



## Janitors sign first labor contract

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Cincinnati janitors who clean most of downtown's office buildings have their first labor contract.

The contract between the Service Employees International Union representing about 1,200 janitors and the area's eight largest cleaning companies was signed Saturday. The contract goes into effect in October.

"This is a huge victory for our families and for our neighborhoods," janitor Laressie Tillman said. "We showed what can be done - what must be done - to make Cincinnati a better city to live in."

The janitors had been negotiating with the cleaning companies since March and on July 14 authorized their union to call a strike if a contract could not be worked out.

Since then, the eight companies - ABM, Jancoa, Professional Maintenance of Cincinnati, Aetna Building Maintenance, Scioto Corp, NSG, OneSource and GSF - had been in off-and-on negotiations with the janitors.

The union and the companies began their latest round of negotiations Wednesday, and, after two days of talks, the two sides arrived at a consensus Friday night. The janitors voted to accept the contract Saturday.

The agreement mandates that by 2012, wages will rise from \$6.85 to \$9.80 for janitors, some of whom pocketed as little as \$28 a day. Janitors also will have six paid holidays and, in 2010, will have access to health care for \$20 a month.

"Cincinnati won big today," said janitor Linda Watson, of Price Hill. "I'm proud to say we won a better future for hard-working people in our city."

The janitors also won the right to work more hours, increasing the shifts from four hours an evening to at least seven within 36 months.

The contract is among those that custodial workers nationwide have achieved recently. Unions in both Houston and Miami recently negotiated contracts with cleaning companies. Custodial workers are negotiating for contracts in Indianapolis and Columbus.

