

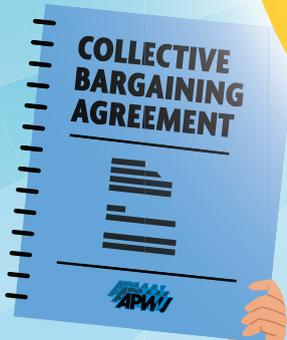
THE AMERICAN

Postal Worker

APWU

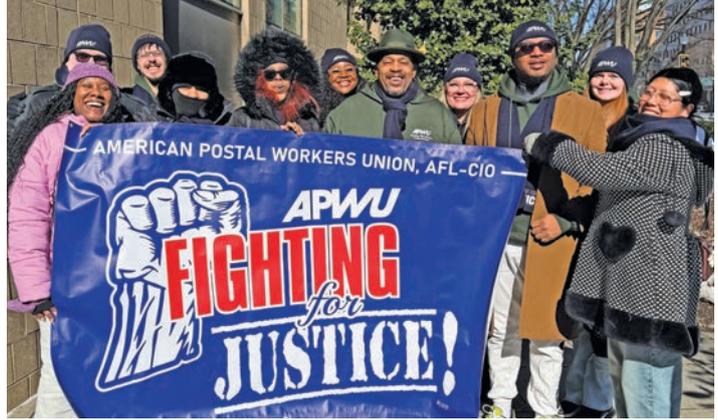
March/April 2026

KNOWLEDGE
EMPOWERS
EVERY UNION
MEMBER





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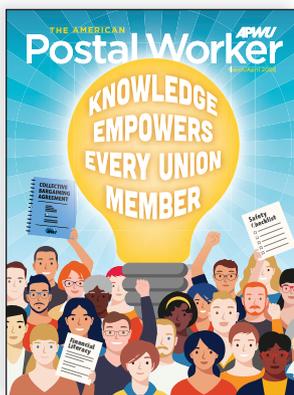


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Our cover shows members beneath a glowing lightbulb, symbolizing knowledge and empowerment. Education is one of our union’s priority, giving members the tools to understand their rights, strengthen solidarity, and stand together for fairness at work and in our communities.

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‘Why Is ICE in Minneapolis an Issue that Concerns the APWU?’

PRESIDENT JONATHAN SMITH

I saw a social media post that perfectly explains what every member should feel for our brothers and sisters in Minneapolis right now. It asked the question, “What radicalized you?” One commenter replied, “Nothing. Caring about people isn’t radical. Wanting clear air and water isn’t radical. Calling out cruelty and corruption isn’t radical. This should be the basic, not the rebellion.”

For the past several months, working people in Minneapolis have been occupied by thousands of federal agents who have terrorized, maimed, and murdered their neighbors. It is not just “violent” criminals or undocumented immigrants who have suffered the brutality of this unprecedented operation, but law-abiding U.S. citizens whose only crime was exercising their freedoms of speech, press, and the right to peacefully protest – rights we often exercise as union members!

On Jan. 7, an ICE agent named Jonathan Ross killed U.S. citizen Renee Nicole Good, who was a 37-year-old mother. Just two weeks later, another citizen, Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old VA nurse and AFGF member protesting Good’s killing, was shot from behind and killed by Customs and Border Patrol agents in Minneapolis.

I have spoken with APWU members and leaders across Minnesota. I’ve heard that postal brothers and sisters are scared to leave their homes for fear of being profiled by ICE because of their national origin. Many have no food to eat because they can’t go to the grocery store. Their children can’t go outside and play because ICE has turned their neighborhoods into war zones. They are afraid that the Postal Service is going to provide employee data to help ICE carry out its campaign of cruelty.

I’ve heard stories of how ICE agents are randomly beating up neighbors of APWU members and destroying the peace and solidarity of their close-knit communities. I’ve heard the heartbreaking stories of parents explaining to their young children why there is chaos in the streets, and they tell me they are honestly at a loss for words. In a story that brought tears to my eyes, I heard about one little girl who said that she wants to move to another country if this is what America stands for.

I hope you noticed that I didn’t use any members’ names in this article, not even those of the union representatives, for fear of retaliation both inside and outside the post office. Their stories are why I had to write this article; I knew I had to be their voice in this crucial moment.

Is this what we want our country to look like? A place where the government has the license to shoot our neighbors without recourse?

As a union, we must protect our First Amendment rights. The essential actions we take to publicly advocate for better conditions, such as organizing demonstrations and picketing workplaces, like our Wells Fargo action, are possible because of the First Amendment. Now we are seeing legal, peaceful protests met with hate, bigotry, violence, and the unlawful detentions of members of the public and press, in what can only be described as an unfettered disregard by federal agents for the constitutional rights of our family in Minneapolis.

CARING ABOUT PEOPLE ISN’T RADICAL. WANTING CLEAR AIR AND WATER ISN’T RADICAL. CALLING OUT CRUELTY AND CORRUPTION ISN’T RADICAL. THIS SHOULD BE THE BASIC, NOT THE REBELLION.

Dr. Martin Luther King once said, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” To APWU members in Minneapolis, we stand with you to say no to excessive force, no to racial profiling, and no to invasion of schools and places of worship. We cannot ignore or absolve these bad actors, because if we do, this policy of cruelty will be repeated in your community next.

This is what solidarity and democracy look like! ■

The American Postal Workers Union Doubles Down on Safety with Campaign for Safe Jobs

On April 28, Workers' Memorial Day, APWU members across the country will double down on our shared commitment to protecting the health and safety of postal workers by standing up to management to say, "Talk is cheap: safety matters." Recognized annually, Workers' Memorial Day honors workers who have been injured or killed on the job and underscores the urgent need for safer working conditions.

THIS YEAR, APWU LEADERSHIP IS ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO VISIBLY STAND UP FOR OUR COLLECTIVE SAFETY BY PARTICIPATING IN COORDINATED ACTIONS AT POSTAL FACILITIES AND DOCUMENTING THOSE EFFORTS.

APWU MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO TAKE PHOTOS SHOWING THEIR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY — WHETHER THAT MEANS WEARING SAFETY CAMPAIGN GEAR, POSTING SAFETY MESSAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA, OR SPEAKING WITH COWORKERS ABOUT WORKPLACE HAZARDS — AND SEND THEM TO COMMUNICATIONS@APWU.ORG.

These images will help strengthen the message that we, as postal workers, are united in demanding safe jobs for all of us, and making sure management does their part too.

Postal workers work every day in a dangerous, highly industrialized environment filled with heavy machinery, vehicles, and repetitive tasks. The reality is sobering: the Postal Service consistently reports more workplace injuries than nearly all other federal agencies. Historically, industrial accidents at the Postal Service have resulted in more worker deaths than all other federal agencies combined. This is not just a number; these are our coworkers, friends, and family members whose lives have been forever changed.

While it is management's responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace, APWU leadership would like to remind members that safety enforcement

often requires constant vigilance and collective action. Unsafe staffing levels, broken equipment, inadequate training, and pressure to cut corners all contribute to preventable injuries. Addressing these hazards requires informed and engaged workers willing to Stand Up for Safe Jobs.

That is where our union solidarity makes the difference. Every time a postal worker refuses an unsafe instruction, a steward files a grievance, or an APWU member challenges management's negligence, we create a culture where safety is fundamental. Our actions protect not only individual workers, but everyone on the workroom floor.

The *Talk is Cheap: Safety Matters.* campaign slogan is a call to action for every APWU member. By standing together, documenting unsafe conditions, and demanding accountability, postal workers can force meaningful change.

Stand with the APWU this year as we fight — together — for safer jobs, safer facilities, and a Postal Service that truly values the lives and well-being of its workforce.

On Feb. 10, President Jonathan Smith hosted a livestream to discuss the need for this campaign and introduce safety checklists for local leaders and individuals to complete. Take a look online and prepare to kick off our campaign on Workers' Memorial Day in April! ■



Third Cost-of-Living Adjustment Announced

In accordance with the 2024-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement, career employees represented by the APWU will receive a 12-cent per hour cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective March 7, 2026.



The increase is the result of a rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W). It will appear in paychecks dated March 27 (Pay Period 07-2026). The value of the COLA for full-time employees in each step and grade will increase by \$250 annually, and the hourly rates for part-time employees will be adjusted accordingly.

The COLAs are in addition to general wage increases. This is the third cost-of-living increase under the 2024 contract. The first increase, effective March 8, 2025, amounted to 19 cents per hour or \$395 annually. The second increase, effective Sept. 6, 2025, was 39 cents

per hour or \$811 annually. The total cumulative COLAs received during the 2024-2027 National Agreement so far is 70 cents per hour, or \$1,456 annually.

Because Postal Support Employees (PSEs) do not receive cost-of-living increases, they have received several additional increases beyond the general wage increases for all employees in the APWU bargaining unit under the 2024 contract. COLAs are added to the base pay schedule, so PSEs will see these increases when they convert to career status.

Rising inflation underscores the importance of our negotiated COLAs within our union contract, made possible by the strength of our membership. In our 2024-2027 contract, we fought to keep the twice-a-year COLAs, our best protection against inflation. Postal workers are some of the few U.S. workers who receive COLA increases. Even in the postal world, we are the only postal union that has maintained full COLA in our union contract. ■

New Tools to Educate About Cost-of-Living Adjustments

To help educate members on the importance of cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) and what they truly mean for your paycheck, the APWU has launched a



new educational webpage and a short, two-minute video designed to break it all down.

COLAs are a critical part of postal workers' pay structure.

They are negotiated through our collective bargaining agreements and are meant to help protect wages from being eroded by inflation. When prices for everyday goods rise, COLAs help ensure that postal workers' pay keeps pace, preserving purchasing power for APWU members and their families. These adjustments are applied twice each year and are a key component of the overall pay package won at the bargaining table.

The new video features APWU members from every craft and region, highlighting the shared impact COLAs have across the postal workforce. It serves as a quick, accessible explainer for new members and newly hired postal workers, while also acting as a helpful refresher for local leaders and stewards who are answering questions or addressing concerns about COLA payments.

Understanding how COLAs work—and why it matters—is essential for every APWU member. Knowledge of our contract strengthens our union and empowers members to explain the value of union-negotiated benefits to co-workers who may be unfamiliar with them.

Members are encouraged to watch the video and explore the new webpage, then share the information with colleagues on the workroom floor. Education is a powerful tool, and an informed membership is key to protecting and advancing the gains we have fought hard to secure.

Watch the video by visiting apwu.org/cola or scan the QR code. ■



Honoring Workers' Memorial Day in 2026

As APWU prepares to honor Workers' Memorial Day with our coordinated collective action (see page 5), it is important to understand the history of why union members like us honor this holiday. Through organizing and collective bargaining, we have won the protections we have today – but that has not always been the case.

In 1989, the AFL-CIO declared April 28 “Workers’ Memorial Day” to honor the hundreds of thousands of working people killed or injured on the job every year. They chose April 28 because it is the anniversary of when the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* went into effect, and when the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was formed in 1971.

Before this, working people had to fight for protection, and there was little to no oversight at all for bosses who wanted to put profit over safety. In fact, it was the strength of labor unions that demanded federal regulation and took collective action like strikes and walkouts that created OSHA. Union representatives helped pass the act, testifying in congressional hearings and helping write the act itself.



OSHA exists because unions forced the issue of workplace safety onto the national agenda. It was a union-fought, worker-won law, born from organizing, collective action, and the insistence that workers’ lives mattered more than profits.

Paired with a strong union contract, OSHA is the path workers have to win safety at work. Workers’ Memorial Day reminds us of the grim consequences that workers face when there are no safety regulations or means to enforce them. ■

RETROACTIVE PAY Included in April Paychecks

As previously announced in August 2025, APWU members covered by the 2024–2027 National Agreement can expect to see their retroactive payments in paychecks dated April 10, 2026. These payments reflect increases to our wages secured through collective bargaining and enforced by the APWU on behalf of members. The amount of the retroactive payment is unique to each employee and cannot be estimated or predicted. It is based on an individual employee’s work hours, leave, step progression, etc. The Industrial Relations Department will release a sample “paystub” for the April 10 pay date after the payments have been issued. The sample will include instructions on how to read and understand your paystub that includes the retroactive payment.

Retroactive pay will cover the period from Nov. 16, 2024, through Aug. 22, 2025. Employees who separated from

the Postal Service during that period, including retirees, remain eligible for retroactive payments if they had work hours or paid leave during the covered timeframe. Those payments will be sent to the employee’s last office of record.

For retirees, the USPS will transmit updated earnings records to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Any resulting annuity adjustments will be made by the OPM after those records are processed. Historically, the OPM has taken several months to update annuities after updated earnings records are transmitted.

Paired with the cost-of-living adjustment that appeared in March paychecks, these retroactive payments underscore the value of a strong union contract. APWU-represented employees are seeing real pay increases that were fought for at the bargaining table and secured through collective action. ■



The American Postal Workers Union Launches Interactive Online History Center



The APWU has launched an interactive website designed to expand access to the APWU History Center, which opened in 2023 at the APWU Headquarters Building, allowing members and the public to virtually explore the union's storied history, no matter where they are.

The APWU History Center documents the often-overlooked role of postal workers in building the

nation's public Postal Service, highlighting moments of collective action, solidarity, and labor organizing that shaped the APWU and the postal industry.

The exhibits trace key events, such as the Great Postal Strike of 1970 and the merger of five postal craft unions into what became the APWU. It also features major campaigns and challenging fights, including efforts to stop postal privatization, secure strong union contracts, improve workplace safety, organize nonunion workers, defend Vote-by-Mail, and navigate legislative battles.

The new website is designed to guide visitors through different decades and the struggles that postal workers faced, just as if they were walking through the museum themselves. It features the same videos and will soon add a virtual video walk-through of the space, making the APWU History Center accessible to anyone who is interested in seeing the exhibits, regardless of location.

To see the interactive website, visit historycenter.apwu.org. ■

ELECTIONS MATTER— Every Vote Counts

Each passing day brings us closer to the 2026 midterm elections. As Election Day draws near, voters will be bombarded with political mailers from candidates in local, state, and federal races across the country. Too often, many mistakenly feel that their vote does not matter. With the current state of the country and the daily assault on our democratic rights, it is our responsibility to fight back against voter apathy in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

While the national political landscape dominates news cycles, the vast majority of elections take place at the local level. Local politicians are the decision makers who have the most immediate and direct impact on our daily lives, from tax decisions to school budgets and much more. Additionally, you may have the ability to vote on various local and state ballot initiatives, which means your vote directly impacts policy in your area.

We have been amplifying the attacks on Vote-by-Mail and our right to vote, but did you know that local officials play a significant role in election administration? They are often tasked with maintaining voter rolls, determining polling locations and hours, and ballot counting processes.

The reality is that every vote counts. Since 2018, there have been 660 elections across all levels of government that have been decided by ten votes or fewer. In the 2024 federal elections, 43 elections for Congress were won by just five percentage points or less. ■



LOOKING BACK ON NOTABLE RACES DECIDED BY FEWER THAN TEN VOTES

September 16, 1975

The 1974 New Hampshire race between Republican Louis Wyman and Democrat John Durkin was the closest election in Senate history. The contest lasted eight months and, after a series of recounts, came down to a margin of victory of just two votes in Wyman's favor. The election was so close that Durkin petitioned the Senate to review the case. After nearly two months, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration remained deadlocked on a decision, and the candidates agreed to run a second, special election. After a record-breaking turnout, Durkin won the special election by 27,000 votes.

January 4, 2018

During the 2017 race between Democrat Shelly Simonds and Republican incumbent David Yancey for a seat in the Virginia House of Delegates, Yancey initially won by a margin of just 10 votes. After a recount, the candidates' votes were tied at 11,608 each. There was much at stake in this election – the winning party would determine who would be picked as Speaker of the House and the number of people on the committees. After weeks of heated political drama and legal battles, the candidates agreed on a method to determine a winner. James Alcorn, the Chairman of the Virginia Board of Elections, drew a name out of a ceremonial blue and white ceramic bowl to determine that Republican incumbent David Yancey would be the certified winner of the Virginia House of Delegates 94th District seat.

Make your voice heard by voting in every election that you are eligible to participate in, including at the local, state, and federal levels!

MEMBERS



The Greater Hicksville Mid-Island Local in Farmingdale, NY displays holiday party for Toys for Tots.

South Alabama Area Local Vice President Rhonda Davis, Secretary-Treasurer Jackie Hafler, and President Tammy Love pose with the proclamation they secured to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Postal Service.



APWU Young Members visit D.C. to make plans for the year ahead.



IN ACTION



s the toys collected at their annual



APWU attends a rally decrying the severe staff cuts at the Washington Post



APWU Young Members Committee gather with National President Jonathan Smith to attend the Young Workers' March in Washington, D.C.



Diane North (Northeast Florida Retiree Chapter) attends a protest against ICE in Florida, holding her handmade sign.

Important Financial Planning for Postal Workers

Career employees at the Postal Service have access to federal retirement benefits, but many times they often fail to maximize one of our most valuable perks: “free” money through employer-matching contributions.

Career postal workers hired after 1984 are covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), which provides retirement income through three sources: a pension, Social Security, and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), which is a 401(k)-style retirement account.

The TSP component requires immediate attention from new employees or anyone who has not yet examined their account. The Postal Service automatically contributes 1% of an employee’s basic pay into your TSP account regardless of whether the worker contributes anything. Additionally, the Postal Service matches employee contributions of up to 5% of your salary.

Every employee who is in FERS gets an automatic 1% match for their contribution. The Postal Service then matches your contribution dollar-for-dollar for the next 3% that an employee contributes. Finally, for the next 2%, the agency matches 50 cents on the dollar. So, a postal employee who contributes 5% of their salary receives an additional 5% in matching contributions, effectively doubling their retirement savings to 10% of pay.

The 2026 TSP contribution limit is \$24,500 for workers under the age of 50. Employees 50 and older can contribute an additional \$8,000 in catch-up contributions, bringing their total to \$32,500. Workers aged 60-63 can contribute even more through a new “super catch-up” provision allowing total contributions of \$35,750.

Starting in 2026, TSP participants earning over \$145,000 must make catch-up and super catch-up contributions to Roth accounts, where contributions are made with after-tax dollars but withdrawals in retirement are tax-free. The change also allows in-plan Roth conversions for the first time, letting workers convert traditional TSP savings to Roth accounts while still employed.

TSP offers six core investment options ranging from conservative government securities in the G Fund

RECOMMENDATIONS



Enroll in TSP immediately at tsp.gov.

1



Contribute at least 5% of your salary.

2



Increase contributions with each pay raise.

3

to stock market index funds tracking the S&P 500 and international markets. The plan also offers lifecycle funds that automatically adjust asset allocation as workers approach retirement, including a newly added L 2075 Fund for younger employees.

It is important that you look at your investment options and make a choice that is right for you. For example, many young workers leave their entire balance in the ultra-conservative G Fund for decades, missing potential growth from stock market investments.

Under FERS, postal workers also receive a pension calculated at 1% to 1.1% of their highest three consecutive years of salary multiplied by years of service. Combined with Social Security benefits and the TSP, the three-part system is designed to provide comprehensive retirement security for employees.

Postal employees are also covered under the Postal Service Health Benefits program starting in 2025, replacing the previous Federal Employees Health Benefits coverage.

The TSP website at tsp.gov and the Office of Personnel Management, found at opm.gov provide detailed information on federal retirement benefits.

It is wise to enroll in TSP immediately, contribute at least 5% to capture full matching, and increase your contributions with each pay raise to build long-term retirement security. ■



Three lucky winners of *The American Postal Worker* quiz will receive a \$50 coupon for the APWU store so that you can gear up and show your APWU union pride. To enter the quiz, email your answers to communications@apwu.org, together with your

EIN by March 30. Winners will be randomly selected among those who correctly answer the following:

- Norma Reyes**, Minnesota Postal Workers Union
- Marti Jablonski**, 480-481 Area Local
- Thom Eiser**, Fort Wayne Area Local

APWU March/April QUIZ

1. Why did the AFL-CIO choose to honor Workers' Memorial Day on April 28?
2. Give the year of the most recent election where a notable race was decided by fewer than 10 votes.
3. Name one recommendation that the APWU has for building long-term retirement security with your employer matching contributions.

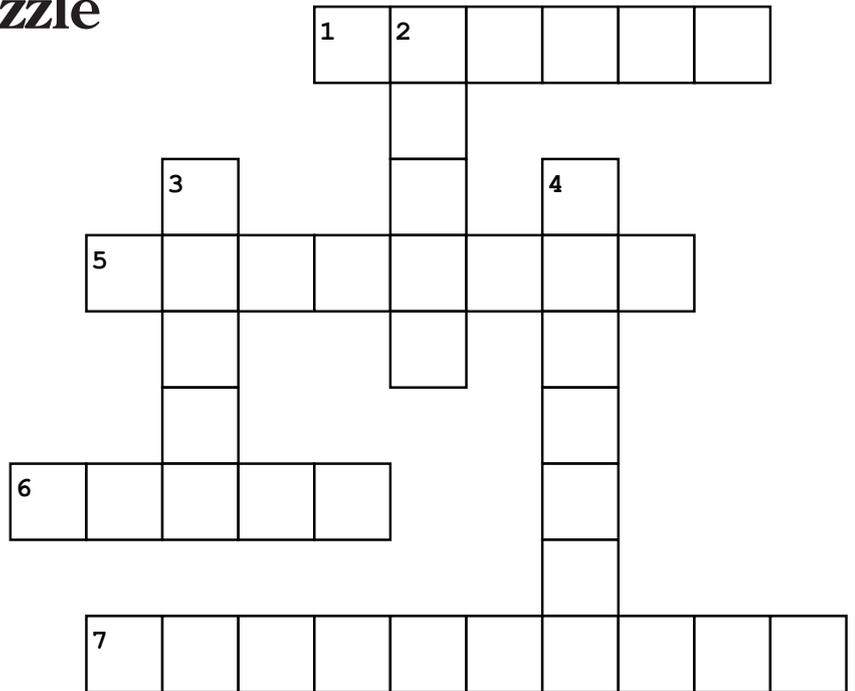
APWU Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. The APWU launched a new campaign called "Talk is Cheap, _____ Matters."
5. The last name of the Postal Governor who wrote about the constraints hamstringing USPS finances.
6. According to the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), both urban and _____ communities would be harmed by postal privatization.
7. What state will host the 28th Biennial Convention?

Down

2. In which month do we celebrate Women's History?
3. Human Relations Director Freeman lays out that the Civil Rights and _____ Movement are inherently linked.
4. Nurses at this health care facility recently voted to ratify a new, three year contract.



ARE YOU A LUCKY WINNER?

APWU members - Do you want another chance to **win a \$50 gift card** to use in the APWU store? Whether you want a shirt, a hoodie, or buttons to show your union pride, check the list below. If you see your name printed, email us at: communications@apwu.org by March 30, and we'll send you a promo code worth \$50 to use towards gear at apwustore.org.

- Laura Arredondo** San Antonio, TX
- Sean O'Brien** Liberty, MO
- Veannett Richie** Louisville, KY

Crossword Answers:
 Across: 1. Safety, 5. Martinez, 6. Rural,
 Down: 2. April, 3. Labor, 4. Medstar,
 7. California



Mobilize for Our Future, End Unlawful Closures of Public Post Offices in 2026

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT DEBBY SZEREDY

At the end of 2025, the Postal Service had to report on its activities regarding rates and services in its Annual Compliance Report (ACR) to Congress and the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). For years, the PRC and Congress have complained about the Postal Service's handling of post office suspensions, yet the issue of violations of federal law — Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 39, Part 241; United States Code (USC) Title 39, section 404(d); and USPS Handbook PO-101 — continues regarding prolonged post office suspensions, discontinuances, and closures without providing affected communities with their right to a public review period to review documents, attend hearings, and record comments, as well as their right to appeal.

After reviewing the 2025 ACR report, management often got away with ignoring the legal procedures required to discontinue and close our post offices. Some offices were on the Suspension List for years, but never held community meetings or communicated with stakeholders, politicians, unions, businesses, and organizations. Others did not meet procedural time limits or legal notifications, or considered the effects that closing post offices would have on postal workers and the communities they served. People regularly served by the Postal Service have the right to appeal a closure to the PRC. The Postal Service failed to make good-faith efforts to solicit public comment on the right to have a post office in their communities or provide a legal right to appeal a decision to the PRC.

There was a push from Congress and the PRC for the Postal Service to respond to the backlog of suspensions, but management ignored many legal and procedural requirements. Many of the suspended post offices were removed from the suspension list and placed on the USPS internal Postal Bulletin, which stated that the office was officially closed and consolidated with another post office. No notifications were provided to patrons of their right to appeal.

That brings us to January 2026. There are still approximately 344 post offices on the Suspension List that have been suspended between 2017 and 2025.

The problem is, no one holds the Postal Service accountable to its legal requirements and responsibilities to provide communities across the country with a voice; their opportunity to comment, ask questions, attend community meetings, and receive notices of an appeal process to the PRC when their post offices are being considered for closure. Why do we let them walk all over our stakeholders and communities? The public has the right to full, prompt, affordable, effective, and reliable services, no matter where they live.

When there is a closure, there is also the loss of good postal jobs in the community, and adverse economic effects on the town or city. There is also a loss of postal revenue. Can you imagine how much postal revenue has been lost? In 2016, more than 660 post offices across the country were inactive because the Postal Service suspended them for between two to 20 years. This is part of privatization.

Postal workers must stand up for the right to have post offices in our communities. We need to stand up and fight back to save our jobs and the constitutionally mandated right of our customers to have postal services. This is a no-brainer fight. We need your help!

There are great, easy ways for you to get involved. If you are interested in supporting this fight or want to find the list of the 48 states that have suspended post offices, visit apwu.org/post-office-closures.

Postal services include your right to vote by mail, communication by sending and receiving letters and packages between loved ones, using businesses to ship products, and receiving services at affordable rates across the country and around the world. ■



Postal Service Financial Woes Do Not Stem from Market Forces Alone

The Postal Service's financial struggles are not simply a result of declining mail volumes in the digital age, they are also tied to congressional restrictions preventing the Postal Service from operating as the independent business it was designed to be, according to recent analysis conducted by former Postal Board of Governor Roman Martinez of a report published by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Since 2007, the Postal Service has accumulated more than \$100 billion in recurring losses. While changes in mail volume contribute to these losses, congressional mandates that constrain the Postal Service's operations have accounted for the majority of its financial woes.

In fiscal year (FY) 2025 alone, more than 70% of USPS losses resulted from factors outside of its control, including limited access to traditional financing and restrictive investment requirements for pensions and retiree health care, highlighting the need for financial reform.

The complications began with the *Postal Reorganization Act of 1970*, which transformed the service into an independent agency with a dual mandate: deliver mail to every address in America while remaining financially self-sustaining. But decades of legislative restrictions have made fulfilling that mission increasingly difficult.



Limited Access to Traditional Financing

Unlike private companies, the Postal Service cannot access traditional credit or capital markets. Its only line of credit comes from the Federal Financing Bank, and Congress set a \$15 billion debt limit in 1991 that remains unchanged today, despite inflation. That capacity is now exhausted. Adjusted for inflation, that limit would exceed \$30 billion in current dollars.

WHILE CHANGES IN MAIL VOLUME CONTRIBUTE TO THESE LOSSES, CONGRESSIONAL MANDATES THAT CONSTRAIN THE POSTAL SERVICE'S OPERATIONS HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR THE MAJORITY OF ITS FINANCIAL WOES.

Without access to financing, the agency faces challenges implementing its restructuring plan and covering \$20 billion in expenses while processing approximately 350 million pieces of mail and packages daily.

Restrictions on Pensions, Retiree Health Care Investments

Another obstacle is how the Postal Service is required to fund pension and retiree health care obligations. The current law requires pension and retiree health benefit funds to be invested solely in Treasury debt. Martinez, citing the OIG report, says that if those funds had been invested in a traditional portfolio like other independent agencies, such as Amtrak or the Tennessee Valley Authority, are allowed to do, they would have shown an \$800 billion surplus instead of a \$100 billion deficit at the end of FY 2022.

Additionally, when the Postal Service became independent in 1970, responsibility for funding pensions of employees who worked for the old Post Office Department was unfairly distributed, according to the OIG. This created an annual payment mandate from the Office of Personnel Management to reduce the pension fund deficit.

Correcting this payment mandate could generate a \$95 billion surplus that, if transferred in the current fiscal year, could extend the life of the depleting retiree health benefits fund from approximately five years to over 25 years.

The Need for Financial Reform

The 2022 *Postal Service Reform Act*, which the APWU helped draft, lobby, and pass, eliminated the mandate to prefund 75 years of future retiree health benefits within a ten-year period, providing much-needed relief. But there are still important legislative reforms addressing liquidity, pension fund investment, and operational and regulatory flexibility needed to ensure the agency's survival. ■

This article is based on commentary by Postal Board of Governor Roman Martinez published in Bloomberg.



New General Services Administration Mileage Rate Effective January 1, 2026

SECRETARY-TREASURER LIZ POWELL

Effective January 2026, the IRS mileage rate increased to 72.5 cents per mile, which the General Services Administration (GSA) has adopted for privately owned vehicles used in official business. It is important to ensure that officers and members are compensated at the correct rate. In order to receive reimbursement for mileage, it is required to provide supporting documents that include the name, dates of travel, locations traveled to and from, number of miles driven, and business purpose for each trip where reimbursement is requested. Local and state treasurers should ensure reimbursement is submitted using the mileage log form and a copy of Google Maps or MapQuest as additional verification for the mileage submission. The mileage log form can be obtained on the Secretary-Treasurer's page at apwu.org.

Electronically File Your LM Report on or Before March 31, 2026!

Save the Dates! **March 31, 2026**, is the deadline to electronically file Department of Labor (DOL) Labor-Management (LM) reports, and **May 15, 2026**, is the deadline to electronically file **IRS 990 reports** if your fiscal year ended December 31, 2025. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Save the Date! Secretary-Treasurer's Training April 7-9, 2026, in Atlanta, GA.

The three-day conference will provide vital training to new local officers, especially presidents and secretary-treasurers. Registration for Fiduciary Responsibility, Refresher QuickBooks, and Beginners QuickBooks training is available between April 7-9. Plan to arrive on April 6 and depart on April 10.

- **Fiduciary Responsibility** training will cover Department of Labor requirements, national constitution requirements, legal responsibilities, planning, setting goals, establishing local policies and procedures, maintaining union bank accounts and credit cards, budgeting, record keeping, DOL and IRS audits, travel and business expenses, and insurance.

- **Refresher QuickBooks** training will cover an overview of QuickBooks, charts of accounts, writing checks, bank deposits, bank reconciliations, payroll review and information, budgets, treasurer's and financial reports. It is important to note that participants must have taken Beginners QuickBooks training before registering for Refresher QuickBooks training.
- **Beginners QuickBooks** training will cover an overview of QuickBooks, charts of accounts, writing checks, bank deposits, bank reconciliations, and treasurer's and financial reports.

2026 APWU Scholarship Application Deadline: May 31, 2026!

The 2026 scholarship deadline for the E.C Hallbeck Memorial Scholarship, Vocational Scholarship, and Best Essay Award is May 31, 2026. The APWU Scholarship Program is one of the great benefits of being an APWU member. 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 2026 APWU Scholarship applications are accessible on the Secretary-Treasurer's page on apwu.org.

2026 APWU 28th Biennial National Convention: August 17-20, 2026 — Los Angeles, CA

Save the dates! Local and state officials should plan to attend the APWU 28th Biennial Convention held August 17-20 in Los Angeles, CA. The official Convention Call is included in this issue of the magazine (page 20). Please check apwu.org for updates and information about the convention, pre-convention workshops, and division conferences.

2026 Young Members' Committee Announced

The APWU Secretary-Treasurer's office, which is the liaison to the APWU's Young Members' Committee (YMC), has announced the members of the 2026 committee. The committee helps connect emerging leaders with the union's broader mission and resources, providing a national platform for younger APWU members to share perspectives, elevate workplace concerns, and help shape the future direction of the union.

Created by a mandate of the APWU's 23rd National Convention and strongly supported by delegates, the Committee is made up of representatives and alternates from the Central, Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northeast regions, ensuring that young members' voices are heard from every region of the country.



L-R Sherika Jackson, Ebony Wright, Eric Chornoby, Rictarsha Westmoreland, Nick Sarvello, Janie Santos, Jerual Gardner, Liset Hernandez, Whitney Sparks, and Skylar Beaton

Since its establishment, the committee has gone beyond discussion by organizing national meetings and targeted training focused on the real-world challenges facing postal workers ages 18 to 35, including building leadership skills, fostering solidarity, and encouraging long-term union involvement.

For questions or to connect with the Young Members' Committee, please contact youngmembers@apwu.org. ■

Current Committee Members

Western Region

Janie Santos
San Diego Area Local

Nick Sarvello
Salt Lake City Area Local

Eastern Region

Jerual Gardner
Baltimore Francis Stu Filbey Area Local

Whitney Sparks
Charleston West Virginia Area Local

Northeast Region

Ebony Wright
New York Metro Area Postal Union

Alison Dumouchel
Central Massachusetts Area Local

Central Region

Skylar Beaton
Kansas Kaw Valley Area Local

Eric Chornoby
480-481 Area Local

Southern Region

Angela McDonald
Miami Area Local

Sherika Jackson
Atlanta Metro Area Local

EARTH DAY 2026: Take Action as Climate Disasters Intensify

Earth Day, observed April 22, comes as communities across the United States continue to grapple with the growing toll of climate-driven disasters, from hurricanes and flooding to ice storms and extreme heat.

Fossil fuel companies are a major contributor to the crisis, often downplaying environmental harm while profiting from practices that worsen air and water pollution in the communities that we live and work in. Organized labor has a critical role to play in protecting both workers and the communities we serve. While billionaires profit

off of destroying our environment, we must keep taking care of each other so that we can protect and repair the places we call home.

That is why the APWU encourages postal workers to get involved locally for Earth Day by joining or forming climate justice or safety committees within your locals. You can also find actions through your AFL-CIO central labor council.

The APWU is a member of the Labor Network for Sustainability, a national coalition that connects unions with environmental and climate justice organizations. The network provides educational

resources on the economic impacts of climate change and highlights the role of organized labor in advancing climate solutions. Information on starting a climate justice committee and participating in related projects is available at apwu.org/climate-justice.

For workers directly affected by natural disasters, financial assistance is available through the Postal Employees' Relief Fund (PERF), which offers aid exclusively to postal employees. Donations to the fund are accepted year-round to help coworkers rebuild after disasters. ■



Postal Workers Have the Right to a Safe Work Environment

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR CHARLIE CASH

In 2020, the United States and the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic. It abruptly closed schools, restaurants, and movie theatres, and disrupted the lives of millions of people. But the one thing that kept going was the U.S. Postal Service. Every day, the mail moved throughout the country and was delivered to people's homes. Every day, thousands of postal employees went to work risking their own health and lives to keep this vital service running for the people living in America. In fact, we lost nearly 400 postal employees due to COVID-19, and tens of thousands more were sickened by the virus.

The pandemic was when the term “essential worker” became a household term. Obviously, first responders are essential workers. Medical professionals, some maintenance workers, and even postal employees were also identified as essential workers during the pandemic.

No matter if postal workers are identified by the Postal Service and the public as “essential” or what “emergency” they work through, postal workers—you—have the right to a safe work environment. You have the right to be able to travel to and from work safely. No human being can have the right to decide to travel to and from work if it is unsafe to do so, taken away from them.

During times of emergency like severe storms, flooding, wildfires, or civil unrest, the public still relies on the employees of the Postal Service to deliver their letters, parcels, medicines, and checks. They trust the postal employees and consistently rate the Postal Service as one of the most trusted government agencies in surveys. All postal employees should feel honored by that.

Many of you have heard the unofficial Postal Service motto, “Neither rain nor sleet nor gloom of night stay these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.” Many people think that means you have to move the mail, no matter the risk to the postal employees and their safety. This is simply not true.

Management always claims that safety comes first and that postal employees need to work safely. I agree—safety is first. You need to work safely. You also need to be able to commute to and from work safely.

When there is any incident that affects a community and mail delivery, you must insist on and defend your rights to a safe workplace and to be protected from harm due to natural disasters, civil unrest, and any other large-scale emergency. You cannot be expected or required to commute through burning wildlands, floods, on icy roads, or large amounts of snow (which could be any amount depending on where you live in the country), or civil unrest just to get to the post office to work. Your life and safety must come first. You have the right to make that decision.

LOCAL LEADERS AND MEMBERS NEED TO BE PROACTIVE WHEN CONDITIONS ARE FORESEEN THAT COULD REQUIRE CURTAILMENT AND DEMAND THAT THE SAFETY OF THE EMPLOYEES IS PUT FIRST, INCLUDING COMMUTES.

Our contract demands safety, and it is management's responsibility to provide that safety. In my opinion, management must recognize when events affecting a community could imperil employee commutes. Local unions have the right to demand the curtailment of postal services in unsafe areas until it is safe to resume operations.

Our contract with the Postal Service includes provisions that allow us to negotiate and implement guidelines for the curtailment or termination of postal operations to conform to orders of local authorities or as local conditions warrant because of emergency conditions. Local leaders and members need to be proactive when conditions are foreseen that could require curtailment and demand that the safety of the employees is put first, including commutes.

Not every event requires curtailment, but when it does, the APWU will vigorously defend and enforce these rights during any emergency, no matter what letter the Postal Service may issue and demand you carry. ■



Reporting Workplace Harassment for Your Safety and Health

If you are being harassed by a supervisor, someone you encounter through postal work, or even a coworker, there are several formal and informal ways to protect yourself. Which one applies depends on who is doing the harassing and how severe it is. If you ever feel that you are in immediate danger, always call 911 first.

1. Document Everything! This Is Very Important

Start documenting the harassment **immediately**, even if you have not reported it yet. Include the following:

- Dates, times, locations
- What was said or done (exact words if possible)
- Witnesses
- Any emails, texts, notes, or messages
- How it affected your work or safety

Keep this information on your personal devices, do not keep this information **on your work computer**. Use a personal notebook or secure digital file.

2. Tell the Person to Stop If You Feel Safe to Do So

If the situation allows and you feel safe:

- Clearly say: *“This behavior is unwelcome. Please stop.”*

- You only need to say it **once**.
- After that, further behavior strengthens your case.

Do **not** do this if you feel threatened or unsafe.

3. Report Harassment with PS Form 1767

You can use PS Form 1767 to report harassment to:

- Your **immediate supervisor**
- Another supervisor or **manager**

Management is required to take harassment complaints seriously, even if the person who is harassing you is a supervisor.

4. File an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaint for Federal Protection

If harassment is based on:

- Sex (including sexual harassment)
- Race, color, religion
- National origin
- Age (40+)
- Disability
- Retaliation

You can contact the **EEO Counselor**. There is a **strict deadline** (usually **45 days** from the incident), so it is important that you do not wait.

5. Contact Your Union Representative

- A **shop steward** can help you fill out the PS Form 1767 and help you turn it in to management. They can accompany you to meetings.
- They help protect you from retaliation.
- This is often one of the **most effective routes**.

6. File a Complaint with the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG)

If harassment involves:

- Abuse of authority
- Threats
- Retaliation
- Serious misconduct

You can file a complaint with the **USPS OIG** (confidentially if needed).

7. Notify the Postal Inspection Service If There's Threats or Stalking

If the behavior includes:

- Threats
- Stalking
- Violence
- Intimidation

The **Postal Inspection Service** handles criminal matters related to the USPS. If you ever feel that you are in immediate danger, always call **911** first. ■

28TH BIENNIAL APWU N

Honoring Our Past, Fighting for Our Future! is the theme of the APWU's 28th Biennial National Convention, which is set for Monday, August 17 through Thursday, August 20, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA.

The National Convention is the union's highest decision-making body and helps the union chart its course for the future. Approximately 2,000 APWU delegates will debate and vote on resolutions that will be introduced on a wide variety of subjects. The resolutions give focus to the union's goals and help us better serve our members.



LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

In accordance with the APWU Constitution and Bylaws, each local and area local is entitled to representation at the National Convention based on one delegate – and one vote – for each 25 members or fraction thereof. Each local is entitled to at least one vote.

State organizations are entitled to one delegate and one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof in the state who are not part of a local. Each regional organization that is organized in place of a state organization and where no state organization exists is entitled to one vote for each 25 members or fraction thereof of the unrepresented members. (No local, state, or regional organization shall be represented by proxy.)

Each national officer holding an elective office shall serve as a delegate with the right to speak and one vote. The convention can authorize Members-at-Large (MALs) to vote, provided not more than three attend the convention. If more than three attend, the convention can apportion one vote to every three MALs. Five elected Retiree National Convention Delegates, one from each region, shall be seated at the National Convention. Each will have a voice and a vote. Each state and local retiree chapter shall be entitled to one (1) credentialed delegate with a voice and a vote.

APWU locals and state organizations are urged to send their full quota of delegates. Members-at-Large are also encouraged to attend. (*Local, state, and regional organizations are reminded that they must adhere to the requirements of applicable federal laws when electing delegates.*)

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS

Convention credentials must be authorized in the online process by the local president and/or the secretary, secretary-treasurer, or treasurer of the local. Beginning April 1, they will be able to log in to the Members Only section of the APWU website and in just a few easy steps they will be able to register their members for credentials. Upon presentation of proper credentials, alternate delegates may be seated in place of regular delegates who will be absent from that point on.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS, CAR RENTAL

KiddieCorp, a professional childcare company, will provide activities for delegates' children aged 6 months to 12 years during the four days of activities on the convention floor, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Reservations are necessary. Submit the forms (available on the website) by June 17.

The APWU has made arrangements with Enterprise/National for discounted rates for convention delegates. Information regarding reservations can be found on the APWU convention webpage.

RESOLUTIONS

June 1 is the deadline for the submission of resolutions for publication in the Convention Book. Resolutions are accepted from local or state affiliates, local and state retiree chapters, or from Members-at-Large (who are the only members permitted to submit resolutions under their own signature). Resolutions adopted at division meetings, either during an off-year or immediately prior to the National Convention, are also accepted.

Resolutions from local or state affiliates and local and state retiree chapters must be submitted electronically through a special link on the union's website that will be accessible only to local, state, or retiree chapter presidents and to local, state, retiree chapter secretaries, treasurers, and secretary-treasurers. There will be a box to check certifying that the submitter is the authorized officer, which will serve as an electronic signature.

Members-at-Large must sign and submit their resolutions directly to the National Secretary-Treasurer prior to the June 1 deadline. Resolutions must be typed, double-spaced, and submitted individually (one per page). Resolutions not properly certified electronically or signed will be returned.

Per Article 5, Section 3, of the APWU constitution, the Secretary-Treasurer will submit the resolutions to the Screening

NATIONAL CONVENTION



Committee, which works to eliminate repetition and consolidate issues. Once the committee has completed its review, locals and pre-registered delegates will have an opportunity to view the resolutions on the APWU website.

Resolutions received after June 1 will be referred to the appropriate committees and will be presented at the National Convention as addendums, provided that they have been properly authorized and signed, and provided that they do not deal with subjects otherwise covered by the Screening Committee.

To achieve uniformity, it is requested that resolutions be structured as follows:

- The name of the appropriate committee to review the resolution, e.g., Labor-Management Committee.
- The article number and section of the Collective Bargaining Agreement or APWU Constitution and Bylaws that the resolution addresses, if applicable.
- The resolution title.
- The names of the sponsoring locals, state organizations and/or Member-at-Large.
- The body or text of the resolution itself.

A sample resolution format can be viewed online.

PLAN YOUR STAY WELL AHEAD

Although the convention is months away, it is essential that locals, state organizations, members-at-large, and retirees make their arrangements as soon as possible. Everything you need to make your hotel and travel plans can be found at apwu.org/convention.

APWU negotiated special room rates for this year's convention at various hotels in downtown Los Angeles. The rate for single/double occupancy ranges between \$219/night plus tax to \$249/night plus tax, depending on the property. The cutoff date to make reservations under the group's block is Tuesday, July 28, 2026 (Tuesday, July 21, 2026, for the JW Marriott).

Rooms and rates will be based on availability. You must use a credit card when booking online. You will receive a confirmation of your reservation via e-mail. Be sure to mention that you are with the

American Postal Workers Union in order to receive the negotiated rates. Additional details, including links to book the hotels, will be available at www.apwu.org.

For each room, a one-night's-stay deposit, plus tax, is requested with payment by credit card. Failure to notify the hotel of a change in arrival date will result in cancellation of the reservation and the deposit will be forfeited. Cancellation policies will be outlined by the hotel on the confirmation received after making a reservation. Please visit apwu.org/convention for additional details.

Early departures are subject to a penalty, set by the hotel. If you do not cancel per the cancellation policies mentioned above or do not arrive on your confirmed arrival date, your full reservation will be cancelled. Please note that APWU locals and state organizations may pay by check. Details can be found at www.apwu.org.

OTHER CONVENTION EVENTS

The BMC Conference will be held prior to the convention, on the afternoon of Thursday, Aug. 13, 2026 from 2 p.m. - 6 p.m. PT. The APWU Research and Education Department will conduct a series of pre-convention workshops on Friday, August 14. (The complete schedule of events can be viewed in the Convention pages at www.apwu.org.)

On Sunday, August 16, 2026, from 8:00am-9:30am, a Legislative presentation on the importance of local and state participation in the Midterm elections will be held. Meetings for each of the Divisions - Clerk, Maintenance, Motor Vehicle Service, and Support Services - are

set for the weekend of August 15 - 16, as is the APWU Retiree's Conference where a panel discussion between our young members and retirees, titled "Bridging the Gap," will take place from 2pm-4pm, Sunday, August 16, 2026.

Our union is strongest when we honor where we've come from and invest in where we're going. This panel will bring together retirees who built this union through struggle and younger members who are carrying that fight forward under new conditions. This will be a conversation about solidarity across generations, shared responsibility, and the future we are building together - as one union.

Clerk Division Officer Assignments



Assistant Director **Ashley Cargill**, Assistant Director **Robert Romanowski**, Director **Lamont Brooks**, and Assistant Director **Sam Lisenbe**

Lamont Brooks Director Clerk Division

Per the APWU constitution, I am responsible for the Division; for processing all Clerk Division grievances and being a member of the

Labor-Management Committee and the National Negotiations Committee. I am the supervisor of the APWU Clerk Division National Business Agents, and I work under the supervision of the APWU National President. There is a misunderstanding that I have authority over the grievance procedure at local and state union offices. APWU local and state unions are autonomous and responsible for processing grievances at both Steps 1 and 2. We are available to assist APWU locals and states, and we share your inquiries with your local union presidents. I am responsible for negotiating new Clerk Craft language and agreements and enforcing Craft-specific provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). I establish the positions of the Craft for contract interpretation disputes. My primary goal in 2026 is to reduce the grievance backlog, arbitrate major local issues, and resolve and arbitrate national-level Step 4 disputes.

Sam Lisenbe Assistant Director (A) Clerk Division

My duties include serving on the Retail Training Taskforce, which has been successful in acquiring additional work for

the Clerk Craft, such as FBI fingerprinting, GSA in-person proofing, and recently, a pilot program for TSA Pre-check. I am also assigned to oversee several other retail and customer service Function 4 issues.

I am responsible for dealing with matters in Functions 5, 6, 7, and 8. Clerk Craft jobs that fall under these functions are, for example, Bulk Mail Techs, Mailing Requirements Clerks, Human Resources Clerks, Training Techs, and Data Collection Techs. When problems arise with these positions, I assist locals, states, and members.

Additionally, I edit our articles for the APWU magazine, update content for the Clerk Division webpage to ensure information such as Step 4 settlements, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and news updates are posted to keep the membership informed. I am also assigned to cover certain handbooks and manuals.

Ashley Cargill Assistant Director (B) Clerk Division

It is my pleasure and honor to serve as your Assistant Clerk Craft Director (B).

Some of my duties include modernizing, automating, and updating various aspects within the Clerk Division. My responsibilities include, but are not limited to: compiling data and spreadsheets for all Clerk Craft global settlements and payouts; updating and maintaining the shareable Clerk Division Dropbox for field use; assisting the Clerk Division Director with creating, updating, and maintaining shareable forms and fillable templates for the field to use in the grievance process; monitoring and updating cases in the APWU Step 4 Case Administration System (CAS) and research for Step 4s; maintaining and assisting with *PS-Form 1260s*; developing and editing documents, presentations, and other materials to share with the field. I am also tasked with handling issues related to several handbooks and manuals.

Robert Romanowski Assistant Director (C) Clerk Division

Brothers and sisters, I am your Assistant Clerk Craft Director (C). My assigned duties consist of administering

the Residual Vacancy MOU at the national level. I provide all the reports to the field, including the eReassign Clerk Craft 21-Day posting and results, Regular eReassign posting and results, and the First and Second Canvass postings and results for each month. I am the person to contact if there is a problem with any of these reports or results. I handle all national-level Administrative Dispute Resolution Process (ADRP) cases that are related to the Residual Vacancy MOU.

I monitor and provide the Small Office Complement Report each month. I have also been assigned to RI-399 as the National Dispute Resolution Committee (NDRC) Technical Assistant to APWU NDRC Committee Representative Ron Suslak. Additionally, I have been assigned responsibility for some handbooks and manuals. ■

March 1-31, 2026: In-Service Register Open Season



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

From March 1-31, all APWU-represented career and non-career employees may request Maintenance Craft eligibility rating testing and placement on In-Service Registers. APWU employees already on the In-Service Register are no longer required to submit a request to stay on the register.

Below are Questions & Answers for the ‘Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: In-Service Examinations, Register and Eligibility’

1. *Is the March annual service wide opportunity to test for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings limited to once per year during the month of March?* **Yes.**
2. *Who is eligible to participate in the annual opportunity to test for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings?* **All career and APWU non-career employees are eligible.**
3. *Can Maintenance Craft employees participate in the annual opportunity to test for Maintenance Craft eligibility ratings?* **Yes.**
4. *If In-Service Registers do not exist, where are the exam results placed?* **The HR MSS [Maintenance Selection System] Coordinator is responsible for placing the results in the employee’s eOPF.**
5. *What form must career and APWU non-career employees complete when submitting a written request to participate in the March annual In-Service opportunity?* **Management shall provide an Employee Maintenance Position Selection (EMPS) form as found in the EL-304 to employees.**
6. *What occupational group can career and APWU on-career employees request to receive eligibility ratings for?* **All Maintenance Craft occupational groups (MSS and non-MSS) that require an examination, except National Service Technician ET-11.**
7. *Can non-Maintenance Craft career and APWU non-career employees that have already received eligibility ratings request to be tested again in subsequent years in an attempt to improve their scores?* **Yes.**
8. *What options are available for non-Maintenance Craft employees who have failed the structured interview, but received an eligibility rating on examination 955?* **In subsequent years, the employee may (1) request to re-take the examination for the structured interview only or (2) can request the opportunity to retake both the examination 955 and the structured interview. If the employee retakes examination 955, the highest score achieved is used as the eligibility rating.**
9. *Can current Maintenance Craft employees that have received In-service eligibility ratings for occupational groups that are not in their facility, request to be tested again in subsequent years in an attempt to improve their scores?* **Yes.**
10. *What happens if an employee is a “no show” for the proctored exam or structured interview during the In-Service process?* **The employee is deemed ineligible and may request to take the exam/structured interview during the following year’s annual opportunity.**
11. *Are there any changes to the way employees are ranked on In-Service Registers?* **No, there are no changes.**
12. *If non-custodial In-Service Registers exist, how will employees be added in subsequent years?* **Merged in score order.**
13. *If an employee on an In-Service Register decline to accept a position in the Maintenance Craft, is that employee’s name removed from the In-Service Register?* **No, the employee will be bypassed for that position. When will In-Service Registers be purged? This provision is no longer applicable.**
14. *What must employees on In-Service Registers do to avoid the April purge and remain on In-Service Registers?* **This provision was replaced in 2024-2027 CBA: Employees will no longer be required to submit a request to stay on the register, however, if an employee who is on the register twice refuses to accept offered positions in any Maintenance Occupational group that employee shall be removed from that occupational group’s In-service register and must wait until March of the following year to request placement back on the In-service register that they were removed from.**
15. *Is there a specific form that employees must use to submit their notification to management of their intent to avoid the April purge and remain on In-Service Registers?* **No, any written/emailed request to remain on the In-Service Registers will be accepted. ■**



Director Michael Foster and Assistant Director Garrett Langley

It Is Still Our Work!

The Motor Vehicle Division continues to initiate national disputes challenging the Postal Service's violations of various articles of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA); however, we continue to focus on Article 32 Subcontracting and management's use of non-postal personnel performing bargaining unit work.

We have bargained for and fought over these subcontracting provisions throughout the bargaining history, and undoubtedly, the fighting will continue in the future.

HCR Non-Notification

There is specific language contained in Article 32.2 "Motor Vehicle Craft Highway Movement of Mail" of the CBA that requires notice to the union.

Article 32.2.F requires that "For all routes for which the Union submitted a cost comparison, if a contract is awarded, the Union will be furnished the cost of the contract." When the parties meet on a Highway Contract Route (HCR) renewal for which the union has submitted a cost comparison, if the contract is not awarded to the Postal Vehicle Service (PVS) bargaining unit, the Postal Service is contractually obligated to provide the cost and terms of the contract.

In numerous HCR renewal notices, after meeting, the Postal Service has failed to provide any notice of decision regarding those HCRs, including the specifics of the HCRs. The APWU initiated National Dispute HQTV20250282 regarding management's failure to comply with Article 32.2 of the CBA and the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM). This violation prevents the union from verifying that the HCR vendor costs less than the costs assigned to PVS based on legitimate, established costs.

The Craft also initiated Step 4 National Dispute HQTV 20250283 regarding the inaccurate information and inflated cost analyses for comparisons under Article 32.2.

During contractually-required meetings to exchange HCR cost analyses, certain cost figures that management provided to the APWU were unrealistic and impossible for them to support. It is not enough for

the Postal Service to simply provide information; they must provide accurate data so that we can have meaningful dialogue. By providing inaccurate data, they deprive us of the right to challenge the process based on factual information.

National Dispute HQTV20250054 pertains to the requirement for Vehicle Operations Assistants (VOA) or other bargaining unit employees to complete Postal Service forms for duties that have previously been performed by management and are outside the scope of the VOA position description. These tasks included issuing *PS-Form 2081* or any other official document to Freight Auction drivers. In at least one facility, the manager was pre-signing *PS-Form 2081* for the VOAs to provide to the Freight Auction drivers; these drivers then had unfettered access to postal facilities wherever they were directed to take the mail by the broker, with no real background check, as required by the Management Instruction PO 530-2009-4.

Like the grievance process at the local level, the MVS Division requests information about subcontracting in both the Vehicle Maintenance Facilities (VMFs) and the PVS. We requested a VMF cost analysis for each facility. Management took a prolonged period of time to provide only a portion of the VMF sites, so we filed National Dispute HQTV20250293. The combination of management's failure to provide timely and accurate information for both VMF and PVS information requests has a detrimental effect on our ability to enforce the contract at every level. Much like management's inaccurate PVS analyses, the VMF information was clearly inaccurate. When the APWU challenged a few chosen VMF sites, management admitted their costs were incorrect. As we go to press, we are still waiting for accurate information to provide to the field.

In many of these disputes, delays were due to management's inaction in providing information. Information requests are covered by Article 17.3 and 31.3 of the CBA and cannot be unreasonably denied by the employer.

"The Struggle Continues" ■

Updates From Around Support Services



Director Kimberly A. Maurer

10 Roads Express Shuts Down Operations

Union siblings, 242 members at 10 Roads Express were informed on Dec. 1, 2025, that the company would cease operations on Jan. 30, 2026. The APWU successfully negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), where 10 Roads Express agreed to pay affected workers a \$1,000 bonus, earned leave, and unemployment claims, as well as provide information and transition support, recall rights, non-precedent and reservation of rights, and workers' benefits through Jan. 30, 2026. In addition, they agreed to settle outstanding grievances and sign a Most Favored Nations (MFN) clause. Securing the MFN clause for our members was crucial to ensure equal terms for all employees affected by the company's closure. For example, if the company decided to offer some employees more than a \$1,000 bonus, then APWU-represented members would receive the same additional amount above the initial \$1,000.

B&B Trucking Negotiations Update

On Dec. 22, 2025, our union siblings at B&B Trucking spoke loud and clear. The tentative agreement (TA) negotiated in early 2025 was NOT acceptable, and members demanded that we return to the table. I heard you loud and clear. The bargaining committee and the APWU are currently scheduled to return to the negotiation table and are preparing to negotiate a fair and reasonable contract that we can be proud of.

Information Technology/Accounting Service Center

We successfully negotiated the continuance of the Telework MOU for our Endpoint Technology and Accounting Service Center (ASC) members, which is set to expire in July. At which time, we will return to negotiate another Telework MOU. This was made possible by the combined efforts of the local leadership in Eagan, San Mateo, St. Louis, Wilkes-Barre, and National Business Agent (NBA) Orlando Anderson. We were successful

due to your efforts and the continued discussions with our members. For this, I must say thank you.

As this issue went to press, we were in negotiations for our Technology Applications and Network Infrastructure Technology Telework MOU for Information Technology (IT) members, which is set to expire on June 26. I received many inquiries regarding this MOU, and understand the frustrations that our members face. I will continue to fight for the gains that our members deserve and will not give up until we get them.

Information Technology Contract Negotiations

We are in the process of negotiating the final portion of the IT/ASC contract. We will continue to update locals on our progress. I am hopeful and confident that we will have a complete TA for the IT/ASC soon.

Contract Negotiations for Albuquerque Mail Service

Our efforts in negotiating the first contract with Albuquerque Mail Service (AMS) are proving fruitful. Over the last two years, the APWU, AMS drivers, and the Albuquerque Local (Local 380) have continued to apply pressure in response to the company's antics. We held AMS accountable after recently demanding that the company return to the bargaining table in good faith, and we were successful. The bargaining committee, along with Local 380, is standing its ground in the fight for a good contract.

I am so proud of the AMS drivers and Local 380 for their efforts. I am humbled and honored to be standing with you in Solidarity. I know it's been a long and frustrating process, but what I say to all APWU members is that the "U" and "I" in Union make us STRONG.

In closing, we have been busy in the Support Services Division through my first 100 days, and I couldn't have done it without the help of the members we represent, local leadership, and NBA Anderson. Thank you all for everything that you do. I appreciate you all. ■

WESTERN REGION COORDINATOR

ALASKA | ARIZONA | CALIFORNIA | COLORADO | HAWAII | IDAHO | MONTANA | NEVADA | NEW MEXICO | OREGON | UTAH | WASHINGTON | WYOMING | AMERICAN SAMOA | GUAM | SAIPAN



Western Region Coordinator Omar Gonzalez

Their Right Don't Make It Right

Bosses are quick to declare their “management rights” — rights that are rooted in law but are not absolute. In the Joint Contract Interpretation Manual (JCIM), management agrees that they are limited by the collective bargaining agreement (CBA), postal regulations, and applicable laws. Let’s examine some of those rights.

Directing employees in the performance of official duties - Employees are required to follow instructions and then file grievances. However, management cannot order you to perform an unsafe act that exposes you to imminent danger; or an illegal, unethical, or immoral act.

An employee faced with those kinds of instructions may have to prove the above if they are charged with failing to follow instructions. No employee should intentionally refuse to perform legitimate instructions without actual justification. Orders must be clear, explicit, acknowledged, understood, reasonable, and lawful.

Suspend, demote, discharge, or take disciplinary action - Discipline must be corrective rather than punitive. Discipline must be for “just cause,” which is a term of art and generally divided into six sub-questions in JCIM Article 16.

1. Is there a rule and is the employee aware of it? Management often lists rules for alleged violations on disciplinary notices that do not apply or were not made known to employees.
2. Is the rule reasonable and related to business efficiency, safe operation, and performance expected of an employee?
3. Is the rule consistently and equitably enforced? Employees should not be singled out.
4. Did management conduct a thorough and “objective” investigation before issuing discipline? Employees are entitled to union representation and must be given reasonable details of the charges, so they have an opportunity to defend themselves. Handbook EL-921 gives stewards the right to ask management questions and to make comments and suggestions. Employees are required to cooperate in investigations and must fully understand all questions — especially leading, misleading, or coercive questions, before responding.

5. Was the severity of the discipline reasonably related to the infraction itself, in line with what is usually administered, and the seriousness of the employee’s past record considered? A record of previous offenses may never be used to establish guilt on a current case. For most offenses, to be corrective rather than punitive, management must issue discipline in a progressive fashion, including issuing less discipline for a first offense and increasingly severe discipline for succeeding offenses.
6. Did management take disciplinary action in a timely manner? Management should take disciplinary action as soon as possible after the alleged offense has been committed.

Determine the methods, means, and personnel by which operations are to be conducted - the CBA contains 438 pages of employee and management rights too lengthy to review in this article. However, Management cannot discriminate in such determinations. New jobs created by technology must be offered to present employees capable of being trained. Layoffs are restricted. Schedule changes are restricted by the CBA craft articles, *Fair Labor Standards Act* (FLSA), “Employee and Labor-Relations Manual” (ELM), and other handbooks.

For Light Duty, management must make “every effort” to reassign employees. If the request is refused, management must provide employees with the reason in writing.

Leave regulations must be administered in accordance with the ELM Chapter 510, which includes the requirement that management must administer the leave policies equitably, considering the needs of the service **and** the welfare of the individual employee.

No boss has a right to harass, intimidate or bully you! If they do, report it using the *PS-Form 1767* and pursue violations of Article 3, 14, 19; Handbooks ELM Chapter 665.24; 666.17, the Postal Operations Manual (POM) 124.51, and the Administrative Support Manual (ASM) 273.132.

Regional Coordinators Tiffany Foster, Amy Puhalski, and I vow to continue fighting to protect your rights, and welcome newly-elected Regional Coordinators Vince Tarducci and Tony McKinnon to the National Executive Board. ■



Judy Beard, Director

The 2026 Midterm Elections are Here — Are You Ready to Fight Back?

In 2025, we experienced a year full of never-before-seen attacks on the working class and the public Postal Service. Health care premiums for millions of Americans are skyrocketing, the Department of Education is being dismantled, immigrants are actively being targeted, and countless jobs have been lost, especially in the federal workforce. Prices for everyday goods and services continue to rise, all while the ultra-rich received one of the largest tax cuts in our nation's history.

Many of you have reached out to ask if the Postal Service is still on the chopping block. Unfortunately, the threat of postal privatization has not gone away. Furthermore, members of Congress are working to rescind federal funding for the Postal Service's electric vehicle (EV) fleet and to stop our ability to collect union dues from paychecks.

This year, we must show our collective strength at the polls. Preserving the public Postal Service, protecting our union wages and benefits, and many other crucial rights, are on the ballot.

Now is the time to fight back! In addition to yourself, encourage your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and members of your community to register and make a plan to vote. It is important to note that voting begins in the primary elections, which are well before November.

Be a Primary Voter

At the time this article went to press, only a few states had held their primaries for the midterm elections. With many competitive primaries this election season, it is important that everyone exercises their right to vote. Historically, primary election voter turnout is less than half of the general election turnout, according to the States United Democracy Center, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the rule of law and free, fair, secure elections.

Primary elections are the best chance for pro-postal, pro-labor, and pro-worker candidates to advance to general elections. Visit www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/2026-state-primary-election-dates to find your state's primary election date and www.usa.gov/state-election-office to locate your state's voter resources or scan the QR codes below. ■

Primary Election Dates



Voter Resources



Save the Date! 2026 Midterm Election Briefing at the APWU National Convention

The APWU National Convention will convene just ahead of the midterm elections. On Sunday, Aug. 16, the Legislative and Political Department will hold an election briefing from 8 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Attendees of this briefing will receive an update on the political lay of the land, an overview of the APWU election program, and engage in conversation about how we can be most effective in driving out the union vote to elect candidates who will fight for postal workers, a public Postal Service, and the working class. Registration for this briefing is required, which will start on April 1. To register, visit apwu.org/events or scan the QR Code!





Joyce B. Robinson, Director

Attend a Pre-Convention Workshop

The Research and Education Department will sponsor 24 Pre-Convention Workshops on **Friday, August 14**, before the start of the craft conferences and national convention at the Los Angeles Convention Center. **Participants are encouraged to register early, as classroom space is limited.** Participants may sign up for workshops after arriving in Los Angeles, but they will have limited choices of workshops, as many will already be filled.

Below is a list of workshops.

APWU SEARCH Workshop: Simplifies search for arbitration awards and decisions. Includes how the interface works, the proper way to log in and set up a web browser, conducting searches using the multiple-tab feature, and methods to narrow searches. **New arbitration advocates who have never attended or those whose skills need refreshing should attend this training.**

Article 37.3.A.1 Clerk Division Desirable Duty Assignments/Fighting Reversions Training: Explains the importance of this contractual provision in assisting in creating desirable duty assignments using available work hours of PSEs, PTFs, overtime, crossing craft, and bargaining unit work violations. Bring the 2020 Das award into focus with avenues to fight management arguments. Provides guidance in fighting reversions, abolitions, and reducing excessing.

Article 38 Maintenance Division Training: Covers Article 38 of the 2024-2027 CBA and JCIM, including the new language negotiated, timelines for posting, withholding, and reverting duty assignments, and what methods to use to preserve Maintenance jobs in postal installations. Explores how duty assignments are awarded and how promotions are handled utilizing the Promotion Eligibility Registers (PER) and Preferred Assignment Registers (PAR).

Basic Shop Steward's Training: Guidelines for **new shop stewards**. Focuses on proper documentation of grievances, and the duties, rights, and guidelines for shop stewards. **Participants must attend this**

workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop.

Building Union Power through Organizing Workshop: This interactive session will guide you through APWU's electronic membership sign-up process and introduce powerful organizing resources to help local and state unions expand membership. Learn proven techniques to inspire your coworkers to join APWU's fight to protect postal jobs, benefits, and our future.

Dealing with a Toxic Work Environment and Handling Postal "Monsters" Workshop: Addresses how to deal with a toxic work environment and how to utilize rules and tools from the CBA and Postal Handbooks and Manuals to help combat abusive supervisors, managers, and the system that protects them.

Eagle Clean Class Training: Covers the pilot program with emphasis on how custodians use the application and scanner, reports that can be generated to identify which tasks were assigned and how much time was spent performing those tasks, and whether tasks were partially completed or bypassed. Teaches the correct information to request and how to apply it when investigating potential Line H violations to determine if management is falsifying data.

Fiduciary Responsibility Training: Reviews the fiduciary and legal responsibilities of union officers, the LMRDA, the National Constitution, and basic financial principles. **New presidents, treasurers, trustees, and executive board members are urged to attend.**

Fighting Back Against Attacks on the Working-Class Training: Explores lobbying techniques to build support for APWU's legislative priorities on Capitol Hill. Reviews best practices for soliciting COPA donations, including how to host a successful COPA fundraiser and how to hold an effective APWU rally. **Local and state officers and stewards are urged to attend.**

Fighting Discipline Workshop: An in-depth discussion of how to protect APWU members from unwarranted discipline. Proper investigation techniques will be

explained in detail, along with common arguments for defending employees against unwarranted discipline.

Gaining Clerk Craft Work Training: Clarifies the national dispute on the Postal Service's violation of the following MOUs: Job Audits, Clerical Work, Clerk Craft Jobs, Temporary Assignment, Reassignment, and Reemployment in APWU Crafts of Employees Injured on the Job. Furnishes arguments for gaining additional work and directions on fighting to secure all clerk bargaining unit work.

Labor Law Fundamentals (A Union Leader's Duty of Fair Representation) Workshop: Reviews the *National Labor Relations Act*, focusing on the rights of APWU members, the Duty of Fair Representation, how to identify unfair labor practices, and how the current administration's appointees affect the National Labor Relations Board's policy.

Lead Clerk Duties and TACS Training: Discusses lead clerk duties and responsibilities. Provides explanations for related Step 4 settlements, discusses Clerk Craft Jobs MOU concerning Lead Clerks, and furnishes arguments for gaining TACS work for the Clerk Craft, in all bargaining unit work functional areas, including all crafts.

Leadership Enhancement Training: Helps newly elected union leaders understand the responsibilities, challenges, and qualities of leadership. They will learn how to run a union meeting, set goals, listen effectively, build coalitions, handle difficult people, resolve conflicts, and reduce stress.

Legal Issues and Union Communications Workshop: Explores editorial policies, union regulations, libel, copyright, and federal election laws applicable to both print and digital communication. Teaches how to enhance communications within local and state unions and strengthen connections with membership.

Military Buyback Training: Aids the audience in understanding the effect of not paying a military deposit for years of qualifying military service, understanding the step-by-step process for making a military deposit for postal employees, and helps to understand how military deposits are computed by the OPM.

Motor Vehicle Service Division (MVS) Issues Training: An update on issues and information on Articles 39, 32, and other articles of the CBA that apply to the Motor Vehicle Craft. **Participants must attend this workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop.**

PSE Everything Workshop: Focuses on understanding and enforcing contractual rights concerning Postal Support Employees (PSEs). Topics include protecting the rights of PSEs, holding management accountable for exceeding the use of non-career employees, increasing the career workforce, seniority issues, and more.

Retirement Planning Workshop: Provides information for Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees on annuity calculations, best date to retire, benefit choices, important records to keep, and tips on completing the application.

Talk is Cheap: Stand Up for Safe Jobs Training: Designed to build active safety campaigns at the grassroots level with a focus on reinvigorating local unions' safety programs. Training includes completing a *PS Form 1767*, the role of local safety committees, seeking assistance from OSHA, and helping employees understand the importance of reporting safety violations on the job.

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Overview Workshop: Covers every aspect of TSP, including the benefits of savings, Traditional vs Roth Contributions, Investments, Loans, and Post-Separation Withdrawals.

Understanding Backpay Settlements Workshop: Designed to help participants identify and address common discrepancies found on backpay forms, understand what backpay and a "make-whole remedy" mean, and identifies common discrepancies and distinguish between a backpay and a lump sum payment.

Workers' Compensation Guidance for Members Injured at Work Training: Focuses on filing a claim through OWCP, enforcement, and ensuring employer compliance to facilitate claim processing and handling employer violations. Discuss what to do if your claim is approved or denied, you have a traumatic injury, a COVID claim, or an occupational disease or injury. **Participants must attend this workshop the entire day and cannot select another workshop.**

Written Communications at the Grassroots Level Training: Includes creating, enhancing, and publishing a local/state newsletter from start to finish. Provides tips on using writing tools such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and the Canva Design Platform.

If you have problems registering online, please email WORKSHOPREGISTRATION@APWU.ORG with your name, a cell phone number, and a brief description of your problem. ■

ORGANIZATION



Anna Smith, Director

Standing Together in 2026: Our Strength Is Each Other

Here we are, a few months into 2026, and a new calendar has not brought new challenges. In fact, the issues that we face today are the same ones we were working through last year and the year before. What has changed is our opportunity to respond together, more intentionally and more united than ever.

APWU membership is not just about filing grievances and having a contract. While both are critically important, so are the connections that we build with each other. Talking with coworkers, listening to their experiences, and sharing knowledge about rights and protections strengthen our workroom floors and our communities. Knowledge is power, and it gives people the confidence to stand up for themselves and each other.

Every conversation you have reminds others that the union is made up of real people looking out for one another. That is organizing.

No action is too small in organizing. A steward who takes time to explain a provision. A member who invites a nonmember to a meeting. A coworker who asks a nonmember to stand with them. These moments build trust. Trust builds participation. Participation builds power. If we want a stronger contract, stronger enforcement, and more respect on the workroom floor, **we need more of our coworkers to be dues-paying members** and not just standing on the sidelines.

TALKING WITH COWORKERS,
LISTENING TO THEIR EXPERIENCES,
AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE
ABOUT RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS
STRENGTHEN OUR WORKROOM
FLOORS AND OUR COMMUNITIES.

ORGANIZING ALSO MEANS
VISIBILITY. WEAR YOUR UNION
GEAR, ATTEND MEETINGS, AND
PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS.

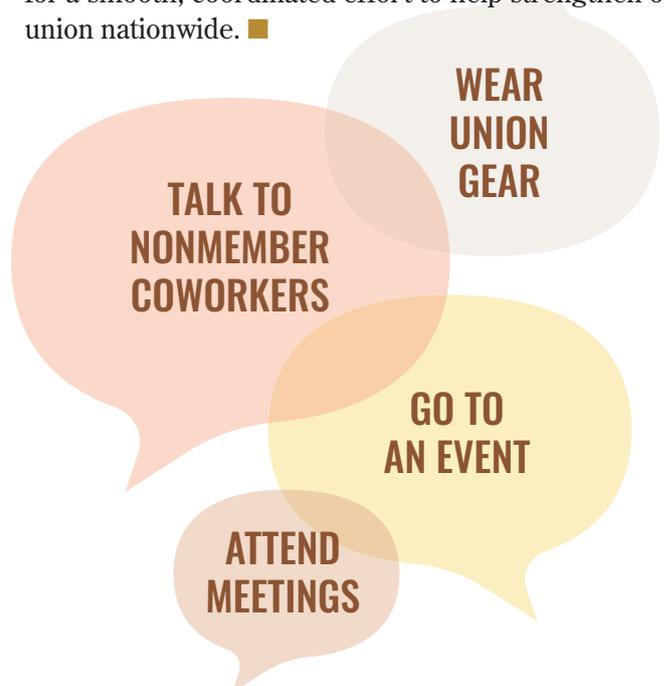
Your Call to Action

In 2026, our strength is not just in our numbers. It is in our willingness to reach out and have conversations with our coworkers. Do not assume someone else will do it. Each of us has a responsibility and a role in growing this union. Commit to talk to one nonmember this week. Share why you joined. Ask them to stand with you.

Organizing also means visibility. Wear your union gear, attend meetings, and participate in events. When our coworkers see active members, it sends a message that APWU members are not some outside group. We are right there on the workroom floor. The more visible and united we are, the harder it is for management to ignore concerns or divide us.

Gearing Up for the 2026 Organizing Drive

The 2026 APWU organizing drive is tentatively scheduled to run from June 1 through to the National Convention. While we are still working out the final details, locals can begin preparing now. That includes developing a plan of action, identifying a lead organizer, reviewing budgets, confirming resources, and making sure that access to nonmember lists is ready and available. Strong local leadership and early planning set the stage for a smooth, coordinated effort to help strengthen our union nationwide. ■





FROM the FIELD

Celebrating Women's Voices in Union Communications

During Women's History Month, we recognize the women whose voices and leadership have helped shape the APWU labor movement. Women editors play a vital role in our union – documenting history, amplifying member voices, and ensuring that the stories of postal workers, especially women, are preserved and shared. For this column, two women leaders, who are editors and members of the APWU Postal Press Association, share their experiences and the importance of female voices in union publications.



Cathy Hanson joined the APWU in 1986 and serves as editor for the Minneapolis Area Local and The Minnesota Postal Worker. Her path into union communications began in 2000, when she became an assistant editor, and she later

assumed the editor role in 2002. Cathy is candid about how it started. Working part-time, newly divorced, and living 30 miles from her post office, the small stipend mattered. At first, the job was logistical—picking up papers and coordinating distribution—but it soon became something more.

Cathy discovered that she enjoyed reading members' submissions and shaping their stories. Without formal journalism training, she relied on instinct and a willingness to learn. When the editor position opened, she stepped forward. "The rest," she says, "is history."

Long before her career at the Postal Service, Cathy served in the U.S. Air Force as a crew chief on fighter aircraft. Working on the flight line in a male-dominated field meant facing doubt, but that resistance only strengthened her resolve. Those experiences shaped her confidence and her belief in standing up for herself and other women – values she carried into the Postal Service and the union. In more than 35 years, she recalls only one situation that she believed was discriminatory, and the union resolved it quickly. Fairness, she says, is the foundation of union strength.



Brittany Price represents a newer generation of APWU leadership. A union member since 2015, she serves as an officer and editor of The Spirit Magazine for the William H. Burrus Cleveland Area Local 72 and as a steward for the Ohio Postal Workers Union. When her local's longtime editor retired, her president

encouraged her to step into the role. Brittany was new to the union at the time but was eager to learn and saw editing as a way to connect with members and strengthen engagement.

For Brittany, representation matters. Women should see themselves in union publications and know their voices belong there. She challenges the idea that expressing emotions is a weakness, instead viewing it as a powerful storytelling tool that helps members connect to real experiences. Collaboration, she believes, brings people together and strengthens union advocacy.

Both Cathy and Brittany agree that women bring empathy and connection to union communications. Cathy recalls how coworkers often know one another beyond the job—families, struggles, and victories—and quietly support each other. Brittany focuses on telling today's stories of workplace harassment, women's healthcare, burnout, and resilience, by listening closely to what members experience on and off the clock.

Brittany's motivation is deeply personal. She credits the union with providing stability for her family and a future she was once told she would never have. Becoming a teen mother in high school, she faced doubt and judgment, but she overcame every obstacle placed in her path. Knowing what the union has made possible for her and for others is what keeps her fighting.

Together, Cathy and Brittany see union publications as tools for solidarity. Effective communication builds understanding, strengthens relationships, and reinforces collective power. They both encourage women to step forward, reminding them that there is no "cookie-cutter" editor, only members willing to learn, contribute, and raise their voices.

Their stories remind us that when women's voices are included, our union's story is stronger, and its future is more secure. ■

Privatizing VA Health Care is Bad for Veterans

In our previous Home Front article, we provided APWU veterans with a strategy to combat the privatization of the Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. In this issue, we aim to motivate our veteran union leaders by highlighting some of the numerous negative consequences veterans are facing due to VA privatization.

First, let's look back at the 20th-century VA health care experience for veterans.

Throughout the entire 20th century, all that an APWU veteran needed to access basic VA health care—provided by a fully staffed team of experienced VA doctors, nurses, and federal government medical and mental health employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—was an Honorable DD-214. There

were no time frames or restrictions for any veteran with an Honorable DD-214 seeking VA health care assistance. Veterans had the option to either utilize the VA for medical and mental health services or seek care from a local private health care provider if they had their own private insurance. During this time, veterans incurred no copayments, did not need to enroll, did not require a military service-connected disability rating, and were not subjected to a means test for their household income.

Fast forward to the 21st century and we now have the *Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act*, which calls for further reductions in regular VA federal government employees and an increased reliance on private community care providers for medical and mental health services. It seems that decision-makers believe private, for-profit community health care providers can deliver better quality healthcare to veterans compared to a fully experienced staff of regular federal government VA medical and mental health professionals specially trained to assist veterans. This shift has resulted in thousands of regular VA federal government job losses nationwide, while simultaneously increasing the use of private care providers starting in 2025. Looking ahead to 2026, the



plan indicates more privatization despite the rising wait times for newly enrolled veterans seeking to visit a doctor. Further complicating matters is the ineffective Veterans' Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, a hotline that advises veterans to call 911 instead of directing them to the nearest VA emergency room for suicide watch by trained VA mental health staff.

On Jan. 15, VA Secretary Doug Collins announced the establishment of a commission to find candidates to lead the Veterans' Benefits Administration. You can read his justifications for further VA privatization and his admission that he did nothing to improve VA health care in 2025 on va.gov or at our apwu.org Veterans Home Front page. Our goal is to provide truthful, honest information that inspires our veterans to take action. The struggle continues.

The APWU encourages all veteran members to sign up to receive emails about veterans' issues by visiting the APWU "Members Only" section of the website and checking the box to receive veteran communications. We also encourage veteran members to join or create an APWU veterans' council or committee at your local to strengthen our collective voice and advocate for the rights and interests of postal workers who have served our country. By working together, we can create a more powerful union that effectively represents all postal workers and fosters a just and equitable society.

We would also like to extend special thanks to Patrick Jones and 480-481 Area Local President Steve Jones for organizing the Veterans Committee meeting in their area. Your leadership and dedication to our union and its veterans are truly appreciated. ■



Daleo Freeman, Director

United We Stand: The Intersection of the Civil Rights and Labor Movements

The APWU has a rich history of fighting for the rights of postal workers, consistently demonstrating our commitment to solidarity, justice, and equality. From negotiating fair wages and benefits to fighting against unfair labor practices, the APWU has been a steadfast champion of postal workers' rights. Our collective efforts have led to improved working conditions, better pay, and enhanced benefits, improving the quality of life of postal workers. The labor movement, led by unions like the APWU, has provided a voice for workers and advocated for policies that benefit working-class Americans.

The labor and Civil Rights movements are intertwined, with many union leaders playing key roles in the fight for racial equality. Two notable examples that demonstrate the deep connection between these movements are the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and the Memphis sanitation workers' strike. The March on Washington, held on Aug. 28, 1963, was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement, with hundreds of thousands of Americans gathering on the National Mall to demand equal rights and opportunities for African Americans. Labor unions played a crucial role in organizing the march and providing support.

The Memphis sanitation workers' strike of 1968 was another powerful example of the intersection of the movements. It was sparked by the deaths of two African American sanitation workers who were crushed by a malfunctioning truck, highlighting the poor working conditions and discriminatory practices faced by African American workers in the South. Led by figures like Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1733, the strike drew national attention to the struggles faced by African American workers and the need for solidarity and collective action.

The labor movement has long recognized that the fight for workers' rights is inextricably linked to the fight for civil rights and social justice. By standing together and demanding better working conditions, wages, and treatment, workers can build a more just and equitable society. This legacy of solidarity continues to inspire

new generations of activists and organizers and remains a vital part of the labor movement's mission and values.

The labor movement continues to play a crucial role in advocating for economic justice, fairness, and equality for all working people. From fair compensation and benefits to fighting against systemic racism and inequality, unions strive to build more just and sustainable economies that put people over profits. Today, we still face challenges from policies and actions that seek to divide us, like the aggressive immigration enforcement tactics tearing families apart and stoking fear in our communities. The labor movement stands in solidarity with all workers, regardless of their race or country of origin.

**THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAS LONG
RECOGNIZED THAT THE FIGHT FOR
WORKERS' RIGHTS IS INEXTRICABLY LINKED
TO THE FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE.**

The APWU's commitment to social justice is a testament to the enduring legacy of the labor movement, and its impact will be felt for generations to come. As we face challenges like income inequality and systemic racism, the labor movement's commitment to collective action is more important than ever, by building upon the legacies of the March on Washington and the Memphis sanitation workers' strike.

We will continue to advocate for policies that benefit working-class Americans, and we will stand in solidarity with all workers who are fighting for their rights. The labor movement's commitment to solidarity and collective action is not just a moral imperative; it is also a practical necessity.

By standing together, we can achieve great things. As we move forward, we will continue to draw on the lessons of our past, and we will continue to fight for and build a world that is more just, equitable, and prosperous, and that values the contributions of all workers and provides opportunities for all people to thrive. ■



Nancy Olumekor, Director

Your Fundamental Right to Freedom of Choice Is at Risk! Are You a Victim of Ageism in the Digital Age?

Why are “Digital Barriers” set up for postal and federal employees? Is there still freedom of choice? Employees who do not have email addresses or home computers must still have their rights for access to information and services offline protected and enforced. Many people struggle to feel confident using modern technology. According to AARP research, 64% of adults over age 50 feel that technology is not designed with their age group in mind. Pew Research Center surveys find that seniors are moving towards more digitally connected lives. As more tasks move online, there are unique and ever-increasing barriers and challenges that may hinder some older adults from going online and using new technology. One technological challenge facing older adults is that many are just not confident in their own ability to learn about and properly use electronic devices. Seniors are also more likely than those in other age groups to say they need help from others to show them how to use new devices.

THE NATIONAL DIGITAL INCLUSION ALLIANCE REPORTS THAT CITIZENS WITHOUT DIGITAL ACCESS FACE SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO ACCESSING PUBLIC SERVICES AND ENGAGING WITH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES. THE “DIGITAL DIVIDE” CREATES A NEW FORM OF CIVIC DISENFRANCHISEMENT.

Older adults feel that technology has had a mostly positive effect on society, and the vast majority of adults ages 65 and older say that having access to high-speed internet at home is either essential or important. Older adults may also face physical challenges that might make it difficult to use or manipulate devices.

According to American Psychological Association writer Kirsten Weir, ageism is one of the last socially acceptable prejudices. In reframing attitudes toward aging,

she says that, “Psychologists are examining the age discrimination that pervades American culture and helping people to reimagine healthier relationships with their older selves.” Ageism is a stubborn prejudice. People of all ages show bias against older adults.

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance reports that citizens without digital access face significant barriers to accessing public services and engaging with elected representatives. The “Digital Divide” creates a new form of civic disenfranchisement. This highlights the real need to create age-friendly environments that cater to everyone’s needs in the digital age; policymakers and service providers should provide diverse choices for older adults, rather than relying solely on one-size-fits-all technological solutions.

While there is no single, universal law titled the “Right to be Offline,” there are federal and state regulations that mandate government agencies provide alternative access methods, such as in-person, mail-based, or phone services, to ensure non-discrimination and equal access for all citizens.

Key Frameworks That Enforce These “Offline” Options Include:

1. Disability and Accessibility Mandates
2. Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination
3. Statutory Access to Records
4. Administrative Reductions

The bottom line is that our voices must be heard on this issue. Working members who do not have or do not use personal email addresses can request that the Postal Service mail them retirement information, such as their Annuity Estimate for a specific date and retirement booklet. Also, retiree members should call the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 1-888-767-6738 and their congressional representatives. Tell the OPM that you want them to mail you the information. Protect your right to be “offline”! Speak up and speak out! ■



Sarah Jane Rodriguez, Director

New Health Plan Benefit: Custom Orthotics for Foot Pain

Do you suffer from foot pain? Do you come home from work with sore and tired feet? Painful and sore feet are especially common symptoms for those who work and stand on their feet all day without proper support and relief.

As postal workers, you may feel the serious impact that standing while working can have on your feet. If you feel that custom orthotics might be the answer, then it is time to get excited about your 2026 APWU Health Plan benefits! New for 2026, members have a \$200 benefit that can be used toward custom foot orthotics when they are prescribed by a podiatrist. Our members spoke and we listened, adding this benefit designed especially for Postal employees and retirees – for both High Option and Consumer Driven Option members.

What are orthotics?

Foot orthotics are helpful because they support and realign the foot, correct gait issues, and redistribute pressure, which relieves pain from conditions like plantar fasciitis, bunions, arthritis, and diabetic neuropathy. They work by absorbing shock, improving joint alignment, and providing extra cushioning, leading to better overall foot function, enhanced athletic performance, and reduced risk of injury, essentially helping your feet function more efficiently and comfortably.

What does an orthotic do?

Your podiatrist may recommend orthotic devices for several reasons, including to:

- Align and support your feet and ankles.
- Prevent and treat foot deformities.
- Improve the overall functioning of your foot and ankle.

For example, you can insert an arch support on the inside of your shoe to help support a flat foot. Supporting flat feet can help prevent foot tendonitis. Or you may use a heel cushion to help absorb the impact and relieve stress when you walk on your heel.

Custom orthotics

Custom orthotics are specially made devices that your podiatrist designs to cushion and support your feet. You can get some custom orthotics like full-shoe inserts. Others are available that support just your heels.

Your podiatrist will craft a pair of prescription orthotics that precisely match the contours of your feet. They will design them to work with the way your feet and ankles move. To construct your custom orthotics, your podiatrist will either make a plaster mold of your feet, have you step in a foam box that takes an impression of your foot, or use a computerized foot analysis to create a 3D image of them.

There are two main kinds of custom orthotics:

- **Functional:** Functional orthotics are made of a semi-rigid material like graphite, carbon fiber, or plastic. They help reduce pain and discomfort by controlling the way your foot moves. You may also use this type of orthotic to treat injuries like shin splints.
- **Accommodative:** Accommodative orthotics are made of soft, flexible materials. This lets them mold to the shape of your feet and provide support and cushioning. This type of orthotic is helpful for treating health conditions like diabetes-related foot ulcers.

Custom orthotics are more expensive than shoe inserts that you can buy in stores, But they last much longer and provide better cushioning and support for your feet. ■

NEW BENEFIT FOR 2026!

Custom molded foot orthotics prescribed and provided by a podiatrist are now covered with a \$200 annual limit (for both High Option and Consumer Driven Option members).

Please visit our website at www.apwuhp.com for more details!

MedStar Nurses Ratify Three-Year Contract



Photo courtesy of NNU

Registered nurses at MedStar Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C. overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year collective bargaining agreement on Jan. 31, winning protections that improve

patient safety and nurse retention. The agreement covers more than 2,200 nurses represented by National Nurses United (NNU). The new contract includes up to 24% wage increases throughout

the life of the agreement and improvements in workplace violence language, additional security resources, improved process for removing dangerous patients, and the addition of a registered nurse (RN) to the hospital-wide workplace violence committee. The agreement also secures extending bereavement leave for grandparents, improved staffing levels to ensure that nurses are immediately available for patient care, and new language that allows the union to bargain over all new technology. According to a statement by the NNU, while the nurses at MedStar are pleased to have reached a contract agreement, there are ongoing disputes with MedStar over the unresolved issues of wage theft, which the DC Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is currently investigating. ■

India's Striking Bank Workers Call for Five-Day Workweek

On Jan. 27, India's bank workers, represented by nine unions in the United Forum of Bank Unions, walked out in a nationwide strike calling for the implementation of a five-day workweek in the banking industry. Employees have grown frustrated with chronic staffing shortages, increased workloads, and demanding performance targets. The banking unions warn that the intense pressure workers have been operating under is taking a "serious toll on workers' physical and mental health," and "weaken the sustainability" of public banking systems."

An agreement for a five-day workweek in the banking sector has already been reached through collective bargaining, but its implementation has stalled. A framework had been formally recommended by the Indian Banks' Association in a settlement agreement, but government approval



Photo courtesy of UNI Global Union

remains at a standstill. "Bank employees have waited patiently for nearly a decade, engaged constructively in negotiations and even agreed to extended working hours in the larger public interest," said General Secretary of the National Confederation of Bank Employees L. Chandrasekhar. "Despite concluded agreements and formal recommendations, the implementation of five-day banking continues to be delayed. Employees are left with no choice but collective action to defend their health, dignity, and the sustainability of the banking system."

Attacks on the Postal Service Threaten Hardship in Rural and Suburban Areas

An attack on the public Postal Service is an attack on the backbone of rural America. That is the inevitable conclusion of recent reports from the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and the Brookings Institution.

The reports, taken together, show that not only would privatization raise postage prices in rural and suburban neighborhoods, it would also create a huge drag on the local economies of small-town America.

Rural and Suburban Communities Pay the Price

In its report, “Who Would Pay the Biggest Price for Postal Privatization?” the IPS exposes the costs of shifting the Postal Service to private ownership. While the USPS offers delivery to more expensive-to-deliver areas without surcharges, the practice of imposing extra fees is common with private companies like FedEx and UPS.

While no one is surprised that rural areas bear the brunt of private surcharges, many suburban communities are also affected. The study highlights a number of areas where UPS and FedEx impose surcharges, including ZIP codes 85339 in Laveen, AZ, which is just eight miles from Phoenix, and 62240 in East Carondelet, IL, which is just seven miles from St. Louis, MO.

The IPS analysis shows that more than 100 million people reside in areas where private carriers already charge delivery surcharges.

If the privatizers succeed in selling off the USPS, its replacement would have to recoup the costs of rural delivery to turn a profit. Individuals and businesses alike would bear the higher costs.

Small-Town Businesses Rely on the Postal Service

The consequences of such a shift go far beyond higher postage costs. In late January 2026, the Brookings Institution released a study on the economic role of the postal network.

The IPS found that access to postal infrastructure is closely linked to small-business activity in rural counties. Rural economies are disproportionately composed of very small firms — sole proprietors, family-run

enterprises, and service providers that lack the internal logistics systems of larger companies.

For these businesses, the USPS provides essential functions: sending and receiving parts and supplies, shipping goods to customers, managing official correspondence, and maintaining a stable mailing address.

The Rural Postal Network Is Small Business Infrastructure

The Brookings analysis shows that rural counties with closer access to post offices have higher levels of small-business activity. That is especially true in sectors where routine interaction with postal services is indispensable, such as retail, transportation services, construction trades, and personal services.

Even after accounting for other factors like broadband access, greater distance from postal facilities correlates with fewer small businesses per capita. These patterns suggest that postal infrastructure is fundamental to rural economic vitality.

Private delivery companies do not offer this kind of integrated network. Their retail presence is sparse in low-density areas, and, as the IPS study showed, distance-based surcharges are commonplace. This means rural businesses often face both limited access to private shippers and pay higher fees, directly inhibit growth and entrepreneurial activity. In contrast, the Postal Service’s stable network of post offices serves as a shared platform for commerce, community engagement, and economic resilience.

Privatizers are Threatening Rural Enterprise

Privatization would dismantle this shared infrastructure. When profit becomes the central focus, post offices that operate at a loss would likely be shuttered, and delivery to more costly routes would be neglected or eliminated.

The Postal Service is an essential part of our economy and our democratic life. Privatization may benefit a small group of corporate shareholders, but it would come at too great a cost to the rest of us. That is why the fight to save our public Postal Service is a fight for us all. ■

A Grand Alliance to Save Our Public Postal Service is a broad coalition of national, state and local organizations including the NAACP, Vote Vets, Jobs with Justice, National Council of Churches, and Rainbow PUSH. These groups have come together to take a stand against the unprecedented assaults on the Postal Service including efforts to dismantle and privatize it. To join A Grand Alliance, visit www.AGrandAlliance.org.

Looking Back: This Time in Our Labor History

Rosina Tucker: A Force Behind the Pullman Porters



Rosina Tucker (right) with Helena Wilson and A. Phillip Randolph

March 3, 1987 - Rosina Corrothers Tucker, a formidable American labor organizer, civil rights activist, and educator, passed away at the age of 105. She played a pivotal role in the foundation of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), the first African American trade union in the United States, and its Ladies' Auxiliary. Tucker also organized women in the laundry trades, domestic service workers, teachers, and railway clerks known as "red caps" throughout Washington, D.C.

She was born in Washington, D.C., in 1881 and was the daughter of former Virginia slaves who moved to the nation's capital after they were emancipated during the Civil War. Her father was a shoemaker who taught himself to read and write and encouraged his nine children to pursue their education.

In 1899, she married renowned poet, journalist, and minister James D. Corrothers. After his premature death, she married Berthea Johnson (B.J.) Tucker — a porter at the Pullman Company in Washington, D.C. At the time, the rail transportation company employed more Black men and women across the country than most other companies. However, that empowered the company to exploit Black workers by paying them lower wages than their white counterparts, enforcing harsh working conditions, and denying them fair seniority rights.

In 1925, Rosina Tucker attended an organizing meeting in Washington, D.C., led by A. Philip Randolph, who had recently co-founded the BSCP in Harlem. Seeking fair treatment and wages for her husband and the thousands of other men and

women who worked as porters, attendants, and maids in sleeper cars, she became an advocate for the union and helped create a local chapter in Washington, D.C.

Women like Rosina Tucker were essential to the survival of the union's organizing efforts and the union itself. The Pullman Company closely monitored employees' organizing activities and retaliated against those who supported the union. Facing less scrutiny from the company, wives and family members of workers visited homes and shared literature to organize, advocate, and collect dues for the union. Before the BSCP was officially recognized, she held secret meetings at her home, keeping the window shades closed to prevent Pullman personnel from spying.

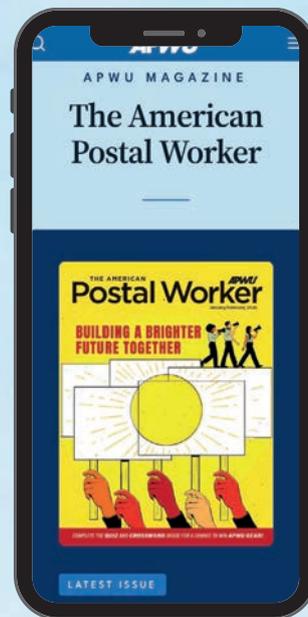
The Pullman Company eventually recognized the union in 1937, due in large part to Rosina Tucker's and other women's success in organizing workers across the country. Upon its recognition, she helped form the Women's Economic Council, which later became the International Ladies Auxiliary Order, to raise money and community support for the union on a national level. She served as the auxiliary's national secretary and treasurer, as well as the liaison between the union's local and national president and the president of the auxiliary. While men often challenged or contested the authority and organizing skills of the women in the auxiliary, Tucker's leadership and organizing successes highlighted the significance of the contributions that African American women made to the union and broader labor movement.

Tucker's impact on the labor and Civil Rights movements was also felt beyond the BSCP. She helped organize the March on Washington Movement with A. Philip Randolph, which challenged segregation in the armed forces and defense industry during World War II and forced legislation banning the practice. She also organized Black and women workers across the nation's capital, and lobbied Congress for labor and education legislation — testifying before House and Senate committees on day care, education, labor, and D.C. voting rights. She testified before a Senate subcommittee on aging at 102 and gave lectures across the country until she was 104 — just a year before she passed away. ■

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