

# THE AMERICAN **APWU** Postal Worker

November / December 2022



## Every Day is Union Pride Day!

**APWU members across the country celebrated our record-breaking COLA by showing our union pride. Every day is a good day to be union-proud!**



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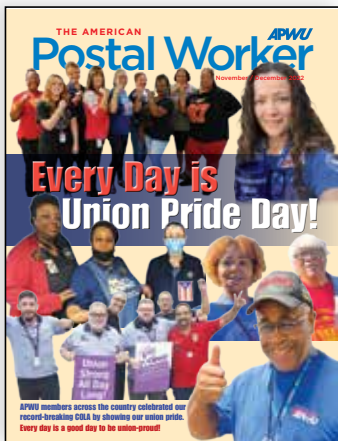
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### ABOUT THE COVER:

"Every Day is Union Pride Day!" – On Sept. 15, 2022, APWU members from across the country celebrated our record-breaking COLA by showing our union pride. Every day is a good day to be union-proud!



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## The American Postal Worker

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PRESIDENT MARK DIMONDSTEIN

# Unity is Key to Our Continuing Progress

**T**he APWU is truly one of the most democratic unions in the United States. This was again reflected in the recently concluded national officer election with our “one person, one vote” mail-ballot election. Different from most unions, every APWU member has the opportunity to have their voice heard in choosing their national union leaders. The union belongs to the members, as it should, and our internal union democracy is part of what makes us “Union Strong, All Day Long!”

Elections are times when any candidate can say or promise anything. But I believe incumbent officers must stand on our concrete record of accomplishments. That is why I, and the entire Solidarity Team, chose to run a positive, upbeat campaign based on facts. We refused to engage in, or respond to, negative mudslinging campaigning.

You responded to the truth. I am deeply appreciative and honored by your vote of confidence in re-electing me as national president for my fourth term by an overwhelming majority of 68-32 percent, and in electing the entire and unified “APWU Solidarity Team.” The outcome undoubtedly reflects the recognition of the many gains that we have collectively made as a union: from the outstanding union contracts, including record Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) increases and impressive job security; historic postal reform; strong COVID health and safety protections; building a Grand Alliance to Save the Public Postal Service; to the successful battles to protect the public Postal Service, and so much more.

As the great abolitionist Frederick Douglas once penned, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” With the mandate of the election results, we will continue to march on the road of struggle and progress - from the workroom floor to the streets, and from the halls of Congress to postal headquarters. Building on our many successes, we will face the challenges and opportunities ahead – fighting for a workplace free of harassment and intimidation; continuing to negotiate solid union contracts; protecting jobs and service in light of the new “network modernization” plans; expanding postal services, organizing the unorganized; advocating for a pro-postal Board of Governors independent of Postmaster General (PMG) DeJoy;

engaging in full-fledged solidarity with workers in struggle, and in the crucial fight to defend and expand voting rights (including vote-by-mail), and against the dangerous ongoing march toward authoritarianism and dictatorship. Along the way, you, the members, will be key to our success - the foundation and strength of our union starts with you and your union involvement!

**“AS THE GREAT ABOLITIONIST FREDERICK DOUGLAS ONCE PENNED, “IF THERE IS NO STRUGGLE, THERE IS NO PROGRESS.” WITH THE MANDATE OF THE ELECTION RESULTS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MARCH ON THE ROAD OF STRUGGLE AND PROGRESS -- FROM THE WORKROOM FLOOR TO THE STREETS, AND FROM THE HALLS OF CONGRESS TO POSTAL HEADQUARTERS.**

And unity is the key to our continuing progress. With the union election behind us, and regardless of whom one supported, it is vital that we now unite in our common struggle for respect, dignity, and the uplifting of postal and all workers. We must continue to unite with the people of the country in defense of the public Postal Service. The greedy Wall Street privatizers want nothing more than to destroy our union, our union contracts, our jobs, our national treasure, and to turn the Postal Service into a profit-making machine for private corporations.

As we look ahead, I urge all of you to become ever more active in your union by attending union meetings, volunteering for union committees, joining in rallies and press conferences, standing up for each other on the workroom floor, fighting for workplace safety, signing up the non-members, engaging in workers’ solidarity and sharing your ideas. I look forward to working with all of you – members, union activists, local and state leaders, and national officers -- over the coming years, as indeed “the struggle for justice continues!” ■

# SEASON'S GREETINGS!

**The APWU National Executive Board & Officers**

**Wish You and Your Family**

**Good Health and Happiness**

**this Holiday Season!**

## IT PAYS TO BE UNION

**E**mployees in APWU-represented crafts recently received retroactive payments in October. The payments were part of the wage increases that APWU members mobilized to win in our 2021-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA or "union contract").

### **The next union negotiated raises will be in paychecks dated Dec. 9, 2022**

APWU-represented workers will also receive a union-negotiated general wage increase equal to 1.3 percent of their pay (2.3 percent for PSEs, who do not receive Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA)), effective Nov. 19. This raise will appear in paychecks dated Dec. 9, 2022. This latest wage increase caps off a year of strong raises secured in the latest union contract, and follows the record-breaking 2022 COLA for career employees, which totaled \$1.81 per hour.

"The more that we strengthen our union, the more power we have to demand an even stronger union contract," said APWU President Dimondstein. "It is everyone's job to do that by talking to our non-member coworkers about why they should join the union."

Through the power of collective bargaining and members like you, we have won these hard-fought union gains in our wages. These include our annual general wage increases, two cost-of-living-adjustments per year during the life of the contract, and general increases for PSE pay. But we all need to pitch-in to strengthen the union – and that means you!

We all can play a role in signing up our coworkers to our union. We encourage everyone to have conversations with your non-member coworkers to make sure they join our union. These new raises secured in our latest union contract could only be won by the strength of our collective endeavor!

Discuss organizing in your union meetings. Let the non-members know that the best way to protect their families and our livelihoods, is as a member of the union. It pays to belong!

### **SIGN UP YOUR NON-MEMBER COWORKERS**

Our job of organizing for a stronger union continues. Ask your non-member coworkers to scan this QR code to access the online form 1187 to join the union. ■







# More Information on Management's Network Modernization Plan

IF, AND WHEN, THESE PROPOSED NETWORK CHANGES ARE IMPLEMENTED, OUR UNION CONTRACT AFFORDS EMPLOYEES VITAL AND SIGNIFICANT PROTECTIONS.

**F**or informational purposes, the APWU leadership is committed to keeping members informed and up-to-date on management's network plans and changes, both through the pages of this magazine and with other forms of communications.

We reported in the last issue of this magazine about management's network modernization plans: "In broad strokes their [management] plans consist of realigning the mail processing network with a 'three-pronged' approach: building a number of new large processing plants; expanding a number of other plants; and reconfiguring many existing plants. On the delivery side, management is planning to create large carrier units called Sorting and Delivery Centers (SDCs) capable of handling package sorting equipment."

The main goals of the APWU leadership in approaching these management initiatives are to protect our jobs, promote good and improved service to the American public, and enforce contractual provisions in relation to centralizing and/or consolidating postal operations.

In light of these aims, national APWU leaders of all the affected crafts – Clerk, Motor Vehicle Service, and Maintenance – along with the APWU Industrial Relations Director and President are fully engaged. We are holding a series of APWU-specific meetings with the Postmaster General and Deputy Postmaster General. These meet-

ings provide an opportunity for the APWU to gather more information regarding management's plans, as well as to provide union input and raise our concerns.

The APWU has thus far received a number of important verbal commitments from management, which the union leadership is pressing to have placed into writing. These include:

1. Management intends to keep open all the current retail units and operations in any post office where the letter carriers are moved to larger scale delivery units.
2. Mail delivered to retail units for distribution to the box sections will be transported by Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) drivers, at least where PVS drivers are currently performing such work.
3. The USPS is committed to examining future possibilities of bringing contracted truck driving work "in-house" to create more APWU-represented jobs.
4. Sorting and Delivery units will continue to be coded as Function 4, Delivery operations.
5. The union contract will be adhered to in regards to timetables of impact statements and potential excessing events.

Follow-up meetings between the national APWU and USPS management will be held in the near future.

In the meantime, management has informed the union that the opening of 12 of the 18 sites scheduled for the

initial implementation of SDCs has been postponed until June of 2023.

Additionally, the national union leadership continues to hold meetings with local union leaders at the impacted facilities. Included in these ongoing meetings are: National Executive Board members, assistant craft directors, appropriate department directors, and National Business Agents in the impacted areas.

If, and when, these proposed network changes are implemented, our union contract affords employees vital and significant protections. APWU career employees with six years of service are afforded job security protection with our no lay-off provision. In addition, all career employees, regardless of years of service, who were on the rolls on Sept. 20, 2021, are likewise protected from lay-offs during the life of the current union contract. No career employee can be excessed more than 50 miles from their current installation. Furthermore, any potential excessing outside of the craft or installation must involve proper and timely notification to the APWU Regional Coordinators and notification to the local president (under Article 12.5.C.4) for any excessing within an installation. Each craft director will provide future guidance for specific circumstances involving their craft.

Stay tuned to future editions of this magazine and at the union website for more information regarding the network modernization initiative. If you haven't already, you can sign up for e-mail updates as well at [apwu.org](http://apwu.org). ■

# Postal Workers Shine as Millions Cast Votes

## National Election Task Force Utilizes Ballot Monitors Across the Country

Following the success of the 2020 National Election Task Force, APWU members once again took part in the labor-management process designed to ensure the swift and accurate delivery of election mail.

Nearly 200 members took on the role of ballot monitor in facilities across the country. Their goal was to monitor election mail and verify that ballots were processed efficiently and accurately in their facility. They reported problems, such as backlogged mail, to a supervisor and our APWU task force representative, to quickly rectify the problem.

Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard, who is APWU's representative on the National Election Task Force, said: "Together, we wanted to allow for a streamlined process to guarantee all complaints could be addressed in a timely manner, as a reduction in service standards for election mail was not an option."

"Postal workers have got the backs of the people in the country when it comes to exercising our right to vote," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "Vote-by-mail works and we must make sure that everyone has access to this simple and effective way of casting our election ballots."

## Voters are Right to Trust Vote-by-Mail

Vote-by-Mail remains one of the most effective ways of expanding our democratic rights. As we went to



press, 2022 midterm election vote-by-mail figures were not available, but more people were expected to vote in this way than the 30 million who cast mail-in ballots in the 2018 midterm elections.

The USPS Office of the Inspector General reported that, in 2020, the Postal Service processed and delivered at least 135 million ballots to and from voters.

According to Postal Service estimates, mail ballots were delivered on-time approximately 99.7 percent of the time.

Eight states, plus the District of Columbia, now conduct all elections by mail and a further 27 allow voters to mail in their ballots without requiring a reason. This removes many barriers to voting, such as long wait times, poor weather, transportation problems, and work schedules.

Getting a ballot in your mailbox is a physical reminder to vote, and it allows time to get information on the candidates and cast a ballot, regardless of health status.

It is crucial that we continue to fight for legislation that grants greater access to the ballot box, as expanding voter participation strengthens our democracy. ■



## APWU is Proud of Director Beard's Award from the New York Amsterdam News

On Thursday, Sept. 29, 2022, APWU Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard was recognized for both her work on social justice and women's issues, and for her contributions as treasurer of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) during the 8th Labor Awards Breakfast in New York, NY.

The award was presented to Director Beard by editor-in-chief and publisher of New York Amsterdam News Elinor Tatum. New York Amsterdam News is America's most influential and oldest continuously-published Black newspaper, which has been in existence since 1909.

During the ceremony, APWU National Business Agent Rachel Walthall, along with several CLUW vice presidents, received a joint award for their work and commitment to equality.

At the awards ceremony Director Beard stated, "Sharing this moment with my CLUW sisters and APWU union makes me prouder than you can ever imagine." ■

# OFFICIAL RESULTS IN ELECTION

## President Dimondstein Overwhelmingly Re-Elected Entire APWU Solidarity Team Prevails

**P**resident Mark Dimondstein was re-elected to a fourth term when votes in the APWU National Officer Elections were tallied on Oct. 6. Also re-elected were Legislative and Political Director Judy Beard, and Retirees Department Director Nancy Olumekor. Human Relations Department Director Daleo Freeman was elected to a first full term.

Yared Wonde was elected the new Southern Region Coordinator and Arrion Brown was elected the new Support Services Division Director.

The election results have been verified by the American Arbitration Association (AAA). Winners are identified by an asterisk.

"I am honored by the strong vote of confidence from APWU members for my re-election and the election of every APWU Solidarity Team member," said APWU President Mark Dimondstein. "As candidates, we proudly ran a campaign focused on our collective accomplishments and our vision for the future of our great union."

"I congratulate all those officers who were re-elected and welcome those who are newly-elected," Dimondstein added. "Now that the election is behind us, let us all unite in APWU solidarity to continue building union power as we face the many opportunities and challenges to come."

### General and Administrative Officers

#### President

Mark Dimondstein*	17,768
John L. Marcotte	8,258

#### Legislative/Political Director

Judy Beard*	17,723
Thomas Benson	8,172

#### Human Relations Director

Daleo Freeman*	17,942
Doris Simmons	7,824

### Regional Coordinators

#### Southern Region

Sam Wood	1,833
Yared Wonde*	2,081

#### Clerk Division

#### National Business Agents, Central Region

#### Cincinnati Region, (A)

Michael D. Schmid*	479
Mark E. Graham	273

#### Minneapolis Region, (B)

Gregory Becker*	346
Christopher Mark Hendrickson	223

#### National Business Agents, Northeast Region

#### New England Region, (A)

Bill Mazurowski*	663
Thomas S. Smith	102
Scott Adams	334

#### National Business Agents, Southern Region

#### Atlanta Region, (C)

Keenan D. Anthony, Sr.	309
Sandra Munoz Hernandez*	773
William G. Flanagan, Jr.	310

#### Dallas Region, (C)

Diann Scurlark*	362
Alex Aleman	255
Ben Martinez	272

#### National Business Agents, Western Region

#### San Francisco Region, (A)

Sonia E. Canchola*	834
Charquita Rainey	490

#### San Francisco Region, (C)

Eric A. Van Dyke	563
Fabiola Dominguez*	584
Terry L. Hood	173

### Motor Vehicle Service Division

#### National Business Agents, Central Region

Mark Krueger	202
Dave Cook*	212

#### National Business Agents, Eastern Region

Garrett C. Langley*	193
Brian R. McLaurin	56
Raymond J. Scanlon	84

#### National Business Agents, Northeast Region

Stephen D. Mohan	176
Rick White*	295

### Support Services Division

#### Director

Robin "Robbie" Robertson	74
Arrion Brown*	142
Aaron T. Young	43

### Retirees Department

#### Director

Nancy E. Olumekor*	6,663
Robert L. Jeffrey, Jr.	2,194



# OF NATIONAL UNION OFFICERS



Members of the Election and Tally Committees. (from left-to-right) Back Row: Tony Turner, Rebecca Gill, Rictarsha Westmoreland, Adrain Alman, Joyce Harris, Carrie Wolff, Sam Wood, Mark Jennings, Vinny (Vicente) Crespo. Front row: Cindy Mahoney, Michelle Elliott, and Abel Mawolo.

## Retiree National Convention Delegates

### Southern Region

Patricia A. McGriff\* .....1,139  
Kim H. Guy ..... 788

## Uncontested National Officers

### General and Administrative Officers

#### Executive Vice President

Debby Szeredy

#### Secretary-Treasurer

Elizabeth "Liz" Powell

#### Industrial Relations Director

Charles "Charlie" Cash

#### Organization Director

Anna Smith

#### Research and Education Director

Joyce B. Robinson

#### Health Plan Director

Sarah Jane Rodriguez

## Regional Coordinators

### Central Region

Sharyn M. Stone

### Eastern Region

AJ Jones

### Northeast Region

Tiffany Foster

### Western Region

Omar M. Gonzalez

## Clerk Division

### Director

Lamont A. Brooks

### Assistant Director (A)

Sam Lisenbe

### Assistant Director, (B)

Lynn Pallas-Barber

### National Business Agents, Central Region

### Chicago Region, (A)

Linda Turney

### Chicago Region, (B)

Devendra Rathore "D"

### Chicago Region, (C)

James Stevenson

### Cincinnati Region, (B)

Michael W. Funk, Jr.

### Minneapolis Region, (A)

Todd M. Elkerton

### St. Louis Region, (A)

Robert D. Kessler

### St. Louis Region, (B)

Daniel F. Skemp

### Wichita Region, (A)

Ashley D. Cargill

### National Business Agents, Eastern Region

### Philadelphia Region, (A)

Robert Romanowski

### Philadelphia Region, (B)

John Louis Jackson, Jr.

### Philadelphia Region, (C)

Vincent A. Tarducci

### Washington DC Region, (A)

Rachel A. Walthall

### Washington DC Region, (B)

Pamela R. Richardson

### National Business Agents, Northeast Region

### New England Region, (B)

Scott M. Hoffman

### New England Region, (C)

Thomas "Tom" O'Brien

### New York Region, (A)

Peter "Pete" Coradi

### New York Region, (B)

Elizabeth "Liz" Swigert

### New York Region, (C)

Bernard "Bernie" C. Timmerman

### National Business Agents, Southern Region

### Atlanta Region, (A)

James "Jim" DeMauro

### Atlanta Region, (B)

Doris Orr-Richardson

Dallas Region, (A)

Jack Crawford

Dallas Region, (B)

Charles Tillman

Memphis Region, (A)

Joe H. Jolley, Jr.

Memphis Region, (B)

Pamela Smith

National Business Agents, Western Region

Denver Region, (A)

Lamont Green

Denver Region, (B)

Joseph M. Zamenick

Northwest Region, (A)

Brian Dunsmore

Northwest Region, (B)

Brian Dunn

San Francisco Region, (B)

Mike Hetticher

San Francisco Region, (D)

Chuck Locke

## Maintenance Division

Director

Idowu Balogun

Assistant Director, (A)

Terry B. Martinez

Assistant Director, (B)

Jason Treier

National Business Agents, Maintenance Division

Central Region, (A)

Craig Fisher

Central Region, (B)

Jeffrey Scott Beaton

Central Region, (C)

Curtis Walker



Eastern Region

Kenneth Lester

Northeast Region

Dave Sarnacki

Southern Region, (A)

John Gearhard

Southern Region, (B)

Carlos Paz

Western Region, (A)

Hector Baez

Western Region, (B)

Louis M. Kingsley

## Motor Vehicle Service Division

Director

Michael O. Foster

Assistant Director

Kenneth (Ken) Prinz

National Business Agents, Motor Vehicle Service Division

Southern Region, Southeast Sub-Region

Bruce E. Amey

Southern Region, Southwest Sub-Region

Dyrike Shaw

Western Region

Jerome A. Pittman

## All-Craft National Business Agents

Alaskan Area

James M. Patarini

Caribbean Area

Samuel A. Hernandez Algarin

Pacific Area

Rufina J. Pagaduan

## Support Services Division

National Business Agent, Support Services Division

Orlando L. Anderson

## Retiree National Convention Delegates

Central Region

Paul Browning

Eastern Region

Cynthia Nesmith

Northeast Region

Leona Draper

Western Region

Patricia Ann Williams

# Court Criticizes USPS's 2020 Policy Changes

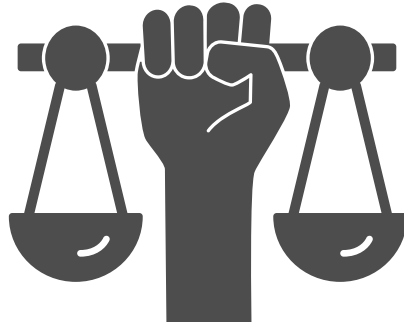
In October, Judge Emmet Sullivan on the federal D.C. District Court criticized the USPS in *State of New York v. DeJoy* for Postmaster General DeJoy's early changes that tanked mail service in 2020.

DeJoy, appointed in 2020, made policy changes that landed the USPS in court. Removing sorting machines, restricting overtime, and cutting trips caused an uproar when state and local governments were looking to the USPS to help manage the pandemic by providing social services, including unprecedented levels of election mail.

The State of New York led the lawsuit joined by the Attorney Generals of Hawaii, New Jersey, New York City, and San Francisco.

Sullivan found for the states and cities on some of their claims, such as that the USPS should have brought the June 2020 policy changes to the Postal Regulatory Commission before implementation. He noted that the law required them to analyze the impact of the changes on service in the special circumstances of the pandemic.

Being uninformed about the effect of its policies was not consistent with the law, Sullivan held. As for Sections 101



and 403 of the Postal Reorganization Act (PRA), Sullivan found that the USPS's conduct did not rise to the level of being outside of their legal authority. The policy changes were not a "clear departure by the agency from its statutory mandate or...blatantly lawless agency action."

While acknowledging that the PRA requires the USPS to follow certain policies, in this case, the legal requirements were not explicit enough that the court could replace its own judgment for the USPS's. Even so, he gave the states and cities a win and enjoined the USPS from prohibiting extra and late trips where they cause a ten percent or more drop in service performance scores.

Local and national leaders at APWU were crucial in providing information about the changes. We continue to work with allies who fight for reliable, equitable, public postal services. Recently, we pressed the USPS to renew local and national postal election taskforces, which are critical to addressing problems with election mail, in real-time, rather than waiting for court action.

We continue to monitor litigation on these issues. Check the APWU website for updates and how to get involved in protecting quality service. ■

## Arbitrator Sharnoff Issues National-Level Award on ADUS Craft Jurisdiction

Arbitrator Joseph Sharnoff issued a national-level RI-399 award on Sept. 1, 2022, concerning the Automated Delivery Unit Sorter (ADUS), which was the last of four craft jurisdiction awards that the APWU had presented at the national-level.

In the case, Sharnoff found that management had "acted appropriately and within its right to exercise discretion in making craft determinations in accordance with the RI-399 guidelines and principles."

Sharnoff rejected both the NPMHU's and APWU's challenges to the Postal Service's craft determinations. He upheld management's jurisdiction decisions and left the status quo in place, meaning that both clerks and mail handlers will continue to perform certain duties on the ADUS per the Postal Service's initial craft jurisdic-

tion determination.

Sharnoff did, however, find that the USPS properly designated the Clerk Craft as the primary craft for operation of the ADUS in facilities without mail handlers. He rejected NPMHU's assertion that the addition of an ADUS in a facility with no mail handlers would result in four consecutive hours of mail handler work. In facilities with both clerks and mail handlers, Sharnoff confirmed that both would continue to perform specific duties as initially decided by the Postal Service. Management has taken the position that craft jurisdiction for the ADUS applies to the Small Delivery Unit Sorter (SDUS) and the Single Induction Package Sorter (SIPS).

There are now no more national-level RI-399 cases pending. ■







# Be There for Your APWU Family

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

**I**t is the holiday season and our postal workers will be stretched to their limit. Then we add a hostile work environment, long hours, and short staffing. Postal workers worry about their health, how to meet their family obligations, and how the Postmaster General (PMG) is taking the Postal Service down a slippery slope, adversely slowing down our tried and true high service standards, closing rural and urban post offices, and consolidating plants.

We used to have a mail processing network that backed each other up with the necessary equipment at every facility. We cancelled our raw mail, postmarked it, processed it on our DBCS, sorting down to carrier routes, providing the best mail service within each SCF area.

Peak season, elections, and holidays are where we shone. Outrageous overtime didn't exist, late trips were low, we had more time to spend with our families, and all mail was cleared each night. We had time to work Operation Santa Claus; we had holiday festivities in our work areas with our co-workers. Our customers really appreciated us. We need to build our union power back. We need you now! Make a New Year's resolution to become active in the APWU.

**WE NEED TO BUILD OUR UNION  
POWER BACK.  
WE NEED YOU NOW! MAKE A NEW  
YEAR'S RESOLUTION TO BECOME  
ACTIVE IN THE APWU.**

Do you have equal concern for each other? If one person suffers, every person suffers. The people in our communities need to work with us, and we need them to know we continue to be essential and we need their help to fight the PMG. There will be blessings when you care and work together for a better Postal Service.

I know there are times when you're worn out, thinking you can't take another step, and your schedule is so full. Many times, that is also the feeling of your union representatives. Yet our collective will and perseverance continue. We are hoping that more workers will join us.

We can't give up on each other and allow management's continued toxic work environment. Our union is only as powerful as our members' strength on the workroom floor. If you only knew how important it is to stand and work together, you can achieve the impossible. All of you can be true leaders and make a real difference. Reignite your passion and volunteer to help power up your union local and/or state.

**"WE CAN'T GIVE UP ON EACH OTHER AND  
ALLOW MANAGEMENT'S CONTINUED  
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STAND AND WORK TOGETHER, YOU CAN  
ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE."**

"Leadership is helping any group of two or more people achieve their common goals" says Les McKeown author of *Do Lead/Share Your Vision. Inspire Others. Achieve the Impossible*. You can lead by helping the union while you're at work. There is plenty of work to be done.

You can wake up every morning filled with excitement because you are a part of a group of union activists, with a plan that works toward making our workroom floors safer, fighting for better staffing, more jobs, and a better working environment.

We are all leaders and need to vote in our union elections. It's important to find out about the candidates just like in the elections for Congress and for the U.S. President. It is sad to see that in 2022, out of 192,429 union ballots that went out to members, approximately 26,397 members sent ballots back. In the 1980s, 1990s, and up until 2010, we would get between 60,000 to 106,000 members participating. We're losing our members' activism. We thank the 26,397 members that voted. We hope all members vote in the Nov. 8 midterm elections and vote by mail. Wishing you strength, compassion, and union activism through the holiday season and into the New Year! ■



# APWU November-December QUIZ

Three lucky winners of the new *American Postal Worker* quiz will receive

a \$50 coupon for the APWU store. Would you spend it on a union t-shirt or put it towards an APWU jacket or watch? To enter the quiz, email your answers to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org) by Dec. 1, together with your name, address, local and EIN. Winners will be randomly selected and published in the next magazine from among those who correctly answer the following:

1. On Dec. 4, 1906, the NFPOC, one of APWU's pre-cursor unions, was officially chartered by the American Federation of Labor. What do the initials NFPOC stand for?
2. On what date did our new Collective Bargaining Agreement come into force?
3. What form do you need to complete to report unsafe workplace conditions or practices?

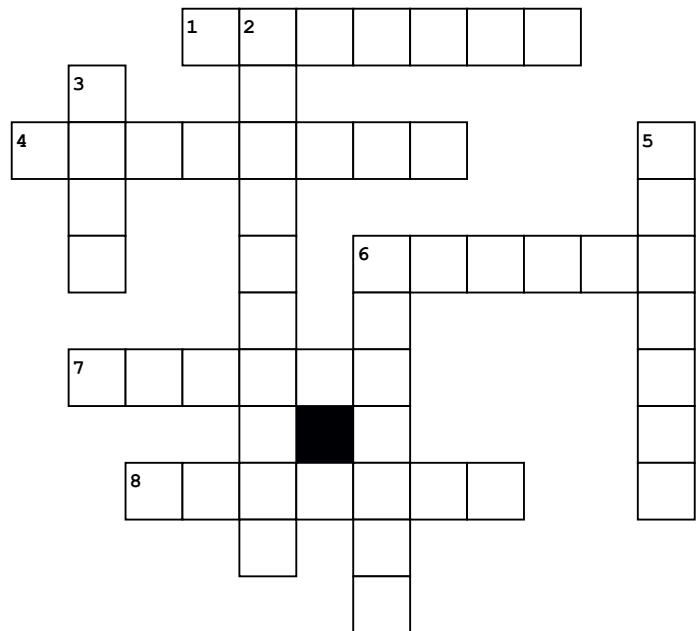
## APWU CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### Across

1. This young union leader, Clara \_\_\_\_\_, helped organize the "Uprising of the 20,000" strike of garment workers in 1909.
4. Also known as a Collective Bargaining Agreement, many of our union rights are contained in this document.
6. Moe \_\_\_\_\_ led the Great Postal Strike and was president of the APWU from 1980-2001.
7. A philatelist is someone who collects what?
8. This financial service was provided through the Post Office until 1966 and could be a part of the future of expanded services at the USPS.

### Down

2. Open \_\_\_\_\_ is the yearly opportunity for eligible members to join or alter their health care coverage with the APWU Health Plan.
3. This fund is built on voluntary member contributions and is the only way that the union can make political campaign donations.
5. This perpetual stamp means the public doesn't have to add penny stamps to their mail when postal prices go up.
6. "Union \_\_\_\_\_" U.S. corporations spent at least \$340 million a year on this "disgusting" activity that silences workers' voices.



Answers: Across: 1. Lemlich; 4. Contract; 6. Biller; 7. Stamps; 8. Banking  
Down: 2. Enrollment; 3. CIPA; 5. Forever; 6. busting

## We want your feedback!

What do you like about the *American Postal Worker* magazine and what would you like to change? Is there a column you always read? Is there a regular feature that you'd like to see? We want to hear your feedback. Scan the QR code or visit [apwu.org/magazine-survey](http://apwu.org/magazine-survey) to take the survey.





SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

# Commercial Crime Policy Bond Coverage

**B**ond coverage was renewed for three years, effective July 1, 2022. Local and state affiliates should remember that a bond is a guarantee to protect unions from financial loss arising from fraudulent or dishonest acts in the handling of funds or other property by officers and/or employees. Violations of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) bonding requirement may be punishable by fines up to \$10,000 and imprisonment for up to one year. As cyber technology becomes more sophisticated, at an alarming rate, it is important to be proactive in protecting local assets from these types of losses. Implementing Commercial Crime Policy coverage would provide coverage for forgery or alteration, computer theft, and funds transfer fraud for the national and locals or affiliates listed on the Labor Organization Bond.

Local affiliates have Labor Organization Bond and Crime Policy coverage, if these circumstances arise, to protect local assets.

- **Forgery or Alteration** - Coverage is provided for losses resulting directly from “forgery” or alteration (coverage not applicable to employees of the named insured) of checks, drafts, promissory notes, or similar written promises, orders or directions to pay a sum certain in “money” that are:
- **Computer Theft** - Covers loss of or damage to “money” “securities” and “other property” resulting directly from the use of any computer to fraudulently cause a transfer of that property from inside the “premises” or “banking premises.”
- **Funds Transfer Fraud** - Will pay for loss of “funds” resulting directly from a “fraudulent instruction” directing a financial institution to transfer, pay or deliver “funds” from your “transfer account.”

## Secretary-Treasurer’s Conference

The Secretary-Treasurer’s Department is currently planning for the 2023 Secretary-Treasurer’s conference. As information becomes available, local and state presidents will be notified to ensure that they reserve a seat for the training opportunities provided. We recommend that local and state presidents and treasurers attend at least one Secretary-Treasurer’s conference per year.

Please contact the Secretary-Treasurer’s Department if you need assistance with determining the amount of bond coverage your local will need, or if your local needs to increase or decrease the current amount of coverage.

## Preparing for the New Year!

Here is a quick reminder of what locals should be doing during November and December in preparation for 2023.

- Review 2022 budget over and under expenditures and prepare 2023 budget;
- Shred financial records prior to 2017 (remember, you must keep financial records for five years, including the current year.);
- Audit of financial records must be done at least once a year;
- Update local inventory of assets. Properly dispose of old or broken equipment and furniture with an adopted motion from the membership;
- Archive membership meeting minutes and Executive Board meetings for 2022;
- Prepare a calendar of deadlines and local commitments for 2023;
- Prepare to file the Department of Labor LM report within 90 days after the end of the fiscal year.

I would like to wish all of the members of the APWU happy holidays and a prosperous New Year. ■

## 2023 APWU Scholarships

The 2023 scholarship deadline for the E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship, and Best Essay Award is March 31, 2023. The APWU Scholarship Program is one of the great benefits of being a member of the APWU. The E.C. Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship awards 10 recipients \$2,000 annually for four years to use towards an undergraduate program. Five Vocational Scholarship winners receive up to \$3,000 to be used for three years of study in a specific trade, technical, industrial, or vocational school. One “Best Essay” winner is selected from the applicant pool to receive a one-time \$2,000 award for their four-year college tuition. The 2023 APWU Scholarship applications are accessible on the Secretary-Treasurer’s page of the APWU website.



# APWU Members Step Up Hurricane Disaster Relief



Tampa Area Local President Mike Searle, National Business Agent Jim DeMauro, and Local Vice President Don Barron are among the members who gathered and transported essential supplies to the affected area.



Miami Dolphins' Ben Stille and Manasota Area Local union leader Kathleen Kaplan.



Southwest Florida Area Local President Sam Wood and Union Office Manager Kim Carbonell.

non-perishables to members and neighboring APWU locals.

During a North Fort Myers community event sponsored by the Miami Dolphins NFL team, Manasota Area Local members volunteered with World Central Kitchen, a non-profit organization providing fresh, hot food relief in response to natural disasters. Cooked food and emergency relief supplies were distributed to families in need.

## Support Postal Worker Relief Through PERF

The APWU urges union members to make contributions to the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF), a charitable organization established by postal unions, management associations, and the USPS. It benefits active and retired postal workers who have suffered significant property loss or damage from natural disasters.

To donate, checks or money orders can be made payable to PERF and mailed to PO Box 41220, Fredericksburg, VA 22404-1220. Donations can also be made online by visiting [www.postalrelief.com](http://www.postalrelief.com) or through payroll deduction by designating #10268 during the Combined Federal Campaign.

Donations to PERF are tax-deductible, and we encourage all members to tell a coworker or start a collection drive in your locals. For more information on PERF, assistance eligibility, and other resources regarding aid after disaster, please visit [www.apwu.org/natural-disaster-relief](http://www.apwu.org/natural-disaster-relief).

In September, two disastrous hurricanes caused devastation and hardship in the Caribbean and southeastern United States. As recovery efforts began in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Hurricane Ian swept through southwest Florida as a category 4 storm. Heavy rain and high winds wreaked havoc, causing widespread flooding, destroying infrastructure, and displacing thousands. Twelve post offices between southwest and central Florida were knocked out as a result.

In spite of their loss, APWU members in Florida and beyond mobilized to lend a helping hand in aid efforts.

The Tampa Area Local led an effort to provide bottled water, driving eight hours round-trip, with three trucks and a trailer to bring the supplies to the affected area. "Despite water being rationed in the Tampa area, we and our members were able to scrounge up 250 cases of water - that's over 12,000lbs," reported Tampa Area Local 259 President Michael Searle.

Southwest Florida Area Local (SWFAL) President Sam Wood coordinated an APWU donation drive to distribute drinkable water and

## Continuing Relief Efforts

Our thoughts are with all APWU members and their communities affected by these horrible storms. APWU national leaders have been in contact with our locals in the affected areas and are working with them to assist members in need.

## Climate Change Is a Workers' Issue

We cannot ignore the impact of climate change, as natural disasters continue to occur on a more frequent basis.

At the 26th Biennial National Convention, APWU delegates passed resolution 129, resolving that the national APWU, local, state and AFL-CIO bodies support the Green New Deal. This legislation would move America to 100 percent renewable and clean energy, reduce greenhouse gases, and promote sustainability. It supports the creation of millions of new union jobs in the transition from fossil fuel industries, while preserving a livelihood for those whose jobs may be affected.

In the shift to a more sustainable world, the APWU also supports the inclusion of an electric fleet of Next Generation Delivery Vehicles. No matter rain, sleet nor snow, the public knows that it can count on postal workers to deliver the mail. Let us do our part in reducing carbon emissions to promote a livable planet for generations to come. ■



# Retro Pay and Our Union Contract

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

**F**inally! The retroactive payments owed under the 2021-2022 National Agreement (union contract) have been processed. The payment, commonly known as “retro pay” or “backpay”, was included in paychecks dated Oct. 28, 2022 - eight months after the 2021-2024 National Agreement was ratified.

I am pleased that you have finally received the payments owed, but the length of time it took to process those payments was unacceptable. When a new contract is established, it takes significant reprogramming of software systems to implement the new parts of the contract. Our latest union contract included ground-breaking changes that required more programming than any contract in recent memory. When Postal Service management scheduled the programming changes, they placed the processing of retroactive payments at the back of the line. The payments were originally scheduled for 2023. We demanded that the processing of these payments be moved up and filed a national dispute. The Postal Service ultimately moved the payments up and active employees received them via direct deposit or paper check on Oct. 28, 2022.

No single employee's retroactive payment will be the same nor can they be calculated easily. Payments are based on the number of paid hours (work or paid leave) an employee had during the retroactive “periods.” The periods are defined as:

- Nov. 20, 2021 through June 3, 2022
  - 1.3% General increase for all employees
  - 1.0% Additional increase for Postal Support Employees (PSEs)
- Feb. 26, 2022 through June 3, 2022
  - \$0.63 per hour COLA for career employees
- April 9, 2022 through July 29, 2022
  - Extra \$0.50 per hour for PSEs
- Sept. 25, 2021 through June 3, 2022
  - Pay Changes to Grade 11 employees

Former employees who had paid hours during the retro periods will also receive a payment. If an employee retired, resigned, or separated for any other reason, they

will receive a payment in the form of a paper check that is typically sent to the last installation they worked at. These former employees should reach out to that installation to arrange receiving their check.

Questions about the retroactive payment should be addressed to your state or local officers and stewards. If necessary, state or local officers can then escalate the question to the Industrial Relations Department.

I want to express my appreciation to our APWU family members whose work and dedication is invaluable to us all. The employees in the Information Technology/Accounting Services (IT/AS) unit did all the work behind the scenes that led to these payments. Without their work, none of us would receive a paycheck from the Postal Service. They, too, are owed a retroactive payment. It will be processed in Pay Period 26 and appear in their Dec. 23, 2022 paychecks.

Many of the changes that were agreed to in the union contract have also now been implemented. Two more went into effect on Sept. 24, 2022 (Pay Period 21-2022). including:

- 40 Hours of Advanced Leave to Part Time Flexible (PTF) Employees and PSEs;
- Preferred rate for the APWU Health Plan Consumer Driven Option (CDHP). Time spent in an FEHB plan as a PSE will now count towards receiving the preferred rate. It is possible some APWU members may be owed refunds. The Industrial Relations Department is currently working with the Postal Service to identify these members.

There are still some changes to the contract that are being programmed and have yet to be implemented. These include the uniform/work clothes allowance rollover and the additional one hour of annual leave per pay period for PSEs who work in RMPOs. An announcement will be made when these changes are implemented.

Negotiating a contract is always a huge undertaking. But the work doesn't stop with ratification. Implementation also takes extensive work and the Industrial Relations Department is working everyday towards full implementation.

**Solidarity! ■**





# Coughs and Sneezes Spread Diseases

**I**t is that time of year where respiratory illnesses are on the rise. The common cold, influenza, and COVID-19 all spread in similar manners. As such, slowing the spread of these viruses can be accomplished by doing a few simple things:

Talk to your doctor about vaccinations and, if able, get vaccinated against the flu and COVID-19.

Take everyday actions that prevent the spread of germs:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Follow Postal Service policy and do not go to work when sick; if you start to feel sick at work, go home.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw it in the trash after you use it and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs that can cause respiratory illnesses like flu.
- For flu, CDC recommends that you (or your child) stay home for at least 24 hours after fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine. The stay-at-home guidance for COVID-19 may be different.



- Wear a good fitting facemask to help prevent the spread of these respiratory illnesses.
- If you have any of the symptoms of the flu or COVID-19, get tested.

If you have a positive test result, contact your doctor to see if you qualify to take anti-viral medications.

The Postal Service has an obligation to provide a Safe and **Healthy** workplace. That includes regularly cleaning buildings, bathrooms, and breakrooms. Frequently touched items in the workplace, like door handles, keyboards, and the like, should be disinfected regularly. You should have masks, gloves, and sanitizer readily available in the workplace.

If your buildings are not being cleaned and disinfected nor are gloves, masks, and sanitizer being provided, it is recommended that you file a PS-Form 1767 Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition or Practice.

**Remember to Stand Up for Safe Jobs! ■**

**If you have questions about the form, need help completing one, or can't find one in your office, contact your local union representative. For more information on reporting hazardous and unsafe conditions, visit the APWU website at: [www.apwu.org/1767](http://www.apwu.org/1767)**





## OPEN SEASON HOTLINE

800.PIC.APWU (8:30am - 7pm ET)  
virtualopenseason@apwuhp.com  
www.apwuhp.com  
(click on Open Season)



### 2 GREAT PLANS TO CHOOSE FROM:



#### High Option

##### 100% covered services:

- Preventive care and treatment
- Lab tests (covered blood work performed at a LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics)
- Maternity care
- Accidental injury outpatient services within 72 hours
- Diabetes generic oral medications
- Tobacco cessation and weight management programs

##### In-network copays:

- \$25 for office visits, including specialists
- \$10 for virtual visits (**decreased** from \$15)
- \$30 for urgent care centers

#### Consumer Driven Option

##### 100% covered services:

- Preventive care and screenings
- Healthy pregnancy and tobacco cessation programs

In January, the Health Plan funds a Personal Care Account (PCA) members can use for covered medical services. Members are covered at 100% until the PCA is exhausted. The Plan funds the PCA at \$1,200 for Self Only and \$2,400 for Self Plus One and Self and Family.

##### In-network copays:

- No upfront deductible, coinsurance or copays until you exhaust your PCA

## ENROLL DURING OPEN SEASON

**November 14 - December 12**



A **Medicare Advantage** plan designed with **you** in mind.  
**You** spoke and we listened.  
 It's time to get excited about these 2023 benefits:

- No deductible, coinsurance or copays for covered medical services
- Monthly Part B reimbursement **increased** to \$85
- Quarterly over-the-counter allowance **increased** to \$60
- \$1,500 hearing aid allowance
- Dental Coverage
- Prescription drug coverage (Part D)
- As well as Wellness programs such as a free gym membership, 24-hour telephonic nurse-support and in-home visit with a healthcare practitioner

The **Medicare Advantage** plan as an enhanced level of benefits for all Medicare-eligible retirees. It is offered to eligible retirees who have Medicare Part A and Part B. As a UnitedHealthcare Group Medicare Advantage plan member for the APWU Health Plan, you'll have a team committed to understanding your needs and helping you get the care you need.

“Every time I turn around, the Medicare Advantage Plan offers even more. You get everything the plan says, from healthcare to fitness programs — and more! It's an awesome plan all around.”

- Gloria Rice, U.S. Postal Service Worker Clerk

## 2023 Premiums

	Enrollment Code	Biweekly	Monthly	APWU Career Special Rate*
High Option Self Only	471	\$121.00	\$262.16	\$121.00
High Option Self Plus One	473	\$238.95	\$517.73	\$238.95
High Option Self and Family	472	\$302.26	\$654.90	\$302.26
Consumer Driven Option Self Only	474	\$73.83	\$159.96	<b>\$14.77*</b>
Consumer Driven Option Self Plus One	476	\$160.46	\$347.67	<b>\$32.09*</b>
Consumer Driven Option Self and Family	475	\$175.05	\$379.28	<b>\$35.01*</b>

\* USPS Career employees get a discounted rate after being in FEHB for over a year. USPS will pay 95% of your premium.



# MEMBERS



In South Dakota, Local 7141 stood union strong



Jhonni Foster, of the Mississippi Area Local



Keystone Area Pennsylvania Local President Kim Miller, standing proud with other local activists



Charlotte Richards gears up outside the Slovan, PA Main Post Office



Angela Elias, Modesto Area Local



Union pride at Sioux Falls Area Local 718



Roanoke Virginia P&DC gear up

Gary Area Local 14



# IN ACTION

## APWU MEMBERS SHOW THEIR UNION PRIDE

On Sept. 15, we showed our union pride as our record-breaking Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) hit paychecks. These are a few of the pictures APWU members sent in. You can see more at [www.apwu.org/union-pride-day](http://www.apwu.org/union-pride-day).

Do you have pictures from an event or action that you'd like to see in the *American Postal Worker*? Send them to [communications@apwu.org](mailto:communications@apwu.org). ■



Larry Ables,  
Dallas Area  
Local



Louisville Local 4



Adrian A. Dominguez  
North Jersey Area Local  
shows his union pride



Big Island Local Standing Strong



# Canada Post Moves Forward on Postal Lending Service

Much like the APWU and similar advocates in the United States, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has long-campaigned for an expansion of postal financial services in Canada. Expanding financial services was only part of a far-reaching vision for the future of Canada Post put forth by CUPW. In 2016, they developed a program called *Delivering Community Power*, which imagined postal workers at the center of solutions to various social problems, including poverty, climate change, inadequate access to financial services, and lack of access to broadband internet.

Late this summer, CUPW celebrated a big victory when Canada Post announced that a personal loan service, which was being piloted in Canada, was to become a permanent fixture at Canada Post locations across the country.

The service, called MyMoney, offers Canadians personal loans of up to \$30,000. With interest rates attached to the loan similar or lower than other lenders, the MyMoney loans have also been stripped of “origination fees” and other surcharges that are common with other lenders, making them a more affordable option for many Canadians in need of some short-term credit. The loans are on offer at Canada Post retail locations across the country and are serviced in partnership with TD Bank.

The MyMoney product sprang out of a pilot project proposed by the CUPW to bring additional financial services to underserved Indigenous communities across Canada. The pilots began in October 2021, and included personal loans, ATM services, and a check cashing service at post offices in remote Indigenous communities. In addition to the expanded financial services offered in the pilots, CUPW secured commitments from Canada Post to hire staff directly from the indigenous communities being served.

The MyMoney product, Canada Post wrote in a standup talk to employees, garnered “strong market demand...with interest far exceeding both Canada Post’s and TD’s expectations.” Michael Yee, Vice President of Financial Services at Canada Post, told the CBC, “What we found when we spoke to Canadians is that there is really a need in the market in accessing simple and affordable loan services.”

The pilots, and the nationwide expansion of the MyMoney product, are a direct result of the union’s unwavering campaigning on the Delivering Community Power initiative. Part of the CUPW initiative calls for transforming Canadian post offices into what they call “Community Hubs.” These hubs are intended to place post offices at the center of local communities, offering many new and traditional services and serving as a gathering place for communities. CUPW has succeeded in working with Canada Post to launch a few community hubs as pilots across the country, especially in rural Indigenous communities. They offer things like the expanded financial services, but also parcel lockers, electric vehicle charging stations, and meeting and co-working spaces.

The union is hopeful that the success of the MyMoney product and other expanded services will be reflected in an upcoming review of the Postal Services Charter, which is the Canadian government’s stated policy expectations for the role of the postal service in their country.

The CUPW is in the process of preparing a robust campaign to “develop very strong, detailed arguments in favour of [their] positions concerning expansion of services, preserving existing services, financial issues, delivery frequency, service standards, modes of delivery, and rural services.”

The longstanding commitment and persistence of Canadian postal workers fighting for the Delivering Community Power vision continues to be an inspiration to the Campaign for Postal Banking. Theirs is an ambitious vision and, while the opposition has been great, their dogged determination to campaign for a brighter future for Canada Post is beginning to bear fruit. ■

**The Campaign for Postal Banking** is a coalition of consumer, worker, financial reform, economic justice, community, civic, and faith-based organizations calling for low-cost, consumer-driven financial services via the Postal Service. Products and services could include check cashing, bill payment, savings accounts and small-dollar loans. Postal Banking will benefit consumers without access to traditional banks, as well as those who want a public option. The expansion of services would also strengthen our public Postal Service. To learn more, visit [www.CampaignforPostalBanking.org](http://www.CampaignforPostalBanking.org).





# FROM the FIELD

Below are quotes from various APWU local and state publications throughout the country. All the publications listed are part of the Postal Press Association (PPA). For more information on the PPA, visit [apwupostalpress.org](http://apwupostalpress.org) or email [ppa@apwupostalpress.org](mailto:ppa@apwupostalpress.org).

Everyone's involvement and participation will make the union more effective. Each person has an obligation to share equally the cost of supporting the organization that wins the benefits. It's just unfair to accept benefits that others are paying for. Think about what we have gained so far. Is it fair for a nonmember to enjoy all the benefits of unionism but refuse to pay a fair share of the cost of gaining these benefits? Not one nonmember has refused any of the benefits and pay increases we have received throughout the years."

— Art Campos  
Kentucky Postal Workers Union District 1 Representative  
*The Kentucky Postal Worker*

"Something people should know about our union is that everyone involved cares. They care about the members and how they are treated. They care if you feel you are being mistreated at work by your postmaster or supervisor. They would not be doing what they do if they didn't care. They all have jobs just as you do and have spent more time than you can ever imagine trying to help a member who has been wronged."

— Angela Hackworth  
Beckley (WV) Area Local Clerk Craft Director  
*The Water Cooler*

"The national, state and local officers in charge will not be around forever. So, to be sure that all these current and future benefits continue to come our way, we must keep lighting the path for OUR UNION to stay STRONG! We need more people to find their voices and become involved. Who knows? Maybe one day your child will keep up the tradition and work in a USPS facility. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you knew you had a part in keeping all that we have fought so hard for is still possible for them too?"

— Kaylynn Mills  
Northwest Arkansas Area Local Tour Two P&DC Steward  
*The Razorback Scheme*

"Don't let management determine if you have a grievance. Remember, that's the union's job. The union is here to make certain that your rights are not violated, but it starts with you doing your part. Take the essential steps in the right direction and do your part by requesting to speak with your steward if you believe your rights have been breached and if something is uncertain."

— Faron Hierholzer  
San Antonio Alamo Area Local Motor Vehicle Service  
Craft Director  
*Alamo Area Local Dispatch*

"I'd like to remind all members to diligently watch management, but more importantly, check management whenever they deviate from the collective bargaining agreement by asking for a steward and grieving violations. They have no problem disciplining us whenever they can. ... Know that management is actively eroding your job and it's going to take all of us to stand as one to defeat and overcome management's tricks and schemes to eliminate our work. The new Postmaster General has a 10-year plan but we have each other and the contract. We can, will and must overcome, just as the generation of 50 years ago did. They made history and sent a tidal wave into the future showing what solidarity and unity can do to overcome the seemingly impossible."

— Paul Longstreth  
Tri-County Ohio Area Local Maintenance Craft Director  
*Spokesman*



# Clerk Division Initiates National Dispute on USPS Failure to Allow/Display Voter Registration Forms in Post Offices



Assistant Director Lynn Pallas-Barber, Director Lamont Brooks and Assistant Director Sam Lisenbe

**T**he issues and facts involved in the dispute are as follows:

The practice of allowing access to blank voter registration cards at United States Postal Service (USPS) locations is long-standing, in accordance with 52 U.S.C. Code 20506, and many individual state election codes.

Voter registration applications can be displayed in the lobbies of all postal facilities, or at least be made available upon request by postal customers, depending on space availability in each postal facility.

As government offices, USPS locations should have blank voter registration application forms readily available for community members, at all times, and allow non-partisan volunteers to donate blank applications to USPS locations, as needed.

Voter registration form displays have routinely been approved by postmasters and installation heads.

The forms are covered under election mail, not political mail. That means it is nonpartisan and part of the Postal Service's universal mission to bind the country together. Post offices are in over 31,000 locations all over the country, rural or urban, and are accessible to everyone in the United States. This is one of many reasons for the importance of maintaining retail post office locations throughout the country.

Many citizens don't have access to public libraries or government buildings, while post offices allow voters to easily obtain voter registration forms, allowing them to vote by mail or in-person, and to complete the change of address form to update their registration.

## Postal Service Agrees to Voter Registration Forms in Post Offices

In a response dated Sept. 22, 2020, officials at the USPS told members of Congress in Texas that voting groups are allowed to leave voter registration and absentee ballot applications in post offices.

"To resolve any confusion on this topic, the Postal Service is issuing clarifying internal guidance," Cory Brown, a government relations representative with USPS said in a letter to lawmakers.

"Such guidance will provide that, effective immediately ... postmasters or installation heads are authorized to allow the placement of voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms in the Post Office Box lobbies of retail facilities, provided there is adequate space available for such materials," Brown wrote.

Earlier this month, Houston-area Democratic Reps. Sylvia Garcia and Al Green wrote to USPS officials raising concerns about what League volunteers experienced.

Postal Service officials said they "will immediately relay this new guidance to district managers and will follow up with written communication to postmasters and installation heads."

The Postal Service maintains the largest physical and logistical infrastructure of any non-military government institution, providing an indispensable foundation supporting an ever-changing and evolving nationwide communication network.

Today, the Postal Service is part of the fabric of this nation. We deliver more mail and packages than any other postal service in the world. We serve more than 163 million addresses in this country — covering every state, city, and town. Everyone living in the United States and its territories has access to postal products and services, and pays the same for a First-Class Mail postage stamp, regardless of location. We make the connections. Friends and families; businesses and customers. We deliver to every community in America, from the biggest cities to the smallest villages. This is our public service mandate — to bind the nation together. This is our commitment — to provide secure, reliable, affordable delivery of mail and packages. It's what we do! Always have. Always will.

The union requests that the Postal Service abide by the law, and comply with the Postal Service's mission of binding the country together to service the public by maintaining all retail post offices, allowing retail clerks to display voter registration cards in the lobby, and to revise postal handbooks and manuals to reflect the revision as they stated they would do in September 2020. ■

# Field Maintenance Operation Management Restructuring



Assistant Director Terry Martinez, Director Idowu Balogun and Assistant Director Jason Treier

**T**he Postal Service notified the APWU on June 20, 2022 that they are going to be realigning the Field Maintenance Operation (FMO) reporting structure from Maintenance to Retail and Post Office Operations to better position management officials that the FMO directly supports.

The notification also stated that the Postal Service anticipates new supervisor and manager positions will be established to oversee the work of bargaining unit maintenance personnel. Immediately after receiving this notification, we sent the Postal Service a request to meet and discuss this, as well as multiple information requests, to discover exactly what was happening, and when.

Two meetings were held (and additional meetings are ongoing) to discuss these changes in which management continued to explain that the changes are internal for EAS employees and that the restructuring will have no effect on bargaining unit field maintenance employees, except that they might have new supervisors or managers overseeing field maintenance operations.

The Postal Service spent the vast majority of their presentation sharing updated EAS positions that are being created, posted, and filled to facilitate field maintenance operations. In addition, the APWU was told that affected bargaining unit employees will include all Area Maintenance Technicians (AMT), limited Level 7 Maintenance Mechanics that fall under FMO, and limited Custodians that fall under FMO (stations, branches, area offices). At the conclusion of our last meeting, management notified the APWU that they were going to begin stand-up talks to affected employees the following morning.

## **Mandatory Stand-Up Talk for Field Maintenance Personnel September 23, 2022**

*Over the past few years, as part of the Delivering for America Plan, the Postal Service has made significant changes to its organizational structure to better align functions in support of our core business operations.*

*In continuation of these efforts, as of this week, Field Maintenance Operations has been realigned from under the Chief Processing and Distribution Officer to a newly established structure reporting to the Vice President of Retail and Post Office Operations under the Chief Retail and Delivery Officer.*

*As a current field maintenance employee, you may be affected by this change. However, your current job, duty station, work hours, days off and current bidding installation will not change. The organization will be creating new field maintenance supervisory positions and some current field maintenance craft employees will begin reporting to a new supervisor or manager over the next few weeks. We will share additional information regarding your reporting structure as it becomes available.*

*Within the next few weeks, you will receive a Form 50 with a different finance number. This new Form 50 is for administrative purposes only. Your work will continue as normal.*

In the event that local or district management is changing FMO bargaining unit duty assignments, or anything else that seems improper, please contact your local president and/or maintenance craft director immediately and provide as many details as possible about what changes are occurring and which postal officials are enacting these changes. Additional inquiries can be submitted to Maintenance Division National Business Agents. ■

## **PER DIEM UPDATE - Effective Date November 7, 2022**

After meeting with the Postal Service again and scheduling an NCED site visit, we can announce that the implementation date of the per diem MOU is Nov. 7, 2022, and will be piloted for three years for all crafts. The current GSA rates control the per diem amount, currently at \$59.00 per day. Students whose training starts prior to Nov. 7 and ends after Nov. 7 will receive per diem for all days beginning Nov. 7, 2022 and after.

If you have any related questions, contact me: Director Balogun of Maintenance Division; (202) 842-4213, or email us at [maintwebinar@apwu.org](mailto:maintwebinar@apwu.org). Feel free to distribute.

# MVS Completes Two Key Arbitrations



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Kenneth Prinz

**N**ational arbitration case number Q10V-4Q-C 1425680 was heard on May 23 -24, 2022 before Arbitrator Brent. This dispute goes back to the Nov. 21, 2010 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The issue before the arbitrator was whether the Postal Service violated the first sentence of Section 2 of the Motor Vehicle Craft Jobs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by failing to convert 600 Highway Contract Routes (HCRs) to Postal Vehicle Service (PVS).

Our position is "yes", Section 2 of the MVS Craft Jobs MOU required the Postal Service to convert a minimum of 600 HCR routes to PVS and then create the duty assignments in the MVS craft to work those routes, a position we have maintained since the 2010 negotiations.

One HCR route is usually not the equivalent of one driving job or duty assignment. Depending on the length of the route, it often requires more than one driver to perform. The same is true once it's converted to PVS. The converted work dictates the number of hours and drivers that are needed to perform the work.

The Postal Service argued that the Motor Vehicle Craft Jobs MOU is only required to create 600 duty assignments in the craft, as opposed to 600 HCRs to be converted to PVS.

The APWU and the Postal Service agreed upon financial provisions, and the union made concessions that made the 2010 APWU CBA as significant as any contract negotiated since the first agreement in 1971.

The effect of the 2010 CBA was a huge change in the postal work force and huge financial savings for the Postal Service. It created a non-career APWU workforce with greater flexibility that was larger than past versions of a supplemental workforce. These new Postal Support Employees (PSEs) had lower hourly wages and fewer benefits than career employees. The actual benefit of PVS PSEs is still being evaluated.

The parties finished the third day of hearings on Oct. 12, 2022, with rebuttal testimony.

This MOU was agreed 12 years ago, and the lead negotiators have since passed. There were several crucial events

in the last 12 years where the MVS Craft had to defend the rights of PVS operators. These actions included USPS attempts to contact the state of California, to consider contracting out the entire PVS operations in 162 sites throughout the country, and the Das 110 Award where they failed to give proper Article 32.2 advance notification.

Both parties will submit briefs and we will notify you of both awards.

## Das Award Aug. 18, 2016

On Sept. 13-14, 2022, the parties held a hearing before Arbitrator Das. The issue in this case was whether the remedy awarded in Case No. Q06C-4Q-C 11182451 Aug. 18, 2016, applied only to the 212 specified violations of the notice requirements of Article 32.2.B in a dispute filed in 2011, or whether the remedy also applied to all of the other grievances alleging violations of Article 32.2.B that were pending at the time of the 2016 award.

We believe these HCR cases that were held in abeyance, pending the outcome of the Das award, should be released and that each case should be judged on the merits, or that the remedy from the Das award should be applied.

The Postal Service takes the position that the Das award resolves all prior grievances pertaining to Article 32.2.B violations that that were filed before the Aug. 2016 award. Therefore, these cases will not be held and should be remanded back to the district and be administratively closed. We strongly disagreed that the USPS has the right or authority to administratively close out a grievance or dispute initiated by the union.

Have a happy & healthy holiday season from the Motor Vehicle Service Division, and keep on trucking! ■



# A Fond Farewell From Support Services Division Director Brooks



Director Steve Brooks

**I** am retiring effective Nov. 18, 2022. As I look back on my tenure, many changes have taken place in the Support Services Division. We successfully defended attempts to reduce our work, eliminate private sector units. We have also organized additional units, both private and postal. Despite the implementation of new technology, aimed at reducing employee complement, we have managed to grow.

We have negotiated 13 new or successor Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) for private sector units alone. These include companies such as PAE, and Hollingsworth LLC for our Mail Transport Equipment Service Centers, and private sector mail hauling companies Salmon & Sons, Mail Contractors of America, 10 Roads Express, and B&B Trucking.

We negotiated several postal CBAs during my time in office. Between the IT/AS, Postal Nurses, main table Operating Services and Material Distribution, and most recently, for the HRSSC, we negotiated 11 new, successor, or extension agreements.

We stopped the Postal Service from shutting down the San Mateo Accounting office. We took the fight to California legislative representatives and senators to question the Postal Service on their proposed actions. Due to pressure from our members and legislative partners, the Postal Service retreated and we retained the accounting positions domiciled in San Mateo.

We also stopped Hollingsworth, a private sector company, from rejecting employment and union recognition when they took over operations involving MTESS work from PAE. Our membership stepped up and wrote letters to their state representatives. We filed NLRB charges and the company agreed to retain union members, as well as recognizing the union and the contract.

Our private sector unit, led by Rich Shelley, organized a new postal group at HRSSC. This was historic for the APWU as it was an EAS non-supervisory group. Once they officially voted to become bargaining unit employees, we negotiated a first contract for them, which allowed for a set pay schedule, step increases, and COLAs, which they did not have before our representation.

The private sector unit organized a group of mail haul drivers working for 10 Roads Express at the Harrisburg, PA terminal. To date, we have been working with the new group to establish their constitution and conduct an election of officers. We are scheduled to begin bargaining in November.

**WE SUCCESSFULLY DEFENDED ATTEMPTS TO REDUCE OUR WORK, ELIMINATE PRIVATE SECTOR UNITS, AND HAVE ORGANIZED ADDITIONAL UNITS, BOTH PRIVATE AND POSTAL.**

I couldn't have accomplished these achievements without the help of National Business Agent Judy McCann. I had worked with Judy for many years prior to appointing her to the NBA position. I knew her work ethic and passion for the union and its members. She has a wealth of knowledge and fights hard for our membership. Judy has been a great co-worker, and an even greater friend. Judy is retiring at the end of this term and I wish her the best in her new chapter of life.

One of my goals was to bring awareness of the Support Services Division to the APWU membership. Many of our members were unaware of what the division was, and who we represent. I think that I have been successful in educating officers and members in the APWU of how important and diverse that the division is.

As I move into my retirement, I hope that I have had a positive impact on the members of the division and my entire APWU family. The union has given so much to me, and my goal was to give back to the membership. I hope that I have left it stronger than when I began. I'm truly going to miss the day-to-day activities, but it is time to move on to another chapter in my life. I will still be active as a retiree, as I can never forget how influential a union as great as the APWU has been to me. ■



Sharyn M. Stone, Central Regional Coordinator

# Central Region Update: Article 12, COVID-19 and Safety

**C**ongratulations on a successful national convention in National Harbor, MD. On behalf of my region, along with the Central Region NBAs, I enjoyed the opportunity to meet and greet delegates, members, and guests.

## Article 12

At the time of my last article, the central region had received several Article 12 impact notices for the maintenance and clerk crafts, starting July of 2021. All of the initial impact notices were filed in a timely manner as required by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Since then, some have been postponed, while others modified or cancelled. No one has been moved, as the 50-mile radius is still working in our favor. I haven't been informed about any withheld residuals for any of the impacts within the 50-mile radius. This MOU is in our current contract. If you need more specific information, please contact my office directly.

I don't know what whoever redefined the areas and sections of the central, and other, regions was thinking. Where state lines once strictly decided the regions, we now need a map and it can be difficult for some people to understand, but we do manage.

## COVID

COVID has clearly defined our past two years. We are still dealing with the repercussions, and I give my deepest condolences to anyone and their family affected by this virus.

Our offices have reopened, but that alone does not resolve all issues related to COVID. We still need to deter the spread by providing a safe area for workers. That's not always easy to do, depending on where the office or building is located, its layout, the total number of employees working indoors, and not to mention the elevators. We are working our way through these obstacles and continue to represent the membership.

## Safety is Always a Must

Remember, management has an obligation to provide clean and safe working conditions, and an environment

free from hazards. Management is required to provide Form 1767 for all employees to report unsafe hazards or conditions, and they are required to address the issue and notify a representative or the employee. If the forms are not available, notify your local officers who can rectify the situation as required.

Get involved! Safety information is also available on the National APWU website. Safety first! Many thanks to all of the local representatives as well as regional safety representatives that assist us, including: Steve Vaughn, Dave Childers, John Hunt and Michelle Elliott. We couldn't do it without you!!

**MANAGEMENT HAS AN OBLIGATION TO  
PROVIDE CLEAN AND SAFE WORKING  
CONDITIONS, AND AN ENVIRONMENT FREE  
FROM HAZARDS.**

## Against All Odds

The grievance arbitration administration has been a challenge this year. Accommodating all necessary restrictions and precautions to maintain a safe environment to meet, discuss, or have arbitration hearings, with the necessary precautions, is a challenge. Many thanks to all NBAs for getting it done. Despite some issues, locals still found a way to meet and conduct elections in a timely manner, compliant with their local constitutions. It wasn't easy. Congratulations to all on fulfilling your constitutional requirements and to all elected members.

As Coordinator, I am available to assist Locals. In addition, coordinators Tiffany Foster, Northeast Region; A.J. Jones, Eastern Region; Yared Wonde, Southern Region; and Omar Gonzalez, Western Region are always available to work with you and for you. Congratulations to Kenneth Beasley on his retirement! Thank you for your service. Welcome newly elected Southern Region Coordinator, Yared Wonde. ■

# Looking Ahead: Legislative Activity to Come on Capitol Hill and the Need to Bolster Our COPA Program



Judy Beard, Director

### Remaining Congressional Activity

With the 117th Congress drawing to a close, Congress has a packed agenda it must complete before the end of the term, and the start of the new Congress, on Jan. 3, 2023.

Congress was scheduled to return on Nov. 14. The first order of business will likely be to fund the government past Dec. 16, when current government funding is set to expire. If Congress fails to pass either a full appropriations package or a continuing resolution, the government will be forced to shut down.

Another important discussion that many of our lawmakers are having, on both sides of the aisle, is how to reform the process for Congress to certify presidential election results. There is currently bipartisan support for clarifying that the vice president's role in counting electoral college votes is strictly ceremonial, and for preventing state legislators from overturning the election results of their state if they disagree with the outcome. The proposed legislation would make it harder to interfere with the lawful vote count, as was attempted on January 6, 2021.

Congress will also have the opportunity to pass H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act; a bill that would finally repeal the unfair Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), and Government Pension Offset (GPO). The Act has amassed overwhelming support (305 cosponsors as of Oct. 12), and has passed the Ways and Means Committee. While the bill is popular in the House, congressional leadership still needs to schedule it for a floor vote. Please call our legislative hotline at (844) 402-1001 and ask your member of Congress to pass H.R. 82!

### Supporting Our COPA Program

As the end of the 117th Congress draws near, it is important to highlight the importance of APWU's nonpartisan Committee on Political Action (COPA), which allows the union to keep up the fight for the public Postal Service, the labor movement, and the working class. Contributions to COPA are used to make political campaign donations to those who champion our issues, regardless of party affiliation.

COPA allows us to amplify our voice on Capitol Hill to fight for the following:

- A vibrant public Postal Service
- Collective bargaining and workers' rights
- Raising the minimum wage and increasing benefits
- Retirement security for active and retired members
- Affordable healthcare for all
- Protecting democracy through automatic voter registration and vote-by-mail

Federal law impacts us all and it is important that we have a seat at the table when decisions are made. We need your help, both to protect the rights we have fought for years to earn, and to make progress on the issues that matter most.

We encourage active, retired, and auxiliary members to donate whatever you can to COPA. The fund is fully financed through voluntary contributions; it does not use a cent of union dues. You can donate through a payroll deduction, electronic fund transfer, OPM annuity disbursement, or personal check.

All contribution methods, excluding one-time donations by check, are recurring. These COPAmatic contributions allow the APWU COPA Committee to estimate future donations, enabling us to properly budget COPA expenditures effectively. Payroll and bank account withdrawals are taken out every two weeks, while retiree OPM annuity deductions are completed monthly, which takes the hassle out of sending checks.

To get started today, please scan the QR code to sign up via the members' only section. ■







## Trader Joe's United Organizes Third Store

**W**orkers at the Williamsburg Trader Joes location in Brooklyn, NY have voted to organize and form a union with Trader Joe's United. The Brooklyn location, which opened last year and has 185 employees, is the third store from the grocery chain to unionize.

According to a flyer that workers distributed to customers, Trader Joe's managers fired a union organizer one day after telling staff that they had learned about efforts to unionize their store. The workers said they're unionizing to win a living wage, better health care access and time off policies, and "clear and fairly applied disciplinary processes..." as their store "has a pattern of inappropriately targeting workers of color for discipline." A statement from the union continued, "We're asking you to stand with our crew as we work together for the protections and fair working conditions we deserve."

## Google Cafeteria Workers ORGANIZE

More than 4,000 food service workers at 23 Google offices nationwide have quietly organized throughout the pandemic and joined Unite Here, a 300,000-member union of workers in the hospitality, hotel, and food service industries. The most successful organizing effort was with workers at two cafeteria contract companies, Compass and Guckenheimer, who make up approximately 90 percent of the workers in the food services industry at Google.



## Apple Store Workers in Oklahoma File to Join CWA

**A**pple store workers in Oklahoma City, OK have filed for a union election with the Communications Workers of America (CWA). The 94-person store is the second Apple Store retail location to successfully organize, and the first to do so with the CWA. "We formed the Penn Square Labor Alliance with Apple Retail Union/CWA to ensure the soul of Apple—the workers—would have a fair say in our working conditions and an opportunity to create an equitable environment for our team," said CWA member and Apple employee Charity Lassiter.

## NURSES AT ASCENSION SETO MEDICAL

More than 800 nurses at Ascension Seton Medical Center (ASMCA) voted in a landslide 72 percent victory to join the National Nurses Organizing Committee (NNOC), an affiliate of the National Nurses United (NNU), which is the largest nurses' union in the United States with more than 175,000 members nationwide. Geovana Hill, a registered nurse in the renal unit, said, "As nurses, we



## GOING TWO-FOR-TWO MLBPA Organizes Minor League Players and Affiliates With AFL-CIO Sports Council

The Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) recently launched an effort to organize minor league baseball players to bring equity to players on the junior circuit. Within 17 days, more than 5,500 minor league baseball players had formed a union. In addition, the MLBPA announced on Sept. 7 that they are formally affiliating with the AFL-CIO and will join the newly formed AFL-CIO Sports Council, which also includes the NFL Players Association, the National Women's Soccer League Players Association, the United Soccer League Players Association-CWA, and the U.S. Women's National Team Players Association.

"The MLBPA and every single one of its 1,200 players have a home in our movement because this union understands and lives the meaning of the word solidarity by leveraging the power of sports and helping others," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "Together, with our 12.5 million members, we will bring our strength to their fights, including working to organize 5,400 minor league players."



## ORGANIZING WIN!

### BOBCAT WORKERS - BISMARCK, ND

**W**orkers at a Bobcat manufacturing facility in Bismarck, ND voted 56 percent in favor of joining the United Steelworkers, after a six-month organizing effort. The 700 workers of the manufacturing facility voted in a secret ballot election that was overseen by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

"Bobcat workers deserve a fair union contract that provides fair pay and promotes a healthy work-life balance with limits on mandatory overtime and provisions for paid-time-off," said Bobcat employee Jacob Klein. "We are proud to join the United Steelworkers and look forward to the next step of the process - working together to negotiate a fair first collective bargaining agreement."

## IN AUSTIN, TX JOIN NNU

always have and always will stand committed to providing the highest quality of care to our patients. We are looking forward to bargaining for a fair contract to improve patient safety, as well as competitive wages to keep Austin nurses working here in our community. We are more than ready to win a strong first contract, which will help with nursing staff retention."



## BRAZIL: Postal Privatization on the Ballot

As this magazine goes to press, the presidential election in Brazil is also a referendum on the future of Correios, the Brazilian postal service. Current President Jair Bolsonaro has, for more than two years, advanced legislation that would privatize Correios. While the bill hasn't yet passed, Bolsonaro has committed to continuing his privatization scheme if re-elected.

Meanwhile, Bolsonaro's run-off opponent, former two-term President and metalworkers union leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, known simply as Lula, has vowed to put a stop to major privatization efforts if elected.





Anna Smith, Director

# Good Tidings and Union Cheer for “Holiday PSEs”

It's that time of year again when the USPS increases the hiring of new employees. The Organization Department fields a lot of questions during this time regarding new employee orientations. One issue that seems to come up year after year is of local leaders being informed that employees are being hired as “Holiday” Postal Support Employees (PSEs) and do not need to have union orientations.

YOU CAN FIND A PSE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS BROCHURE BY SENDING A REQUEST TO [ORGANIZATION@APWU.ORG](mailto:organization@apwu.org) OR VISITING [APWU.ORG/APWU-PSE-RIGHTS-2022](https://apwu.org/apwu-pse-rights-2022).

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA or “union contract”), covers all aspects of PSE wages, benefits, hours and working conditions. The PSE workforce is comprised of employees who do not yet have career appointments, but who enjoy union representation and negotiated rights.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT TIME OF YEAR A PSE IS HIRED, WHEN PSES ARE SEPARATED DUE TO LACK OF WORK, RE-APPOINTMENTS MUST BE MADE BY PSE SENIORITY.

You will not find a PSE position title of “Holiday PSE,” “Temporary PSE,” “Peak PSE,” or “360-PSE.” PSEs are hired for a term not to exceed 360 calendar days per appointment. A PSE is not a Holiday Clerk Assistant. Annuitant Holiday Clerk Assistants (HCA) are retirees that have the opportunity to be rehired temporarily and work during a specific period.

Regardless of what time of year a PSE is hired, when PSEs are separated due to lack of work, re-appointments must be made by PSE seniority. PSEs will be re-appointed ahead of applicants who have not served as PSEs, provided the need for hiring arises within one year of the break in service. Some additional provisions APWU has secured for PSEs include:

- **Overtime Pay** at the rate of 1.5 times the basic hourly straight-time rate for work performed after eight hours on duty in a service day, or 40 hours in a service week.
- **Penalty Overtime Pay** at the rate of two times the basic hourly straight-time rate, excluding the month of December, for all work in excess of 10 hours in a service day, or 56 hours in a service week.
- **Night Differential Pay** for hours worked between 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- **Higher-Level Pay for Higher-Level Work** where in the event that a PSE is temporarily assigned to a higher-level position, PSEs are to be paid at the higher-level rate for the time spent performing higher-level duties.

You can find a PSE Rights and Benefits Brochure by sending a request to [organization@apwu.org](mailto:organization@apwu.org) or visiting [apwu.org/apwu-pse-rights-2022](https://apwu.org/apwu-pse-rights-2022).

Thank you for all that you do each and every day. Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season! ■

YOU WILL NOT FIND A PSE POSITION TITLE OF “HOLIDAY PSE,” “TEMPORARY PSE,” “PEAK PSE,” OR “360-PSE.” PSES ARE HIRED FOR A TERM NOT TO EXCEED 360 CALENDAR DAYS PER APPOINTMENT.





Joyce B. Robinson, Director

# Employee Rights During Interrogation by the OIG/Postal Inspectors

Postal employees are subject to investigation by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and/or U.S. Postal Inspection Service for on and off-duty offenses. Off-duty non-postal offenses include: serious acts of criminal violence; use of fire arms or dangerous weapons in the commission of a crime; grand larceny, burglary, embezzlement, or robbery, and sale or possession of narcotics or dangerous drugs.

### Advice to Follow When Questioned

If questioned by an OIG agent(s) or by postal inspector(s), you should:

- Remain calm.
- Correctly identify yourself.
- **Request a union steward/representative, or an attorney, as appropriate.**
- **Remain silent until you have consulted the appropriate representative.**
- Request to see a search warrant. If one is not available, inform the investigator(s) that you **do not consent to the search. Do not resist arrest or search of your person or property.**
- Ask, “**am I a suspect in a criminal matter?**” If “**Yes,**” **exercise your rights to remain silent until you consult with an attorney.**
- Do not deny or admit to any allegations without consulting with the appropriate representative.
- **Do Not Sign Any Forms Waiving Your Rights.**
- Do not write or sign any typewritten statements or make oral remarks without the appropriate representative.

### Know Your Weingarten Rights

U.S. Supreme Court case (NLRB vs. Weingarten, Inc. 420 U.S. 251, 88 LRRM 2689) established “Weingarten Rights,” which give employees the right to union representation at investigatory interviews, when a supervisor questions the employee to obtain information that could be used as a basis for discipline, or asks an employee to defend his/her conduct. Management is not required to inform the employee of their “Weingarten Rights;” it’s the employee’s responsibility to make the request for representation.

### When the Employee Requests a Union Representative, Management Has Three Options:

1. Grant the request and wait until a union representative arrives,
2. Discontinue the interview, or
3. Offer the employee the choice to continue the interview without a representative, or discontinue the interview. ***Never accept this option, remain silent until you have representation.***

### Rights of Union Representatives During an Investigatory Interview

The Supreme Court acknowledges a steward or representative’s right to assist and counsel employees during investigatory interviews. Management must inform the representative of the subject of an interrogation. Representatives must be allowed to speak privately with an employee before interviews. During questioning, a representative can interrupt to clarify a question or to object to confusing or intimidating tactics. They can advise the employee when to stop answering questions and to consult with an attorney.

Never allow investigators to intimidate you. Beware of the “good cop, bad cop” routine; getting you to believe that one of them is helping you. Never fall for the trap, always refuse to answer questions unless a representative or an attorney is present. **What you say will definitely be used against you!** As we begin a new year, may God grant you peace, good health, and happiness in 2023! Be blessed and stay safe!!! ■

Arbitration Advocacy Training was held in August/September 2022 at the Maritime Institute and Conference Center in Baltimore, MD. Featured is Joyce B. Robinson, National Director Research and Education, APWU, AFL-CIO (Front Center), along with instructors and graduates.



## The Focus on Mental Health and Veteran Suicide



**N**ow more than ever, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is focusing on mental health issues.

In September 2022, VA released its National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.

The report documents that there was a decrease in veteran suicide deaths and in the suicide

rate during the two most recent years for which data is available: 2019 and 2020.

The 2022 report provides two decades of veteran suicide information, from 2001 through 2020. It also evaluates veteran suicide during 2020, the initial period of the COVID-19 pandemic, comparing patterns of veteran suicide and COVID-19 mortality over time and across veteran subgroups.

Many experts have expressed concern that the pandemic could contribute to an increase in suicide rates. Mental health and suicide scholars described mechanisms by which pandemic effects could increase risks and “create a perfect storm of increased military veteran suicide rates.” However, the report did see an increase in suicide in the first nine months of the pandemic.

The report continues a “*whole of VA*” approach to veteran suicide prevention, which means every part of the Department should be involved in the planning, operating and evaluating of its suicide prevention programs.

VA has also expanded its collaboration with other federal agencies on this issue – a fact highlighted in the recent White House report: *Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide*. This collaboration is a part of VA’s 10-year National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide (2018).

This strategy outlines a series of priority goals and executive actions to be pursued in collaboration not only with federal agencies, but also with other government programs, public-private partnerships, and local communities to implement a full public-health approach unified in collective engagement for veteran suicide prevention.

The *Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program* allows VA to provide grants to eligible entities to expand suicide prevention services to eligible individuals and their families to reduce the risk of suicide. Community organizations can apply for grants worth up to \$750,000 and may apply to renew them yearly.

In partnership with VA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently issued a challenge (and is providing assistance) to governors and mayors across the United States to create and implement suicide prevention plans targeting service members, veterans, and their families.

In addition to community-based efforts, disseminating evidence-based clinical practices for suicide prevention across the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) system is critical. One such program is SP 2.0 Clinical Telehealth, which offers psychotherapy to veterans with recent suicidal self-directed harm.

Because the program uses a virtual care platform (video telehealth), it allows veterans to access treatment without leaving their homes, which is particularly helpful in a pandemic. As of April 2022, VA has hired 97 therapists and received over 3,000 consults for services.

Please encourage your community healthcare organizations to partner with VA to help provide as many opportunities to reduce veteran suicide as possible; and please encourage struggling veterans to seek and utilize the mental health services available to them, as losing even one to suicide, is one too many.

- If you or a loved-one are suffering with suicidal thoughts, you can get help by texting or dialing 988.
- VA suicide prevention resources and the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Reports are available at:  
[www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention)
- Resources are available for APWU active service members, wounded troops, and veterans at:  
[apwu.org/veterans-issues](http://apwu.org/veterans-issues)

Source(s): Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

## Human Resources Rolls Out Regional Resource Assistant Training Program for OWCP

**T**hanks to you, the membership, for electing me to the position of Human Relations Director. I am honored and humbled by your vote of confidence. I will endeavor to accomplish the goals that I set out to you while I was serving as an appointed officer.

In keeping with the APWU Constitution, we are finalizing plans for implementing programs in the areas of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP), equal opportunity, civic community service, and other related programs. My intention is to balance the department's focus so that we address all the outlined areas mentioned above. The Human Relations Department is dedicated to showing unity and implementing programs that reach all of our members.

**I AM EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE  
ROLL-OUT OF THE NEWLY FORMED  
APWU REGIONAL RESOURCE  
ASSISTANT (RRA) TRAINING PROGRAM  
FOR ISSUES RELATED TO ON-THE-JOB  
INJURIES AND OWCP.**

We have focused our initial efforts on the principle that our injured members are entitled to the best assistance that we can provide. That is why I am excited to announce the roll-out of the newly formed APWU Regional Resource Assistant (RRA) training program for issues related to on-the-job injuries and OWCP.

We have developed an OWCP training program that equips nationally appointed Regional Resource Assistants (RRAs) with the knowledge and tools needed to assist locals nationwide with providing proper advice and effective assistance to workers within the APWU family on issues related to OWCP and on-the-job injuries. All RRAs will have gone through the formal training and certification processes provided by the Depart-

ment of Labor to provide effective and knowledgeable training on those specific issues.

At the request of local, state, and regional APWU offices, RRAs will provide training sessions and presentations to those local, state, and regional union offices (including to members at local union meetings) for issues related to on-the-job injuries and OWCP.

**THE HUMAN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT  
IS DEDICATED TO SHOWING UNITY AND  
IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS THAT REACH  
ALL OF OUR MEMBERS.**

Local, state, and regional offices may request RRA training sessions by visiting the Human Relations Department page of the [apwu.org](http://apwu.org) website, where we will provide a form and/or email address created specifically to request training. Members should contact their local/state representatives for issues related to OWCP.

To date, twenty members have been recommended by their local presidents and appointed by APWU National President Mark Dimondstein as APWU RRAs. Our training program is in its infancy. We anticipate perfecting the content and processes as needed. I look forward to sharing the results of the training in the future. Please visit the Human Relations section of the website for more information and updates on the program.

I encourage you to support your fellow siblings as they accept the responsibilities of an RRA. Our work on improving the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) processes continues, and implementation strategies for the other areas mentioned are underway.

Voting matters. Equal Opportunity, civil rights, and voting rights work hand-in-hand. Plus, we have the civic responsibility to vote.

Until next time, the struggle continues! ■





Nancy Olumekor, Director

# Still Fighting for Justice: Congress is in Session

**R**etirees and postal workers, we can still do the work to protect our federal pensions, benefits, and the U.S. Postal Service. It is not too late to let Congress know that we expect them to protect our hard-earned benefits, such as our federal pensions: Civil Service Retirement Scheme (CSRS) or Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), Social Security, Medicare, health insurance and life insurance, and we expect them to protect and preserve the Postal Service by supporting and passing legislation to accomplish these goals.

**THE RETIREES DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINARS ON ZOOM AT LEAST THREE TIMES EACH YEAR. ON NOV. 20, 2022 AT 1:00 P.M. EST WE WILL HOST A RETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINAR ON ZOOM.**

Now is the time for the Social Security Fairness Act to become law. The legislation is H.R. 82 in the House and S.1302 in the Senate.

Start by calling Congress at: (844) 402-1001 and continue to write letters, postcards, and emails. Millions of federal, local, and state retirees are still waiting for Congress to pass legislation to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) in order to provide us with a fair return on our investment in the Social Security system. These retirees have worked and contributed to the Social Security system at the same rate as other non-CSRS retirees have contributed to Social Security, yet CSRS and state retirees are denied an equitable benefit for their contributions into Social Security. We need to insist that Congress pass H.R. 82 in the House and S.1302 in the Senate during this current session.

### COLA Increase for Retirees

The 2023 federal retiree Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) will be 8.7 percent for CSRS annuitants and 7.7 percent for FERS annuitants. The COLA for those receiving Social Security benefits will be 8.7 percent. Congress

must also pass H.R. 304 and S.4221-the Equal COLA Act-in order to “achieve parity between the cost-of-living adjustment with respect to an annuity under the Federal Employees Retirement System and an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement System.”

According to *Benefits Ben of STWServe.com*, the Equal COLA Act will amend a 1986 law that gives FERS retirees less of a COLA than CSRS retirees to give both types of federal retirees the same COLA. Based on the current rules, if inflation is over 3 percent, FERS retirees get a COLA equal to the CPI-W rate minus 1 percent. If the inflation rate is between 2 percent and 3 percent, FERS gets a flat 2 percent COLA increase. When inflation is less than 2 percent, both FERS and CSRS retirees get a COLA equal to inflation – like in 2021 when inflation was 1.3 percent. CSRS and FERS retirees got a COLA of 1.3 percent.

### Going Forward! Retirement Planning on ZOOM

The Retirees Department will continue to provide Retirement Planning seminars on Zoom at least three times each year. On Nov. 20, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. EST we will host a Retirement Planning Seminar on Zoom. Detail information is available on the APWU Events page.

### Thank You!

Thank you to our veterans and all the active military personnel for their service on behalf of all of us. Thank you for continuing to support me in the true spirit of unionism by re-electing me. It is an honor and a privilege to serve the membership of the APWU. I extend special thanks to those of you who offered words of encouragement of any kind to me; I cannot do this work without your support!

I am mindful of all of the APWU friends, families and loved ones who died this year. The great unionists who built this union: without their great work we would not be here.

I wish each of you happy holidays, merry Christmas, good health and happiness in the New Year.

*Solidarity Forever.* ■



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

# The Importance of Good Oral Hygiene

**C**OVID-19 restrictions are starting to ease up and we can finally get back to our normal routines, and that means getting back to the dentist for your checkups. Unfortunately, the pandemic forced many of us to put our health, and especially our oral health, on the back burner but now is the time to put your teeth and your beautiful smile back in the spotlight.

Your smile isn't the only thing at risk when you don't practice good oral hygiene. Without proper care and cleaning, you're at risk of tooth decay and gum disease, which are both linked to many other diseases and conditions within your body. Your oral health offers clues about your overall health, so it's important to practice good oral hygiene and see your dentist for cleanings and checkups twice a year.

### What's the connection between oral health and overall health?

Like other areas of the body, your mouth teems with bacteria — mostly harmless. But your mouth is the entry point to your digestive and respiratory tracts, and some of these bacteria can cause disease.

Normally the body's natural defenses and good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, keep bacteria under control. However, without proper oral hygiene, bacteria can reach levels that might lead to oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease.

Also, certain medications — such as decongestants, antihistamines, painkillers, diuretics and antidepressants — can reduce saliva flow. Saliva washes away food and neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth, helping to protect you from microbes that multiply and lead to disease.

Studies suggest that oral bacteria and the inflammation associated with a severe form of gum disease, which is called periodontitis, might play a role in some other diseases. And certain diseases, such as diabetes and HIV/AIDS, can lower the body's resistance to infection, making oral health problems more severe.

### How can I protect my oral health?

To protect your oral health, practice good oral hygiene daily.

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day for two minutes each time. Use a soft-bristled brush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily.
- Use mouthwash to remove food particles left after brushing and flossing.
- Eat a healthy diet and limit sugary food and drinks.
- Replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if bristles are splayed or worn.
- Schedule regular dental checkups and cleanings.
- Avoid tobacco use.

Also, contact your dentist as soon as an oral health problem arises. Taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.

### How can the APWU Health Plan help?

**If you're enrolled in the Consumer Driven Option Plan** you can use up to \$400 for Self Only and \$800 for Self Plus One or Self and Family for eligible dental expenses as long as funds are available in your Personal Care Account (PCA). You will need to pay the dentist and request reimbursement from us.

**If you're enrolled in the High Option Plan** the plan will cover 70 percent for routine dental care, office visits, exams, cleanings, x-rays, fluoride treatment, fillings and simple extractions.

### What if I need more dental coverage?

If you feel that you need more extensive dental coverage, you can enroll in the **APWU Health Plan Dental Plan** and pay a separate premium. You can enroll in this option at any time of the year, there is no need to wait for Open Season. Dependents are also covered and children on your plan are covered up to age 26.

All postal workers are eligible to enroll in this plan as long as you're an APWU member before you enroll.

This is the time to focus on your oral health. Put your smile back in the spotlight. Enroll now! Go to: [www.apwuhp.com/members/high-option/dental/](http://www.apwuhp.com/members/high-option/dental/) to download the application form and get a head start on your oral health. ■

# Looking Back: This Time in Our Labor History



Clara Lemlich

On Dec. 4, 1906, postal workers based in Chicago and the Midwest affiliated the newly formed National Federation of Post Office Clerks (NFPOC) with the American Federation of Labor (AFL).

The NFPOC was an alternative to the conservative United National Association of Post Office Clerks (UNAPOC) which did not see themselves as part of the broader labor movement and was not affiliated with the AFL.

In 1961, these two unions merged and formed the United Federation of Post Office Clerks, and in 1971, merged with four other postal unions after the Great Postal Strike and created the APWU.

## *General Motors - United Auto Workers Union Strike*

On Nov. 21, 1945, more than 300,000 hourly workers from the General Motors Corporation (GM) began a 113-day long strike. The nationwide strike, which affected operations at 96 manufacturing plants in over 50 cities, was the longest and one of the largest of its kind against a major manufacturer at the time.

Led by Walter Reuther, who was the Director of the General Motors Department of the United Auto Workers (UAW), the union demanded a 30 percent increase in hourly wages, and overtime pay. The strike ended when workers from the UAW agreed to a 17.5 percent increase in wages, as well as paid vacations and overtime. The strike paved the way for a higher standard of living for auto workers.

## *"The Uprising of the 20,000" - NY Garment Workers*

On Nov. 23, 1909, 20,000 mostly young immigrant Jewish woman garment workers, began an 11-week strike protesting long hours, low wages and unsafe working conditions. The New York shirtwaist workers strike, commonly known as the "Uprising of the 20,000", was at the time the largest strike by women workers in U.S. history.

The strike was led by garment worker Clara Lemlich, a local activist and leader of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. The strike succeeded in winning higher pay and reduced working hours, but failed to secure critical demands concerning safety and union recognition.

Two years later the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Fire killed 146 women workers when there was no escape due to locked doors. The Uprising of the 20,000 was one of the historical events that

led to the formation of International Working Women's Day.

## *Boeing Walkout*

On Dec. 14, 1995, more than 33,000 members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers ended a 69-day walkout at Boeing, the world's leading airplane manufacturer. The strike was the second-longest strike against Boeing at the time.

Workers ended the strike when the union secured protections against subcontracting, an immediate bonus that was equal to ten percent of their annual pay, as well as a \$3 per hour wage increase in the following years between 1997 through 1999.

## *Kellogg's Strike Ends - New Contract*

On Dec. 21, 2021, approximately 1,400 workers at the Kellogg Company ended a two-month long strike that began Oct. 5, in favor of a new contract that offered improved conditions for transitional employees and across-the-board wage increases.

The strike garnered national attention, as Senator Bernie Sanders joined rallies with the workers, and consumers online made calls to boycott products made by Kellogg's and their subsidiaries.

The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union members at Kellogg's won an agreement that included no permanent two-tier system where lower-tier workers made less than the longer-tenured workers. ■





# APWU 2023 LEAVE CHART

BROUGHT FORWARD		PAY PERIOD BEGINS							EARNED THIS PERIOD							USED THIS PERIOD			BALANCE	
ANNUAL	SICK	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	ANNUAL	SICK	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	SICK
			Jan. 14, 2023																	
			Jan. 28																	
			Feb. 11																	
			Feb. 25																	
			Mar. 11																	
			Mar. 25																	
			Apr. 8																	
			Apr. 22																	
			May 6																	
			May 20																	
			June 3																	
			June 17																	
			July 1																	
			July 15																	
			July 29																	
			Aug. 12																	
			Aug. 26																	
			Sep. 9																	
			Sep. 23																	
			Oct. 7																	
			Oct. 21																	
			Nov. 4																	
			Nov. 18																	
			Dec. 2																	
			Dec. 16																	
			Dec. 30																	

Leave year Begins: PP 03-2023 Jan. 14, 2023 Leave year Ends: PP 02-2024 Jan. 12, 2024

**Choose your  
health plan  
for 2023**

# Welcome to health coverage you can rely on.

All postal and federal employees  
and retirees can enroll.



**Enroll during Open Season  
November 14 – December 12, 2022**

## High Option 100% covered services



- ✓ Preventative care and screenings
- ✓ Lab tests (covered blood work performed at LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics)
- ✓ Maternity care
- ✓ Accidental injury outpatient services within 72 hours
- ✓ Diabetes generic oral medications
- ✓ Visits to a registered dietician/nutritionist
- ✓ Tobacco cessation and weight management programs
- ✓ Breast cancer screenings for women



### In-network copays

\$10 for virtual visits  
\$25 for office visits, including specialists  
\$30 for urgent care  
\$10 for retail non-specialty Tier 1 drugs  
Save on prescriptions by using the Express Scripts® SmartRx® program

## High Option 2023 premiums

Features the  
Cigna Healthcare  
provider network.



Self Only enrollment code 471		Self Plus One enrollment code 473		Self & Family enrollment code 472	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
\$121.00	\$262.16	\$238.95	\$517.73	\$302.26	\$654.90

“She was very customer service oriented, very professional and very knowledgeable. It was a pleasure speaking with her. She answered all my questions. My main concern was that my questions were answered, and the best thing about it, she listened to my concerns, didn't rush me and you can tell she had a smile on her face!” - Health Plan member

## Consumer Driven Option 100% covered services



- ✓ In January, the Health Plan funds a Personal Care Account (PCA) members can use for covered medical services. Members are covered 100% until the PCA is exhausted. The Plan funds the PCA at \$1,200 for Self Only and \$2,400 for Self Plus One and Self and Family.
- ✓ Preventative care and screenings
- ✓ Maternity care
- ✓ Well-woman care
- ✓ Tobacco cessation program



### In-network copays

No upfront deductible, coinsurance or copay until you exhaust your PCA  
Receive a discount on prescriptions when you use the OptumRx® Home Delivery

## Consumer Driven Option 2023 premiums

UnitedHealthcare  
administers the  
Consumer Driven Option.



Self Only enrollment code 474		Self Plus One enrollment code 476		Self & Family enrollment code 475	
Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly	Biweekly	Monthly
\$73.83	\$159.96	\$160.46	\$347.67	\$175.05	\$379.28

### APWU special rates biweekly

APWU career less than 1 year in FEHB	PSE	APWU career more than 1 year in FEHB	APWU career less than 1 year in FEHB	PSE	APWU career more than 1 year in FEHB	APWU career less than 1 year in FEHB	PSE	APWU career more than 1 year in FEHB
\$73.83	\$73.83	\$14.77	\$160.46	\$160.46	\$32.09	\$175.05	\$175.05	\$35.01

“She was patient, she explained things to me and she was wonderful and she was very, very kind and I want to give her kudos! Thank you!” - Health Plan member