

The Providence Journal

LOCAL

The strike is over at Butler Hospital. Here's what is in the new contract.

Nish Kohli Providence Journal

Aug. 19, 2025, 11:06 a.m. ET

Key Points AI-assisted summary ⓘ

Butler Hospital workers ended their strike, the longest hospital strike in Rhode Island history, by ratifying a new four-year contract.

The agreement includes wage increases, with no employee earning less than \$20 an hour by the contract's end.

PROVIDENCE – [Butler Hospital](#) workers have approved a new union contract, putting an end to months of [tense bargaining](#) and the longest hospital strike in Rhode Island history.

Nurses and other frontline staff at the psychiatric hospital had been on strike and [picketing outside the facility](#) daily since May, striving for higher wages and better working conditions. After several rounds of "last" and "final" offers; urging by lawmakers and the governor to stay at the bargaining table and even a prayer vigil, an agreement was reached.

[Service Employees International Union 1199NE](#) represents over 800 employees at Butler Hospital and said that workers voted overwhelmingly in favor of the agreement.

Aided by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the union's bargaining committee struck a tentative deal for a new four-year contract with hospital management over the weekend and sent it to the rest of the workers for approval on August 18.

According to the union, 99% of those who participated voted to ratify the contract. Workers will begin returning to work in the coming weeks.

“We are thrilled we were able to achieve wage increases of up to \$5 an hour for our lowest paid members, secured our retirement and maintained affordable health care benefits,” Dan Camp, a behavioral call intake staffer and bargaining committee member, shared in a statement. “We hope that these gains will help recruit and retain more staff to improve workplace safety and improve care. It has not been an easy road but we’re hopeful this is a positive step between hospital workers and management, all for the good of our patients.

What’s in the contract?

Wage increases for full-time employees by at least \$6,000 in the first year of the contract; By the end of the four-year contract, no employee will earn less than \$20 an hour.

Retention of health care benefits and controlled out-of-pocket costs for Health Savings Account plans

Financial support for workers injured by workplace violence

Affordable retirement for current and future workers

Educational benefit fund administered by the SEIU 1199NE Training and Education Fund

For equity and inclusion efforts, the hospital will provide and share the costs of tri-lingual translation of medical and retirement benefits, as well as the union contract

Butler hospital & 1199 SEIUNE

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Date: Tue, Aug 19, 2025, 9:19 AM

In their joint statement, hospital executives and SEIU leaders acknowledged that negotiations and the ongoing strike led to a "long and challenging process."

"Both sides worked hard throughout negotiations to reach this resolution, and we are grateful for the assistance of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service," wrote the union and hospital leaders in their joint statement.

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