



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

National Headquarters
1727 KING STREET, SUITE 400
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2753

NAPS/USPS Consultative Meeting Minutes *in Conjunction with the* Spring 2021 NAPS Executive Board Meeting March 24, 2021 via Zoom

US Postal Service Headquarters

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National Association of Postal Supervisors

NAPS Executive Board

0321-01

NAPS is requesting USPS to adjust the hiring process for craft employees. NAPS contends that these changes are needed to address the shortages created by an imperfect hiring process, leading to excess overtime, grievances, employee retention issues, and negative impact to TOE (Total Operating Expense). Results also include EAS staffing imbalances based on SWC and increased stress and dissatisfaction among EAS employees. Please see attached detailed analysis.

Response: Fast Track Hiring was implemented in 2019 to increase the efficiency of the hiring process. The hiring process was reduced by over 18 days. It also corrected issues related to background screening that were being routinely skipped at the local level; ensuring safety and security for all employees. Over 260,000 new hires were done last year through the fast track hiring process to address all emergency hiring needs.

This process is continually reviewed by Human Resources to identify opportunities to make any improvements that can reduce the overall time to hire. A pilot commenced 2020 specific to RCA hiring in several districts. It was intended to reduce the time to hire by eliminating applicants from consideration that either did not entirely understand the requirements of the position or no longer were interested in the position. The pilot did not yield intended results and was stopped to be reevaluated. Local Services can assist managers in the hiring process by modifying and designing job application templates to communicate individual needs of an office and providing lists of applicants for each requisition.

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to delays at local courthouses and other municipalities when the SF-85, *Background Check*, is flagged and additional action is required. The SF-85 cannot be bypassed.

Multiple initiatives are being conducted at headquarters and dedicated to retention of non-career employees, specific to non-careers in each craft, and includes training, first 60/90 days experience and further strategies to improve and expedite the hiring process. NAPS's Resident Officers will be contacted once these initiatives are further developed for feedback and to solicit participation. The Postal Service welcomes NAPS's



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participation in the development and improvement of the hiring process. The analysis provided by NAPS is helpful and will be discussed in those forums.

Improvement in retention of recent hires will require fewer hiring activities and provide supervisors and managers with a consistent workforce to develop.

0321-02 NAPS requests procedural guidance from USPS HQ on addressing Hostile Work Environment, DRAC, HRM, and Labor Relation issues. What position title is the USPS POC at District and Area levels?

Response: The process for “addressing Hostile Work Environment, DRAC, HRM, and Labor Relation issues” has not changed. Any employee that has concerns related to any of these issues should continue to report them through their current chain of command and each will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The point of contact at the district and area levels is unchanged. The 67 departments of District Labor Relations and District Human Resources Managers still exist and are providing support to the former 67 districts, with former geographic boundaries, and to Mail Processing, Logistics, etc. The recent announcement on the 50 districts is only for the Delivery and Retail component.

As outlined in Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) Isaac Cronkhite’s August 18, 2020 memo, District HR Managers will report to the Area HR Manager/Director under the Vice President, Employee Resource Management, and District Labor Relations Managers will report to Area Labor Relations under the VP, Labor Relations.

0321-03 NAPS has been made aware that the paperwork provided at 650-Mediation when no agreement is reached and what is in the ELM are conflicting (See attachment). In the attached agreement to mediate, NAPS notes that Form K says they can appeal by the traditional appeal, which is in writing/and or person. In comparison, Form L states that the appeal can only be in writing which follows the USPS ELM. NAPS is requesting that the language to both Form L and Form K reflect the employee's opportunity to appeal both in writing and/or in-person if no resolution is reached in an ELM 650 Mediation. NAPS is further requesting that this opportunity be reflected in changes to USPS ELM 652.53 and ELM 652.54.



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USPS ELM 652.53

Change From: If no resolution is reached between the employee and the proposing official as a result of the mediation, the employee may submit written responses to the proposed letter of warning in lieu of a time-off suspension within 10 calendar days of the mediation to the deciding official.

Change To: If no resolution is reached between the employee and the proposing official as a result of the mediation, the employee may submit in the traditional written and/or verbal response to the proposed letter of warning in lieu of a time-off suspension within 10 calendar days of the mediation to the deciding official.

USPS ELM 652.54

Change From: If no resolution is reached between the employee and the proposing official as a result of the mediation, the employee may submit written responses to the proposed adverse action within 10 calendar days of the mediation to the deciding official.

Change To: If no resolution is reached between the employee and the proposing official as a result of the mediation, the employee may submit in the traditional written and/or verbal response to the proposed adverse action within 10 calendar days of the mediation to the deciding official.

NAPS contends that this affords the member the opportunity to personally demonstrate their value as a member of their management team by allowing them to meet with the deciding official.

Response: The mediation process is an alternative to the traditional appeal process. An employee has an opportunity to appeal verbally, with a mediator to the proposing official. If unresolved in mediation, the employee is still given an opportunity to submit a written appeal to the Deciding Official.

Form K has been revised, based on NAPS's input, to be provide more clarity to the employee on options if no agreement is reached in mediation and to be consistent with the language in Form L and ELM 652.53 and 652.54.



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0321-04 NAPS would like clarification on how the USPS plans to apply any losing and gaining facility protocols under the recently announced district realignment.

Example: Mid-America and the Gateway Districts have been eliminated. They are now called Kansas and Missouri. As in this scenario, NAPS would like to know who will be the incumbent employees to these two new districts? Someone could go on a technicality and say that "well, they don't have a Gateway either, so who are the employees that should be gone?" Like having two HR managers now, someone has to go.

NAPS would like to know and better understand who the incumbent employees are in this district realignment for all districts.

Response: A Reduction-In-Force (RIF) isn't implemented solely based on one facility remaining in place and one going away. Also, there were multiple changes in reporting relationships as a result of the August 7 announcement. When work is moved from one organization to another, we assess whether there is a transfer of function. A transfer of function takes place when a function ceases in one competitive area and moves to one or more other competitive areas that do not perform the function at the time of transfer. Positions are under review as well as incumbents in all district positions and will be completed prior to any announcement of RIF. Once that information is known, a briefing will be provided to NAPS.

0321-05 NAPS The hiring process is failing, and something has to be done with it. In the field, before hiring, we no longer have that initial contact with the person to question them and explain in detail what the job entails. We need to get back to an interview process and describe the job more, so people understand that they are not initially career. The retention starts with the hiring for the most part. That initial interview and meeting of the applicant was the biggest thing for most managers in the field. Most applicants see a job with the Postal Service and think it is the easiest since they don't know the essential aspects of the job since the job videos are not the greatest.

Response: Methods of communicating information to potential applicants regarding the work associated with the posted job is under development. Presently, realistic job preview videos are provided to applicants. Also, the Virtual entry assessment discusses real life scenarios related to the work a new hire will be performing and candidates are provided written descriptions of the type of work for which they are applying prior to



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fingerprinting. This allows the opportunity to review and ask additional questions, if necessary, at the actual appointment by the applicant or by the manager. The material to include job postings can be customized by Local Services based on an office's specific or unique needs i.e., approximate hours expected. Keep in mind that adding an interview with a local manager adds on average 10 additional days to the hiring process.

0321-06 NAPS request the date OPM approved the Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) process for the USPS?

Response: OPM approved USPS Voluntary Early Retirement Authority for our non-bargaining population on 9/16/2020 for the period of 10/1/2020 to 9/30/2021.

0321-07 NAPS would like to understand better why the Postal Service set the dates in a short time frame turn around for employees to make a life decision that affects them and their entire family? NAPS is requesting that the VER be set after the RIF is announced.

Response: A second offering of a VER was announced and was specific to NAPS's concerns. The second VER for eligible employees will have an option to retire effective July 31. This second offering provides employees an opportunity to see jobs available and learn of any new assignments after organizational changes are implemented in May. The first VER will allow additional opportunities to place impacted employees in vacated assignments.

0321-08 NAPS requests a briefing to know and better understand the USPS RIF avoidance process plans timelines? This is being requested so that the Association is aware of any other short periods in the process.

NAPS' concern is that employees were allowed to request and were approved to go on details to learn about job responsibilities in the past. NAPS presumes that the target group of this pending RIF is for administrative personal. NAPS also contends that, for the most part, vacancies are in customer services operations. If you never work in that environment, a detail will be beneficial to an impacted EAS.

NAPS would like to know how the USPS plans to ensure these impacted EAS have the opportunities needed to learn Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in a functional area that some may have never worked in to become minimally qualified while continuing necessary support functions to the district.



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Response: A RIF timeline has not been developed and will be put together once the consultation process has concluded with NAPS on the organizational changes. The RIF timeline will be provided and discussed with NAPS in advance of the restructure announcement in May. The RIF timeline will allow time for various repositioning tactics including Voluntary Early Retirement, Limited Area of Consideration job postings, lateral requests, downgrade request, etc. The Postal Service will work closely with NAPS Officials on identifying impacted employees and help those employees secure landing spots.

Employees are already eligible to request detail assignments to positions that they are interested in to gain new experiences and to help facilitate placement.

0321-09

NAPS has received questions from the field based on comments by managers in town halls being held where it was stated; that if you have received a PFP non-contributor at any time within the last three years, that employee will be RIF'd. NAPS is requesting a briefing on the USPS RIF process step by step.

Response: This statement is inaccurate. Reassigning employees and Reduction in Force policies can be found in ELM 354. The regulatory requirements governing reduction in force are contained in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 351. Federal agencies must follow the procedures contained in the Code of Federal Regulations when conducting a RIF. The law provides that OPM's RIF regulations must give effect to four factors in releasing employees: tenure of employment (e.g., type of appointment); veterans' preference; length of service; and performance ratings.

When an agency must abolish positions, the RIF regulations determine whether an employee keeps his or her present position or whether the employee has a right to a different position.

NAPS and its Executive Board will be provided a briefing on these procedures prior to the finalization of the recently announced organizational changes and prior to announcement of a RIF.