

# Green Bay Starbucks workers latest to seek unionization

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Starbucks workers at a store in Green Bay are seeking to unionize for better hours and working conditions, according to union advocate and barista Aji Rauworth.

In an interview yesterday, Rauworth said workers at the Green Bay location submitted a petition for union representation to the National Labor Relations Board last week, and are now going public with their effort.

“We’ve asked for a spot at the table for a while now,” Rauworth told WisBusiness.com. “We’ve asked and asked, and our voices have been heard but ignored ... They have actively encouraged us not to have a voice in this company. And we are no longer asking for this voice in our company, and in our roles, and we are now demanding it.”

A release from the Chicago & Midwest Regional Joint Board of Workers United shows this would be the fifth Starbucks location to unionize in Wisconsin, following stores in Oak Creek, Madison, Appleton and Plover.

In a statement responding to the unionization push in Green Bay, a Starbucks spokesperson said the Seattle-based coffee chain is “listening and learning from the partners” in stores that are seeking to unionize.

“From the beginning, we’ve been clear in our belief that we are better together as partners, without a union between us, and that conviction has not changed,” the spokesperson said in an email. “We respect our partner’s right to organize and are committed to following the NLRB process.”

Rauworth, one of the leaders of the union effort who has worked at the Green Bay location for the past nine months, said workers are “looking for better, stable hours.” That’s after Starbucks came out with a policy that requires shift leads to be on call without getting paid for it, according to Rauworth, who argued this is “unfair to the baristas and their schedules.” Rauworth also said cafe workers have been working with outdated equipment, making it more difficult for them to do their jobs.

“We’re looking for just, overall, to be treated better by the company,” Rauworth said. “To be viewed as people, instead of just numbers.”

Rauworth said the Green Bay workers were inspired and encouraged by the Appleton store that unionized in June, adding it’s “less scary, less intimidating” to follow the example set by others. Hundreds of Starbucks stores around the country have filed petitions for union elections since August 2021, and dozens have voted to unionize, according to NLRB data.

“They call us partners; this partnership has to go both ways now,” Rauworth said. “So Starbucks Corporation is going to have some pushback, but we’re strong and we’re going to work together to push through.”

See the release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2022/cmryb-workers-united-green-bay-starbucks-workers-are-unionizing>

*-By Alex Moe*