



MAIL HANDLER UPDATE

NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION

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2025 CONTRACT UPDATE #13

ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE

2025 No. 13 — February 18, 2026

You are reading the thirteenth Contract Update produced and distributed by the NPMHU during the course of 2025 negotiations. These updates, along with the Union's magazine and monthly bulletins, will keep mail handlers throughout the country informed and involved in the issues raised during this round of bargaining.

As we have been reporting since the conclusion of the Hotel week negotiations in September, our negotiations with the Postal Service have turned to a specific focus on economic issues — namely, negotiations around issues such as general wage increases, COLA, night shift differential, and MHA wage rates.

While negotiations over the summer involved a large contingent of Postal employees from operations and labor relations and from multiple locations around the country, negotiations over economic terms have taken place between the parties' principals: Deputy Postmaster General Douglas Tulino and Vice President of Labor Relations Michael Elston for the Postal Service and National President Paul Hogrogian and National Secretary-Treasurer Kevin Tabarus, with assistance from Manager of Contract Administration Teresa Harmon and General Counsel Matthew Clash-Drexler for the NPMHU.

While we have had open discussions with the Postal Service representatives, **WE REMAIN FAR APART ON THE CORE ECONOMIC ISSUES**. The NPMHU has focused these discussions on the persistent disparities between the NPMHU

and what the Postal Service has already agreed to with other postal unions. The NPMHU has made clear that we will not agree to any contract that does not continue the path the NPMHU achieved in prior rounds of bargaining to eliminate and close those disparities.

While NPMHU leadership has made its case through discussions at multiple bargaining sessions and through detailed presentations, the Postal Service has been unwilling to date to agree to economic terms that meet this priority and thus have failed the most basic requirement of any these negotiations: a contract that fairly reflects the value, contributions, and lived economic realities of the membership.

Following our most recent session on February 11, 2026, the Postal Service agreed to review again the materials that the NPMHU had provided and to present a revised proposal. We hope that the next proposal will move us closer to an agreement. Additional bargaining sessions could be scheduled once we receive the Postal Service's counter proposal, which they said would be forthcoming.

While the NPMHU will continue to negotiate with the Postal Service, NPMHU leadership has been firm that if the Postal Service will not propose economic terms that achieve our objectives, there will be no agreement.

If the parties are unable to come to an agreement, then the Postal Reorganization Act (PRA) sets out a detailed process for the terms of the National Agreement to be decided. The most popular of these options is for both parties to settle on dispute

resolution procedures on their own. If the legal teams cannot agree in procedures to resolve their dispute, this activates another provision in the PRA.

First, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) would establish a 3-person fact finding panel that would then have 45 days in which to investigate the bargaining dispute and issue a report of its findings. If an agreement still has not been reached after the fact-finding panel, the PRA requires the establishment of an arbitration board. This board generally consists of three members — one appointed by the Union, one appointed by the Postal Service, and a third (neutral) member.

The arbitration board holds a hearing in which both sides have the chance to present evidence in support of their claims. The board is required to make a decision 45 days after its appointment, which, as the PRA states, will be "conclusive" and "binding." It will determine the terms of the new agreement. Therefore, the National President usually hosts a meeting of the Local Unions and receives their advice before entering arbitration.

As we have said throughout these negotiations, our preference is to negotiate an agreement with the Postal Service. If a negotiated agreement is not possible, the NPMHU is prepared to carry the fight through to arbitration to ensure that the next National Agreement achieves the fair wages and working conditions that all Mail Handlers deserve. We will accept nothing less.

We will keep you updated as the negotiation process continues.

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February 2026