

US rural letter carriers speak out over massive pay cuts from new compensation formula

Our reporters
2 June 2023

On May 31, the WSWWS published an initial article on the new Rural Route Evaluation Compensation System for rural letter carriers in the US Post Office. This new pay system, based not on hours work but on an “evaluation” based on the amount of mail delivered and difficulty in delivering it, is completely opaque and has resulted in drastic cuts to annual compensation, in some cases up to five digits.

Over the past two days, the WSWWS has received an overwhelming response from letter carriers, eager to share with the world the scope and impact of these cuts. We are publishing an initial selection of these submissions below.

If you are a letter carrier, write to us and let us know how the system is affecting you. All submissions will remain anonymous.

From North Carolina: I took an \$18,000+ pay cut. I was one of the biggest routes in the office and evaluated at 60+ hours a week. Under RRECS, I’m now evaluated at 44 hours a week and am forced to work an extra day every other week. My husband is in the same office and lost \$16,000, but kept his 5 day work week.

From near Denver, Colorado: The union negotiated that the PSE Clerk becomes a career employee after two years. Those two years, you have to work 6 days a week, no raises and work overnight shifts.

People who are now hitting two years are waiting almost four months some more past the mark. This means, for those months all the benefits are on hold. PSE also has to arbitrate for back pay of the only raise you get.

I pay union dues and only spoken and seen the rep once in this time.

This is in the contract, and we have to wait and fight to get pay that should happen at time of promotion. So much for a good-faith contract!

Also, we are given four hours every check for annual leave. No matter what, be it a wedding or funeral, 99 percent are denied for time off. I couldn’t even get approved for jury duty.

Some who don’t get any days off months at a time, delivering many routes a day to ensure that our customers are taken care of. Some also give their personal cell numbers to help the people on their routes.

The post office doesn’t care about its employees. This also means our customers are not taken care of and communities go without mail and poor service. We have carriers being robbed, stalked, attacked by dogs and humans for less pay and now less retirement benefits.

But I’m glad [Postmaster General Louis] DeJoy’s trucking company is doing well on its contracted USPS deliveries! All the mail we process, that loss of money is not the postal employees’ fault. We all care and want our customers happy. We work hard, but we seem to also be paying the price for poor labor practices. We didn’t have the workers to start out with and this rural carrier tragedy will only make things worse for everyone involved.

From outside Waco, Texas: I took an \$11,000 annual pay cut due to the ineptitude of postal management. Twenty percent of my routes’ data weren’t even counted in the RRECS process, because of a supervisor who refused to update anything for over a year. With the increased costs of summer child care, I’ve had to choose between paying the rent or buying

groceries. I've resorted to donating plasma, visiting food banks and seeking additional employment just to survive.

What other employer rewards 10 years of diligent service with a 6 percent pay cut? Especially since most rural carriers worked through the pandemic, even while sick themselves, and dealt with the quadruple workload added by Amazon. All just to get this slap to the face.

From the Atlanta, Georgia area: Do not think that this is anything new. I worked for the post office for almost 30 years, and the rural carriers' pay has always been subject to the flow of mail either being stopped or slowed down. This happens so much that you cannot get an accurate accounting.

I sent a letter to the Postmaster General 10, maybe 12 years ago, and accused them of stealing my pay with a pen and a computer. It would be amazing if you could get more than retired rural carriers to stand up and tell everybody how the post office stole money from them. The entire time I worked, every mail count was amazing. The mail went out, and then when the mail count was over, we got all that held mail and had to put it up at the current pay that we were on, and many, many carriers lost money.

From central Pennsylvania: My route lost 7.5 hours a week. It still takes me the same amount of time to do my route. I am now expected to do it in over an hour less each day, and I now have to work six days a week instead of five.

Our pay is now based on scans that are being entered in our scanners, and information that is supposed to be entered in at the plants, which we are just supposed to trust is being entered correctly. When we are off, we have to trust that subs are properly doing the scans.

There is no transparency. Instead of showing us how they came up with the numbers for these new evaluations, we are expected to prove to them why the numbers are wrong, and we can't get the data to do this.

We are told mail volume is down since the last National Mail Count in 2018, but I didn't get much mail during the second half of that count. Parcels have more than doubled since then.

We were expected to show up every day during the pandemic, not knowing if we were going to our death sentence or not. We didn't even receive hazard pay and this is how they are treating us. It is beyond disgusting.

From western Wisconsin: When there used to be mail count, it was always the least busy time of the year. The numbers never added up for the work performed the rest of the year, let alone fighting on every action, mail piece, packages, etc. During this time, supervisors would wonder why it takes us longer than the rest of the year. It's an ongoing battle to get paid for what we do every day.

This new evaluation system we weren't officially trained for. I think the evaluation time system for every duty we do is coming from what was calculated back from mail count on the least busy part of year. Those numbers need to be reevaluated, and we need to be properly trained on it.

I'm tired of working on days off and not getting paid for what we do. And with no new subs coming in, it makes it that much worse. As far as I'm concerned, the new system stinks! I know I'm not alone on this. Carriers are quitting and I'm one of them. We demand to be paid fairly!

From Montana: I have been with the USPS [nearly two decades]. My route was considered "overburdened" at 48 hours a week. Now, under this new program they have determined my route is now only 41 hours in six days, not five. Now I lost my day off and nearly \$20,000 a year.

We need to strike! They are making working conditions dangerous for carriers. We are exhausted, we need help! People need to know what is happening!



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