

**COURT APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND HEARING DATE FOR FINAL COURT
APPROVAL**

*Michael A. Haser v. Universal Chain of California, Inc.,
Case Nos. 34-2022-00332268 and 23CV006331*

***The Superior Court for the State of California authorized this Notice. Read it carefully!
It's not junk mail, spam, an advertisement, or solicitation by a lawyer. You are not being sued.***

You may be eligible to receive money from an employee class action and an employee representative action lawsuit (together, the “Action”) against Universal Chain of California, Inc. (abbreviate name; “UCC” is used herein as a placeholder) for alleged wage and hour violations. The Action was filed by a former UCC employee Michael A. Haser (“Plaintiff”) and seeks payment of (1) back wages and other relief for a class of hourly-paid or non-exempt employees (“Class Members”) who worked for UCC during the Class Period (December 30, 2018 to September 30, 2023); and (2) penalties under the California Private Attorney General Act (“PAGA”) for all employees who worked for UCC during the PAGA Period (December 30, 2021 to September 30, 2023) (“Aggrieved Employees”).

The proposed Settlement has two main parts: (1) a Class Settlement requiring UCC to fund Individual Class Payments, and (2) a PAGA Settlement requiring UCC to fund Individual PAGA Payments and pay penalties to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”).

Based on UCC’s records, and the Parties’ current assumptions, **your Individual Class Payment is estimated to be \$<<MERGED_ClassAward>> (less withholding) and your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be \$<<MERGED_PAGAAward>>.** The actual amount you may receive likely will be different and will depend on a number of factors. (If no amount is stated for your Individual PAGA Payment, then according to UCC’s records you are not eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment under the Settlement because you didn’t work during the PAGA Period.)

The above estimates are based on UCC’s records showing that **you worked <<MERGED_ClassWW>> workweeks** during the Class Period and **you worked <<MERGED_PAGAPP>> pay periods** during the PAGA Period. If you believe that you worked more workweeks during either period, you can submit a challenge by the deadline date. See Section 4 of this Notice.

The Court has already preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement and approved this Notice. The Court has not yet decided whether to grant final approval. Your legal rights are affected whether you act or not act. Read this Notice carefully. You will be deemed to have carefully read and understood it. At the Final Approval Hearing, the Court will decide whether to finally approve the Settlement and how much of the Settlement will be paid to Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s attorneys (“Class Counsel”). The Court will also decide whether to enter a judgment that requires UCC to make payments under the Settlement and requires Class Members and Aggrieved Employees to give up their rights to assert certain claims against UCC.

If you worked for UCC during the Class Period and/or the PAGA Period, you have two basic options under the Settlement:

- (1) Do Nothing.** You don’t have to do anything to participate in the proposed Settlement and be eligible for an Individual Class Payment and/or an Individual PAGA Payment. As a Participating Class Member, though, you will give up your right to assert Class Period wage claims and PAGA Period penalty claims against UCC.
- (2) Opt-Out of the Class Settlement.** You can exclude yourself from the Class Settlement (opt-out) by submitting the written Request for Exclusion or otherwise notifying the Administrator in writing. If you opt-out of the Settlement, you will not receive an Individual Class Payment. You will, however, preserve your right to personally pursue Class Period wage claims against UCC, and, if you are an Aggrieved Employee, remain eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment. You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement.

UCC will not retaliate against you for any actions you take with respect to the proposed Settlement.

SUMMARY OF YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT

<p>You Don't Have to Do Anything to Participate in the Settlement</p>	<p>If you do nothing, you will be a Participating Class Member, eligible for an Individual Class Payment and an Individual PAGA Payment (if any). In exchange, you will give up your right to assert the wage claims against UCC that are covered by this Settlement (Released Claims).</p>
<p>You Can Opt-out of the Class Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement</p> <p>The Opt-out Deadline is January 17, 2025.</p>	<p>If you don't want to fully participate in the proposed Settlement, you can opt-out of the Class Settlement by sending the Administrator a written Request for Exclusion. Once excluded, you will be a Non-Participating Class Member and no longer eligible for an Individual Class Payment. Non-Participating Class Members cannot object to any portion of the proposed Settlement. See Section 6 of this Notice.</p> <p>You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the proposed Settlement. UCC must pay Individual PAGA Payments to all Aggrieved Employees and the Aggrieved Employees must give up their rights to pursue Released Claims (defined below).</p>
<p>Participating Class Members Can Object to the Class Settlement but not the PAGA Settlement</p> <p>Written Objections Must be Submitted by January 17, 2025.</p>	<p>All Class Members who do not opt-out ("Participating Class Members") can object to any aspect of the proposed Settlement. The Court's decision whether to finally approve the Settlement will include a determination of how much will be paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiff who pursued the Action on behalf of the Class. You are not personally responsible for any payments to Class Counsel or Plaintiff, but every dollar paid to Class Counsel and Plaintiff reduces the overall amount paid to Participating Class Members. You can object to the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiff if you think they are unreasonable. See Section 7 of this Notice.</p>
<p>You Can Participate in the March 21, 2025 Final Approval Hearing</p>	<p>The Court's Final Approval Hearing is scheduled to take place on March 21, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. You don't have to attend but you do have the right to appear (or hire an attorney to appear on your behalf at your own cost), in person, by telephone or by using the Court's virtual appearance platform. Participating Class Members can verbally object to the Settlement at the Final Approval Hearing. See Section 8 of this Notice.</p>
<p>You Can Challenge the Calculation of Your Workweeks/Pay Periods</p> <p>Written Challenges Must be Submitted by January 17, 2025.</p>	<p>The amount of your Individual Class Payment and PAGA Payment depend on how many workweeks you worked at least one day during the Class Period and how many Pay Periods you worked at least one day during the PAGA Period, respectively. The number Class Period Workweeks and number of PAGA Period Pay Periods you worked according to UCC's records is stated on the first page of this Notice. If you disagree with either of these numbers, you must challenge it by January 17, 2025. See Section 4 of this Notice.</p>

1. WHAT IS THE ACTION ABOUT?

Plaintiff is a former UCC employee. The Action accuses UCC of violating California labor laws by failing to pay minimum and straight time wages, overtime wages, wages due upon termination and reimbursable expenses and failing to provide meal periods, rest breaks and accurate itemized wage statements. Based on the same claims, Plaintiff has also asserted a claim for civil penalties under the California Private Attorneys General Act (Lab. Code § 2698, et seq.) ("PAGA"). Plaintiff is represented by attorneys in the Action: John G. Yslas, Jeffrey C. Bils, Aram Boyadjian, and Andrew Sandoval of Wilshire Law Firm, PLC ("Class Counsel").

UCC strongly denies violating any laws or failing to pay any wages and contends it complied with all applicable laws.

2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT THE ACTION HAS SETTLED?

So far, the Court has made no determination whether UCC or Plaintiff is correct on the merits. In the meantime, Plaintiff and UCC hired an experienced, neutral mediator Steven J. Rottman, Esq. in an effort to resolve the Action by negotiating an to end the case by agreement (settle the case) rather than continuing the expensive and time-consuming process of litigation. The negotiations were successful. By signing a lengthy written settlement agreement (“Agreement”) and agreeing to jointly ask the Court to enter a judgment ending the Action and enforcing the Agreement, Plaintiff and UCC have negotiated a proposed Settlement that is subject to the Court’s Final Approval. Both sides agree the proposed Settlement is a compromise of disputed claims. By agreeing to settle, UCC does not admit any violations or concede the merit of any claims.

Plaintiff and Class Counsel strongly believe the Settlement is a good deal for you because they believe that: (1) UCC has agreed to pay a fair, reasonable and adequate amount considering the strength of the claims and the risks and uncertainties of continued litigation; and (2) Settlement is in the best interests of the Class Members and Aggrieved Employees. The Court preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement as fair, reasonable and adequate, authorized this Notice, and scheduled a hearing to determine Final Approval.

3. WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT TERMS OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT?

1. UCC Will Pay \$725,000.00 as the Gross Settlement Amount (Gross Settlement). UCC has agreed to deposit the Gross Settlement into an account controlled by the Administrator of the Settlement. The Administrator will use the Gross Settlement to pay the Individual Class Payments, Individual PAGA Payments, Class Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel’s attorneys’ fees and expenses, the Administrator’s expenses, and penalties to be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”). Assuming the Court grants Final Approval, UCC will fund the Gross Settlement not more than 30 days after the Judgment entered by the Court becomes final. The Judgment will be final on the date the Court enters Judgment, or a later date if Participating Class Members object to the proposed Settlement or the Judgment is appealed.
2. Court Approved Deductions from Gross Settlement. At the Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiff and/or Class Counsel will ask the Court to approve the following deductions from the Gross Settlement, the amounts of which will be decided by the Court at the Final Approval Hearing:
 - A. Up to \$241,666.67 (33 1/3% of the Gross Settlement) to Class Counsel for attorneys’ fees and up to \$22,000.00 for their litigation expenses. To date, Class Counsel have worked and incurred expenses on the Action without payment.
 - B. Up to \$10,000.00 as a Class Representative Award for filing the Action, working with Class Counsel and representing the Class. A Class Representative Award will be the only monies Plaintiff will receive other than Plaintiff’s Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA Payment.
 - C. Up to \$13,550.00 to the Administrator for services administering the Settlement.
 - D. Up to \$25,000.00 for PAGA Penalties, allocated 75% to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% in Individual PAGA Payments to the Aggrieved Employees based on their PAGA Period Pay Periods.

Participating Class Members have the right to object to any of these deductions. The Court will consider all objections.

3. Net Settlement Distributed to Class Members. After making the above deductions in amounts approved by the Court, the Administrator will distribute the rest of the Gross Settlement (the “Net Settlement”) by making Individual Class Payments to Participating Class Members based on their Class Period Workweeks.
4. Taxes Owed on Payments to Class Members. Plaintiff and UCC are asking the Court to approve an allocation of 20% of each Individual Class Payment to taxable wages (“Wage Portion”) and 80% to interest and penalties. (“Non-Wage Portion.”). The Wage Portion is subject to withholdings and will be reported on IRS W-2 Forms.

UCC will separately pay employer payroll taxes it owes on the Wage Portion. The Individual PAGA Payments are counted as penalties rather than wages for tax purposes. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments and the Non-Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments on IRS 1099 Forms.

Although Plaintiff and UCC have agreed to these allocations, neither side is giving you any advice on whether your Payments are taxable or how much you might owe in taxes. You are responsible for paying all taxes (including penalties and interest on back taxes) on any Payments received from the proposed Settlement. You should consult a tax advisor if you have any questions about the tax consequences of the proposed Settlement.

5. Need to Promptly Cash Payment Checks. The front of every check issued for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments will show the date when the check expires (the void date). If you don’t cash it by the void date, your check will be

automatically cancelled, and the monies will irrevocably lost to you because they will be paid to a non-profit organization or foundation (“Cy Pres”).

6. Requests for Exclusion from the Class Settlement (Opt-Outs). You will be treated as a Participating Class Member, participating fully in the Class Settlement, unless you notify the Administrator in writing, not later than **January 17, 2025**, that you wish to opt-out. The easiest way to notify the Administrator is to send a written and signed Request for Exclusion by the **January 17, 2025 Response Deadline**. The Request for Exclusion should be a letter from a Class Member or his/her/their representative setting forth a Class Member’s name, present address, telephone number, and a simple statement electing to be excluded from the Settlement. Excluded Class Members (i.e., Non-Participating Class Members) will not receive Individual Class Payments, but will preserve their rights to personally pursue wage and hour claims against UCC.

You cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the Settlement. Class Members who exclude themselves from the Class Settlement (Non-Participating Class Members) remain eligible for Individual PAGA Payments and are required to give up their right to assert PAGA claims against UCC based on the PAGA Period facts alleged in the Action.

7. The Proposed Settlement Will be Void if the Court Denies Final Approval. It is possible the Court will decline to grant Final Approval of the Settlement or decline enter a Judgment. It is also possible the Court will enter a Judgment that is reversed on appeal. Plaintiffs and UCC have agreed that, in either case, the Settlement will be void: UCC will not pay any money and Class Members will not release any claims against UCC.
8. Administrator. The Court has appointed a neutral company, ILYM Group, Inc. (the “Administrator”) to send this Notice, calculate and make payments, and process Class Members’ Requests for Exclusion. The Administrator will also decide Class Member Challenges over Workweeks, mail and re-mail settlement checks and tax forms, and perform other tasks necessary to administer the Settlement. The Administrator’s contact information is contained in Section 9 of this Notice.
9. Participating Class Members’ Release. After the Judgment is final and UCC has fully funded the Gross Settlement and separately paid all employer payroll taxes, Participating Class Members will be legally barred from asserting any of the claims released under the Settlement. This means that unless you opted out by validly excluding yourself from the Class Settlement, you cannot sue, continue to sue, or be part of any other lawsuit against UCC or related entities for wages based on the Class Period facts and PAGA penalties based on PAGA Period facts, as alleged in the Action and resolved by this Settlement.

The Participating Class Members will be bound by the following release:

All Class Members who have not validly opted out will become Settlement Class Members and will on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, release and discharge Defendant, and any past and present owners, officers, directors, shareholders, unit holders, managers, employees, agents, principals, heirs, representatives, accountants, auditors, attorneys, insurers, consultants, and their respective successors and predecessors in interest, subsidiaries, affiliates, and parents from all claims, demands, rights, liabilities and causes of action that were pled in the Action filed by Plaintiff against Defendant, or reasonably could have been pleaded based on the facts alleged in the Action, including claims under California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 510, 512, 558(a), 1174, 1174.5, 1175, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 1199, and 2802, and California Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*

10. Aggrieved Employees’ PAGA Release. After the Court’s judgment is final, and UCC has paid the Gross Settlement and separately paid the employer-side payroll taxes, all Aggrieved Employees will be barred from asserting PAGA claims against UCC, whether or not they exclude themselves from the Settlement. This means that all Aggrieved Employees, including those who are Participating Class Members and those who opt-out of the Class Settlement, cannot sue, continue to sue, or participate in any other PAGA claim against UCC or its related entities based on the PAGA Period facts alleged in the Action and resolved by this Settlement.

The Aggrieved Employees’ Releases for Participating and Non-Participating Class Members are as follows:

All PAGA Settlement Members, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, will discharge Defendant, and any past and present owners, officers, directors, shareholders, unit holders, managers, employees, agents, principals, heirs, representatives, accountants, auditors, attorneys, insurers, consultants, and their respective successors and predecessors in interest, subsidiaries, affiliates, and parents and attorneys from all claims, demands, rights, liabilities and causes of action under California’s Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2699 *et seq.*) that were alleged or reasonably could have been alleged based on the facts alleged in any letter Plaintiff filed with the LWDA against Defendant, including claims for PAGA civil penalties for violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 510, 512, 558(a), 1174, 1174.5, 1175, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 1199, and 2802.

4. HOW WILL THE ADMINISTRATOR CALCULATE MY PAYMENT?

1. Individual Class Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual Class Payments by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members, and (b) multiplying the result by the number of Workweeks worked by each individual Participating Class Member.
2. Individual PAGA Payments. The Administrator will calculate Individual PAGA Payments by (a) dividing \$6,250.00 by the total number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees and (b) multiplying the result by the number of PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by each individual Aggrieved Employee.
3. Workweek/Pay Period Challenges. The number of Class Workweeks you worked during the Class Period and the number of PAGA Pay Periods you worked during the PAGA Period, as recorded in UCC's records, are stated in the first page of this Notice. You have until **January 17, 2025** to challenge the number of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods credited to you. You can submit your challenge by signing and sending a letter to the Administrator via mail, email or fax. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.
You need to support your challenge by sending copies of pay stubs or other records. The Administrator will accept UCC's calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods based on UCC's records as accurate unless you send copies of records containing contrary information. You should send copies rather than originals because the documents will not be returned to you. The Administrator will resolve Workweek and/or Pay Period challenges based on your submission and on input from Class Counsel (who will advocate on behalf of Participating Class Members) and UCC's Counsel. The Administrator's decision is final. You can't appeal or otherwise challenge its final decision.

5. HOW WILL I GET PAID?

1. Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single check to every Participating Class Member (i.e., every Class Member who doesn't opt-out) including those who also qualify as Aggrieved Employees. The single check will combine the Individual Class Payment and the Individual PAGA Payment.
2. Non-Participating Class Members. The Administrator will send, by U.S. mail, a single Individual PAGA Payment check to every Aggrieved Employee who opts out of the Class Settlement (i.e., every Non-Participating Class Member).

Your check will be sent to the same address as this Notice. If you change your address, be sure to notify the Administrator as soon as possible. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

6. HOW DO I OPT-OUT OF THE CLASS SETTLEMENT?

Submit a written and signed letter with your name, present address, telephone number, and a simple statement that you do not want to participate in the Settlement. The Administrator will exclude you based on any writing communicating your request be excluded. Be sure to personally sign your request, identify the Action as *Michael A. Haser v. Universal Chain of California, Inc.*, and include your identifying information (full name, address, telephone number, approximate dates of employment, and social security number for verification purposes). You must make the request yourself. If someone else makes the request for you, it will not be valid. **The Administrator must be sent your request to be excluded by January 17, 2025, or it will be invalid.** Section 9 of the Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

7. HOW DO I OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT?

Only Participating Class Members have the right to object to the Settlement. Before deciding whether to object, you may wish to see what Plaintiff and UCC are asking the Court to approve. At least 16 days before the March 21, 2025 Final Approval Hearing, Class Counsel and/or Plaintiff will file in Court (1) a Motion for Final Approval that includes, among other things, the reasons why the proposed Settlement is fair, and (2) a Motion for Fees, Litigation Expenses and Service Award stating (i) the amount Class Counsel is requesting for attorneys' fees and litigation expenses; and (ii) the amount Plaintiff is requesting as a Class Representative Service Award. Upon reasonable request, Class Counsel (whose contact information is in Section 9 of this Notice) will send you copies of these documents at no cost to you. You can also view them on the Administrator's Website <https://www.ilymgroup.com/universalchain> or the Court's website <https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/default.aspx>.

A Participating Class Member who disagrees with any aspect of the Agreement, the Motion for Final Approval and/or Motion for Fees, Litigation Expenses and Service Award may wish to object, for example, that the proposed Settlement is unfair, or that the amounts requested by Class Counsel or Plaintiff are too high or too low. **The deadline for sending written objections to the Administrator is January 17, 2025.** Be sure to tell the Administrator what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. Make sure you identify the Action *Michael A. Haser v. Universal Chain of California, Inc.* and include your name,

current address, telephone number, and approximate dates of employment for UCC and sign the objection. Section 9 of this Notice has the Administrator's contact information.

Alternatively, a Participating Class Member can object (or personally retain a lawyer to object at your own cost) by attending the Final Approval Hearing. You (or your attorney) should be ready to tell the Court what you object to, why you object, and any facts that support your objection. See Section 8 of this Notice (immediately below) for specifics regarding the Final Approval Hearing.

8. CAN I ATTEND THE FINAL APPROVAL HEARING?

You can, but don't have to, attend the Final Approval Hearing on March 21, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Department 27 of the Sacramento Superior Court, located at 720 9th Street, Room 101, Dept. 27, Sacramento, CA 95814-1302. At the Hearing, the judge will decide whether to grant Final Approval of the Settlement and how much of the Gross Settlement will be paid to Class Counsel, Plaintiff, and the Administrator. The Court will invite comments from objectors, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel before making a decision. You can attend (or hire a lawyer to attend) personally. Check the Court's website for the most current information (<https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/default.aspx>).

It's possible the Court will reschedule the Final Approval Hearing. You should check the Administrator's website <https://www.ilymgroup.com/universalchain> beforehand or contact Class Counsel to verify the date and time of the Final Approval Hearing.

9. HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The Agreement sets forth everything UCC and Plaintiff have promised to do under the proposed Settlement. The easiest way to read the Agreement, the Judgment or any other Settlement documents is to go to ILYM Group, Inc.'s website at <https://www.ilymgroup.com/universalchain>. You can also telephone or send an email to Class Counsel or the Administrator using the contact information listed below, or consult the Superior Court website by going to (<https://www.saccourt.ca.gov/civil/file-status.aspx>) and entering the Case Numbers for the Action, Case Nos. 34-2022-00332268 and 23CV006331. You can also make an appointment to personally review court documents in the Sacramento Superior Court Civil Records Unit by calling (916) 874-7186.

DO NOT TELEPHONE THE SUPERIOR COURT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT.

Class Counsel:

John G. Yslas

jyslas@wilshirelawfirm.com

Jeffrey C. Bills

jbills@wilshirelawfirm.com

Aram Boyadjian

aboyadjian@wilshirelawfirm.com

Andrew Sandoval

andrew.sandoval@wilshirelawfirm.com

Wilshire Law Firm, PLC

3055 Wilshire Boulevard, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90010

Telephone: (213) 381-9988

Settlement Administrator:

ILYM Group, Inc.

info@ilymgroup.com

P.O. Box 2031, Tustin, CA 92781

Telephone: (888) 250-6810

Fax Number: (888) 845-6185

10. WHAT IF I LOSE MY SETTLEMENT CHECK?

If you lose or misplace your settlement check before cashing it, the Administrator will replace it as long as you request a replacement before the void date on the face of the original check. If your check is already void you will have no way to recover the money.

11. WHAT IF I CHANGE MY ADDRESS?

To receive your check, you should immediately notify the Administrator if you move or otherwise change your mailing address.