



Santa Clara County Chapter

2026 Contract Extension Agreement - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Revised: April 9, 2026

When does our current union contract expire?

Our current union contract with Santa Clara County expires on June 21, 2026.

What did County management recently communicate?

County management recently contacted our union to express interest in discussing a possible contract extension. As part of this outreach, they cited economic concerns related to HR.1 funding cuts and revenue uncertainties.

Has our SEIU 521 elected bargaining committee agreed to extend the contract?

The bargaining committee met with the County on March 30 and April 1 to discuss what a contract extension could look like. As of April 2, 2026, our union **reached a mutual understanding** with the County on an agreement for a contract extension framework that reflects the key priorities of our members: protect our pension and safeguard our healthcare. This mutual agreement is subject to approval by our SEIU 521 membership and the Board of Supervisors.

Our SEIU 521 - Santa Clara County Bargaining Committee unanimously voted to recommend a yes vote on the extension.

What does a contract extension mean?

All terms in our union contract (MOA, August 14, 2023 - June 21, 2026) shall remain status quo and continue during the term of the extension under the same conditions.

This means:

- Current wages (e.g. step increases, tuition reimbursement, education fund, reclassification)
- Benefits (retirement and health care), and working conditions stay the same
- Departmental Agreements currently in effect shall remain status quo
- All existing rights and obligations remain unchanged
- No modifications would be made to the agreement

How long would a contract extension be?

The contract (MOA) shall be extended through June 20, 2027.

The County originally proposed a two-year extension. Our SEIU 521 negotiating committee proposed a one-year extension instead to ensure we have an opportunity to revisit negotiations in 2027 if we have improved economic conditions.

Why didn't we extend for two years?

Our negotiating committee preferred a one-year extension as it gives more flexibility and allows us to reassess and come back to the table with the County if we have improved economic conditions.

What if another union receives raises while we accept an extension?

Our union secured a "me too" clause, which ensures that if any employee groups receive wage increases or any other compensation, SEIU 521 members would receive the same adjustment.

The "me too" clause would apply to any new County proposals made after March 30, 2026. This would not include the current negotiations that the County is in with the Building Trades Council (BTC) for approximately 100 workers in the hospital system. The County sees this as the last contract from the last bargaining cycle and they have stated that moving forward into negotiations with all other unions in this new cycle, they will be offering no increases.

If we have a side letter that expires at the same time as the contract, would it stay in place?

We negotiated to maintain certain side letters that benefit our members and allow others to expire that do not benefit our members.

What does a one-time Lump Sum payment mean and who does it apply to:

Upon member ratification of the extension term:

- a. The County shall make a one-time lump sum payment of \$1,000 to each SEIU 521-represented employee who is employed by the County in a coded (non-extra help) position and in paid status in pay period 26/15.
- b. For part-time employees, the amount per employee will be prorated based on Full Time Equivalent ("FTE") status (e.g., half-code or 0.5 FTE employees shall be paid half the aforementioned amount) based on status in pay period 26/15.
- c. Extra help/per-diem employees who worked 40 hours or more in pay period 26/15 shall receive a one-time lump sum payment, and that payment shall be \$500.
- d. The one-time, lump sum payment shall be paid to each employee in pay period 26/17 (payable on August 21, 2026). This payment will be less than all applicable withholdings. The lump sum amount is not reportable as compensation earnable/pensionable compensation to CalPERS, and shall not be included in the FLSA regular rate of pay for any period.

Who decides if the one-year contract extension happens?

Members decide. Nothing can take effect without a ratification vote of the membership, and final approval by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

If we extend for a year, won't the political situation still be the same?

Bargaining in April 2027 would occur after the November 2026 midterm and California Gubernatorial election, which may change the political makeup of the State and/or Congress and could affect federal funding and economic conditions that impact the County.

What is the worst possible scenario if members vote NO and REJECT the one year extension? We would proceed with full negotiations under challenging economic conditions, the County will attempt to:

- Offer no wage increases

- Propose healthcare and other benefit takeaways
- Use budget uncertainty as leverage

Santa Clara County members will need to be prepared to strike.

Have we ever agreed to an extension before?

Yes. In 2009, our union bargaining committee believed that a two-year extension was the best way to protect healthcare and benefits given the impacts of the 2008 financial crisis. The 2009 extension included no raises, but included a “me too” clause where SEIU 521 workers would receive any salary increase or compensation given to any other bargaining units during the course of the extension.

Does this change our contract campaign preparations?

No. We now have one year to prepare for negotiations in 2027. Member participation and unity will determine the strength of our campaign.

Activating your membership is the most important step you can take today to help build our power at the negotiations table: www.seiu521.org/membership

When will the ratification vote take place?

The ratification vote dates will be announced soon, and the vote will be conducted electronically similar to the recent Bargaining Committee Election. Only active members are eligible to cast a vote. If you are not an active member, [sign up here today](#).

How can I obtain more information about the terms of the extension?

Attend an info session at a worksite near you. [Click here to view the informational roadshow tour schedule.](#)