

What's fact & what's fiction?

Some union claims are
FICTION. It is essential to
know the **FACTS**.

Get them here



See your store leader for a hard copy of this flier.

MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS

Fact or Fiction

You may have heard or read things online, in the media, or in materials from union representatives saying things about New Seasons, what we stand for, what we believe in, and how we treat our staff.

We know how much you value honest, transparent communications, so we're working to make sure you have accurate, complete information, whether it's about how to do your job, what you need to know about your compensation and benefits, or what's going on in the company as a whole.

With that in mind, **here's a look at some of what's being said about New Seasons, and whether it is fact or fiction** – in other words, how it stacks up next to the truth.



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Fact or Fiction?

"The company is intentionally understaffing its stores and profiting further from doing that." This claim is Fiction.

Fact: Short-staffing negatively impacts the entire business, including sales, the customer experience, store conditions, and most importantly our staff experience.

We have made every effort to fill all open jobs as quickly as possible, including:

- ✓ Holding in-person and virtual job fairs.
- ✓ Increasing advertising of job openings in new ways, such as boosting job ads and job fairs via paid social media.
- ✓ Using temporary and other third-party staffing services.
- ✓ Offering hiring bonuses.
- ✓ Re-engineering much of the hiring process, including how jobs are posted, candidates are screened, interviews are scheduled and offers processed. This has sped up hiring and increased the number of applicants making it to the offer stage.

Our efforts have been working. We have filled 162 jobs in the past month, and our total open jobs has dropped from over 300 in May to less than 190 today. It's also worth noting that our annualized turnover rate for 2022 15% lower than the grocery industry pre-pandemic average

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Fact or Fiction?

"A union can guarantee higher wages and better benefits for staff members."

This claim is Fiction.

Fact: A union cannot guarantee it will get you higher wages or benefits.

New Seasons already offers a comprehensive wage and benefits package, **which outpaces those offered by other grocers in the area**, including those with a union. **The wages we pay are in-line with the MIT living wage, and we prioritize keeping employee benefit costs affordable.** We're one of the only grocers to pay bonuses to hourly staff.

Wages:

- ✓ We provide an **industry-leading starting wage plus twice-annual wage increases.**
- ✓ **In late 2021, we invested over \$8.6 million in increased pay and benefits – one of our largest ever investments.**
- ✓ **Since then, staff have received an additional \$.40 per hour raise and will receive another this October.**
- ✓ Since 2021, we have paid more than \$1.5 million in **"Heartbeat" bonuses.**

Benefits:

- ✓ **Flexible paid time off policy and lifestyle scheduling; 401(k) with matching contribution.**
- ✓ **Healthcare benefits to almost all staff because of our generous eligibility – 96% of staff are eligible.***
- ✓ **Blue Slip program – we know of no other grocer who provides this benefit.**
- ✓ **30% staff discount – as high or higher than any other grocer; the average discount is \$150 per month; so far this year, New Seasons staff have received more than \$2.35M in discounts.**
- ✓ **We now pay 72% of the cost for our excellent medical, dental and prescription benefits. Since 2018, New Seasons' cost for this coverage has increased by 59% while staff cost has only increased by 18%.*****
- ✓ **Generous healthcare coverage** for both part- and full-time staff includes the following:
 - **Gender confirmation benefit**
 - **Chiropractic care, massage, acupuncture, and naturopathic services (services not frequently covered)**

*According to the most recent data available (2021) from the Food Industry Association (FMI), the average grocer with between 11 and 100 stores makes healthcare coverage available to only 60% of employees.

NEW SEASONS
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**According to 2022 FMI data, grocers with between 11 and 100 stores on average cover only 58% of employee healthcare premium costs.
***According to 2022 FMI data, grocers with between 11 and 100 stores on average spend 2.2% of sales on healthcare. New Seasons spends 4.1% of sales on healthcare.

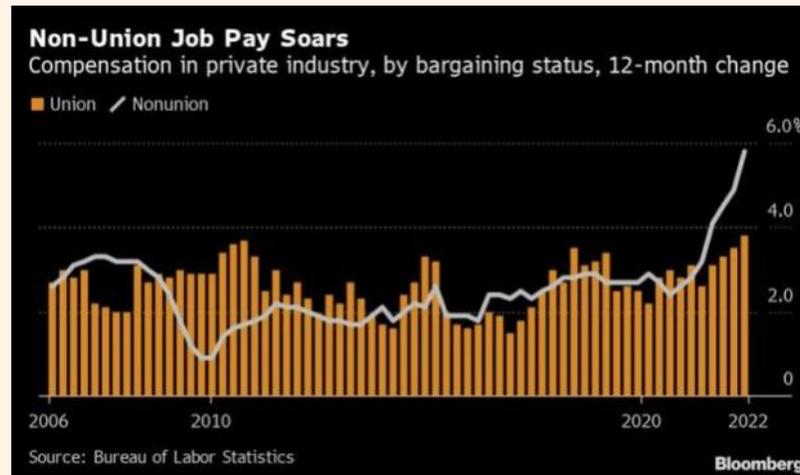
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Fact or Fiction?

"Wages will increase with a union contract." Or, "A union will guarantee a competitive wage." These claims are Fiction.

Fact: There is no guarantee that wages will increase with a union contract. According to a July 2022 **Bloomberg Law** [article](#), "US Union Jobs Are Taking Back Seat to Non-Union in Pay." One reason non-union job pay may be outpacing union job pay, is that unions typically operate under multi-year contracts, which may limit an employer's ability to quickly increase pay while a contract is in place.

From the article: "Over the past year, **compensation for workers with non-union jobs is rising more than for those represented by a union.** Overall, total wage and benefit costs for private-industry firms increased 5.5% in the year ended in June but pay was stronger for workers not represented by a union. Wages and salaries for non-union workers rose 6%, the most in data back to the early 2000s, compared to 3.4% for those in unions."



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Fact or Fiction?

"Wage increases at NSM have not kept up with inflation." These claims are Fiction.

Fact: New Seasons' wages are keeping up with inflation. Here is how we do it and below are some statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that show where we stand.

- To help ensure wages keep up with inflation, **New Seasons provides most hourly staff set increases of \$.40 twice per year.**
- In addition to this, **we conduct thorough market and equity compensation analyses every other year** to verify we are keeping pace with inflation and market pay rates.
- Over the past eight years, to ensure pay is aligned with the market and inflation, and that compensation is fair and equitable, **New Seasons has made three large investments in raising the starting wages and adjusted the wages of other hourly staff.** In each of these instances, New Seasons made the pay increases quickly, once our analysis showed that adjustments were needed.

By contrast, an average union contract may be anywhere from 1 to 3 years, possibly locking in certain terms related to wages and benefits for the duration of the contract.

How Our Wage Increases Compare with Inflation

In October 2021, we raised our starting wage to \$16.25/hour and adjusted tenured staff to address the impact of wage compression. **Our August store average hourly rate was \$20.39.** The chart here shows the % increase in average hourly wage for staff members from 2021-2022. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that **prices in the Pacific Region, including in Portland and Seattle, were up 7.6% in August 2022 vs. a year ago. So, if you were employed in 2021 and 2022, your wage increase exceeded inflation for our region.**

Role	Compensation Band	Same Employee Year-Over-Year Increase
Clerks	OR 01	10.48%
Clerks to Leads	OR 02	10.78%
Dep. Lead; Small Dept. Asst.	OR 03	11.14%
Small Dept. Mgr.; Big Dept. Asst.	OR 04	8.24%
Small Dept. Mgr.; Big Dept. Asst.	OR 05	10.56%

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Fact or Fiction?

“Union dues and initiation fees are minimal.” This claim is Fiction.

Fact: Dues and initiation fees could be significant. Union dues are often necessary to cover administrative, legal, and operational expenses, such as a strike fund (money used to pay workers while on strike), union offices, lawyers, or employees to represent staff. NSLU at Seven Corners has stated they will likely need money for a lawyer.

Should the union win the vote, you will be bound to any contract agreed upon with the union, which will likely include mandatory, after-tax deductions for union dues and/or fees from each paycheck.

As an example, for the period covering July 2020 to June 2021, UFCW Local 555 reported to the U.S. Department of Labor the following rates of regular dues/fees and initiation fees, which UFCW Local 555 represented employees had to pay:*

Rates of Dues and Fees	
Dues/Fees	Amount
Regular Dues/Fees Per Month	\$37.00 - \$76.00
Initiation Fees	\$22.00 - \$300.00

Note: NSLU has not disclosed their dues and initiation fees, to our knowledge. **We encourage staff to ask what the dues and initiation fees will be before making a decision.** The reply so far of, "We will decide together what they will be" not only leaves one of the biggest, most important questions unanswered, but the **dues could actually end up costing an individual staff member hundreds to a thousand dollars per year after-tax.** The UFCW has hundreds of thousands of members to cover their operating expenses.

*: <https://olmsapps.dol.gov/query/orgReport.do?rptId=782567&rptForm=LM2Form>

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Fact or Fiction?

“Staff do not have a “Seat at the Table.” Or, “When workers bring up their concerns, management goes on “autopilot.” This claim is Fiction.”

Fact. Every voice matters at New Seasons – that’s not just lip service, it’s a core value. Listening to our staff, fostering respectful conversations, and creating an atmosphere where ideas can thrive is at the heart of what we do. **Over the years, our policy, program and benefit improvements have often come from staff using the many ways they can Speak Up and make great suggestions.**

How you can be heard:

Following are all the ways we solicit direct staff input:

- Our Speak Up forum on The Pantry
- Our regular Speak Up staff satisfaction surveys
- Our DEI Advisory and Values Teams
- Coffee talks with Nancy and other leadership staff
- Store working groups
- Our open-door policy that encourages anyone, at any time, to speak to someone in their direct reporting line or any member of senior leadership
- Our anonymous hotline for any concerns about ethics or company practices

How we've listened:

The following programs and policy changes were implemented based on staff input:

- The Community Loan Fund
- Paid Parental Leave
- Lend a Hand
- GO Box
- Bag it Forward
- Childcare Tuition & Extended Parental Leave for all part-time staff
- Removal of the 5-day cap for taking off pre-planned shifts without the use of PTO

The reality is that **union membership could limit the ways in which staff can engage directly with management about terms and conditions of employment.** Any changes to things like pay, benefits or working conditions, would need to be addressed through a union representative rather than directly between a staff member and their manager.

And **once a union contract is agreed upon, the terms are generally locked in for the entire duration of the contract.** For example, a [recent agreement](#) negotiated by UFCW Local 555 for grocery store workers in Oregon and SW Washington has a term of three years.