

Oregon Health & Science University Associate Vice President, Labor Relations

[Oregon Health & Science University](#) (OHSU) is seeking an Associate Vice President, Labor Relations who will advance labor strategy aligned with the clinical, academic, and research missions of the institution, lead from the bargaining table, develop and coach a growing labor relations team, and guide labor partnership for a workforce where nine unions represent more than 17,000 employees, roughly 75% of OHSU's overall employee population. OHSU is a labor-friendly institution and a continued strong, positive relationship with union partners is essential to the university's continued success and growth.

About OHSU

For more than 130 years, OHSU has been Oregon's only academic health center — the place where healing, teaching and discovery come together to improve health across the state. OHSU provides exceptional patient care at state-of-the-art hospitals and clinics, world-class education and training for tomorrow's physicians, nurses, dentists and health leaders, breakthrough science and research, including clinical trials, to prevent, detect and treat illness, and partnerships and services to improve health in communities across the state and beyond. Today OHSU employs more than 22,500 people, making it one of Portland's and Oregon's largest employers, and operates on an annual budget of roughly \$5.5 billion.

OHSU's footprint spans the Marquam Hill, South Waterfront, and Beaverton campuses, encompassing [OHSU Hospital](#), [Doernbecher Children's Hospital](#), more than 200 community health programs across rural and urban Oregon, and one of the state's two Level 1 trauma centers. The university is in the midst of its largest capital expansion in decades: the [Vista Pavilion](#), a 14-story cancer care facility, opened on Marquam Hill in April 2026, with additional brain and heart care capacity and emergency department expansion following through 2028. This growth reflects an institution investing heavily in its future — and in the people who make that future possible.

OHSU's Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

As part of its multifaceted public mission, OHSU strives for excellence in education, research and scholarship, clinical practice and community service. Through its dynamic interdisciplinary environment, OHSU stimulates the spirit of inquiry, initiative and cooperation among students, faculty and staff.

Setting the example for integrity, compassion and leadership, OHSU strives to:

- Educate tomorrow's health professionals, scientists, engineers and managers in top-tier programs that prepare them for a lifetime of learning, leadership and contribution.
- Explore new basic, clinical and applied research frontiers in health and biomedical sciences, environmental and biomedical engineering and information sciences, and translate these discoveries, wherever possible, into applications in the health and commercial sectors.

- Deliver excellence in health care, emphasizing the creation and implementation of new knowledge and cutting-edge technologies.
- Lead and advocate for programs that improve health for all Oregonians, and extend OHSU's education, research and health care missions through community service, partnerships and outreach.

Vision

Elevate Oregon as the heart of health innovation.

Values

- Compassion — We see the whole person
- Integrity — We do the right thing
- Inclusion — We design so everyone belongs
- Respect — We lead with dignity
- Collaboration — We build together
- Adaptability — We stay curious and adjust intentionally

Position Summary

Roughly three in four OHSU employees, more than 17,000 people, are represented by one of nine collective bargaining units spanning healthcare, research, and public employee unions. Labor relations is not a peripheral human resources (HR) function at OHSU; it is central to how the institution operates, negotiates change, and sustains its clinical, academic, and research missions.

The Associate Vice President (AVP), Labor Relations is OHSU's enterprise executive for labor strategy, collective bargaining, and union partnership across the university. Reporting to the Vice President, HR Business Partners & Employee and Labor Relations, and with a dotted line to the Executive Vice President and Chief People Officer, this role carries executive-level accountability for how OHSU engages with a represented workforce that makes up roughly three-quarters of its total employee population across nine bargaining units.

The AVP will lead a labor relations organization and will set a vision for the structure, hiring and development of its leaders to ensure the team operates as a unified, strategically aligned function.

Beyond internal leadership, the AVP is OHSU's senior voice at the bargaining table and in the C-suite on labor matters — translating institutional priorities into negotiation strategy, advising executive leadership on risk and opportunity, and ensuring that labor strategy is woven into how OHSU plans its workforce, its finances, and its operations. The successful candidate will bring both the gravitas to advise senior executives on high-stakes labor matters and the operational discipline to lead a growing, specialized team through a period of significant organizational change. More than anything, OHSU is looking for someone who leads with a people-first mindset, makes it a priority to build authentic relationships with leadership, and sees strong labor partnership as core to moving OHSU to even greater heights.

Key Responsibilities

Enterprise Labor Relations Strategy & Governance

- Own OHSU's enterprise labor relations strategy, ensuring it aligns with the university's clinical, academic, and research missions and its broader financial and operational priorities
- Build the oversight model, decision rights, and escalation pathways that allow labor relations to function consistently across a complex, multi-mission institution
- Serve as the senior authority translating institutional direction into a coherent labor relations agenda

Collective Bargaining & Negotiations

- Direct collective bargaining strategy and in-person negotiations across OHSU's nine bargaining units, representing roughly 17,000 employees
- Lead or oversee the bargaining table personally for the university's highest-stakes negotiations, and ensure the broader team is equipped to do the same across their assigned portfolios
- Partner with Finance and Compensation on proposal costing and ensure negotiated outcomes protect both institutional sustainability and workforce stability

Contract Administration & Interpretation

- Ensure consistent, compliant interpretation and administration of collective bargaining agreements and labor-related policy across every mission area of the university
- Establish standards that allow the labor relations team to apply contract provisions accurately and consistently, regardless of which union or unit is involved

Arbitration & Dispute Resolution

- Provide executive oversight of arbitration and grievance strategy, personally engaging in the most complex or highest-risk cases
- Represent OHSU in arbitration and mediation proceedings as needed and build proactive risk-identification practices that reduce the volume and severity of disputes over time

Executive Advising & Stakeholder Influence

- Act as OHSU's go-to executive resource for senior leaders, deans, and operational leaders on labor and union-related matters, particularly where decisions carry institutional risk or touch multiple bargaining units
- Translate complex labor dynamics into clear guidance that supports sound, timely leadership decisions

Organizational Design & Team Leadership

- Design, staff, and lead a labor relations organization built around union-specific expertise
- Recruit and develop the team, establish labor relations competencies, workflows, and professional development frameworks for the team and build the bench strength needed for long-term succession

Change Management & Capability Building

- Lead communication and change management for labor agreements, policy shifts, and workforce transitions, ensuring leaders across the university understand their obligations and options under active contracts
- Build durable tools, training, and frameworks that raise every manager's ability to lead effectively in a unionized environment

Integration with Broader HR Strategy

- Partner with HR Business Partners, Employee Relations, Total Rewards, and Workforce Planning to ensure labor strategy is not siloed — that it actively informs and is informed by organizational design, compensation strategy, and employee engagement efforts across OHSU
- Provide escalation support to HR Business Partners and Employee Relations on complex disciplinary matters involving represented employees, ensuring performance management and discipline decisions hold up against active contract language

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB)

- Advance DEIB outcomes within the labor relations function and in how labor strategy is executed — through hiring, development, promotion, and the equitable application of contract provisions

What Success Looks Like

Within the first year, the AVP will have stood up the new labor relations structure, built credibility at the bargaining table across OHSU's major unions, and established a clear, trusted advisory relationship with executive leadership. Longer term, success means a labor relations function that operates as a strategic partner to the institution — anticipating risk, enabling change, and sustaining constructive relationships with union partners even through difficult negotiations.

Qualifications

Core Competencies

As with every OHSU employee, the AVP is expected to embody the university's core competencies in how the role is carried out, including:

- Inclusion, Collaboration and Teamwork — Every person matters. OHSU benefits from the rich variety of ideas, skills, and perspectives that emerge through collaboration. The AVP fosters a climate of inclusion and respect that allows the labor relations function to partner effectively across the university.
- Organizational Perspective — Everyone at OHSU is connected by a common purpose. The AVP understands how labor relations decisions ripple across clinical, academic, research, and administrative work, and aligns the function's priorities with the best interests of the institution as a whole.

- Performance Results — The AVP holds the labor relations function to high standards focused on outcomes, gives and receives feedback openly, and continually improves the team's work by setting goals, measuring results, and building capability
- Personal Effectiveness — The AVP brings integrity, sound judgment, and calm resolve to high-stakes labor situations, adapting quickly to change and remaining accountable to OHSU's mission even when circumstances are difficult

Education

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Labor Relations, Business Administration, Law, Public Administration, or a related field is required. Master's degree (MBA, MHA, MS in HR) or JD is strongly preferred.

Experience

- 12–15-plus years of progressive labor relations experience, including significant time in a senior leadership capacity
- Demonstrated success leading collective bargaining across multiple unions or bargaining units simultaneously
- Track record of building or substantially reshaping a labor relations function or team
- Direct experience advising C-suite executives and/or governing boards on complex labor matters
- Experience in a large, unionized academic medical center, healthcare system, or comparably complex, highly regulated environment is strongly preferred

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Advanced knowledge of labor law, collective bargaining statutes, and grievance/arbitration processes
- Proven negotiation, mediation, and conflict-resolution skills at the executive level
- Ability to translate labor strategy into workforce planning, organizational design, and total rewards decisions
- Strong executive presence and communication skills, with the ability to influence stakeholders across clinical, academic, research, and administrative domains
- Data-driven approach to labor analytics and risk assessment
- Demonstrated ability to lead, coach, and develop specialized technical teams

Working Conditions

This role requires regular onsite presence across OHSU locations and the ability to respond in person to critical events at any OHSU site within four hours. Work is generally performed during standard business hours; however, extended and non-traditional hours should be expected during active negotiations and time-sensitive labor matters. The AVP will maintain a visible, in-person presence at the bargaining table and across OHSU worksites to stay connected to workplace climate and workforce trends.

Why OHSU?

OHSU offers what few labor relations leaders get the chance to build: a mandate to reshape a function at enterprise scale, inside an institution investing in its own growth. With a \$5.5 billion operating budget, a hospital expansion underway, and a workforce where union partnership touches nearly every corner of operations, this is a role with real stakes and real visibility — the chance to shape how one of Oregon's largest and most mission-driven employers works with the people who deliver its care, teaching, and research.

To Apply

OHSU has engaged [Opus Partners](#) to support this search. [Katie Dean](#), Senior Partner, [Kenna Boyd](#), Partner, and [Thomas Lapierre](#), Senior Associate, are leading the search, which will remain confidential until the final stage of campus visits. For additional information, to nominate qualified candidates, or to apply, please contact Thomas at thomas.lapierre@opuspartners.net.

To be considered by OHSU's search committee, candidates must provide a resume and a letter of introduction that addresses the specific responsibilities, expectations, and qualifications described above. Please consult Opus Partners for more information about the application process.

OHSU welcomes people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, national origins, religions and sexual orientations. OHSU is striving to build an anti-racist, multicultural institution and encourage people with diverse backgrounds to apply.

To request reasonable accommodation, contact askhr@ohsu.edu.