

Back pay and COLA update

Most eligible city letter carriers have received retroactive pay pursuant to the 2019-2023 National Agreement in their Aug. 20 paychecks.

Back pay is calculated for all paid hours between Nov. 23, 2019 (the date of the first general wage increase in the agreement) and April 9, 2021 (the day before new pay rates were implemented, as explained at nalc.org/news/nalc-updates/new-pay-rates-implemented).

For career city carriers:

- 1.1 percent general wage increase, effective Nov. 23, 2019
\$166 cost-of-living adjustment, effective Feb. 29, 2020
\$188 cost-of-living adjustment, effective Aug. 29, 2020
1.1 percent general wage increase, effective Nov. 21, 2020
\$416 cost-of-living adjustment, effective Feb. 27, 2021

Note: Cost-of-living increases referenced above are paid proportionally to city carriers in Table 2, in accordance with Article 9.3.E of the National Agreement.

For city carrier assistants:

- 1.1 percent general wage increase and additional 1.0 percent increase, effective Nov. 23, 2019
1.1 percent general wage increase and additional 1.0 percent increase, effective Nov. 21, 2020

Note: CCAs receive the additional 1.0 percent increases referenced above in lieu of cost-of-living adjustments, pursuant to Article 9.7 of the National Agreement.

Retired and separated employees who worked during the back pay period will be paid by check mailed to their last work location. Retroactive pay adjustments for now-retired letter carriers may result in adjustments to annuities.

Fourth COLA is \$1,934

The fourth regular cost-of-living adjustment under the 2019-2023 National Agreement will be \$1,934 annually for letter carriers in Table 1 and at Step O of Table 2. Cost-of-living increases are paid proportionally to city carriers in Table 2, in accordance with Article 9.3.E of the National Agreement.

CCAs will receive additional 1.0 percent increases effective Nov. 20, 2021, and Nov. 19, 2022, in lieu of cost-of-living adjustments, pursuant to Article 9.7 of the National Agreement.

The new pay rates can be seen in the new letter carrier pay schedule below.

Congress returns to work on postal reform

With the House of Representatives and the Senate back from August recess, we expect Congress to pick up where it left off on the Postal Service Reform Act (H.R. 3076/S. 1720).

H.R. 3076 advanced out of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform in May. Since that time, Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) and Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY) have been working with stakeholders to finalize technical modifications to the bill.

In the Senate, the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee has yet to consider S. 1720, but Chairman Gary Peters (D-MI) and Ranking Member Rob Portman (R-OH) have been coordinating with the House on the identical measures. S. 1720 has attracted 13 Republican co-sponsors, which means that if all 50 Democrats support the measure along with those 13 Republicans, the bill could surpass the 60-vote threshold needed for passage.

As a reminder, the legislation achieves key priorities for NALC, including:

- The repeal of the mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund decades' worth of retiree health benefit premiums.
A reform of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program to maximize Medicare integration.
Language to permanently protect six-day mail delivery.

Both chambers have focused on technical changes to the legislation to ensure that the future integration with Medicare is seamless. This careful coordination has required guidance from the Office of Personnel and Management, the Office of Management and Budget and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Service. In addition, these agencies are collaborating with the House Committee on Ways and Means, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and the Senate Finance Committee to ensure that final language can be legally adhered to.

NALC has been working directly with all involved to ensure that the final legislation benefits active and retired letter carriers. We also have been actively pushing back against false claims regarding the legislation. As we navigate our way to the finish line, other congressional matters, such as the Sept. 30 deadline to raise the national debt limit, the funding of government agencies for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and the president's 'Build Back Better' agenda to invest in the nation's infrastructure, could interfere with the timeline for passage of postal reform.

Letter Carrier Pay Schedule City Carrier Wage Schedule: Effective Aug. 28, 2021

The following salary and rate schedule is for all NALC-represented employees.

Career city letter carrier increases

Table with 3 columns: Effective Date, Type of Increase, Amount. Shows increases from Nov. 23, 2019 to Nov. 19, 2022.

City carrier assistant increases

Table with 3 columns: Date, Type of Increase, Amount. Shows increases from Nov. 23, 2019 to Nov. 19, 2022.

Back pay adjustments for the two general wage increases and three COLAs will be calculated and paid by USPS as soon as practicable.

NOTE: Upon conversion to Full-Time, Part-Time Flexible employees in Table Two will be slotted into the Full-Time Step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF, and retain their time credit toward the next step.

NOTE: Effective Nov. 19, 2022, Table One and Table Two will be modified to include an additional Step P that is \$444 more than Step O of the basic salary schedule in Tables One and Two.

NOTE: Carrier Technicians receive additional compensation equivalent to 2.1% of the employee's applicable hourly rate for all paid hours.

NOTE: The full COLAs will be added to the salaries of all steps in Table 1 and Step O of Table 2, with proportionate application of the COLA to Steps A-N of Table 2.

* NOTE: In accordance with Article 9.3.B, COLAs become effective the second full pay period after the release of the January and July Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers.

Table 1: City Carrier Schedule. This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date prior to Jan. 12, 2013. Includes basic annual salaries and hourly rates.

Table 2: City Carrier Schedule. This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date on or after Jan. 12, 2013. Includes basic annual salaries and hourly rates.

Table 3: City Carrier Assistant Schedule. This schedule applies to CCA hires with no previous TE service. Includes hourly rates for various steps.

NOTE: Effective June 19, 2021, the Step CC pay rate in Table Three was eliminated. All CCAs at step CC as of that date were moved into step BB, receiving a 50 cent per hour raise.

Postal Service revises face covering policy

On Aug. 27, the Postal Service revised its policy on face coverings, reverting to the policy that was in place prior to a July 16 change.

- In public-facing settings when there is a state or local face covering order or directive in place; or
When an employee who does not deal directly with the public cannot achieve or maintain social distancing in the workplace.

On Jan. 25, President Biden established the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force to oversee the implementation of COVID-19 workplace safety plans across the federal government.

The guidelines do not require adherence by independent agencies such as the Postal Service; however, the administration strongly encouraged independent agencies to comply.

Subsequently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its guidance to advise both vaccinated and non-vaccinated Americans to wear face coverings in indoor settings in locations with a substantial or high level of community transmission of COVID-19.

We continue to have discussions with Postal Service representatives about incorporating elements of the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force's COVID-19 guidance for vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees, with the goal of ensuring that USPS policy prioritizes and maximizes the safety of letter carriers and other postal employees.

COVID-19-related MOUs and USPS directive to continue through the end of September

In early August, NALC and the Postal Service agreed once again to continue several pandemic-related memorandums of understanding (MOUs). Five of the MOUs, all which can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System on the NALC website, were extended with the signing of M-01958.

M-01910 provides some relief for certain letter carriers dealing with child care needs caused by the pandemic. This MOU allows career letter carriers to use Sick Leave for Dependent Care (SLDC) to care for a child as the result of a closed day care facility or school, or the unavailability of the child's primary caregiver, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

M-01913 institutes the use of Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM), Section 432.53, City Letter Carriers (7:01 Rule). With this rule, a full-time city letter carrier who actually works more than seven hours but less than eight hours of a regular scheduled day will, upon their request, be officially excused from the completion of the eight-hour tour and still be credited with eight hours of work time for pay purposes.

M-01915 directs the local parties to discuss potential scheduling and office setup changes, such as staggered start times, scheduling of letter carriers to begin tours in groups of 10 or fewer, the manner in which stand-up talks are given, as well as break locations and times, and other initiatives to maximize social distancing.

M-01916 allows the Postal Service to employ TCAs as operationally necessary for the sole purpose of replacing city letter carriers absent due to COVID-19.

Throughout the pandemic, letter carriers have needed to use leave to care for themselves and their families. To limit disruptions in mail service as a result of taking this necessary leave, not only to protect letter carriers and their families but also to protect the overall general public, the ability for the Postal Service to employ TCAs has been helpful.

NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals (M-01960), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime desired list or work assignment list.

In addition to these MOUs, a USPS directive (M-01914), originally issued in March 2020 by then-USPS Vice President, Labor Relations Doug Tulino, and most recently extended by current USPS Vice President, Labor Relations Katherine Attridge, also will remain in effect until the end of September.

The letter states that in addition to allowing SLDC, managers and supervisors should allow liberal changes of schedule in recognition of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. To the extent operationally practicable, managers and supervisors should accommodate employees who submit PS Form 3189, Request for Temporary Schedule Change for Personal Convenience, as a result of child care issues caused by day care closures, school (pre-K through Grade 12) closures, or the unavailability of a child's primary caregiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Managers and supervisors also should allow liberal sick leave usage for employees and liberal annual and leave without pay usage to the extent operationally feasible during this time period. If an employee requests leave for reasons related to COVID-19, such leave should be treated as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave.

The national parties have agreed to revisit each of these issues immediately prior to their expiration to determine if further extensions are appropriate.

House passes combined FY 2022 appropriations bill, maintains six-day mail delivery

Prior to its summer break, the House passed the Defense, Commerce, Justice, Science, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 7617), which provides fiscal year funding to the majority of the federal government through Sept. 30.

Financial Services and General Government legislation has broad jurisdiction over agencies or entities, such as the Internal Revenue Service, the Treasury Department, the Office of Management and Budget, the General Services Administration, the Small Business Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Postal Service.

In addition, appropriators included an amendment that would prevent the Postal Service from implementing the Expedited to Street Afternoon Sortation (ESAS) pilot program and from making changes to services standards that were in effect on July 31, 2020.

The House-passed measure also included an amendment to provide \$2 million to the Postal Service for a postal banking pilot program, and funding for the Postal Service Office of Inspector General to encourage the Postal Service to investigate mail delivery issues in Chicago.

Senate passes budget resolution, paving way for massive infrastructure investments

Prior to departing for summer recess, the Senate passed the FY 2022 budget resolution. The 10-year \$3.5 trillion framework drafted by Senate Democrats includes funding for improved family services, health care, education and combatting climate change to complement legislation investing in the nation's physical infrastructure, which also is currently moving through Congress.

In the budget resolution, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee would receive \$37 billion in new funding. This funding would be used to fully electrify the federal vehicle fleet, including the Postal Service's fleet. It also would be deployed for federal building rehabilitation projects, cybersecurity infrastructure, border management investments and other federal investments related to clean energy procurement.

The House had not yet voted as of press time on the budget resolution, and Democrats will have to continue to navigate within their own party to get the legislation through Congress. The House cut short its summer recess to return the week of Aug. 23 to begin work on the budget resolution and reconciliation.

If the Senate and the House are able to work out any differences between their infrastructure and reconciliation bills, Congress as a whole will potentially consider these major pieces of legislation in late September or early October. NALC will continue to monitor these bills as they move through Congress.

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