

NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS EXTENDED PAST SEPTEMBER 20, 2022 DEADLINE

Paul V. Hogrogian, National President



Dear Members: The following includes a report on the status of the contract negotiations with the Postal Service as it stands at the time that this article goes to publication.

The collective bargaining agreement between the NPMHU and the USPS expired on September 20, 2022.

Since the beginning of June 2022, the NPMHU Negotiations Team has been working diligently to secure a new collective bargaining agreement with the U. S. Postal Service. For over four months, NPMHU representatives have spent countless hours analyzing and developing proposals and meeting with USPS representatives. Despite the concerted efforts of both parties, the NPMHU and USPS have so far, at the time that this article goes to press, been unable to reach a comprehensive agreement on all the terms to be included in the 2022 National Agreement.

Enough progress was made over the negotiation period, however, to convince the parties to extend bargaining past the September 20, 2022 deadline.

The parties have made significant progress in subsequent discussions and are extremely close to an agreement. The parties have reached an agreement in principle on most of the major issues. The parties must finalize language on the implementation of the agreements that we have reached.

Entering negotiations, our priorities in bargaining included:

1. A fair and just general wage increase

2. A continuation of our current Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)
3. Keeping the No Lay Off clause
4. Improving the wages, rights, and benefits for our MHAs
5. Increasing MHA conversions to career status
6. Returning subcontracted work to the Mail Handler Craft while stopping future subcontracting
7. Minimizing the dislocation and inconvenience to Mail Handlers subject to involuntary reassignments
8. Addressing the issue of MHAs serving as 204Bs
9. Fixing the badly broken wage scale which hinders the recruitment and retention of new Mail Handler employees

We believe that we successfully addressed most, if not all, of these priorities.

If and when the NPMHU and the Postal Service come to an agreement, it will be subject to a mail referendum ballot of the entire NPMHU membership. All regular dues paying members will have a chance to make their voices heard and give their assent to the new terms and conditions included in the 2022 National Agreement. However, if no agreement is reached, and the parties reach impasse, there are alternate dispute resolution procedures to determine the changes to the National Agreement through final and binding interest arbitration.

The NPMHU will keep the membership informed of the progress of these negotiations.

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The Postal Service has finally cancelled all of the Phase II closings and consolidations that have been pending during the past several years.

However, the Postal Service has now announced a new, more comprehensive Network Redesign plan. The centerpiece of the Network Redesign project is the establishment of Regional Distribution Centers (RDCs) in approximately 64 metropolitan areas throughout the country. These RDCs would consolidate all originating letters, flats, and parcels from all mail processing facilities within a metropolitan area into one mega-processing center. These RDCs would also process some of the destinating mail. Most, but not all, of the NDCs will be transformed into RDCs. Most of the processing plants from which originating mail was taken would continue to process destinating letters, flats and parcels and would be renamed Local Distribution Centers (LDC). The information that we have received from the Postal Service is high on concept but extremely low on details. The plans are fluid and are constantly changing.

The USPS has announced Wave #1 of its RDC sites (all subject to change), including the following facilities:

1. Sandston (Richmond), VA
2. North Houston, TX
3. Santa Clarita, CA

4. Bethpage, NY
5. Charlotte, NC
6. Greensboro, NC
7. Jersey City, NJ
8. Atlanta, GA
9. Chicago, IL
10. Indianapolis, IN
11. Portland, OR

It is worth repeating that these plans are extremely fluid and subject to change. The National Office will provide updates on this project once we receive more information.

The Postal Service also has plans to consolidate many of its delivery operations into super delivery sites call Sorting and Delivery Centers (SDCs). The purpose of the plans is to centralize the delivery functions of several post offices into a single mega-delivery site. It is possible that the Postal Service may establish over 900 of these SDCs throughout the country. The Postal Service has identified the following sites to be in its initial phase of SDCs:

1. Athens, GA
2. Brooklyn, NY (parcels only)
3. Bryan, TX
4. Utica, NY
5. Gainesville, FLA
6. Panama City, FLA
7. Woburn, MA
8. Pasco, WA

It is still early in the project and all plans are subject to change.

The NPMHU has also been in discussions with the Postal Service to return some of the Terminal Handling Services (THS) work which has been subcontracted for many years. We have reached agreement to return the THS functions in Phoenix and Anchorage, Alaska and are discussing bringing other THS sites back in-house, including Kansas City and Philadelphia.

The NPMHU is committed to convert as many MHAs as we can to career status. The provisions of the Residual Vacancy MOU continue to apply, and they have paid significant dividends in addition to the MHAs who were converted under the various conversion MOUs.

- Total Conversions since the inception of the MHA category: 37,000
- Total Conversions since the Residual Vacancy MOU: 35,000

The NPMHU will continue its efforts to maximize the Full-Time career workforce for Mail Handlers.

The National Office has spent the last 32 months dealing with the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. Recent reports show a significant decrease in the COVID numbers since February

2022, when there were 18,500 postal workers infected with the virus. The most recent reports list less than 900 employees infected. It appears that the worst of the pandemic is behind us.

The CDC issued new guidelines in August. The Postal Service has now revised its own protocols to conform to these guidelines. The changes include:

1. Social distancing recommended, not required
2. Close contact tracing no longer performed by USPS (OHNA's)
3. Self-Isolation Guidelines put in place
4. New Decision Tree which eliminated Administrative Leave for COVID reasons

Our National Representatives continue to meet, when necessary, with our counterparts in postal management to discuss COVID issues.

I remain confident that through the work of our Contract Administration Department and our legal representatives, and through the hard work of our Regional, Local, and Branch representatives, we can successfully meet all challenges that lie before us.

Fraternally,



Paul V. Hogrogian
National President

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