

NYC Apple retail workers want a \$30 minimum wage

Fruit Stand Workers United, the union attempting to organize Apple's Grand Central Terminal store, says that if its drive succeeds it plans on pushing for a \$30 an hour minimum wage for the location's employees (via CNBC). The union updated its website on Monday with its goals, including the wage increase, health and safety research, and better education and retirement benefits.

A \$30 minimum wage means that a full-time employee would start off making roughly \$62,000 a year. The union also wants pay calculated using a "matrix based on role, tenure, and performance."

Fruit Stand Workers United says it also wants to negotiate for increases in vacation time accrual, 401(k) matching rates, and tuition reimbursement as well as more options for retirement, such as pension plans. The union also calls on Apple to "conduct research into security protocols with customer interactions, and research into track dust, health effects from building materials, and noise pollution at Grand Central."

In major cities like New York, there's significant concern around vehicle-related pollutants, such as brake dust and exhaust fumes. And while noise pollution is an issue for almost all New York residents, it appears to be a particular concern for employees of a store located in one of the city's busiest rail terminals.

Fruit Stand Workers United is affiliated with the union behind Starbucks' recent organization

While the site doesn't explicitly mention COVID-19 in the section about health and safety, Apple has made many changes to its store operations throughout the course of the pandemic, both opening and closing its retail locations and instating, removing, and reinstating mask mandates for customers. In Texas, Apple reportedly temporarily closed a store when three workers tested positive shortly after Black Friday.

Last week, Fruit Stand Workers United announced that it started having employees sign cards to say they're interested in joining a union. If over 30 percent of workers at the location sign, Fruit Stand Workers United can officially petition the National Labor Relations Board to hold an election.

The ambitious demands come amid a surge of organizing efforts at both tech and retail companies. Amazon warehouse workers in New York voted to unionize earlier this month, and employees at several Starbucks locations have also voted for worker representation. (According to its site, Fruit Stand Workers United is affiliated with the union behind the efforts at Starbucks.)

In just the past few weeks, contractors for Google Fiber and employees at two Verizon retail locations have also voted to unionize. Verizon announced yesterday that it was raising its minimum wage to \$20 for retail and customer service workers with the caveat that, for retail workers, the \$20 figure is the sum of their salary and "target commission."

<https://www.theverge.com/2022/4/19/23032222/apple-retail-fruit-stand-workers-united-minimum-wage>