

Starbucks Unionization - 36th and May



Howard Schultz
President and CEO
Starbucks Support Center
Seattle, Washington, United States

Howdy, Howard!

We the Partners at store #14406 on NW 36th and May in Oklahoma City are writing to inform you of our intent to unionize. Our company describes its workers as Partners, which is language we will continue to use. Specifically, we view this decision as the best possible route for us to move forward and grow with Starbucks as a company. At our store, we pride ourselves and our location as one of the most open and welcoming Starbucks in the OKC metro area. Genuinely, we love coming into work, where we make coffee and see many people—customers and Partners alike—whom we consider friends and family. With this decision, we're asking Starbucks to allow us—as baristas working on the floor and in the community—to voice our thoughts and concerns with the company, so we may continue to thrive and do what we do best.

Our location exists a few blocks west from where our city's first LGBT+ pride parade took place in 1988, when residents successfully marched past and outnumbered the Ku Klux Klan. At our store, most of the Partners identify as part of OKC's LGBT+ community, and many of our trans Partners find themselves relying on the trans-inclusive healthcare plans Starbucks offers. For a Partner at Starbucks to become eligible for these benefits, first, they must work at least 160 hours over a two-month period, and, to keep eligibility, they must receive payment for a minimum of 240 hours over a full calendar quarter. Practically, keeping up with these minimums to access benefits becomes impossible for all Partners, not just at our store, but all across the country. Partners should not struggle to qualify for life-saving benefits.

Across the United States, Starbucks reduced hours for workers, even after increasing prices, experiencing a record-breaking number of sales last year, profit growth, and providing a recent—but miniscule—pay increase for tenured Partners. Due to this reduction in hours, many

Partners find themselves working second jobs just to make ends meet, particularly with increasing inflation and rising gas costs. A second job leads to changes in availability, which leads to even more reduction in hours.

In recent weeks, locally, we have witnessed Partners go from 30-38 hours a week to anywhere between five to eight scheduled hours. Nationwide, thousands of Partners— including many here in Oklahoma City— are experiencing extremely close touches with homelessness due to these reductions in hours. Quite soon, the outcomes could become devastating for many Partners and their families, contributing to our city’s housing and homelessness crisis. Recently, we read a New York Times article where, “a large group of investors, representing more than \$1 billion in Starbucks stock” said in a letter to former CEO Kevin Johnson, “we believe that Starbucks’s reputation may be jeopardized due to reporting of aggressive union-busting tactics.” In the article, “Starbucks has denied engaging in anti-union activity,” but local Partners remain concerned about such reporting, particularly regarding the reduction of hours for union supporters. We find such allegations troubling, because we value our reputation and our hard work.

We are stronger working together, which is why we understand the importance of our decision to create a union. With our union we’ll have a voice when it comes to accountability regarding our working conditions and decisions impacting us as workers. Starbucks has always said that they keep a seat empty in corporate meetings to represent the Partners at Starbucks, who are out in their communities and in their stores working as baristas. Current conditions don’t reflect what a true Partnership looks like, and we believe it’s time for Starbucks to fill that empty seat.

In solidarity,

Starbucks Workers United Organizing Committee
3616 N May Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK
Store #14406

Stephanie A.
Ethan C.
Niko M.
Mari N.
Jordan W.
Nash G.
Lea C.

Jaymi T.
Keely O.
Lydia F.
Madisson M.
Neha C.
Kimberlee G.
Wren R.

Lauryn W.
Azuriah G.
Kirby B.
Kori T.

And all others who choose
to remain in anonymity.