

Implementing the new collective-bargaining agreement

Following balloting, eligible NALC members ratified the tentative National Agreement by an overwhelming margin. The contract was officially ratified March 8, 2021. Following ratification, the process of implementing the terms of the new contract began.

New pay rates implemented

On April 10, all city letter carriers began earning their new pay rates in accordance with the 2019 National Agreement. The new pay rates include the following:

For career city carriers:

- 1.1% 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% general wage increase effective Nov. 21, 2020
- \$416 cost-of-living adjustment effective Feb. 27, 2021

*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 (CCAs):

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

*City carrier assistants receive the additional 1.0% increases referenced above in lieu of cost-of-living adjustments pursuant to Article 9.7 of the National Agreement.

These increases were reflected in the April 30 paychecks.

Back pay will be calculated from the dates indicated above through April 9, 2021. The Postal Service has indicated that it will take some time to calculate the back pay for more than 210,000 letter carriers, but it expects the process to be completed and payments made sometime in July.

The new pay rates can be seen in the new letter carrier pay schedule on page 13.

Future wage schedule changes

All city letter carriers will receive the following general wage increases:

- 1.3% effective Nov. 20, 2021
- 1.3% effective Nov. 19, 2022

Career letter carriers will receive four more COLAs over the life of the Agreement. Wage rates will be increased by 1 cent per hour for each 0.4-point increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban and Clerical Workers. The cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) will be applied to the pay tables using the practice established by the Das interest arbitration award that set the terms of the 2011-2016 contract. July 2019 has been set as the “base month.” The future COLAs are payable as follows:

- The fourth COLA will be effective in September 2021.
- The fifth COLA will be effective in March 2022.
- The sixth COLA will be effective in September 2022.
- The seventh COLA will be effective in March 2023.

The contract provides for the addition of a new top step to Tables 1 and 2 on Nov. 19, 2022. The new career Step P will be \$444 annually greater than Step O. Carriers with at least 46 weeks

in Step O on Nov. 19, 2022, will advance to Step P. Those with fewer than 46 weeks will advance to Step P upon reaching 46 weeks in Step O.

Additionally, effective June 19, 2021, the CCA Step CC hourly pay rate (currently \$18.01) will be eliminated, and CCA Step BB and its higher pay rate (currently \$18.51) will become the new entry step for newly hired CCAs pursuant to the MOU Re: Elimination of Step CC Pay Rate in CCA Schedule.

A new Part-Time Flexible Step AA, with a waiting period of 46 weeks to PTF Step A, has been created as the starting wage for CCAs converted to career under the new 24-month automatic conversion (discussed in detail below). The hourly pay of PTF Step AA will equal the hourly pay of Full-time Regular Step A. Upon conversion to full-time, the PTF will be slotted into the full-time step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF.

Future city carrier assistant health benefit changes

The Postal Service’s biweekly contribution of \$125 toward self-only coverage in the USPS Non-career Health Plan for Plan Years 2020 and 2021. For CCAs who wish to select self-plus-one or self-and-family coverage under the USPS plan, the first-year contribution by USPS will be 65 percent in Plan Years 2020 and 2021, rising to 75 percent in their second year of service. However, effective in Plan Year 2022, the Postal Service will contribute 75 percent of the premiums for self only, self plus one or self plus family, regardless of the year of employment.

Uniform allowance increases

All letter carriers will receive a 5 percent increase in their uniform al-

Letter Carrier Pay Schedule

City Carrier Wage Schedule: Implemented April 10, 2021

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

Career city letter carrier increases

Date	Type of Increase	Amount
Nov. 23, 2019	General wage increase	1.1%
Jan. 2020	COLA	\$166
July 2020	COLA	\$188
Nov. 21, 2020	General wage increase	1.1%
Jan. 2021	COLA	\$416
July 2021	COLA	TBD
Nov. 20, 2021	General wage increase	1.3%
Jan. 2022	COLA	TBD
July 2022	COLA	TBD
Nov. 19, 2022	General wage increase	1.3%
Jan. 2022	COLA	TBD

City carrier assistant increases

Date	Type of Increase	Amount
Nov. 23, 2019	General wage increase	2.1%
Nov. 21, 2020	General wage increase	2.1%
Nov. 20, 2021	General wage increase	2.3%
Nov. 19, 2022	General wage increase	2.3%

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 2 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 1 and Table 2 will be modified to include an additional Step P that is \$444 more than Step O of the basic salary schedule in Tables 1 and 2.

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 to N of Table 2.

Table 1: City Carrier Schedule

RSC Q (NALC)

This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date prior to Jan. 12, 2013.

Basic Annual Salaries																MOST PREV. STEP
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	54,776	59,105	59,205	62,302	62,752	63,204	63,649	64,095	64,547	64,984	65,438	65,890	66,334	66,792	67,237	452
Carrier Technician**	55,926	60,346	60,448	63,610	64,070	64,531	64,986	65,441	65,902	66,349	66,812	67,274	67,727	68,195	68,649	461
Part-Time Flexible Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	27.39	29.55	29.60	31.15	31.38	31.60	31.82	32.05	32.27	32.49	32.72	32.95	33.17	33.40	33.62	
Carrier Technician**	27.96	30.17	30.22	31.81	32.04	32.27	32.49	32.72	32.95	33.17	33.41	33.64	33.86	34.10	34.32	
Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																
City Carrier (Grade 2)	26.33	28.42	28.46	29.95	30.17	30.39	30.60	30.81	31.03	31.24	31.46	31.68	31.89	32.11	32.33	
Carrier Technician**	26.89	29.01	29.06	30.58	30.80	31.02	31.24	31.46	31.68	31.90	32.12	32.34	32.56	32.79	33.00	
Step Increase Waiting Periods (In Weeks)																
Steps (From-To)	A-B	B-C	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-H	H-I	I-J	J-K	K-L	L-M	M-N	N-O		YRS.
	96	96	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	34	34	26	26	24		12.4
** Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%																

** Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%

Table 2: City Carrier Schedule

RSC Q7 (NALC)

This schedule applies to all carriers with a career appointment date on or after Jan. 12, 2013.

Basic Annual Salaries																PREV. STEP	
	AA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	
City Carrier (Grade 2)		41,353	43,200	45,049	46,898	48,748	50,595	52,446	54,296	56,144	57,993	59,843	61,690	63,541	65,389	67,237	1,850
Carrier Technician**		42,221	44,107	45,995	47,883	49,772	51,657	53,547	55,436	57,323	59,211	61,100	62,985	64,875	66,762	68,649	1,889
Part-Time Flexible Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																	
City Carrier (Grade 2)	19.88	20.68	21.60	22.52	23.45	24.37	25.30	26.22	27.15	28.07	29.00	29.92	30.85	31.77	32.69	33.62	
Carrier Technician**	20.30	21.11	22.05	23.00	23.94	24.89	25.83	26.77	27.72	28.66	29.61	30.55	31.49	32.44	33.38	34.32	
Full-Time/Part-Time Regular Employees - Hourly Basic Rates																	
City Carrier (Grade 2)		19.88	20.77	21.66	22.55	23.44	24.32	25.21	26.10	26.99	27.88	28.77	29.66	30.55	31.44	32.33	
Carrier Technician**		20.30	21.21	22.11	23.02	23.93	24.84	25.74	26.65	27.56	28.47	29.38	30.28	31.19	32.10	33.00	
Percent Step O																	
		61.50%	64.25%	67.00%	69.75%	72.50%	75.25%	78.00%	80.75%	83.50%	86.25%	89.00%	91.75%	94.50%	97.25%	100.00%	
Step Increase Waiting Periods (In Weeks)																	
Steps (From-To)	AA-A	A-B	B-C	C-D	D-E	E-F	F-G	G-H	H-I	I-J	J-K	K-L	L-M	M-N	N-O		YRS.
	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46		12.4
** Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%																	

** Carrier Technicians receive an additional 2.1%

Table 3: City Carrier Assistant Schedule

Hourly Rates

RSC Q4 (NALC)

This schedule applies to CCA hires with no previous TE service.

	CC	BB	AA
City Carrier (Grade 2)	18.01	18.51	19.01
Carrier Technician (add 2.1%)	18.39	18.90	19.41
Steps (From-To) in weeks	CC-BB	BB-AA	
	12	40	

This schedule applies to CCA hires with previous TE service after Sept. 29, 2007, who were on the rolls as of Jan. 10, 2013.

	CC	BB	AA
City Carrier (Grade 2)	19.50	20.00	20.50
Carrier Technician (add 2.1%)	19.91	20.42	20.93
Steps (From-To) in weeks	CC-BB	BB-AA	
	12	40	

NOTE: Effective June 19, 2021, the Step CC pay rate in Table 3 will be eliminated. Step BB and its pay rate will become the new entry step for new CCA hires. The new waiting period from Step BB to Step AA will be 52 weeks.

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lowance in 2021 and a 2.5 percent annual increase in 2022. The 5 percent increase on May 21, 2021, equates to a yearly uniform allowance of \$487 plus an additional \$113 for a newly eligible carrier. The 2.5 percent increase on May 21, 2022, equates to a yearly uniform allowance of \$499 plus an additional \$116 for a newly eligible carrier.

Annual leave in lieu of holiday pay

Effective beginning with the 2021 Independence Day holiday, full-time, part-time regular and CCA letter carriers who work their holiday, at their option, may elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of holiday pay. Such leave will be subject to all applicable rules for requesting and scheduling annual leave, and shall be combined with annual leave and counted as annual leave for purposes of annual leave carryover. City carriers who choose this option will be credited with a number of hours of annual leave equal to the number of hours of holiday leave pay for which they are eligible. Time worked on the holiday will continue to be paid as normal. Starting with the July 4 holiday, eligible city carriers wishing to request annual leave in lieu of holiday pay should do so using PS Form 3971.

Leave upon conversion to career status

Previously, all newly converted employees, regardless of time in service, were required to complete 90 days of employment as a career employee prior to being allowed to take annual leave. The new MOU Re: Qualifying Period – Exception for City Carrier Assistants states the parties agree that CCAs with a minimum of 90 days of continuous service as a CCA prior to conversion to career status will be exempt from the 90-day qualifying period in *ELM* 512.313. Any break in service as required by Appendix B, Section I.1.b will not affect this continuous service requirement.

24-month automatic conversion of CCAs to career status

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding Re: City Carrier Assistants - Conversion to Career Status, CCAs who have not been converted to career status by the time they reach 24 months of relative standing in their installation will now be converted to PTF career status in their installation rather than continuing as non-career employees. This automatic conversion after reaching 24 months of relative standing will take place in every size office throughout the country, providing full fringe benefits and peace of

mind to non-career carriers.

Those CCAs who have reached 24 months of relative standing without being converted to career will be converted to PTFs and placed in a new PTF Step AA in Table 2. The Step AA hourly rate will equal the full-time Step A hourly rate, and PTFs in Step AA will receive proportional COLAs as described above. The waiting period in PTF Step AA to PTF Step A will be 46 weeks. Upon conversion to full time, regardless of the PTF step they are currently in, PTFs will be placed in the full-time step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF, and they will retain their time credit toward the next step.

CCAs who reached 24 months of relative standing on or before April 9, 2021, will be converted to PTF career status effective May 8, 2021. CCAs who reach 24 months relative standing on or after April 10, 2021, will be converted to PTF career status by the first day of the third full pay period that follows the date the CCA achieves 24 months of relative standing. CCAs converted pursuant to this provision will not have to serve a probationary period, since they already will have successfully completed one 360-day term as a CCA.

Please see the Contract Talk in this issue of *The Postal Record* for a detailed explanation of the conversion to career and transfer processes. **PR**

Part-time flexible questions and answers

As a result of this new 24-month automatic conversion that will continue throughout the life of the 2019 National Agreement, many offices will see the return of part-time flexible (PTF) career city carriers. Many of those offices have not had PTFs in some time. PTF is a career classification that entitles letter carriers to additional compensation and benefits. These benefits include

paid sick leave; annual leave carryover; employer contributions to retirement; increased employer contributions to health insurance through the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, and seniority privileges—just to name a few.

Q. What are PTFs?

A. PTFs are career carriers who are a part of the regular workforce and

have flexible work hours rather than a fixed schedule. PTFs are identified by USPS designation-activity code 43-4 on their PS Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action and in the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS).

Article 7 of the National Agreement defines the different classifications of employees, including PTFs:

Part-time flexible Q-and-As (continued)

ARTICLE 7 EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

A. Regular Work Force. The regular work force shall be comprised of two categories of employees which are as follows:

- 1. Full-Time. Employees in this category shall be hired pursuant to such procedures as the Employer may establish and shall be assigned to regular schedules consisting of five (5) eight (8) hour days in a service week.*
- 2. Part-Time. Employees in this category shall be hired pursuant to such procedures as the Employer may establish and shall be assigned to regular schedules of less than forty (40) hours in a service week, or shall be available to work flexible hours as assigned by the Employer during the course of a service week.*

Q. Do PTFs have a work-hour guarantee?

A. While PTFs have no weekly work-hour guarantees, they maintain the daily work-hour guarantees that apply to CCAs. Article 8.8.C provides the same work-hour guarantees to PTFs as Article 8.8.D provides for CCAs:

C. The Employer will guarantee all employees at least four (4) hours work or pay on any day they are requested or scheduled to work in a post office or facility with 200 or more workyears of employment per year. All employees at other post offices and facilities will be guaranteed two (2) hours work or pay when requested or scheduled to work.

D. Any CCA employee who is scheduled to work and who reports to work in a post office or facility with 200 or more work-years of employment shall be guaranteed four (4) hours of work or pay. CCAs at other post offices and facilities will be guaranteed two (2) hours work or pay.

Q. As a PTF, can I be laid off?

A. Members of the regular workforce,

which includes PTFs, are protected from layoffs or reductions in force once they reach six years of continuous service, as provided in Article 6 of the National Agreement:

ARTICLE 6 NO LAYOFFS OR REDUCTION IN FORCE

(1) Each employee who is employed in the regular work force as of the date of the Award of Arbitrator James J. Healy, September 15, 1978, shall be protected henceforth against any involuntary layoff or force reduction.

(2) Employees who become members of the regular work force after the date of this Award, September 15, 1978, shall be provided the same protection afforded under (1) above on completion of six years of continuous service and having worked in at least 20 pay periods during each of the six years

The intent of this provision is to provide security to each career employee during his or her work lifetime. Career employees achieve protected status upon completion of six years of continuous service, which begins upon conversion to career status. To receive credit, employees must work at least one hour in at least 20 of the 26 pay periods for six consecutive years following their conversion date. Absences from duty while on paid leave, military leave, leave without pay for union business or leave due to a compensable on-the-job injury are considered work for application of this provision.

Q. What hours/schedule will I be expected to work as a PTF?

A. Article 8 of the National Agreement describes the workweek, work hours and work schedule for letter carriers. PTFs work a flexible schedule and most of scheduling/work hour guidelines for PTFs are similar to CCAs; however, there is one important difference, found in Section 6:

ARTICLE 8 HOURS OF WORK

Section 6. Sunday Premium Payment

Each employee whose regular work schedule includes a period of service, any part of which is within the period commencing at midnight Saturday and ending at midnight Sunday, shall be paid extra compensation at the rate of 25 percent of the employee's base hourly rate of compensation for each hour of work performed during that period of service.

An employee's regularly scheduled reporting time shall not be changed on Saturday or Sunday solely to avoid the payment of Sunday premium payment.

While PTFs may be required to work on Sunday, they will receive an additional 25 percent of the base hourly rate for each hour worked.

Q. My supervisor has instructed me to come back to work later in the day. Is that proper under the National Agreement?

A. PTFs may be required to work a split shift under certain conditions. The following rules, found on page 8-26 of the 2014 USPS-NALC Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM), determine the work or pay guarantees the employee is due:

Split shifts: When PTF employees work a split shift or are called back, the following rules apply (Step 4, H8N-1N-C23559, Jan. 27, 1982, M-00224):

1) When a part-time flexible employee is notified prior to clocking out that he or she should return within two hours, this will be considered as a split shift and no new guarantee applies.

2) When a part-time flexible employee, prior to clocking out, is told to return after two hours:

- The employee must receive the applicable guarantee of two or four*

Part-time flexible Q-and-As (continued)

hours work or pay for the first shift, and;

- The employee must be given another minimum guarantee of two hours work or pay for the second shift. This guarantee is applicable to any size office.

3) All part-time flexible employees who complete their assignment, clock out and leave the premises regardless of intervals between shifts, are guaranteed four hours of pay if called back to work. This guarantee is applicable to any size office.

Q. As a PTF, what types and amounts of leave am I entitled to?

A. Article 10 of the National Agreement outlines the leave program that the parties have negotiated. These leave provisions are contained in Chapter 5 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*.

ARTICLE 10 LEAVE

Section 2. Leave Regulations

The leave regulations in Subchapter 510 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual, insofar as such regulations establish wages, hours and working conditions of employees covered by this Agreement, shall remain in effect for the life of this Agreement.

The *ELM* defines which employee classifications are eligible for paid leave and the different types of leave they earn. Upon conversion to PTF, letter carriers earn sick leave and receive access to added leave categories above the leave benefits CCAs receive. When a CCA is converted, any annual leave earned will be paid out.

Annual leave: Career letter carriers earn annual leave based on their years of career service, and the number of hours in which they are in a pay status accrues as follows:

- Less than three years = 1 hour for each unit of 20 hours in pay status

- Three years but less than 15 years = 1 hour for each unit of 13 hours in pay status
- 15 years or more = 1 hour for each unit of 10 hours in a pay status

Military veterans may submit their DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty to receive credit toward their years of service for earning annual leave.

PTFs may accumulate and carry over unused annual leave from year to year (instead of the terminal payout at the end of a CCA appointment), up to a maximum of 55 days, or 440 hours.

Sick leave: PTFs earn one hour of sick leave for each unit of 20 hours in a pay status up to 104 hours per 26 pay-period leave year. Sick leave for PTFs may be carried over from year to year and has no maximum accumulation limit.

Court leave: PTFs who have completed their probationary period (CCAs converted to career who have completed one 360-day term as a CCA do not have a probationary period) are eligible for court leave if the employee would otherwise have been in a work status or annual leave status. The amount of court leave for PTFs shall not exceed eight hours in a service day or 40 hours in a service week.

Military leave: PTFs who are members of the National Guard or reserve components of the armed forces are granted paid military leave. Paid military leave is authorized absence from postal duties for hours the employee would have worked during his or her regular schedule, without loss of pay, time or performance rating, granted to eligible employees. Eligible PTFs receive one hour of military leave for each 26 hours in pay status. Employee must have a minimum of 1,040 hours in the preceding fiscal year and paid military leave cannot exceed 80 hours annually.

Q. Do PTFs receive holiday pay?

A. While PTFs do not receive holiday pay *per se*, Article 11 of the National Agreement explains how PTFs are compensated for holidays:

ARTICLE 11 HOLIDAYS

Section 7. Holiday Part-Time Employee

*A part-time flexible schedule employee shall not receive holiday pay as such. Part-Time Flexible employees **other than those in Step AA** shall be compensated for the ten (10) holidays by basing the employee's regular straight time hourly rate on the employee's annual rate divided by 2,000 hours. For work performed on December 25, a part-time flexible schedule employee shall be paid in addition to the employee's regular straight time hourly rate, one-half (1/2) times the employee's regular straight time hourly rate for each hour worked up to eight (8) hours.*

Rather than basing a PTF's hourly pay rate on a 2,080-hour work year as is the case with full-time employees, the hourly pay rate for PTFs is based on a 2,000-hour work year. The result is a higher hourly straight time rate for PTFs, which offsets the lack of holiday pay. The additional holiday portion of a PTF's hourly straight-time rate is not used when calculating overtime or Sunday premium.

Please note the new language in bold in Article 11, Section 7 quoted above that excludes PTFs in Step AA from this provision.

Q. How and when will I be converted to full-time regular status?

A. Most PTFs are converted to full-time regular status in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding Re: Full-time Regular Opportunities – City Letter Carrier Craft found on pages 161-165 of the 2019 National Agreement.

Q. How is “seniority” different from “relative standing”? How does it benefit me?

A. Seniority applies to all regular workforce letter carrier craft employees. It is computed from your career appointment date in the letter carrier craft and continues to accrue so long as service is uninterrupted in the same installation. CCAs converted to career status on the same day in the same installation will be in the same seniority order as their relative standing order. Seniority determines the “pecking order” for many of your contractual rights, including annual leave scheduling, opting under Article 41, and filling temporarily vacant higher-level assignments within the city letter carrier craft under Article 25.

Q. As a PTF, may I be involuntarily reassigned to another installation? What are my rights if I am?

A. Article 12 of the National Agreement contains the provisions regarding the reassignment of career employees.

Article 12.5.B.5 provides that full-time and PTF employees involuntarily detailed or reassigned from one installation to another shall be given not less than 30 days’ advance notice, or 60 days if they qualify for relocation benefits, if possible.

ARTICLE 12 PRINCIPLES OF SENIORITY, POSTING AND REASSIGNMENTS

12.5.B.5 Full-time and part-time flexible employees involuntarily detailed or reassigned from one installation to another who qualify for relocation benefits shall be given not less than 60 days advance notice, if possible. They shall receive moving, mileage, per diem and reimbursement for movement of household goods, as appropriate, if legally payable, as governed by the standardized Government travel regulations as set forth in the applicable Handbook.

Full-time and part-time flexible employees involuntarily detailed or reassigned

from one installation to another who do not qualify for relocation benefits shall be given not less than 30 days advance notice, if possible.

If a PTF is required to involuntarily relocate due to an involuntary reassignment, USPS is obligated to reimburse certain expenses under the policies contained in the *F-15, Travel and Relocation handbook*. The provisions for paying mileage in these circumstances are the same as for a CCA.

Q. As a PTF, may I voluntarily transfer to another installation?

A. Career employees wishing to transfer to another installation must serve a lock-in period in their current installation before being eligible to transfer. Local transfers (within the district to which the employee is currently assigned or to an adjacent district) require an 18-month lock-in period, while all other transfer requests require a 12-month lock-in period.

Whether a CCA must serve a “lock in” when they are converted to career status is addressed by the parties’ joint *Questions and Answers 2011 USPS/NALC National Agreement*, dated March 16, 2016 (M-01870 in NALC’s Materials Reference System).

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29. After a CCA becomes a career employee does he/she serve a lock-in period for transfers as defined by the Memorandum of Understanding, Re: Transfers?

Yes.

There are specific factors that management must consider fairly when evaluating transfer requests. These factors are referred to as “normal considerations.” These normal considerations and other requirements governing voluntary transfers are contained in the Memorandum

of Understanding Re: Transfers on pages 189-192 of the 2019 National Agreement.

The MOU Re: Full-time Regular Opportunities – City Letter Carrier Craft allows letter carriers who were PTFs on Aug. 7, 2017, the ratification date of the 2016 National Agreement, to transfer without being subject to normal transfer considerations. This provision does not apply to PTFs achieving career status after Aug. 7, 2017.

Q. I am having surgery and may not be able to carry my route until I recover. As a PTF, can I request a light-duty assignment?

A. Article 13 of the National Agreement includes PTFs among the employees who may submit a written request, accompanied by a medical statement from a licensed physician, for light duty following an off-duty illness or injury from which the carrier has not yet fully recovered.

ARTICLE 13 ASSIGNMENT OF ILL OR INJURED REGULAR WORK-FORCE EMPLOYEES

Section 2. Employee’s Request for Reassignment

A. Temporary Reassignment

Any full-time regular or part-time flexible employee recuperating from a serious illness or injury and temporarily unable to perform the assigned duties may voluntarily submit a written request to the installation head for temporary assignment to a light duty or other assignment. The request shall be supported by a medical statement from a licensed physician or by a written statement from a licensed chiropractor stating, when possible, the anticipated duration of the convalescence period. Such employee agrees to submit to a further examination by a physician designated by the installation head, if that official so requests.

Part-time flexible Q-and-As (continued)

B. Permanent Reassignment

1. Any ill or injured full-time regular or part-time flexible employee having a minimum of five years of postal service, or any full-time regular or part-time flexible employee who sustained injury on duty, regardless of years of service, while performing the assigned duties can submit a voluntary request for permanent reassignment to light duty or other assignment to the installation head if the employee is permanently unable to perform all or part of the assigned duties.

Career employees must have five years of career service to be eligible to apply for permanent reassignment due to a non-job-related injury or illness.

Q. What about my health insurance? What are the changes? What are my options?

A. As a career PTF letter carrier, you are now entitled to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. From the date you were converted, you have 60 days to enroll in a FEHB plan. You should have received a package of information in the mail that included a brochure listing the available plans and their cost. Your right to these benefits, and to have a large portion of their cost paid for by the Postal Service, is covered by Article 21 of the National Agreement:

ARTICLE 21 BENEFIT PLANS

Section 1. Health Benefits

B. The bi-weekly Employer contribution for self only, self plus one, and self and family plans is adjusted to an amount equal to 73% in 2020 and 2021, and 72.0% in 2022 and 2023, of the weighted average bi-weekly premiums under the FEHBP as determined by the Office of Personnel Management. The adjustment begins on the effective date determined by the Office of Personnel Management

in January 2020, January 2021, and January 2022, and January 2023.

If as a CCA you were enrolled in the USPS Non-Career Employee Health Benefits Plan, your enrollment in that plan is terminated either: 1) the last day of the month that is 28 days after you are converted to a career position, or 2) if you choose to enroll in a FEHB plan, the date your FEHB coverage begins, whichever is earlier. It is recommended that you enroll in the FEHB as soon as possible to avoid any gap in coverage or to start receiving health benefits.

Q. Do I receive dental and vision insurance?

A. The Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) is a voluntary program designed to provide supplemental dental and vision benefits, which are available on an enrollee-pay-all basis (no government contribution toward premiums) to federal civilian and U.S. Postal Service employees, retirees and their family members. Letter carriers are eligible to enroll in FEDVIP upon conversion to career status. For more information on available plans and their associated costs, visit benefeds.com.

Q. Are there any other programs that will help me save money on my health care costs?

A. As a career employee, you are automatically eligible to contribute to a flexible spending account (FSA) on a pre-tax basis. An FSA allows you to pay for eligible out-of-pocket health care and dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. By using pre-tax dollars to pay for eligible health care and dependent care expenses, an FSA gives you an immediate discount on these expenses that equals the taxes you would otherwise pay on that money. For plan information and enrollment options, go to fsafeds.com.

Q. Do I now receive life insurance?

A. Employees converted to career status are automatically enrolled in Federal Employee Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) for basic life insurance coverage, unless this coverage is waived. Basic coverage begins the first day in a pay and duty status after conversion. USPS pays the entire cost of the basic coverage. The coverage is the annual rate of base pay rounded up to the next \$1,000 plus \$2,000.

You may choose to increase the amount of life insurance coverage up to five times your annual salary or provide optional coverage for your spouse and eligible dependent children; however, these additional premiums are paid entirely by the employee. To enroll you must submit a completed Life Insurance Election form (SF 2817) to your local personnel office within 60 days of your conversion to career. Eligibility to enroll in optional insurance after your first 60 days is limited. Open season for FEGLI is rare, and the most recent FEGLI open seasons were held in 2016, 2004 and 1999. Outside of an open season, eligible employees can enroll or increase their coverage by taking a physical exam or with a qualifying life event (QLE). For more information on FEGLI and a list of QLEs, visit opm.gov/healthcare-insurance/life-insurance.

Q. What about retirement? Do I start earning it? How does it work?

A. Upon conversion to career, employees are enrolled in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). FERS comprises three components: FERS Basic Benefit Plan, Social Security and the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The basic benefit plan and Social Security portion of your retirement are defined benefits, while the TSP is similar to a 401(k) retirement plan.

Career employees have control over their TSP. The Postal Service automatically contributes 1 percent of your base

pay and will match employee contributions up to 5 percent of base pay. Although participation in TSP is voluntary, letter carriers are automatically enrolled, and 5 percent of base pay will be deducted each pay period and deposited into your TSP account, unless you elect to change or stop contributions. For more information on retirement, please visit the NALC website or contact the NALC Retirement Department at 202-393-4695.

Q. Can I opt on a carrier technician assignment? If so, do I receive carrier technician pay?

A. Temporarily vacant carrier technician positions are higher-level assignments and thus are not subject to opting under the provision of Article 41.2.B. Rather, temporarily vacant carrier technician positions must be filled in accordance with Article 25, and as a career letter carrier, you are now entitled to the provisions outlined in this article. Employees who are detailed to carrier technician positions under the provisions of Article 25.4 are entitled to higher-level pay as if promoted to the position. These provisions are outlined below:

ARTICLE 25 HIGHER LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS Section 1. Definitions

Higher level work is defined as an assignment to a ranked higher level position, whether or not such position has been authorized at the installation.

Section 2. Higher Level Pay

An employee who is detailed to higher level work shall be paid at the higher level for time actually spent on such job. An employee's higher level rate shall be determined as if promoted to the position.

Section 4. Higher Level Details

Detailing of employees to higher level bargaining unit work in each craft shall be from those eligible, qualified and available employees in each craft in the immediate work area in which the

temporarily vacant higher level position exists. However, for details of an anticipated duration of one week (five working days within seven calendar days) or longer to those higher level craft positions enumerated in the craft Article of this Agreement as being permanently filled on the basis of promotion of the senior qualified employee, the senior, qualified, eligible, available employee in the immediate work area in which the temporarily vacant higher level position exists shall be selected.

Q. An unassigned regular (UAR), PTF and CCA all have requested to opt (hold down) on the same vacant route for the same time period. Who gets the hold-down?

A. Full-time reserve, unassigned regulars and PTFs have first preference, by use of their seniority, to be awarded a hold-down assignment prior to a CCA. This is outlined in Article 41, Section 2.B of the National Agreement as follows:

ARTICLE 41 LETTER CARRIER CRAFT Section 2.B Seniority

3. Full-time reserve letter carriers, and any unassigned full-time letter carriers whose duty assignment has been eliminated in the particular delivery unit, may exercise their preference by use of their seniority for available craft duty assignments of anticipated duration of five (5) days or more in the delivery unit within their bid assignment areas, except where the local past practice provides for a shorter period.

4. Part-time flexible letter carriers may exercise their preference by use of their seniority for vacation scheduling and for available full-time craft duty assignments of anticipated duration of five (5) days or more in the delivery unit to which they are assigned. City carrier assistants may exercise their preference (by use of their relative standing

as defined in Section 1.f of the General Principles for the Non-Career Complement in the Das Award) for available full-time craft duty assignments of anticipated duration of five (5) days or more in the delivery unit to which they are assigned that are not selected by eligible career employees.

Q. I have opted on a temporary vacancy. Can management move me to another assignment?

A. Article 41, Section 2.B.5 of the National Agreement requires management to honor opts for the duration of the vacancy. These rules apply to all carriers properly awarded a hold-down assignment.

ARTICLE 41 LETTER CARRIER CRAFT Section 2.B Seniority

5. A letter carrier who, pursuant to subsections 3 and 4 above, has selected a craft duty assignment by exercise of seniority shall work that duty assignment for its duration.

The opting carrier awarded the hold-down works the assignment until the regular carrier returns, a new regular carrier is assigned or as outlined below. Opting carriers are entitled to work the regular schedule/hours of the assignment, but are not automatically entitled to the scheduled day off of the assignment. A carrier may be removed from the hold-down only to provide work for a full-time carrier who does not have sufficient work for a full-time assignment.

When a CCA or PTF letter carrier on a hold-down is converted to full-time regular and assigned to a residual vacancy pursuant to Article 41.1.A.7, the employee may voluntarily choose to end the hold-down and assume the new assignment at any time. This is in accordance with the MOU Re: Opting Duration found on page 226 of the 2019 National Agreement. **PR**