

# Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio workers organize unions

WOSU 89.7 NPR News | By Allie Vugrincic

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Rick Bowmer

/

Associated Press

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio workers are on the brink of officially unionizing.

"If we're going to continue to preach this mission of reproductive rights, reproductive justice and caring about our abortion providers and everyone that works for Planned Parenthood, it required us to fight for a union so that we could represent ourselves at



the bargaining table," said Oliva Oney, a regional field manager at Planned Parenthood who spurred the unionization effort.

Oney said talks about unionizing began last spring, after Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio closed three health centers in January 2024.

"A lot of folks that we all care about like just were released from the organization, essentially, and it just felt wrong," Oney said.

She said she also noticed high turnover, both in her position of regional advocate and in other parts of the organization.

"I saw that there was definitely some like issues internally when it came to burnout turnover and things like that," Oney said. "Pretty much everyone we talked to was super supportive and they all had similar stories of, you know, needing better wages and like struggling to pay rent and things like that."

Two unions are set to represent around 170 workers at Planned Parenthood locations around Ohio, including in Franklinton and north Columbus.

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio runs 13 health centers and two surgical centers, as well as a virtual health center.

This week, leadership of the organization recognized a union for clinical staff, which is set to have about 140 members, and a smaller one for administrators, advocates, and educators with about 30 members, Oney said. Together, they make up P-P-go Workers United, under Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 98.

The last step to finalizing the unions is a card count, Oney said.

The two unions will bargain together to ensure livable wages and comfortable work situations, she said.

She said the unionization process has also helped workers from different departments get to know each other better.

"So far, we've seen a lot of solidarity across departments and hearing each other's stories and being able to connect with one another has definitely brought a sense of community," she said.

Oney said unionization was always the goal, but safety and funding concerns have become part of the conversation with the start of a second Trump administration.

"I know in the conversations we've had, like what it's going to look like in the future for Planned Parenthood when it comes to funding and things like that and making sure that all of us have things in place to protect us if that were to be a problem down the line," Oney said.

Oney said about 20 other Planned Parenthood affiliates have unionized in the past few years.

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio President and CEO Erica Wilson-Domer said in a

statement that Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio respects collective bargaining rights and supports the worker's rights to unionize.

"PPGOH recognizes the important role unions can play in fostering dialogue, fairness, and collaboration in the workplace," the statement reads. "We are committed to building an environment where all our employees feel supported, empowered, and have the opportunity to thrive, so they can continue providing the high-quality care our patients rely on."

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*This story has been updated with a statement from Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio President and CEO Erica Wilson-Domer regarding collective bargaining and worker's rights to unionize.*

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Allie Vugrincic has been a radio reporter at WOSU 89.7 NPR News since March 2023.

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