

**MEDIA ADVISORY FOR: Thursday, March 31, 2022**

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**\*10 AM MARCH AND RALLY THURSDAY\***

**WITH CONTRACT SET TO EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT,  
THOUSANDS OF STRIKE-READY SEIU 721 MEMBERS TO  
DESCEND ON DOWNTOWN LA IN LARGEST-EVER  
MOBILIZATION; “FIGHT FOR THE FRONTLINE” MARCH AND  
RALLY KICKS OFF STRIKE VOTE COUNTDOWN**

*Amid Skyrocketing Inflation, Insulting Contract Proposals by LA County Leadership that Don't Keep Up with the Rising Cost of Living, and Rampant Privatization Threats that Put Good Union Jobs at Risk, LA County SEIU 721 Members Set to Conduct First County-Wide Strike Vote in Decades; Workers to Pack DTLA in Historic Show of Union Power*

**LOS ANGELES** — With their contract set to expire at midnight, and after 4 months of contract negotiations with the County of Los Angeles, thousands of SEIU 721 members will march and rally Thursday at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in the largest mobilization in the union's history. The union members include County workers in healthcare, library administration, public works, social services, homelessness outreach, public safety, custodial services, and more.

The workers will speak out against County leadership's insulting contract proposals, which many describe as a “slap in the face” to those manning the frontlines of the COVID pandemic, especially in the face of historically high inflation. Workers will also sound the alarm on LA County's efforts to privatize and outsource vital County services to major for-profit corporations — a trend that threatens good local union jobs.

The march and rally mark the start of a countdown to a County-wide strike vote of SEIU 721 members if local leaders and department bosses continue to devalue and disrespect their workers. SEIU 721 members will be joined at the event by other County labor unions and the LA County Federation of Labor.

The historic action comes amid growing labor militancy in the U.S., in which more and more workers are organizing, striking, and demanding more from their employers.

For many years, the County has underinvested in its employees and departments, leading to rampant short-staffing and poor, sometimes dangerous working conditions. To fill gaps, County leaders have too often turned to big corporations — which are happy to cut corners to win contracts and profit off taxpayers while providing shoddy services previously performed by experienced, local union workers.

The workers are seeking a contract with strong protections against privatization and outsourcing, guaranteed health benefits, increased childcare and eldercare support, and fair pay that keeps up with skyrocketing inflation and the cost of living in the Los Angeles area.

- **Who:** Thousands of SEIU 721 members who work for LA County.
- **What:** March and rally at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration with union and pro-worker speakers.
- **When:** 10 a.m.
- **Where:** 205 N Spring St, Los Angeles, CA 90012.
- **Visuals:** Massive crowd banners unfurled along march route, thousands of workers chanting pro-worker slogans and carrying pro-union signs, oversized foam letters.

**Background:** For many years, LA County has underinvested in its workers and departments, leading to rampant short-staffing and poor working conditions. When this has created gaps in services, the County has turned to big corporations to fill them.

These moves can lead to dangerous outcomes. For example: During the pandemic, short-staffing and an overreliance on private employment agencies at County hospitals has led to overwork and burnout for County nurses and health-care workers — sometimes leading to reduced services at hospitals and difficulties providing care to patients. As Omicron spread rapidly in January, a [state health guidance](#) even allowed LA County hospitals to force healthcare staff back to work after they tested positive for COVID-19, putting workers and patients at greater risk of contracting the virus. After SEIU 721 members and other labor allies [spoke out](#), the guidance was [reversed](#).

Many other County departments have felt squeezed by short-staffing, too. Workers for the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) recently [rallied](#) against management's proposed "task-based" work system. This system would have turned the County's social services administration into an assembly line and eliminated the time and space frontline professionals must have to build trust with their clients — disrupting connections to critical social services, such as food, emergency housing, healthcare, and counseling. The proposed "task-based" system was an attempt to circumvent the root of the issue — short-staffing.

In recent months, SEIU 721 members have also [spoken out](#) against the County's ongoing threat to shift its 2-1-1 hotline services away from 211 LA and to a giant for-profit corporation. 211 LA, a trusted non-profit with 41 years of service, played a key role at the height of the pandemic in connecting County residents to COVID-19 testing and other critical services. The contracting out of the 2-1-1 hotline would eliminate vital services performed by experienced, local union workers — handing them over to a penny-pinching for-profit company.

In the union's ongoing negotiations with the County, County negotiators are proposing inadequate pay that fails to keep up with inflation and the LA area's ballooning cost of living. Despite County workers' sacrifices and heroics over the course of the 2-year pandemic, the proposed pay raises are a slap in the face for these workers deemed as heroes by County leaders.

Many County workers are also women who have performed vital labor during the pandemic both on and off the clock in an era of school closures and lockdowns. Still, the County refuses to offer increased support for childcare and eldercare — which would reduce the burdens these women face.

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