

# MANY STATE WORKERS DO NOT EARN ENOUGH TO COVER A BASIC FAMILY BUDGET

Ensuring that California workers are earning a living wage is essential for a full recovery from the economic upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet even the state government, one of California's largest employers with more than 200,000 employees, has failed to provide living wages to a large portion of its workforce. This has resulted in many of the State of California's working families facing enormous challenges including food insecurity and an untenable rent burden.

SEIU Local 1000 is the largest public sector union in the state, covering almost half of all state government workers. An analysis of wages for state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 shows that large numbers do not earn enough to attain financial stability. Though coastal regions are the most unaffordable, workers in all parts of the state face self-sufficiency challenges.

## STATE WORKERS REPRESENTED BY SEIU LOCAL 1000 LACK SUFFICIENT WAGES TO MEET BASIC NEEDS.

Share of full-time state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 who earn less than the wage required to support various family sizes:



More than **one-third (35%)** of state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 would be unable to support a family of four even with a working partner earning the same wage.



More than **two-thirds (69%)** of these state workers would be unable to support themselves and one child on their own.



**Five percent** of state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 lack sufficient income to provide for just their own basic needs.

Despite providing services that are vital to the state of California, sizable shares of state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 do not earn a family-sustaining wage even when working full time. Interviews with state workers reveal that some need to work overtime or multiple jobs to afford a decent living.

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STAY AFLOAT IN CALIFORNIA?

Based on the MIT living wage calculator, which measures income adequacy by accounting for both family composition and geography, the 2022 self-sufficiency wage in California for

- **a single adult is \$21.24**
- **a family with two working adults and two children is \$30.06**
- **a family with one working adult and one child is \$43.44**



# MANY STATE WORKERS ACROSS OCCUPATIONS CANNOT MAKE ENDS MEET

Share of full-time state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 in various occupations **unable to support a family of four** with a partner earning the same wage:



**Building & Maintenance**

**100%**



**Healthcare Support**

**80%**



**Office & Admin**

**77%**



**Production**

**72%**



**Food Prep**

**69%**

[Supporting my family] just depends on how much overtime I do.  
–Susanna, food preparation worker, Kings County

Many struggling state workers represented by SEIU Local 1000 are employed in occupations that provide services that are essential to the public's health and quality of life, including custodians, health care workers, and librarians. Further analysis of all state workers, using data from the American Community Survey and California Department of Human Resources, reveals that workers of color and women are overrepresented in many of the lowest earning occupations in state government, including health care support, office and administration, and food preparation. Without meaningful gains in wages, existing racial, and gender disparities in pay will persist or worsen.

We're making barely \$15 and some change an hour while the cost of living is skyrocketing.  
–Jason, building and maintenance worker, LA Area

During the pandemic, we were expected to be there, no matter what, regardless of how much we were exposed to those who had COVID. We were still expected to be there.  
–Efrain, employee in California Prison Industry Authority

I work a side job, too. So I have to have that extra money to basically get through the month.  
–Karen, custodian in downtown LA

*Interviews conducted by the UCLA Labor Center with SEIU Local 1000 members illustrate the financial struggles faced by California state employees.*

*Source: UC Berkeley Labor Center Analysis of SEIU Local 1000 payroll data (August 2022).*

**Additional analysis is available on the UC Berkeley Labor Center website:**

