¹¹ More than 15,000¹² workers won **\$12/hour** with an annual cost of living indexing.
- In 2008, San Jose City Council approved a living wage, worker retention policy, and other protections which cover about 750¹³ workers at the airport.¹⁴ The current rates under the ordinance are **\$15.36/hr** for workers with health insurance and **\$16.61** without.¹⁵
- Beginning in 1999 and 2000, San Francisco Airport implemented raises for 9,700 SFO workers to **\$10/hr** with health insurance or **\$11.25** without.¹⁶

30,000 airport workers have won a union with SEIU.

- In 1999 and 2000, janitors and security officers at LAX and SFO were the first airport workers to organize in SEIU.¹⁷ Since then, security officers, janitors, baggage handlers, wheelchair attendants, skycaps, cabin cleaners, food service workers, and terminal cleaners have united in SEIU at more than 37 airports across the country.
- Momentum has grown recently as more than 11,000 airport workers joined SEIU since 2016, including:
 - o 8,000 workers at JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark airport, who won their first contract in December 2016.¹⁸
 - o 1,400 airport workers in Philadelphia, who gained the support of their Mayor, Governor, the majority of City Council, and American Airlines in 2017. They began bargaining their first contract last year.¹⁹
 - o Nearly 1,300 airport workers at Dulles and National airports in D.C., who won their union in 2016 and 2017.
 - o 750 more workers won their union at LAX in 2016, joining 3,000 existing SEIU members.

⁵ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/seatac-15-minimum-wage_us_55d74dcfe4b04ae49702fa99

⁶ <https://www.seattlemet.com/articles/2016/5/24/whatever-happened-to-seatac-s-15-minimum-wage>

⁷ SEIU analysis of airport badge information.

⁸ <https://www.gomn.com/news/minimum-wage-will-rise-to-10-for-workers-at-msp-airport>

⁹ http://www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2015/04/pdx_leaders_move_forward_with.html

¹⁰ <https://www.panynj.gov/pdf/intervista-report-072116.pdf> p. 6

¹¹ https://files.philadelphiavotes.com/PROPOSED_CHARTER_CHANGE_QUESTION.docx

¹² SEIU analysis of airport badge information

¹³ SEIU analysis of airport badge information

¹⁴ <http://www.flysanjose.com/living-wage>

¹⁵ http://www.flysanjose.com/sites/default/files/ALWO/ALWO_Wage_2018.pdf

¹⁶ http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2003/sfo_mar03.pdf

¹⁷ Cleeland, Nancy. “California: some security, baggage workers walk out at LAX, demanding union”. Los Angeles Times, April 30, 1999.

“Airport workers vote to join Teamsters, SEIU”. San Jose Mercury News, December 6, 2000.

¹⁸ <http://www.seiu32bj.org/press-releases/8000-ny-nj-airport-workers-win-first-union-contract/>

¹⁹ <http://www.phillymag.com/business/2017/08/29/philadelphia-airport-workers-contract-union/>

- Large groups of workers have joined SEIU at many other airports, including:
 - San Francisco: nearly 2,700
 - Denver: more than 1,100
 - [Seattle-Tacoma](#): more than 1,100
 - Minneapolis-St. Paul: nearly 1,000
 - Chicago: more than 2,000