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Union victory for NOLA city workers as council ratifies \$15 minimum wage

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New Orleans city workers, Aug. 16, 2021.

On Oct. 7, the New Orleans City Council ratified a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for city workers, effective in January. This will be \$3.81 more than the paltry \$11.19 minimum currently in place.

Because of [sky-rocketing inflation](#), \$15 dollars doesn't go as far as it did even a few months ago. Nevertheless, the raise is a major victory for the working-class movement here, and will be welcomed by city workers struggling to make ends meet.

As [reported in Struggle-La Lucha](#) back in July, the council was forced to move forward when the firefighters' union and allies marched into the chambers on July 1,

right in the middle of a session. When put on the spot, the council members voted unanimously that they would find the money for a raise. Now it's official.

When the firefighters marched into the chambers on that day in July, the council was voting on a resolution to require a \$15-an-hour minimum for city contract workers. This was one year after mostly-Black [contracted sanitation workers had gone on strike](#) in the city, carrying out an unprecedented drive for unionization. At the time, this sent shockwaves through New Orleans' big and small bourgeoisie, with the owners of the garbage-collection company, Metro Services Group, crying to the press. But support for the strike was widespread, and most media coverage was sympathetic.

It should also be noted that in the summer of 2020 — when the sanitation-worker strike was ongoing — thousands of people in the city marched against racist police killings in what was really a country-wide rebellion against white supremacy; the council and mayor were certainly paying attention to these events, as they were embroiled in controversy after New Orleans police used [tear gas against protesters](#) marching across the Mississippi River bridge.

All in all, we can conclude that workers can only get concessions from the capitalists and their governments if we organize for militant fightback.

