



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

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May 15, 2023

Board Memo 036-2023: Supervisor Apprentice Program Pilot

Executive Board,

For years, NAPS HQ has discussed the overuse of 204-B's, in some case over authorized complements with USPS HQ. This overuse of 204-B work hours has proven the misconception in the current ratio models used to determine EAS staffing by the USPS. In response, the USPS is initiating the Supervisor Apprentice Program pilot. See attached for details.

NAPS looks forward to hearing from you, our Executive Board members and/or our Local NAPS leaders in these pilot sites so that NAPS HQ remains 100% engaged in making this program a substantive success, enhancing the working life of all EAS.

Please share this information with your membership.

Thank you, and be safe.

NAPS Headquarters



May 9, 2023

Mr. Ivan D. Butts
President
National Association of Postal Supervisors
1727 King Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314-2753

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Dear Mr. Butts:

As a matter of information, the Postal Service will launch a pilot, *Supervisor Apprentice Program* in May 2023. The objective of the *Supervisor Apprentice Program* is to enhance opportunities for advancement and promotion for our employees and build a talented pipeline to fill front-line supervisor vacancies. The Supervisor Apprentice Program will equip employees with the necessary leadership skills to be effective in guiding and directing employees in carrying out the mission of the Postal Service.

The *Supervisor Apprentice Program* is a 26-week program designed to give employees an opportunity to promote to a level EAS-16 Apprentice Supervisor position and receive intentional training to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and abilities for an additional promotion to an EAS-17 supervisor.

Apprentices will receive a wide array of training and development opportunities, including, but not limited to:

- Supervised on-the-job training
- Behavior and performance modeling
- Coaching & mentoring to identify short-term and long-term goals
- Cross-functional training opportunities
- Completion of USPS Supervisor Program

Supervisor Apprentice Program goals include:

- Guiding the apprentices on professionalism, development, and provide training on policies and procedures
- Preparing the apprentices to be qualified for future supervisor assignments

The pilot for the *Supervisor Apprentice Program* will begin in the following sites:

Retail and Delivery

- ❖ Brooklyn Post Office
- ❖ San Diego Post Office

Processing and Distribution

- ❖ Brooklyn NY P&DC
- ❖ Miami FL P&DC
- ❖ St Paul MN P&DC
- ❖ West Valley P&DC

Upon successful completion of the program, apprentices will be outplaced to an EAS-17 Supervisor position at the discretion of USPS management. The intent of outplacing the apprentice will be preferably within the installation that the apprentice was developed; provided there are authorized, vacant positions available.

Additionally, we plan to host kick-off events for the program, and welcome your participation.

Enclosed is an overview of the *Supervisor Apprentice Program*.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this matter.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Nicholson
Manager
Labor Relations Policy Administration

Enclosures



USPS Supervisor Apprentice Program Overview Guide

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USPS Supervisor Apprentice Program Overview Guide

Program Description

The Supervisor Apprentice Program is a 26-week program that provides employees the opportunity to work as an EAS-16 Supervisor Apprentice. It will develop and prepare apprentices to outplace to an EAS-17 supervisor position and allows the organization to build a talented pipeline to fill frontline supervisor positions.

This development program includes a wide array of training and development opportunities for the apprentice, including but not limited to:

- Supervised on-the-job training
- Behavior and performance modeling
- Coaching and mentoring
- Cross-functional training opportunities
- Completion of USPS Supervisor Program

Upon successful completion of the program, apprentices will be outplaced to a supervisor position. The outplacement position will be determined by USPS management.

Program Objectives

The apprentice will be able to:

Manage a delivery/processing unit and ensure all duties are performed within required performance standards.

- Gather, analyze, and take appropriate action based on data from multiple sources to accomplish operational goals.
- Successfully run a unit to achieve productivity goals.

Build business knowledge.

- Learn and apply knowledge of national and local labor agreements, Postal policies, and applicable regulations to ensure adherence.
- Learn and apply operations knowledge to duties as a frontline supervisor.
- Create and utilize a network of resources and people.

Manage employee performance.

- Supervise an operational unit to achieve daily service/productivity goals.
- Manage employee performance by applying knowledge of labor agreements and Postal policies in combination with communication and listening skills learned in the program.
- Motivate employees to strive to achieve individual service/productivity goals by applying functional skills combined with coaching, communication, and listening skills learned in the program.

Program Requirements

- **Retail and Delivery Units:** Facilities should be level 20 and above. It is recommended that the office have rural and city delivery when possible. The office must use Delivery Operations



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Information System (DOIS). In addition, the facility must provide a capable and willing coach and mentor, as defined below, as this support is crucial to the program.

- **Processing and Logistics Facilities:** Facilities must be level 1, 2 or 3. In addition, the facility must provide a capable and willing coach and mentor, as defined below, as this support is crucial to the program.
- **Cross-functional Assignments:** Apprentices are required to complete cross-functional assignments that include plant or customer service, logistics, maintenance, vehicle maintenance, labor relations, workforce planning, and safety & occupational health. The cross-functional assignments are designed to give trainees an overview of each function and to create a network of support. The operations manager and Field HR, Employee Development are responsible for scheduling the cross-functional assignments.

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Apprentice:** The apprentice will participate in all program activities over the 26-week period. The apprentice should avoid taking leave during this training program when possible. While in this program, the apprentice's workhours, schedule, and reporting locations may vary; however, the apprentice should work only five days per week. The apprentice is a non-exempt employee and will be paid for all hours worked. The apprentice will report to a minimum of two different facilities and may be required to work off-tour. Every effort will be made to notify the apprentice of schedules and reporting locations in a timely manner (minimum of one week's notice). They will attend formal and informal trainings, complete all required training assignments, and perform on-the-job learning activities. The apprentice will work with assigned mentors and coaches to fulfill program requirements.
- **Operations Managers:** The operations manager is either the Postmaster, Manager Customer Service Operations (MCSO), or Manager Post Office Operations (MPOO) for apprentices in Retail and Delivery, and Plant Manager, Sr. Manager Distribution Operations (Sr. MDO), or highest-level MDO for Processing and Distribution. They will partner with Field HR – Workforce Planning to post apprentice positions. These managers will be the selecting official for all apprentice positions. They will schedule and support the cross-functional experience for the apprentice in weeks 12 and 13, and the week 14-17 assignment to a different facility. Cross-functional scheduling will include - Plant or Customer Service (3 days), Logistics (1 day), Maintenance (1 day), and Vehicle Maintenance (1 day). The operations managers will manage leave requests and any questions related to the program. They will also manage any unique or unforeseen circumstances.
- **Mentor:** The apprentice will be assigned one mentor for the program. The mentor will be selected by the Postmaster/MCSO or Plant Manager using the criteria defined in the Supervisor Apprentice Mentorship Program Guide. The mentor is responsible for bi-monthly meetings with their apprentice. Mentors will complete required Skillsoft courses prior to the beginning of the program. The mentor will oversee and guide the coach as needed. And the mentor will ensure the development of the apprentice.



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- **Coach:** The apprentice will be assigned two different coaches during the program. The coach assigned to the apprentice should be a high-performing supervisor in the assigned unit and should be selected by the operations manager. The coach will work side by side with the apprentice, providing daily training on requirements of a supervisor role. The coach is responsible for completing behavioral checklists, evaluating the apprentice's performance, and providing job-related feedback. Coaches will complete required Skillsoft courses prior to being assigned an apprentice.
- **Cross-Functional Managers:** The apprentice will be afforded the opportunity to observe multiple operational and support functions during weeks 12 and 13 of the program. The cross-functional experience will be scheduled by the operations manager (or their designee) or by the Manager, Field HR. The cross-functional managers are responsible for ensuring the apprentice has a positive experience and is afforded the opportunity to learn relevant processes and develop a network of peers. The cross-functional manager will ensure that the apprentice observes and participates in the experience by following the prescribed cross-functional checklist.
- **Manager, Field HR:** The Manager, Field Human Resources (Mgr. FHR) is the program champion and will administratively support the apprentice throughout the program. They, or the Manager, Employee Development, will lead kickoff meetings and conduct the first day meeting with the apprentice, coach, and mentor. The Mgr. FHR will conduct personal check-ins with the apprentice once a month using proscribed conversation script and verifying completion. They will oversee all HR aspects of the program administration to include cross-functional scheduling during weeks 12 and 13: Workforce Planning (1 day), Safety and Occupational Health (1 day), and Labor Relations (2 days).
- **Workforce Planning and Complement:**
 - Workforce Planning and Complement will partner with Operations to post and fill authorized positions.
 - Recommended Review Board:
 - Review Board Chair - Mgr. Field HR, Mgr. Workforce Planning and Complement, or Mgr. Employee Development
 - Review Board Member 1: Operational leader (Example: Manager Operations Integration (District) or Manager Operations Support (Division))
 - Review Board Member 2: Workforce Planning Specialist
- **Employee Development:**
 - Employee Development will:
 - Schedule USP training
 - Monitor learning management system assignments and program progress to ensure successful completion of program
 - Administer program evaluation assessments and surveys
 - Plan and host the apprentice graduation
- **Career Development Team (HQ):** The Career Development team will provide nationwide oversight of the program, including guidance to Field HR and Operations Managers. The team



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will review program feedback/evaluations and will intervene or make adjustments to the program when necessary. They will also conduct periodic check-ins with HR, Operations, and program participants.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Program Questions

1. How many mentors and coaches will the apprentice have in the program?
 - The apprentice will have one mentor and two coaches during the program.
 - The mentor and first coach will be assigned during weeks 1-11, and the second coach will be assigned during weeks 14-17 when the apprentice is assigned to a different office. During weeks 18-26, the apprentice will return to the first office and have the same coach they had during weeks 1-11.
2. Can management put the apprentice on higher-level to run a unit during the program?
 - No. The apprentice is in training and cannot be used in a supervisory capacity except as outlined in the program and with direct oversight from either their coach or mentor.
3. Can EAS-16 apprentices apply for other EAS positions?
 - Yes. If the posting in eCareer indicates the apprentice is otherwise eligible, they may apply and be considered for other EAS positions while in the program.
4. Will the employee receive a salary differential adjustment (SDA) when they are promoted to EAS-16 Apprentice Supervisor?
 - No. EAS-16 Apprentice Supervisors are not eligible for the SDA.

Program Completion

5. Who is responsible for ensuring that the apprentice completes the program?
 - The program champion is the Manager, Field Human Resources. Utilizing the numerous roles and resources in the program, this person is responsible for ensuring that the apprentice completes the program requirements.
6. What happens if an apprentice does not pass all evaluations in the program? Do they graduate/outplace?



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- During the Phase 1 rollout of the Supervisor Apprentice Program, the evaluations will not require a passing score for the apprentice to complete the requirement. They must, however, complete the evaluations. Once completed, and if all other program evaluations and curriculum are completed, the apprentice may graduate and be outplaced.

Learning Management System (HERO)

7. What curriculum components need to be tracked in HERO? Who will manage this?
 - Field Human Resources will monitor HERO reporting and will follow up with the program champion, mentors, and coaches. All parties should also be reviewing HERO curriculum completion status with the apprentice during their scheduled touchpoints. This can be accomplished by having the apprentice log-in to the curriculum and can be an opportunity to uncover challenges and roadblocks the apprentice may be experiencing. A dashboard will be provided to assist with HERO monitoring.
8. What happens if an apprentice does not complete the HERO curriculum within the six months? Will they graduate/outplace?
 - The program champion, the mentor, the coach, and other program support managers will participate in various program checkpoints with the apprentice. During those checkpoints, each manager should review the apprentice's HERO curriculum with them and provide needed support to ensure they stay on target for completion.
 - An apprentice who does not complete the program curriculum and evaluation requirements will not be allowed to graduate or be outplaced. Management will **not** utilize the apprentice in a supervisor capacity until all program requirements are met.

*****Managers must consult their Field Labor Relations Specialist immediately when an apprentice is unable to complete the program within six months.**

Other Questions

9. Who schedules the cross-functional training experience in weeks 12-13?
 - The Postmaster/MSCO/MPOO or Plant Manager/MDO will schedule operational experiences (Plant/Customer Service, Logistics, Maintenance, and Vehicle Maintenance).
 - The Manager, Employee Development, will schedule human resource related cross-functional experiences, including Workforce Planning, Safety and Occupational Health, and Labor Relations.
10. There is a significant backlog in scheduling EAS-17s for USP training. Are we increasing capacity in USP?



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- During the Phase 1 rollout, headquarters will reserve space in the USP for apprentices. We are currently reviewing this process. Apprentices will take priority during the scheduling of classes based on the start date of the program. Additional classes may be implemented to address this need.