

# EAP offers help when you need it most

**S**tress from work, school or home can make coping difficult for a letter carrier or a family member of a carrier—that’s just life. Fortunately, it’s easy for letter carriers to find help facing life’s many challenges. Article 35 of the National Agreement calls for an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at no cost to carriers. Fulfilled by a contracted service provider, the EAP is a confidential program that offers assessment, consultation, counseling (up to 12 sessions), life coaching or training for any postal employee who needs help. Family members of employees living under the same roof are eligible as well. The EAP can even provide advice for a concerned employee on how to help a co-worker.

EAP is jointly administered by NALC, the American Postal Workers Union, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and the Postal Service. All EAP counselors have at least a master’s degree in counseling or social work, are licensed in their state, and have experience in dealing with a wide range of personal and workplace concerns.

Reasons a postal employee might seek help from EAP include difficulties with family, children, marriage, divorce, care of an elderly person, child care, depression, anxiety, grief or loss, substance abuse, job performance problems, or personal or work relationship problems.

Discussions with EAP professionals are protected by strict federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations, and by professional ethics standards for counselors, even when they relate to work. EAP services are provided by an independent contractor.

“EAP is an incredible resource for all sorts of problems letter carriers may face,” NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. “If you need it, just use it.”



One NALC member, who asked to remain anonymous, told *The Postal Record* that he had turned to EAP to get help for himself and his family when his wife was diagnosed with cancer. “It was just a matter of calling the 1-800 EAP number and then talking with someone,” he said. Sometimes he talked on the phone with counselors, other times he visited therapists whom EAP had referred him to in his area. He also went to EAP counselors located in postal facilities, using measures that ensure privacy. His wife, who also sought help from EAP to deal with her health crisis, later recovered from her illness.

In addition to helping a postal employee or family members, EAP also can help postal employees support each other or deal with the repercussions of other people’s challenges. If you notice a co-worker who appears to need help, you can contact EAP for assistance. An EAP counselor will help you size up the problem and help you decide how to approach that person to offer help, including the option of referring the co-worker or family member to EAP.

Technology has opened up opportunities for communicating with EAP. In addition to person-to-person or phone communication, employees or family may use video counseling or even messaging through a phone or tablet using the EAP’s privacy-protecting portal. The EAP’s website, eap4you.com, is also a rich resource for getting help—you can

find articles, locators, assessment tools, training, webinars, calculators, advice, videos and recipes there.

Letter carriers seeking EAP services can call 800-EAP-4YOU (800-327-4968), TTY 877-492-7341 or visit eap4you.com.

## NALC’s Emergency Response Team is ready for critical incidents

Another tool for helping letter carriers in crisis is NALC’s Emergency Response Team (ERT).

When a critical incident happens at a station or affects a member who works there, the ERT is ready to help all the members who need help handling it. In its third year, the ERT has already deployed at more than 110 events throughout the country.

ERT members are specially trained to provide peer-to-peer support. Team members are there to listen, understand and help. They talk to members on the workroom floor or in private, and may meet with family members of the affected carrier. Their role is to assist members and family by providing “emotional first aid” and guiding them to the available resources in the aftermath of a traumatic event.

For an in-depth look at the ERT and how it works, see the March 2026 issue of *The Postal Record*.

“Letter carriers aren’t immune from the hazards of life, including the increase in violent crimes targeting them,” President Renfroe said. “The ERT is another way our union looks out for our brothers and sisters. When they face the aftermath of a traumatic event, the ERT responds very quickly to provide support.”

If your post office experiences a traumatic event, NALC members can reach out to the ERT through their branch president or by contacting their national business agent’s office. **PR**