



Press Release

Southern Region • 568 State Route 52 • Beacon, NY 12508
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Workers at Storm King Art Center enthusiastically approve first contracts

MOUNTAINVILLE – Workers in two CSEA union bargaining units at Storm King Art Center are celebrating the approval of their first contracts, the latest in a wave of victories for cultural workers who’ve recognized that unionizing is the best way to secure better wages and benefits along with a voice on the job.

Both workers and the SKAC Board of Trustees approved the two contracts in July following roughly eight months of negotiations.

The first CSEA bargaining unit (CSEA Local 720 – Unit A) formed last spring represents the majority of full-time SKAC employees and several part-time workers. The second unit (CSEA Local 720 – Unit VS), which management voluntarily recognized not long after the first unit organized, consists of workers from SKAC’s Visitor Services Department.

“During contract negotiations, workers maintained the same solidarity they showed when they were organizing their union, and they now have two strong contracts to show for it,” said CSEA Southern Region President Anthony Adamo. “We hope that workers in other cultural institutions can look to the CSEA members at Storm King Art Center as proof that there is power in a union and there is no substitute for the stability that comes with a union contract.”

CSEA – the Civil Service Employees Association – is one of New York’s top unions and is the largest affiliate of AFSCME (the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees). AFSCME represents over 35,000 unionized cultural workers across the country and continues to organize new workplaces as part of its Cultural Workers United movement. Workers at SKAC first connected with CSEA in late 2022 when they reached out to Cultural Workers United looking to form their union. Regulations from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) necessitated the separate bargaining unit for Visitor Services workers, but CSEA members at SKAC stand united.

“We see this first contract as a foundation we can build upon now that we have our union and the voice on the job that comes with it,” said Maureen Spaulding, a negotiating committee member from CSEA Local 720 – Unit A who works in SKAC’s Development Department. “Right away, we’re all benefiting from an immediate wage increase following our contract vote. Having that contract gives us a written guarantee for our wage increases, health insurance costs, and other benefits for the next several years. Before we organized our union, there were no guarantees year to year.”

“A lot of work went into this process, starting from the ground up,” said Bam Bowen, a negotiating committee member from CSEA Local 720 – Unit VS who works as a team lead in that department. “From organizing staff to getting cards signed, every step was a collective effort. We sat at the negotiating table, stood up for each other, and persevered together. I am so proud to work with these incredible folks and am proud of all we have achieved. We now have a collective voice and a seat at the table.”



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Both contracts contain economic gains for workers that more fairly compensate SKAC's diverse staff for their education, experience and expertise. Non-economic strides were also significant, with the new contracts codifying some existing practices as well as implementing due process procedures and 'just cause' employment (versus 'at-will').

Between both bargaining units, there are approximately 75 CSEA-represented jobs in different departments including the administrative offices, Gift Shop, Facilities and Conservation, Education and Visitor Services.

The wage increases in the contract showcase the union difference:

- The average hourly wage for workers at SKAC before organizing was \$18.28 per hour.
- The average hourly wage for workers after announcing their intent to organize their union was increased to \$20.16 per hour.
- The average hourly wage for CSEA-represented workers at SKAC in the first year of their collective bargaining agreements is \$23.31 per hour.
- The average hourly wage for CSEA-represented workers by 2027 will be \$25.17 per hour.

Other gains benefiting both bargaining units include a guaranteed employer contribution to workers' 403(b) accounts, minimum call-in pay (four hours for on-site call ins and one hour for remote work), cancellation pay for shifts canceled with less than 24 hours' notice, pay for out of title work, and the addition of two days of paid time off.

Unit A's contract runs through July 31, 2027 and Unit VS's agreement ends July 31, 2028. Members of CSEA Local 720 now have access to the vast resources offered by being part of CSEA and AFSCME, including an assigned Labor Relations Specialist to assist members and on-site union leadership, a strong Occupational Safety and Health Department, an in-house Legal Department, and a robust Member Benefits Department offering programs available in addition to contractually negotiated benefits.

About CSEA:

The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) is one of the largest and most influential unions in New York and the United States. CSEA has about 300,000 members and represents state, county, municipal, school district, child care, and private sector employees. Formed in 1910, CSEA has improved the lives of hardworking New Yorkers for more than 100 years, and is the largest affiliate of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). For more information, go to CSEANY.org.

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