

CWA/AT&T - Wireline COVID Vaccination Bargaining Update #9 - Final Report

Brothers & Sisters,

On August 26, 2021, AT&T informed the Communications Workers of America (CWA) that it intended to implement a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy requiring all Wireline employees represented by CWA in Districts 3, 4, 6, 9 & CWA T&T, be vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment. Utilizing the Union's legal authority, in an effort to prevent the Company's proposed mandate, and to provide additional protections for our members, CWA demanded that AT&T bargain over their decision to implement the policy.

CWA's National Bargaining Committee entered into negotiations with AT&T. Throughout the course of these discussions, the Union held firmly to our position against vaccinations being a mandatory requirement as a condition of employment. AT&T was just as adamant that the Company would not agree to any proposal that did not include a mandate. As a result, the parties were unable to come to terms on an agreement and reached an impasse in "Decisional Bargaining."

CWA then utilized the full extent of authority under federal labor law governing the bargaining process and impasse, by immediately demanding that the Company enter into "Effects Bargaining" with the Union. Our National Bargaining Committee commenced negotiations with the Company over the terms of their proposed policy, its implementation, and its effects in the workplace. During the course of these negotiations both parties have affirmed their unwillingness to move off their respective positions relative to the issue of mandatory vaccinations as a condition of employment.

As it stands today, the Company has presented the Union a "last, best, and final offer," which incorporated certain modifications to their proposed policy, based on CWA's bargaining demands. The deadline for the Company's vaccination requirement has now been pushed back from January 1, 2022, to February 1, 2022. The Company will provide employees who are not vaccinated by February 1, 2022, with a 60-day unpaid reconsideration period. Any employee who is discharged by the Company for violating their policy will be marked as rehireable. Additionally, the Company's policy will provide a process for employees to request an exemption from the vaccination requirement for both religious and/or medical reasons. However, because AT&T's last, best, and final offer still included mandatory vaccinations as a condition of employment, the CWA Bargaining Committee rejected their proposal. As a result, the parties have now reached a second impasse.

Under federal labor law, a Union and a company are required to bargain until they reach agreement or until they reach impasse. If an impasse is reached, a Company is, by law, entitled to implement its final proposal as long as it is bargained with the Union. To summarize these negotiations, because CWA would not agree to the Company's insistence on a COVID-19 vaccine mandate, the parties inevitably reached an impasse and the company intends to invoke their legal right under federal labor law, to implement their COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

In Unity,

Your CWA Bargaining Committee

District 3: Nick Hawkins, Assistant to the Vice-President

District 4: Curt Hess, Assistant to the Vice-President

District 6: Mark Franken, Administrative Director

District 9: Domonique Thomas, Assistant to the Vice-President

CWA T&T Office: Ken Saether, Assistant to the Vice-President