

Striking lawyers eye contract

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A tentative agreement was reached early yesterday morning in the bitter 16-week strike of lawyers, paralegals and support staff against the Legal Services for New York City.

About 250 union employees walked off the job April 1 in a dispute over wages and other issues.

Legal Service lawyers annually represent 35,000 poor people who have civil problems with landlords and government agencies. During the strike, no new cases were accepted.

Threat of temps

Earlier this month, Legal Services executive director Dale Johnson threatened to hire "temporary" replacement workers.

Under the tentative two-year contract attorneys will receive an 18% wage increase in the first year and 6½% in the second year. Support staff would get 12% and 5%, according to strike coordinator Scott Sommer.

In addition, the entire staff will receive bonuses in the first week of August, said Legal Service Staff Association spokeswoman Martha Raimon. "This is a triumph for our union and a triumph for the entire labor movement in this country," said Anita Miller, association president.

She said the union leadership was recommending ratification. A vote is scheduled for Monday.

"We defeated their attempt to hire replacement scabs and now we can go back to providing the indigent in this city with quality legal services," she said.

Christopher Lunding, the chairman of Legal Services, said, "I am particularly pleased, that as I understand it, the workers will be returning on Tuesday."

Lunding said he was "looking forward to our ability to commence serving the needs of the poor in their legal matters on a fully staffed basis."

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