OSU's Union Busting Propaganda Page-

Incentive Pay Program Resources

Use these resources to understand the Wexner Medical Center's nursing Incentive Pay (IP) program effective Nov. 15, 2026. For additional questions, please contact your manager.

View IP Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is Ohio State moving forward with an Incentive Pay Program?

A: Our nurses deserve meaningful recognition for stepping forward to meet critical staffing needs. Our patients and community deserve timely access to safe, high-quality care.

Recently we have experienced increasingly difficult staffing conditions, including bed closures, staffing assignments above our targeted ratios and fewer nurses volunteering for additional hours compared with historical trends.

We have worked in good faith to reach an agreement on a new program. Despite those efforts, we remain without an agreement, and the staffing challenges continue.

We believe our responsibility to our nurses, patients, and community requires us to act.

Q: Why isn't Ohio State waiting for the union to agree to the program?

A: We respect the collective bargaining process and have made significant good faith efforts to reach an agreement with OSUNO over a new program.

The absence of an agreement does not eliminate our responsibility to respond to urgent operational and patient care needs.

The staffing challenges we are experiencing are real, measurable, and affect our ability to provide care. After careful consideration, the University has determined that the circumstances warrant immediate action rather than further delay. This decision is about addressing those urgent needs while continuing to respect our nurses and their representation.

Q: What has Ohio State done to reach an agreement?

A: Ohio State began discussions in August on a new program before the previous agreement expired on September 30. To support productive negotiations, we engaged a mediator. However, the OSUNO maintained its "no cuts, no compromises" stance and did not meaningfully engage in discussions regarding potential compromises or alternatives.

Since then, we have continued discussions, renewed our offer of a significant financial proposal, addressed concerns about program utilization, and offered additional transparency through regular reviews of utilization in an existing joint committee.

Our last, best and final offer reflected a substantial investment in our nursing workforce, with incentive compensation at approximately twice the market rate.

Our objective has remained consistent: meaningful additional compensation for nurses who voluntarily help meet staffing needs, supported by a responsible and sustainable program.

Q: If the nurses voted against the proposal, why is Ohio State moving forward?

A: We recognize that OSUNO conducted two votes and that the proposal was not approved through its process.

Ohio State did not determine the voting procedures, notice periods, eligibility rules, or how those votes were administered. Those decisions were made by OSUNO.

We respect the right of nurses to participate in their union's processes and to express their views.

At the same time, we must evaluate the ongoing staffing conditions and our responsibility to the patients and community who depend on us. The decision to move forward is based on those operational and patient care needs—not on disagreement with how individual nurses voted.

Q: Why is the proposed incentive rate $25 per hour instead of the higher amount under the previous program?

A: The previous program expired September 30, as OSUNO and the Medical Center agreed during negotiations in 2025, and there is currently no incentive bonus in place. The proposed $25-per-hour incentive would restore meaningful additional compensation for eligible nurses who volunteer to work extra hours in response to staffing needs. We recognize that this rate is lower than the prior program's incentive rate. We believe $25 per hour strikes a more sustainable balance between recognizing nurses' additional contributions, encouraging extra-hour coverage, and applying resources consistently across the organization. The alternative today is no incentive bonus at all.

Q: Why are IRP nurses being excluded from the new Incentive Pay Program?

A: We appreciate our IRP nurses and the impact they make in patient care. We also understand that flexibility is one of the many reasons a nurse pursues this role. Our IRP nurses receive a higher base pay rate to recognize the flexibility they provide in helping us meet staffing needs. We want to continue to allow that flexibility while also using the Incentive Pay Program to continue to focus on enhancing core staffing to ensure patient and team member safety and to build schedules with that committed scheduling commitment.

We also recognize that some IRP nurses are already working consistent hours. That's why we're providing time for those nurses to consider whether moving into a regular part-time or full-time appointment makes sense for them. IRP nurses will

remain eligible for incentive pay through January 10, 2027, giving them an opportunity to explore their options before the change takes effect.

Both IRP and regularly scheduled nurses are important to meeting the needs of our patients and teams.

Q: How is this program different from the previous one?

A: The new Incentive Pay Program is designed to provide greater flexibility and more consistent opportunities for nurses to earn additional compensation while helping meet critical staffing needs.

While the incentive rate will be $25 per hour going forward, our intent is to make the program available more frequently and consistently when staffing needs arise. By removing previous restrictions, including functional vacancy and 72-hour limitations, nursing leaders will have greater flexibility to offer incentive pay when additional staffing support is needed.

Our goal is to move away from higher incentive rates with more limited utilization toward a more sustainable program that provides nurses with greater opportunities to earn additional compensation, strengthens staffing coverage, and supports reliable patient care.

Q: Is Ohio State implementing the program to undermine the union?

A: No.

This decision is not about union representation, membership, or nurses' individual views regarding collective bargaining.

It is about an urgent need to respond to ongoing staffing challenges.

We recognize OSUNO as the exclusive bargaining representative and respect the rights of our nurses under Ohio law. Our obligation to address patient care needs and our commitment to appropriate labor relations processes are both important.

Q: Why does Ohio State believe immediate action is necessary?

A: Recently, we have experienced bed closures, higher than normal staffing assignments above our targeted ratios, and reduced voluntary extra-hour coverage compared with historical patterns.

These conditions affect our nursing teams, our ability to maintain available patient care capacity, and the communities that rely on Ohio State for care.

We cannot guarantee that incentive pay alone will resolve every staffing challenge. But providing an additional tool to encourage voluntary staffing support is an important and practical step.

Q: Will the new program address nurses' concerns about staffing?

A: We believe it will provide an important additional resource.

The program is intended to encourage nurses to volunteer for additional hours, help managers fill critical staffing needs and support patient access to care.

It is not a substitute for hiring, retention, appropriate staffing plans or long-term workforce investments. Those efforts remain priorities.

Q: Is this program fair to nurses?

A: Yes. We believe moving forward with this program is better for our nurses than allowing continued disagreement to delay much-needed staffing support.

Our intent is to offer incentive pay for all currently posted extra-hour shifts within the eight-week scheduling period, **providing more consistent opportunities for eligible nurses to earn additional compensation.**

This approach recognizes nurses who step forward, strengthens staffing coverage, and supports our responsibility to provide reliable patient care. Taking action now is better than allowing continued delays to leave nurses without any incentive pay.

Q: What happens if OSUNO challenges the decision?

A: Ohio State is prepared to defend its decision and explain the operational circumstances, bargaining efforts, and patient care considerations underlying its necessary action.

Our focus will remain on supporting nurses and maintaining the care our patients and community need.

Q: What is Ohio State’s message to its nurses?

A: We see the extraordinary work you do every day. We recognize the additional pressures our nursing teams have faced, and we appreciate those who continue to step forward to support their colleagues and patients.

You deserve meaningful recognition for that commitment.

Our patients deserve access to the care they need, and our community relies on us to deliver it.

We believe moving forward is the right thing to do for our nurses, our patients, and the community we serve.

Q: How is Ohio State responding to concerns about a staffing crisis?

A: We recognize the serious staffing concerns being raised and share the expectation that our nurses have the resources and support needed to provide high-quality patient care.

Both Ohio State and OSUNO agreed to the September 30 expiration of the previous Incentive Pay Program, and we began discussions on a potential new program before that date. Despite Ohio State's good faith efforts to reach an agreement, staffing conditions have become increasingly concerning.

Ohio State continues to invest in recruitment, retention, and other staffing resources. However, bed closures, increased staffing pressures, and reduced voluntary extra-hour coverage are not conditions we are willing to accept as our standard. **We have a responsibility to address these challenges now rather than allow continued delays to affect our nurses, patients, and community.**

Q: What if I experience pressure or retaliation for picking up incentive-pay shifts?

A: Every nurse should feel comfortable making their own decision about picking up extra shifts without fear of pressure, intimidation or retaliation. If you experience or witness this behavior, please notify your manager, contact Human Resources or submit a report through EthicsPoint. Concerns involving union conduct may also be reported to the State Employment Relations Board (SERB).

Reporting Resources:

- **Ohio State EthicsPoint:** https://www.ohio-state.ethicspoint.com (-> url.usb.m.mimecastprotect.com)
- **State Employment Relations Board (SERB):** https://serb.ohio.gov/explore-board-services/unfair-labor-practices/unfair-labor-practices (-> url.usb.m.mimecastprotect.com)

Q: Why didn't we implement the East Hospital Incentive Pay Program across the medical center?

A: We understand why nurses are asking about the East Hospital program and why they would want the same opportunity. While we continued working in good faith with OSUNO to reach an agreement on a new Incentive Pay Program, we kept the previous program in place at East Hospital. This was always intended to be temporary, with a plan to transition East to the new program in January.

We know nurses have been waiting for a solution, and we didn't want to delay any longer. With the previous program no longer in place across the rest of the medical center, we're moving forward with the new program to provide consistent support, help address staffing needs, and recognize nurses who step up to work extra hours.

Q: Why was an incentive pay program implemented if 97% of members rejected the proposal?

A: OSUNO has reported that 97% of the members who voted in the September vote were not in favor. We have asked OSUNO leadership for voting numbers to verify that information, but we have not been provided any additional information regarding how many bargaining unit nurses actually voted in September or last Friday.

We took action to implement an incentive pay program now because we have recently experienced increasingly difficult staffing conditions, including bed closures, staffing assignments above our targeted ratios and fewer nurses volunteering for additional hours compared with historical trends.

We want to ensure that we can continue to provide our patients with the high-quality, safe care they deserve.

Q: Why aren’t the previous rates being continued through January while we negotiate?

A: The previous incentive pay program expired on Sept. 30 by a mutual agreement that was reached between OSUNO and the medical center as part of the previous bargaining process. Negotiations for the new program concluded without resolution.

We proposed a new IP program, recognizing the limitations for use of the previous program. The new program provides a new incentive pay rate at twice the market rate and allows for greater flexibility and potential increased utilization.

Q: Why are you excluding IRP nurses from this program after Jan. 9?

A: We appreciate our IRP nurses and the impact they make in patient care. We also understand that flexibility is one of the many reasons nurses pursue this role. Our IRP nurses receive a higher base pay rate to recognize the flexibility they provide in helping us meet staffing needs. We want to preserve that flexibility while continuing to use the Incentive Pay Program to strengthen core staffing, ensure patient and team member safety, and build schedules around that commitment.

Q: What's the staffing plan if our staff nurses don't pick up extra hours?

A: We've seen that many nurses across a number of units are already self-selecting to pick up extra shifts since the program was announced on Nov. 12. However, incentive pay remains just one tool in our arsenal. We continue to pursue many recruitment and retention efforts. We have hired over 400 nurses since July, many of whom are currently working through the process of orientation and will be functioning independently soon. While our priority is to build and maintain a sustainable core staffing model, we'll continue to extend traveler contracts as needed to support staffing needs and ensure continuity of patient care.

Q: With this new plan, does that mean all negotiations are over?

A: The medical center entered negotiations for a new plan in good faith. Throughout the process, we exchanged proposals, carefully considered the union's concerns and made significant movement in an effort to reach agreement,

ultimately presenting a last, best and final offer that was twice the market rate for comparable incentive plans.

Unfortunately, OSUNO continued to adhere to its “no cuts, no compromises” position and did not engage in meaningful dialogue regarding potential solutions. Even after reaching an impasse, we hoped there was an opportunity for compromise – which is why we kept our offer open. However, finding common ground is challenging when those efforts are not reciprocated. We remain committed to an open and constructive bargaining process. We are always willing to listen, discuss concerns and work toward solutions, but successful negotiations require engagement from both parties. We are always willing to talk and listen, but we expect that same engagement in return.

Q: How are you responding to the ONA grievance?

A: As with all grievances, we’ll evaluate the union’s concerns and respond consistent with our contractual obligations. We are prepared to defend the actions that were necessary to meet operational needs while fulfilling our responsibilities to our patients, our staff and our community.

Read the IP plan

Incentive Pay Program

Watch IP Nursing Town Halls

Friday, Nov. 13	Thursday, Nov. 12

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