



June 27, 2019

Dear Friends:

It was just a year ago that many were predicting the demise of labor unions following the U.S. Supreme Court's *Janus vs AFSCME* decision. Today, MAPE is stronger than ever with a record number of members.

This is MAPE's 20th contract. We received a record number of proposal ideas from members this year: more than 5,000 participated in our negotiations survey, 2,500 in over 130 worksites participated in listening sessions across the state and more than 1,000 electronic messages were sent to the union. More than 400 members participated in the opening negotiations rally on April 4 and over 150 of you showed up for our Push Week rally last week.

Your thousands of ideas enabled us to group our proposals under five themes, all designed for the recruitment and retention of talented, highly-qualified state employees:

- Economics: Wages and Healthcare
- Workforce Development
- Work-Life Balance
- Healthy Workplace and
- Equity and Inclusion.

We were transparent throughout the process and updated you regularly in real time through more stories on MAPE's website, social media channels and even live videos. Negotiators from MAPE and Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) heard more than a dozen members share their stories about why specific proposals were needed to retain and recruit quality employees.

On June 21, MAPE's Board of Directors unanimously approved a 2019-2021 contract tentative agreement and urged members to ratify the agreement. MAPE's Negotiations Committee bargained for higher wages, made necessary changes to keep SEGIP one of the best health plans on the market with minimal monthly insurance premium increases, student loan payment reimbursement, phased-retirement, guaranteed removal of letters of expectation from employee files and other items.

Some of the highlights of the tentative agreement include:

Economics

Wages

The proposed contract included general wage increases in both years: 2.25 percent effective July 1, 2019, and 2.50 percent effective July 1, 2020. Step increases apply both years for eligible employees (step increases average 3.55 percent in the MAPE contract).

The second-year wage increase will be given to all employees including those employees whose rates of pay exceed the maximum rate for their class.

Health Insurance

Health care costs continue to escalate nationwide and Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) negotiators tried to force \$122 million in additional costs on employees. Union negotiators were able to hold the line at \$23.5 million [\$8 million is MAPE's share] in increases while securing improvements in our dental plan and development of a new vision plan. The remaining \$98.5 million in costs will be paid for by the employer.

Monthly premiums will increase for singles by \$2.60 in 2020 and \$2.80 in 2021, and families will pay an additional \$17.73 in 2020 and \$19.14 in 2021.

MAPE was one of a handful of unions in the country two years ago to negotiate no increases in members' out-of-pocket costs and co-pays for office visits and prescriptions. The 2019-2021 contract includes market value increases in these services.

The dental plan will now include a lifetime orthodontia benefits increase from \$2,400 to \$3,000, preventative dental services will no longer apply to a person's \$2,000 annual maximum dental benefit, and employees will now have coverage for repairs on a tooth that has previously been repaired without waiting two years. Employees with family coverage will pay an additional \$1.66 monthly premium in 2020.

MMB has agreed to work with labor to create a vision plan that employees may purchase. The process is not expected to be completed when the 2020 insurance year begins on Jan. 1, so the anticipated start of the optical insurance is Jan. 1, 2021.

Workforce Development

Student Loan Payment Reimbursement

A new letter has been included in the contract allowing agencies the option of offering student loan payment reimbursement not to exceed \$5,000 per calendar year of \$25,000 over five years. Participating employees will be required to have been employed for 18 months and remain employed for one year after receiving a reimbursement payment.

Career Mapping

Throughout a discussion on employee career paths and recognizing the need for

professional development, the employer has agreed to simplify its classification system by providing more up-to-date class specifications, better distinction between classes in a series and continuing dialogue with members to address gaps in clarity and continued improvements. The employer also agreed to encourage agencies to accept employees from different agencies as part of their professional development.

Phased Retirement

MAPE's current phased retirement program has been improved. Agencies may participate by providing notice to MAPE and MMB and is no longer restricted to specific agencies. Phased retirement may now be granted for up to six months instead of three months, without any additional written agreements.

Recruiting Incentives

The employer may offer a recruiting incentive of up to \$5,000 to new employees who accept a hard-to-fill position. The employer may also offer a referral incentive up to \$1,000 to current employees who refer a new employee to a hard-to-fill position. Hard-to-fill positions will be determined by MMB with payments made in installments.

IT Pay Ranges

Additional pay grids for Information Technology Specialists (ITS) positions has been added. There is no new language accompanying the pay scale, but this offers more pay and allows for future flexibility around recruitment and retention in IT.

Work-Life Balance

Sick Leave

The sick leave policy has been amended to allow the use of sick leave for adult children, grandparents, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother or sister and grandchild. It further is expanded to meet the statutory requirements for allowing sick leave use for obtaining assistance or providing assistance for a covered relative for sexual assault, domestic abuse or stalking.

Bereavement Leave

Employees who do not have sufficient accruals to take bereavement leave for covered family members will be allowed to get a credited amount of sick leave, not to exceed 40 hours, to cover their leave. The credited hours would be paid back in subsequent pay periods.

Healthy Workplace

Letters of Expectation

Upon request of an employee, a letter of expectation (LOE), which is not discipline, shall be removed from the employee's personnel file provided that the employee has performed satisfactorily for six months from the date of the LOE.

Guaranteed Loudermill Hearing

Before an employee is suspended or terminated, they have a right to meet with the employer – with union representation – to plead their case. Previously, this right was only guaranteed for terminations; now it is guaranteed for all suspensions.

Equity and Inclusion

Equity Adjustments

MMB is now allowed to make equity adjustments and advance incumbents within a pay range and/or provide a one-time lump sum payment of \$2,500 to an individual at the top of their range who has at least a satisfactory job performance. We expect this to be used only in limited circumstances.

Temporary Unclassified Employees

Employers are required, when practicable, to notify a temporary unclassified employee a minimum of 14 days in advance of their scheduled end of their appointments to what the status of their position will be at the end of their appointment.

Assistive Devices for People with Disabilities

An employee with a disability using an assistive device can attend training paid for by vacation and sick leave accruals.

Tribal Voting

Voting in a tribal election is now included in voting time eligibility. This provides pay for the time it takes an employee to vote in a tribal election.

There are proposals and ideas that didn't make it into this 2019-2021 tentative agreement but that doesn't mean it's the last we'll hear of them. Our work isn't done, and neither is yours. Once the tentative agreement goes into effect, there will be opportunities for all of us to act. All of the Negotiations Committee representatives will be meeting with members in their regions to discuss the tentative agreement and next steps; meeting dates and locations are available here: www.mape.org/2019-2021-contract-info.

Following the regional informational meetings, **electronic voting on the tentative agreement will begin on Aug. 14** and continue through 11:59 p.m. on Aug.26. Only members may vote on the tentative agreement. The MAPE office must receive membership applications by 11:59 p.m. on **Aug. 9 to vote**. You may join online at www.mape.org/join-mape.

We're stronger together. Together, as a union, we build power and better lives. Together we brought paid parental leave and a respectful workplace to state government – making Minnesota a national leader among employers. If we continue to stick together, we can hold off harsh cuts to our agencies and programs that hurt our workers, our families and our communities.

In solidarity,



Lynn Butcher, Co-Chair
Negotiations Committee



Maggie Dreon, Co-Chair
Negotiations Committee