

Take the NTEU Challenge

Get to Know Your NTEU-IRS Contract — Contract Termination —

The Contract Has Been Terminated. Your Rights Have Not.

Many IRS employees have questions about the June 30 termination of the NTEU-IRS national collective bargaining agreement. Why did the contract terminate? What happens to the benefits and protections contained in it? Can employees still file grievances? What are NTEU's next steps?

Test your knowledge of the NTEU contract and how its expiration affects employees by taking this quiz and matching your responses with the answers provided on the next page.

True or False

- _____ 1. Management terminated the NTEU collective bargaining agreement.
- _____ 2. The impact of the contract termination on employees will be limited.
- _____ 3. Management opted to terminate the contract in an effort to increase its chances of taking away benefits from employees.
- _____ 4. Management is trying to take away the employees' right to have NTEU bargain as an equal of management.
- _____ 5. NTEU is ready to defend employees against management's bargaining plans to reduce their benefits.
- _____ 6. Employees have no one to turn to if something happens to them while the contract is terminated.
- _____ 7. Employees can file grievances even though the contract has expired.
- _____ 8. No one knows what will happen next.

Answers:

1. **True.** NTEU asked management on three occasions to extend the contract until the parties finish negotiating a new contract, but IRS refused. However, the law gives either party the right to terminate the agreement on June 30, 2006, and management decided it wanted to do so.
2. **True.** The law provides that all the working rules and benefits established by the contract remain just as enforceable after a contract is terminated as they did before. All employee rights and benefits remain in effect except for a handful of subjects deemed “permissive” subjects. In allowing the contract to expire, the IRS also chose to discontinue the following benefits:
 - Bonuses for IRS instructors who travel more than two weeks at a time.
 - Health insurance benefits for newly-hired seasonal employees.
3. **True.** As a result of the termination, NTEU loses a few benefits. However, the only two you may observe are the right to five days notice of any meeting managers have with their groups and the right to immediately bargain improvements in your alternative work schedules (AWS). Still, management is hoping that even those changes will put so much pressure on NTEU that the union will do almost anything to get a new contract.
4. **True.** NTEU and the IRS have begun negotiations over a new contract and management has insisted that NTEU waive statutory rights that the employees and union have to operate as an equal of management in the bargaining process. If management can achieve this, it will be in a better position to reopen every article and section of the contract as IRS has indicated it wishes to do. It is a very safe bet that management is not planning to totally rewrite the contract to improve your benefits and work conditions.
5. **True.** This past year, NTEU secured millions of dollars in retroactive award payments, won 1,400 priority considerations for IRS employees treated unfairly in promotions, stopped management from closing 68 Taxpayer Assistance Centers and achieved dozens of other accomplishments for you. Most recently, NTEU was successful in convincing more employees than ever to boycott the annual Employee Engagement survey until management starts using the data and holding the few poor managers accountable. NTEU stands ready to stop management from trying to strip your rights and will use our proven expertise wherever the fight takes us—in the courts, on Capitol Hill, in the media or at the bargaining table.
6. **False.** You have 108 local NTEU chapters, more than 2,000 local union representatives or stewards, NTEU national staff in seven cities around the country and thousands of your fellow employees behind you. This is what NTEU brings to employees whether they are individuals targeted for adverse action or a group that stands to lose something. NTEU will use all available tools and resources to protect your interests and rights.
7. **True.** The contract expiration does not affect NTEU’s right to protect employees. Chapters still have the right to file grievances on your behalf.
8. **False.** You will know. NTEU will be e-mailing regular bargaining updates to members and employees are always welcome to ask a local NTEU steward for news on the negotiations.

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