

# What a difference a contract makes



**Brian  
Renfroe**

**W**hile the goal of our recent contract negotiations was to attain the best contract we could for all city letter carriers, we knew some of our biggest challenges would be coming to terms with the Postal Service on how to improve the wages, benefits and working conditions of our city carrier assistants (CCAs).

Over the term of the new agreement, the starting wage rate for Grade 1 CCAs increases from \$16.06 per hour to \$17.29 per hour. In addition, for those CCAs who were on the rolls as transitional employees (TEs) on Jan. 10, 2013, the starting pay increases from \$17.40 per hour to \$18.71 per hour by the end of the

contract.

New step increases negotiated in this contract also provide enhanced pay for CCA letter carriers. After 12 weeks of employment, CCAs receive a step increase equal to a 50-cent-per-hour pay raise and another step increase with another 50-cent raise after 52 weeks of service. These increases, combined with the general wage increases described above, translate to a pay hike in excess of 13 percent over the term of the agreement.

**“We will continue to stay engaged with the Postal Service and look to find solutions and improvements in the task forces and processes established by our new collective-bargaining agreement.”**

We also were successful in obtaining a one-time conversion to career status for eligible CCAs who had 30 months of relative standing prior to the ratification date of our national agreement. In 200-workyear offices, CCAs who met the 30-month requirement were converted to full-time regular career status in their installations. In 100- and 125-workyear offices, those CCAs who met the 30-month requirement were converted to part-time flexible (PTF) status in their installation. The CCAs converted in both cases will not serve a probationary period provided they have successfully completed one 360-day term as a CCA. Additionally, the Postal Service and NALC agreed to consider the possibility

of another one-time conversion after one year.

The contribution paid by the Postal Service toward health insurance premiums has increased significantly as well for CCAs. While all CCAs will remain eligible to receive a bi-weekly contribution of \$125 from the Postal Service for “self only” coverage in the USPS Non-career Health Plan, the Service will now contribute an amount equal to 65 percent of the total premium for any CCA who wants to obtain “self plus one” or “family” coverage in the USPS non-career Health Plan during the CCA’s initial year of CCA employment. After their first year, the Postal Service’s contribution increases to 75 percent of the total premium of the self-plus-one or family options in the USPS Non-career Health Plan.

## Tasks forces, MOUs and pilot programs

**In addition to these financial improvements for CCAs, the new agreement provides the following:**

- A task force with the goal of improving the CCA uniform program has been established.
- An update to Appendix B, Section 3.E., Article 16, which clarifies that discipline issued to CCAs should be corrective rather than punitive.
- An updated memorandum requiring CCAs be included in the provisions of an LMOU for granting annual leave selections during the choice vacation period and for incidental leave.
- An updated memorandum reducing the CCA service time required to not serve a probationary period when converted to career status to one year.
- A one-year pilot program in at least two districts was established to study ways to facilitate the voluntary reassignment of CCAs from one installation to another.

These are just some of the improvements for CCAs under the new National Agreement. We are currently working on several of the task forces mentioned above to continue to find improvements for all city letter carriers. While contract negotiations are important and are a lot of work, implementing an agreement is just as important. We will continue to stay engaged with the Postal Service and look to find solutions and improvements in the task forces and processes established by our new collective-bargaining agreement.

**I thank each and every letter carrier for the hard work you do every day serving the American public. I also wish all of you and your families happy holidays and a happy New Year!**