Postal workers: Organize now to stop the deepest cuts in US Postal Service's history!

USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee
17 August 2026

To join the USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee, fill out the form below.

Fellow postal workers:

Starting in March, USPS management seized on a cash flow crisis to call for the deepest cuts in the history of the post office. Now, they have set a date for when these will start.

On August 7, Postmaster General David Steiner told the Postal Service Board of Governors that management "would not take any action until after the New Year." Even without congressional action to weaken or eliminate the Universal Service Obligation or roll back service from six days a week, he threatened changes to service standards, higher prices and the closure of "thousands of unprofitable post offices."

Management plans to spend the next four months preparing the attack. The bureaucracy of the postal unions will use the same period to block opposition from the rank and file.

We cannot wait until January. Management has a timetable. Postal workers need a plan of our own.

Their timetable

Already, USPS has suspended payments to our pension program and frozen hiring, raiding money that is supposed to go to workers. Steiner also hired corporate turnaround firm Alvarez & Marsal to put together a cost-cutting plan.

The next major step is the new National Association of Letter Carriers contract. The last NALC contract, which was imposed through binding arbitration anyway after members voted it down, expired on May 22. Now, NALC bureaucrats are trying to force through a new deal without even a membership vote by going straight to binding arbitration. A final decision will likely come sometime in the fall.

On August 12, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union announced that it too is moving towards binding arbitration.

To add insult to injury, the NALC arbitration will take place around the same time as the union's leadership election; current president Brian Renfroe is not seeking re-election. This means we are being doubly disfranchised: denied the right to vote either on the contract or even on which bureaucrats are involved in the arbitration!

Reports from the union's own collective bargaining conference say management wants to weaken protections against layoffs and reductions in force. It wants to narrow grievance rights and remedies, strip subjects from local bargaining, remove safeguards against subcontracting and make City Carrier Assistants easier to fire. It also wants greater control over office time, route adjustments and steward activity.

The arbitration, in other words, is a conspiracy between USPS and union officials to create the labor framework for mass restructuring. NALC President Brian Renfroe stated the bureaucracy's position at the union convention: "There will be change. We must be the ones shaping the change." The bureaucracy wants a seat at management's table. It does not intend to mobilize postal workers against the cuts.

While USPS is no longer projected to run out of cash by early 2027, this is still management's chosen date to begin major action.

Steiner wants Congress to approve a package this year. He has asked for temporary federal funding (which he knows very well he is unlikely to get), changes to postal benefit costs, greater borrowing authority and more freedom to raise prices. Congress must also decide whether to preserve current service obligations or give management greater power to reduce them.

The two parties may disagree over the exact financing. But they agree that postal workers and the public must pay. A temporary appropriation, even if it were to come, would only be to give management more time and money to restructure. A refusal would supply management with the excuse for immediate cuts.

Management does not need a new act of Congress before it can start cutting.

USPS can slash work hours, leave vacancies unfilled, consolidate routes, excess workers, expand subcontracting and initiate closure reviews under powers it already holds. It can launch several measures at once before opposition develops. A favorable arbitration award would make that easier.

Steiner has already told Congress that USPS plans to employ 30,000 to 35,000 fewer workers within four years. He wants to shift the workforce "more toward pre-career than career"

© World Socialist Web Site

employees. Management has already cut tens of millions of work hours.

USPS may not announce one national plan with one start date. Management can move facility by facility and craft by craft. It can call each cut a local adjustment. The combined result will be a national attack.

A July white paper from the USPS Office of Inspector General lists 15 options for closing the Postal Service's financial gap. They include a 10 percent workforce reduction, or roughly 60,000 jobs; fewer delivery days; wider conversion from door delivery to cluster boxes; outsourcing of transportation and retail operations; changes to collective bargaining and reductions in universal service.

Management may combine these measures over several years. It can use natural attrition, reduced hiring, automation, excessing and subcontracting to eliminate jobs without announcing all the losses as layoffs.

Other post offices in other countries are already slashing spending around the world. Canada Post plans to end door delivery for millions of addresses and close facilities. Royal Mail in Britain has imposed a delivery model in which three workers absorb the work of four. Australia Post has cut ordinary letter delivery to every other weekday. In each country, the union bureaucracy helped design or enforce the restructuring. Instead, opposition is coming from the rank-and-file. In each of these countries, workers have formed rank-and-file committees to oppose the bureaucratic sellouts and mobilize the working class to defend postal services. We are in regular contact with these sister committees, as part of a global movement, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

We must act before January

The union bureaucracies will not organize this fight. They accept the corporate framework that produced the crisis. They suppress information, divide workers by craft and enforce contracts that workers never approved. They subordinate postal workers to the Democratic and Republican parties, which have spent decades converting the Post Office into a profit-driven operation.

We call on postal workers to form rank-and-file committees in every post office, station, processing plant and distribution center. These committees must unite carriers, clerks, mail handlers, maintenance workers, drivers and all other crafts. Workers must elect their representatives and retain the right to remove them. The committees must remain completely independent of the union apparatus and both corporate parties.

The committees must break the information blackout. Workers should collect and circulate every local plan for staffing cuts, route consolidation, excessing, subcontracting and closure. They should establish direct communication across facilities and prepare coordinated national action before management moves in January.

We call for a united fight around the following demands:

- No layoffs, job cuts, excessing, route eliminations, post office closures or facility consolidations.
- No cuts to delivery standards, service days or door delivery.
- End mandatory overtime and chronic understaffing. Fill every vacancy with a career employee.
- Convert every noncareer worker to full career status with equal pay and benefits.
- Defend all pensions, health benefits, wages and contract protections.
- Reject every contract imposed through binding arbitration. Workers must vote on every agreement.
- Open all USPS restructuring plans and agreements with Alvarez & Marsal.
- Prepare united industrial action, including a national strike, against layoffs and service cuts.

Steiner and Congress will claim that such demands are "unaffordable." In reality there is enough money hundreds of times over. The question is who controls it. Trillions are spent on the military and on Wall Street. Workers must instead organize to redirect this money away from the financial oligarchy and towards the needs of society.

Congress cannot be waited upon to "grant" postal workers the right to strike. At any rate, this right was only ever won through struggle. To prepare action, postal workers should appeal for support from workers at UPS, FedEx, Amazon, the railroads and every section of the logistics industry. They should establish direct contact with postal workers fighting the same attacks in other countries.

The Post Office ranks among the great democratic conquests of the American Revolution. The generation that fought the Revolution regarded the free flow of information as essential to the new republic. Congress subsidized the distribution of news so that the population could take part in political life.

Congress did not design the Post Office to turn a profit, but to act as a public service. Its restructuring in 1970 into a self-funding agency forced it to operate as a business, leading to decades of cuts and declining service.

Today, the financial aristocracy uses the resulting deficits to justify layoffs, closures and service cuts. The working class must mobilize against this oligarchy, defend the Post Office and restore it as a fully funded public service under workers' democratic control.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site