

## Miller releases city's contract offer

Details of a proposed 7.2 per cent wage increase over four years released Friday in high-stakes move to end 19-day strike by Toronto workers

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In a high-stakes move to end a 19-day strike by city workers, Toronto Mayor David Miller has released key details of a proposed contract offer.

The offer includes a proposed wage increase of 7.2 per cent compounded over four years: 1 per cent in 2009, 1 per cent in 2010, 2 per cent in 2011 and 3 per cent in 2012.

“Enough is enough,” said Mr. Miller. “It’s time to say yes to a deal.”

The city said its offer maintains all the same seniority protection for employees that was in the previous collective agreements.

The deal would also scrap the controversial sick leave benefit program, which allows full-time employees to collect, carry over and cash out up to six months of sick pay upon retirement, and replace it with a short-term disability plan.

However, the city has agreed to pay out a portion of the existing sick leave credits to staff. For employees with 10 years or more of service, the average payout would be about \$8,500, the city said. The minimum payout would be \$500 for full-time employees. Part-time workers with CUPE local 79, which represents indoor workers, would be eligible for a payment of up to \$500 based on their hours worked in the previous year.

Details of the new plan were posted at [www.toronto.ca/offer](http://www.toronto.ca/offer).

Mr. Miller’s announcement comes just two days after his employee and labour relations committee gave city negotiators “a little more flexibility,” in the mayor’s words, to cut a deal with locals 79 and 416 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

The mayor's strategy appears designed to go over the head of union leaders to the public and striking workers, some who have expressed concerns recently about the length of the walkout and the union's communication to its members.

“We want our employees back and Torontonians want their services and their city back to normal,” he said.

The union local presidents representing 24,000 workers said they were "disgusted" that the mayor had gone public with the offer, which they rejected as inadequate. They said they would make a counter proposal tonight.

Meanwhile, picketers stepped up the pressure outside the city's 19 temporary garbage dumps, delaying residents for one to two hours at sites like Wishing Well Park and Caledonia Park. CUPE Local 416

president Mark Ferguson said there had been a change of protocols at each site, though he declined to give details.

CUPE Local 79 president Anne Dembinski, who spoke to The Globe and Mail just before Mr. Miller's announcement, said there had been some movement by the city but that there was still much work to be done.

"There was a movement that we haven't seen in a very long time. I would not call it being too flexible, but it's a little movement," she said. " We'll soon know if this is just another ploy on the part of the city or if they're serious about reaching a settlement."

The city and its union locals have been at a virtual negotiating standstill since June 22, when 24,000 workers walked off the job in a legal strike that has left about 400,000 residents without garbage collection and cancelled a range of other services including day care, pools, ferries and permits.

Other details of the city's offer made public Friday:

- The city says it has asked for only two "simple changes" to its benefits package. While employees are covered 100 per cent for prescription drugs, the city wants to limit its payout of the pharmacist dispensing fee to \$9.50. It also wants to change dental recall exams to every nine months instead of six months for adults. -
- For workers who get Remembrance Day off, the city wants to exchange it for Family Day.
- The short-term disability plan would offer employees either 100 per cent or 75 per cent of their salary based on years of service to a maximum of six months per year. There would be no carryovers.