

(Note: The Texas AFL-CIO is passing along this news release at the request of our affiliates in the Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 277.)

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**Nonprofit Workers at International Rescue Committee  
Announce Union in Dallas**

**DALLAS, TX** - Approximately 80 employees at the national nonprofit organization International Rescue Committee (IRC) announced the formation of their union with the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 277.

The employees who provide a broad slate of services to refugees and asylum seekers in the resettlement process presented a letter to the Dallas office Executive Director, Shalaina Abioye on Wednesday requesting that the organization voluntarily recognize their union, IRC Workers Unite.

“An overwhelming majority of us have signed union cards and come forward because, as the staff that provide IRC services on the frontlines, we understand this work the best,” said Zarifa Barkatullah, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Coordinator. “We see this as an opportunity for leadership to partner with us to improve our work and better achieve our vital mission.”

While the Dallas office is the first union formed at IRC in the United States, the IRC London office has already been unionized and several other immigrant rights organizations have organized in recent years such as RAICES, Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project, and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project.

IRC Dallas workers have raised issues of insufficient staffing, unreasonable case loads, low wages, safety concerns and inadequate interpretation support as some of the priorities they will seek to address through the collective bargaining process.

“We work hard at IRC to provide our clients with wrap-around support during the resettlement process,” said Emmy Stolemeyer, a youth services coordinator at IRC. “We do not think it is appropriate that senior leadership is compensated as highly as it is when frontline IRC staff struggle with high caseloads and little pay.”

IRC Workers Unite (OPEIU Local 277) has given IRC Dallas until Sept. 20 at 5 p.m. to respond to their request for voluntary recognition. According to the NLRB’s recent ruling in *Cemex*, IRC Dallas has two weeks to file an RM petition for an election if they choose not to voluntarily recognize their employees’ union.

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*OPEIU Local 277 represents over 10,000 members in the insurance industry, credit unions, aircraft manufacturing clerical and technical, nonprofit organizations and union offices. Local 277 negotiates and services over 35 collective bargaining agreements.*