

PTF opportunities



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The interest arbitration award issued by the panel chaired by Arbitrator Shyam Das in early 2013 set the terms of the 2011 National Agreement. Appendix B, 1, General Principles, contains the following language regarding the phasing out of the PTF classification of employees: “As Part-time Flexible (PTF) employees are converted to full-time in accordance with existing contractual processes, the PTF classification shall be phased out.”

To help facilitate this, the National Agreement contains a memorandum of understanding (MOU) Re: Part-Time Flexible Conversions, which states:

It is anticipated that during the term of the 2011 National Agreement, sufficient full-time duty assignments will become available through attrition to accommodate the conversion of part-time flexible employees currently on the rolls to full-time status. The parties recognize that there may be certain circumstances where conversion opportunities are not available for individual part-time flexible employees. The parties will explore ways to provide full-time conversion opportunities to such employees.

As I talk with letter carriers throughout the country, I am often asked about the phasing-out of the PTF classification. This article will provide some history on what has taken place since the Das award and current opportunities for PTFs to convert to full-time status.

When the Das award was issued in January 2013, there were 10,704 PTFs nationwide in the letter carrier craft. Since then, we have continuously worked with the Postal Service on converting PTFs where there were existing opportunities and giving PTFs opportunities to transfer to other installations where they could convert to full-time status. This has been accomplished through a series of memorandums of understanding. The first, Re: Residual Vacancies – City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01824), was signed in August 2013. The MOU created a process for filling residual vacancies through a series of steps, including PTF conversion to full-time status, transfers with priority to PTFs wishing to transfer, and city carrier assistant (CCA) conversions to full-time status. The process was later modified by two subsequent MOUs, Re: Full-time Regular Opportunities – City Letter Carrier Craft (M-01834), and another MOU with the same title (M-01856), which is currently in effect. While parts of the process have changed over the course of these MOUs, the

opportunities for PTF conversions have remained the same.

All of these MOUs required a residual vacancy or full-time opportunity to first be filled by a PTF conversion within the same installation, unless there was an unassigned or full-time flexible letter carrier who could be assigned. All three MOUs also contained provisions to make it easier for PTFs to transfer.

First, PTFs were allowed to transfer on a first-come, first-served basis without regard to normal transfer consideration. So, if a full-time opportunity is posted in eReassign for 21 days, the first PTF to request that transfer either prior to the posting or during the posting is granted the transfer without exception. Second, PTFs who elected to transfer were given retreat rights back to their original installations. This provision allows PTFs the opportunity to transfer to another installation to become full-time employees. Then, when an opportunity becomes available, and there are no longer any PTFs in their original installation, they have the chance to retreat back as full-time employees. Many PTFs have not transferred in the past because they eventually wanted to be a full-time regular in the installation where they presently work. This provision gave them the chance to become full time somewhere else without losing that opportunity.

As of the writing of this article, there are just more than 1,000 PTFs remaining nationwide. The majority of the remaining PTFs are located in smaller offices where there is currently no opportunity for conversion. The national parties continue to discuss ways to give these PTFs opportunities to convert to full-time status.

In the meantime, any PTF who would like to transfer should log on to eReassign and submit requests to anywhere he or she would like to go. The monthly eReassign list of available full-time opportunities may be found on the City Delivery page of the NALC website at nalc.org.

City carrier assistant conversions to full-time status

So far, the aforementioned MOUs have also resulted in more than 20,000 CCA conversions to full-time career status. Over the last couple of months, several thousand full-time opportunities have been posted in eReassign. Many of these opportunities are for unassigned regular positions designed to increase full-time staffing above and beyond any residual vacancies that may exist at the time. As a result, an additional 3,000 or so CCA conversions to full-time career status should take place before the end of September.