



Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

RISC Report

Views of the Postal Service As an Employer

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Executive Summary

The U.S. Postal Service operates the largest retail network in the country and a delivery network that connects every household in the nation. With more than 31,000 retail offices and 161 million residential and business delivery points under its purview, the Postal Service employs over 644,000 employees to collect, move, and deliver mail, among other duties. These employees comprise the USPS workforce, and the Postal Service could not fulfill its service obligation without them.

To better understand current and former postal workers' perceptions of the Postal Service as an employer, the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) turned to job-related websites, Glassdoor.com and Indeed.com (henceforth referred to as Glassdoor and Indeed). Both Glassdoor and Indeed contain job advertisements and employer reviews, functioning as a repository of information for prospective employees and serving as a valuable resource for the Postal Service. The OIG analyzed ratings and reviews from 1,408 career and non-career postal workers — employees who received full federal benefits and those who did not, respectively — from six-month increments between Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and FY 2021. The OIG looked at both overall ratings, which reflect an average of all ratings up to the present, and yearly average ratings that account for only ratings submitted that year. Overall ratings of the Postal Service declined or stayed the same in FY 2021 compared to FY 2016. Ratings for other shipping and logistics companies also declined or stayed the same during this period, but these ratings fell at a slower rate and continued to be higher than the Postal Service's ratings.

Yearly average ratings revealed that career employees on Glassdoor rated the Postal Service more favorably than non-career employees for each of the years between FY 2016 and FY 2021. Among career employees, high ratings (4 or 5 stars out of a possible 5 stars) outnumbered low ratings (1 or 2 stars out of a possible 5 stars) in FY 2016, FY 2017, and FY 2021, but low ratings outnumbered high ratings in the intervening years. Meanwhile, low ratings outnumbered high ratings among non-career respondents every year. More career employees than non-career employees indicated they would recommend the Postal Service as an

employer for each of the past six fiscal years, but the percentage who would do so gradually declined across both categories.

The Postal Service also tracks and measures employee engagement among all employees via annual Postal Pulse Surveys, and it examines the non-career employee experience via monthly Non-Career Exit Surveys and Non-Career Stay Surveys. Survey results show employees are unengaged overall, though engagement has risen slightly from a low of 22 percent of respondents reporting engagement in FY 2016 to 25 percent in FY 2020. Surveys also revealed non-career employees understood how their work contributed to the Postal Service's success but quit due to a lack of schedule flexibility, dislike of their supervisors, and the physical demands of their jobs.

The Postal Service has tried to reduce its non-career churn for years, aiming to lower turnover rates among non-career employees to a target of 34.08 percent. While it has not yet met this goal in any of the past five years, turnover rates have improved from FY 2016's high of 42.8 percent. Annual turnover rates for career employees were much lower, ranging from 6 to 8 percent between FY 2016 and FY 2020. Most of this career turnover was due to retirements.

As a result of its survey findings, the Postal Service has introduced a new initiative aimed at improving non-career retention within the first 90 days of hiring. It seeks to improve the onboarding and training process in five stages that are specifically designed to address Non-Career Exit Survey results that point to dissatisfaction with schedules and supervisors.

Postal employees are key to the success of the Postal Service — a fact both acknowledged and highlighted by postal leadership in their 10-year plan. Information on postal employees' views of the Postal Service as an employer can be found in several official and unofficial channels — including online reviews — and provide a fuller picture of the postal employee experience. As the Postal Service continues its endeavors to become an employer of choice, online employee reviews also present an opportunity for the Postal Service to gather employee views, improve prospective employees' perceptions, and increase new employee hiring.

Observations

Introduction

The U.S. Postal Service employs over 644,000 employees to fulfill its mission of delivering mail to every address in the nation. Postal employees are responsible for every step along that process — collecting, sorting, processing, moving, and delivering mail — and the Postal Service could not operate without them.

Employees are an integral part of the Postal Service, and the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) was interested in examining employees' thoughts on their work. Specifically, our objective was to determine how employees perceive the Postal Service as an employer. To meet this objective, the OIG examined publicly accessible employee ratings and reviews on Glassdoor.com and Indeed.com (henceforth referred to as Glassdoor and Indeed); results from employee surveys administered by USPS between FY 2016 and the second quarter (Q2) of FY 2021; data on turnover, retention, and conversion rates; and postal initiatives to reduce employee turnover.

Refer to [Appendix A](#) for more information on the objective, scope, and methodology.

Background

The Postal Service workforce is made up of both career and non-career employees. Career employees are in permanent positions with full federal benefits; in FY 2020, they comprised most of the Postal Service's workforce at 77 percent. By contrast, non-career employees are in entry-level positions that do not receive the full federal benefits or job protections associated with career positions. In FY 2020, non-career employees made up 23 percent of the workforce. Non-career employees are divided into the following positions:

- **Mail Handler Assistants (MHAs)** load, unload, and move bulk mail in postal plants. MHAs separate the incoming mail for dispatch and delivery to distribution areas;
- **Postal Support Employees (PSEs)** process mail and perform retail activities, from clerical and administrative duties in telephone customer service centers to sales and customer support at the retail window in a post office lobby;
- **City Carrier Assistants (CCAs)** case, deliver, and collect mail on designated city routes — via foot or vehicle — as well as deliver and collect charges on customs, postage-due, and Collect on Delivery mail matter; and,
- **Rural Carrier Associates (RCAs)** case, load, deliver, and collect mail on assigned rural routes, while providing customer service along those routes.

The four non-career positions roughly align with four major crafts — groups that are represented by unions and are recognized at the national level: Mail Handlers, Clerks, City Carriers, and Rural Carriers, respectively.¹

Since 2007, the Postal Service has increased its hiring of non-career employees to help offset rising compensation costs associated with career employees. New field employees now begin as non-career employees in some positions before they become eligible for a career position. Every craft provides a separate conversion process for their respective non-career employees. When career positions are available, MHAs and CCAs with the highest relative standing are offered the open career positions, but PSEs are converted based on seniority only after other part-time flexible employees are offered conversion. RCAs are eligible for conversion after one year of continuous work as an RCA, but only after part-time rural carriers and substitute carriers are offered conversion first.²

¹ A craft can include both career and non-career employees within their ranks.

² For more information on non-career crafts, including craft descriptions and non-career benefits, see the bargaining agreements with the individual craft unions. See National Postal Mail Handlers Union, "Agreement between National Postal Mail Handlers Union, A Division of the Laborers' International Union of North America, AFL-CIO and United States Postal Service: September 21, 2019 – September 20, 2022," 2019, <https://www.npmhu.org/resources/body/FINAL-2019-Agreement.pdf>; American Postal Workers Union, "Collective Bargaining Agreement between American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO and United States Postal Service, September 21, 2018 – September 20, 2021," 2018, <https://apwu.org/contracts/2018-apwuusps-collective-bargaining-agreement-slim>; National Association of Letter Carriers, "2019-2023 National Association of Letter Carriers – United States Postal Service National Agreement," May 8, 2021, <https://www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/body/2019-2023-National-Agreement-Bookmarked.pdf>. The agreement between USPS and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association is not available to the public.

Online Ratings of the Postal Service

There is a great deal of ratings information available about employers such as the Postal Service. For instance, a recent Forbes survey asked employees of large organizations about critical factors related to their jobs, including their workplace safety, compensation, and opportunities for advancement. The Postal Service ranked among the top 100 large employers in 32 states.³ By comparison, FedEx was among the top employers in 26 states, and UPS was among the top employers in 25 states.

Another type of rating information comes directly from former and current employees: employer review websites. Two of the most popular job-review websites are Glassdoor and Indeed, which have a combined total of more than 400 million ratings and reviews of employers from around the world — including ratings and reviews of the Postal Service.⁴ These websites provide aggregated job postings and user-generated, anonymous reviews of employers by current and former employees.

More than 6,600 reviews of USPS were posted on Glassdoor, and another 20,000 on Indeed, between FY 2016 and the first half of FY 2021. These ratings and reviews serve as an important source of information for prospective postal workers but come with some limitations. Reviewers self-identify as having worked for the Postal Service, and though they are required to register and maintain a valid email account, their experience is not independently verified. In addition, the views of employees who choose to submit online reviews may not match the views of the broader postal workforce. However, the themes described in these online ratings generally align with the comments postal employees submit via official channels, which are discussed in further detail below.

Postal workers posted more than 26,600 reviews of USPS on Indeed and Glassdoor between FY 2016 and the first half of FY 2021.

Job-related websites offer benefits to employers as well as to prospective employees. These websites provide employers with an ability to market their company as an organization that prospective employees would like to join. Some websites such as Glassdoor also offer the ability to gain competitive intelligence about other employers, enabling the refinement of marketing campaigns. In a competitive marketplace for highly-qualified workers, this can be particularly important — and for an employer like the Postal Service, which often finds itself competing with private sector companies for talent, every potential advantage becomes even more critical. Employers can also respond to reviews. Seventy-five percent of site users say that they are more likely to apply for a position when the employer is active on the site (for example, responding to reviews, updating its profile, sharing insights into its culture and work environment). Finally, a site like Glassdoor also offers employers the ability to make job titles even more appealing to prospective applicants by allowing employers with an account the opportunity to observe click-through rates of specific job titles and job descriptions.

Overall Job Ratings

Both Glassdoor and Indeed list an average overall rating for the Postal Service based on a five-star scale.⁵ This rating represents an average of all ratings of the Postal Service up to that point in time. In both FY 2017 and FY 2021, average overall ratings for the Postal Service were consistently lower than ratings for comparable organizations — both in the shipping and logistics sector and in the federal government — on Glassdoor and on Indeed.⁶

On Glassdoor, USPS received 3.0 out of five stars in both FY 2017 and FY 2021. Glassdoor ratings for UPS also stayed the same between the four years, but ratings for FedEx declined slightly. In FY 2017, USPS received an overall rating of 3.7 stars out of five stars on Indeed, but that rating dropped to 3.4 stars in FY 2021. While ratings for two other large shipping and logistics companies, UPS and FedEx, also dropped during this time, the Postal Service's rating declined more than either of these other organizations.

³ For more information, see: Forbes, "Best Employers by State," August 24, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/best-employers-by-state/#17b2d14f487a>.

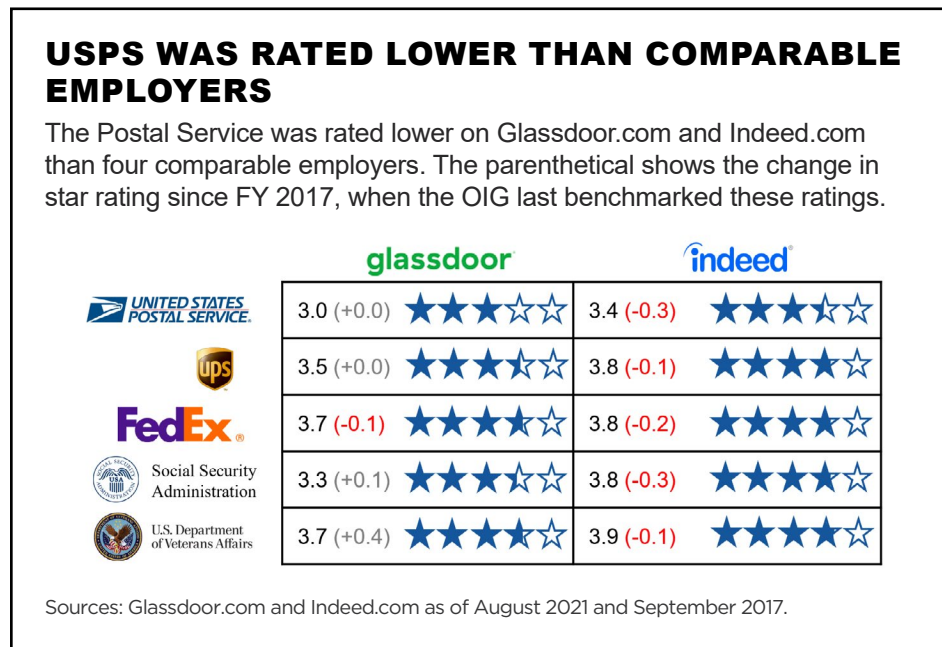
⁴ Indeed, "About Indeed," <https://www.indeed.com/about>, and Glassdoor, "About Us," <https://www.glassdoor.com/about-us/>.

⁵ These ratings were calculated by Glassdoor and Indeed and do not represent reviews from only our scope period.

⁶ To align with previous OIG work in this area, we compared USPS ratings against ratings for UPS and FedEx (two other delivery providers), and ratings for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration (two organizations in the public sector). For more information, see U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, *Assessing Postal Service Employee Engagement Activities*, Report Number HR-AR-17-013, September 21, 2017, <https://www.uspsog.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2017/HR-AR-17-013.pdf>.

The OIG previously completed work that benchmarked the Postal Service's overall ratings on Glassdoor and Indeed against ratings for two other public sector organizations: the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration.⁷ Comparisons between these agencies' ratings and the Postal Service's ratings in FY 2017 and FY 2021 are nuanced. The Postal Service's ratings on Glassdoor stayed the same in FY 2017 and FY 2021, while overall ratings for the Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs increased. Meanwhile, the Social Security Administration's overall Indeed rating dropped at the same rate as the Postal Service's, while Indeed ratings for the Department of Veterans Affairs declined at a slower rate. For more information, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: High-Level Ratings Out of Five Stars



Glassdoor and Indeed also provide star-ratings on several broad categories. While these categories are not identical across the two sites, there are similarities between categories and between their respective results. Reviewers on both sites reported that the best aspect of working for the Postal Service was the pay and benefits, with both sites listing a 3.7 rating. The second-best aspect was diversity and inclusion (3.5) for Glassdoor respondents, and job security and advancement (3.3) for Indeed respondents. Reviewers on both sites agreed that the worst components of the job were management (scoring 2.3 on Glassdoor and 2.8 on Indeed) and work-life balance (2.1 on Glassdoor and 3.0 on Indeed).⁸

The Postal Service's Yearly Ratings on Glassdoor

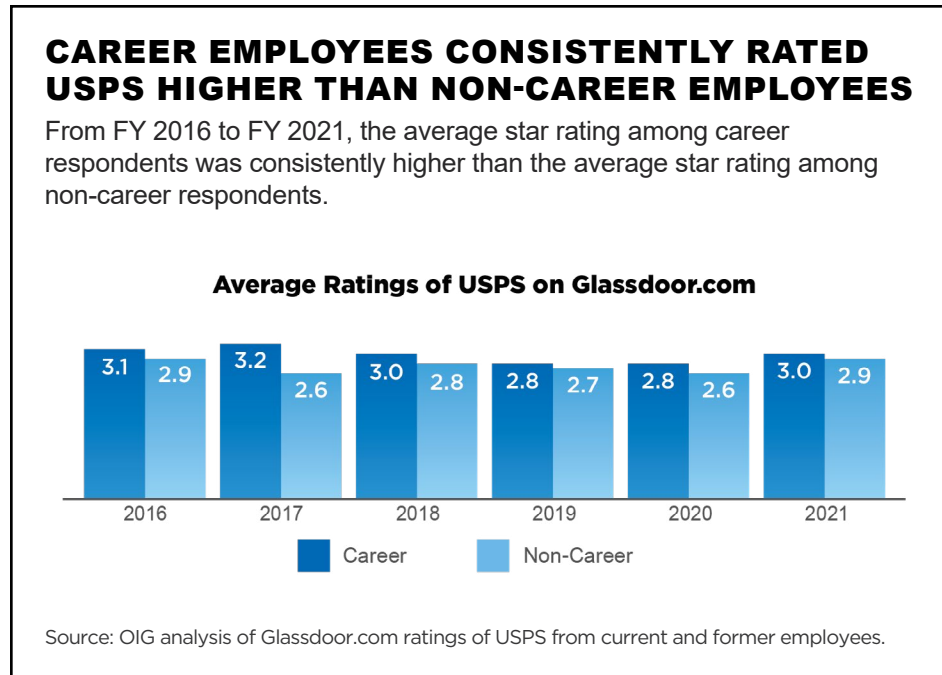
In addition to examining average overall ratings, the OIG calculated an average yearly rating. To do this, the OIG collected a total of 1,408 Glassdoor ratings and reviews in six-month increments beginning October of FY 2016 through the end of FY 2021. These reviews included user-provided information on the specific position reviewers held at the Postal Service; whether they were a current or former employee; positive aspects of the job; negative aspects of the job; and whether they would recommend USPS as an employer. The OIG used information on a reviewer's self-identified position to categorize non-career employees — such as RCAs and CCAs — into one category, and career field employees — such as mail handlers — into another category. Average yearly star ratings were then calculated by combining these monthly Glassdoor ratings to calculate a score for each FYs 2016 to 2021.

The average yearly star rating for the Postal Service fluctuated between a low of 2.8-out-of-five stars in both FY 2019 and FY 2020 to a high of 3.1 stars in FY 2016 among all postal respondents. Yearly ratings dropped for both career and non-career reviewers over the six-year timeframe before rising to comparable heights in FY 2021 as FY 2016. Every year, career employees provided a higher yearly rating on Glassdoor than non-career employees did. For more information, see [Figure 2](#).

⁷ Ibid.

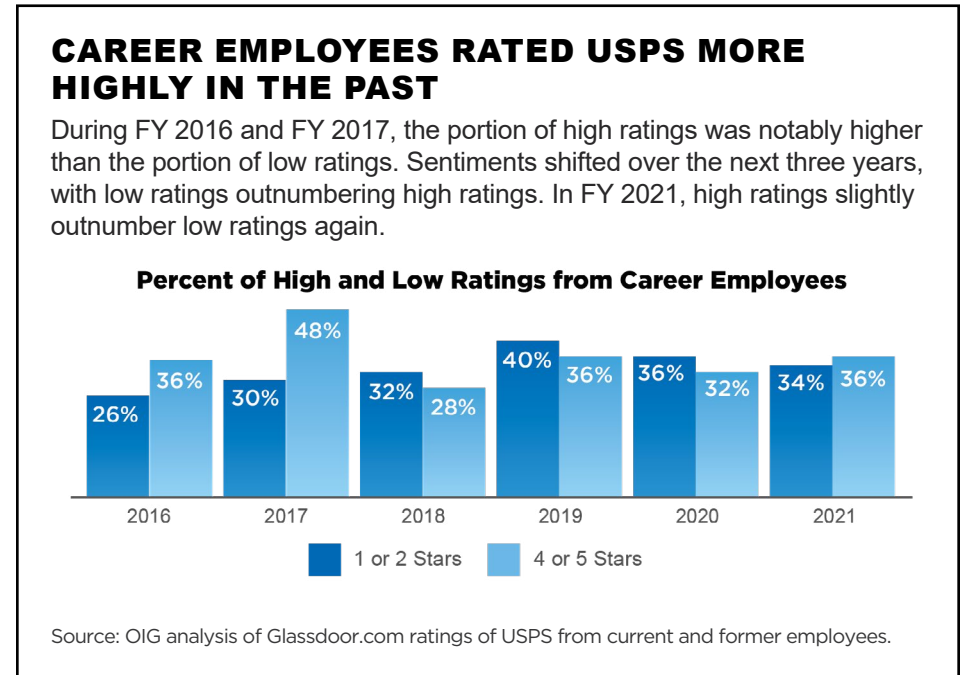
⁸ Neither site provides definitions of management. Indeed lists the category as "Management," and Glassdoor lists the category as, "Senior Management."

Figure 2: Average Ratings of Career and Non-Career Employees



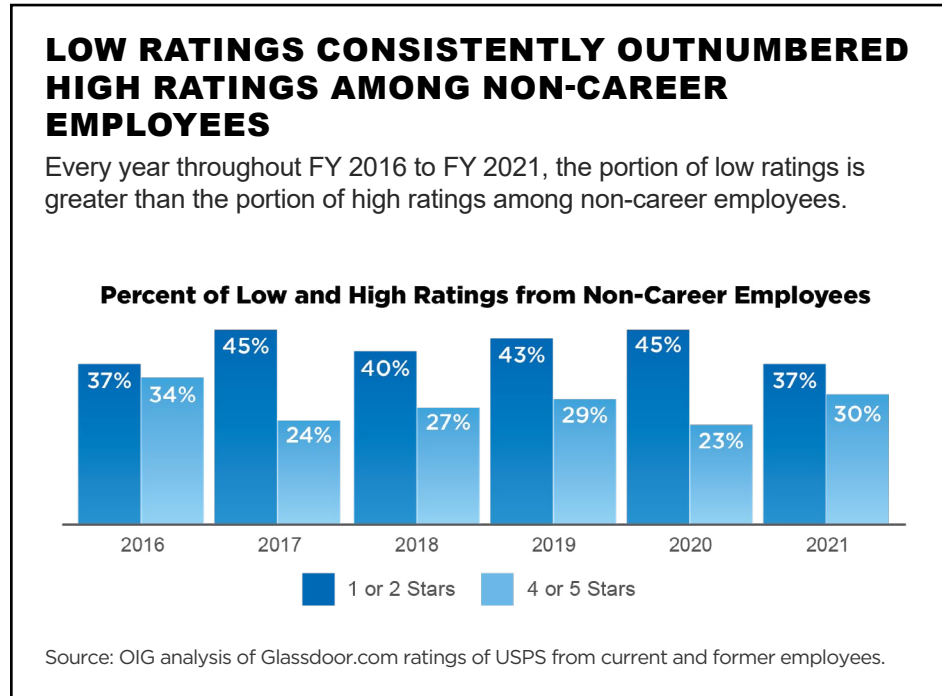
The OIG also reviewed the proportion of high ratings (four or five stars out of five stars) versus low ratings (one or two stars out of five stars) over time on Glassdoor. Career employees viewed the Postal Service more favorably at the beginning of this period. The percentage of high ratings hit a peak of 48 percent in FY 2017 (see Figure 3), and in both FY 2016 and FY 2017, more career employees gave a high rating than a low rating. However, over the years, the percentage of low ratings began to outnumber the percentage of high ratings. In FY 2021, the portion of high ratings of USPS slightly outnumbered the portion of low ratings once again, though not at the level seen in earlier years.

Figure 3: Career Employees' Glassdoor.com Ratings Over the Years



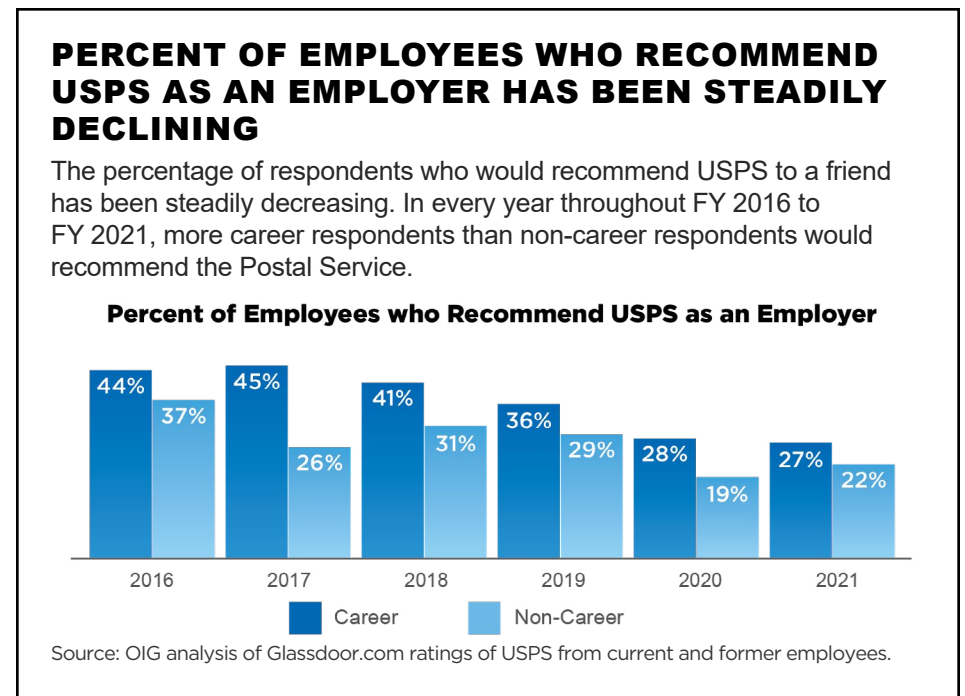
Non-career employees on Glassdoor gave more low ratings than high ratings of the Postal Service every year between FY 2016 and FY 2021. The percentage of non-career respondents who gave low ratings fluctuated within an 8-point range over the six-year timeframe, and the percentage who gave high ratings fluctuated 11 points during the same period. Despite this variability, the percentage of non-career reviewers who gave a high rating never matched nor exceeded the percentage of those who gave low ratings during any of the years within the scope period. In both FY 2017 and FY 2020, the percentage of non-career employees who provided low ratings was almost twice the percentage of respondents who provided high ratings in the same year. More information on this trend can be found in [Figure 4](#).

Figure 4: Non-Career Employees' Glassdoor.com Ratings Over the Years



Reviewers were asked if they would recommend the Postal Service as an employer to friends, and 41 percent of all postal respondents since 2008 indicated they would recommend USPS. However, the percentage of both non-career and career reviewers who indicated a favorable response has been declining over the years, with both groups dropping 40 percent between those who would recommend USPS in FY 2016 and those who would do so in FY 2021. For every year throughout FY 2016 and FY 2021, career employees were more likely to recommend the Postal Service than non-career employees (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Recommendation Rates Over the Years



Reviews of the Postal Service on Glassdoor

In addition to rating their past and current employers, Glassdoor respondents can also leave information on the benefits (“Pro”) and drawbacks (“Con”) of working for their employers. An algorithm on Glassdoor then compiles the most frequently cited phrases in user reviews and provides an example of its usage.

As of August 28, 2021, the top three “Pro” phrases since FY 2008 were: “Good pay” (1,158 reviews), “Great pay” (658 reviews), and “Good benefits” (545 reviews). Meanwhile, some of the most frequently cited “Con” phrases were: “Long hours” (563 reviews), “No benefits” (363 reviews), and “Work-life balance” (206 reviews).⁹ Examples of postal reviewers with these phrases can be found in [Table 1](#).

⁹ “Carriers” and “Post office” were among the top five “Con” phrases but were dropped from the OIG analysis.

Table 1: Top “Pro” and “Con” Phrases on Glassdoor

TOP “PRO” PHRASES	EXAMPLES
Good pay	“Good pay, great people to work with.”
Great pay	“Great pay especially for how easy the job is.”
Good benefits	“Nice pay and benefits working here.”
TOP “CON” PHRASES	EXAMPLES
Long hours	“Long hours and working in all weather conditions.”
No benefits	“No benefits only holidays and weekends which work for me.”
Work-life balance	“Can be all consuming, can be challenging to find work/life balance.”

Source: OIG analysis of Glassdoor.com ratings of USPS from current and former employees.

“Pay” (43 percent) and “Benefits” (29 percent) continued to be the most frequently occurring words when describing the “Pro” of working for the Postal Service between FY 2016 and FY 2021.¹⁰ However, this was not true across all employee categories. While both career (44 percent) and non-career reviewers (49 percent) frequently mentioned, “Pay,” fewer non-career reviewers ever mentioned, “Benefits” (18 percent). Instead, “Work” (25 percent) was the second-most frequently cited word when listing the “Pros” of working for the Postal Service.

When asked to describe the “Con” of working for the Postal Service, the most frequently occurring word among all employee reviews was, “Work” (44 percent) followed by “Management” (29 percent) between FY 2016 and FY 2021. Career respondents tended to mention “Work” (38 percent) and “Management” (38 percent) with similar frequency in their reviews. Among non-

career respondents, “Work” (53 percent) was mentioned by more than half of the respondents, followed by complaints about “Hours” (38 percent) and then “Management” (29 percent).

Indeed Work-Happiness Survey

Indeed generates a Work Happiness survey to measure respondents’ well-being at work. The Work Happiness survey is a separate survey from the Indeed review process, comprised of 15 questions to gauge a user’s satisfaction with their workplace. As of July 1, 2021, the Postal Service has received 10,098 survey responses.

The Postal Service scored highest on questions about compensation and purpose, which measured whether respondents felt they were paid fairly for their work and whether they felt a clear sense of purpose at work. The Postal Service received its lowest scores on questions regarding stress, management, and flexibility. The Work Happiness survey asked if respondents could generally avoid feeling stressed at work; results indicated that nearly half of USPS employees did not believe this was possible. The Postal Service also received low scores on measures gauging employee views on whether managers helped them succeed and whether they had the time and location flexibility they needed.

Postal Efforts to Reduce Turnover and Improve the Onboarding Experience

The Postal Service has been working to steady its employee churn, or the amount of movement among its workforce, for years. It has measured employee turnover rates — including turnover rates for both career and non-career employees — and set goals to improve non-career turnover. Beginning in 2019, the Postal Service began analyzing the duration of non-career employee tenure before their departures. The agency has also used surveys to gather qualitative data on employees, including the Postal Pulse survey to gauge employee engagement, and Non-Career Stay and Non-Career Exit surveys to specifically target and evaluate the non-career employee experience. The Postal Service incorporated a goal of empowering its workforce as a separate and specific initiative within its recent 10-Year Plan, *Delivering for America: Our Vision and*

¹⁰ Percentages were calculated by dividing the total number of occurrences by the total number of employees. However, it is possible that reviewers repeated words more than once within the same review.

Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence.¹¹ Furthermore, the Postal Service implemented a new initiative in February 2021 aimed at improving employee retention and reducing turnover as a result of previous Non-Career Exit Survey findings.

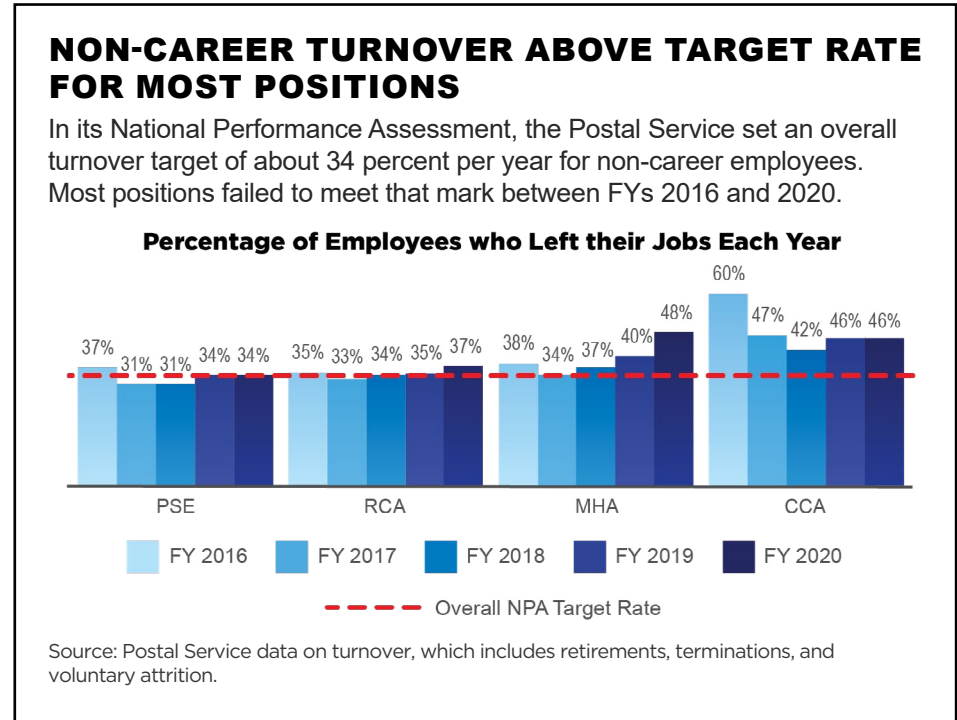
Measuring Turnover, Retention, and Conversion Rates

Turnover and retention within a workforce can serve as rough proxies for employee (dis)satisfaction. For most postal employees, turnover is quite low. Career employees comprise the bulk of the USPS workforce, and only 6 to 8 percent of all career employees left each year between FY 2016 and FY 2020. About two-thirds of those departures were due to retirement.

Career turnover is low relative to non-career turnover — there is only 6 to 8 percent turnover among career employees, and most of that turnover is due to retirement.

Turnover among non-career employees was much higher. It ranged between 36 and 43 percent during the same period. In FY 2016, the Postal Service implemented an overall National Performance Assessment turnover target of 34.8 percent to reduce non-career turnover; this goal was lowered slightly to 34.08 percent in FY 2017. However, even with the lower goal, it has been a challenge for the Postal Service to meet its target in each of the past five fiscal years. Among the four non-career crafts, CCAs had the highest turnover rate between FY 2016 and FY 2019; by FY 2020, MHA rates exceeded CCA rates at 48 percent (see Figure 6 for more information).

Figure 6: Non-Career Turnover vs. NPA



Much of the new employee churn was attributable to the first ninety days of an employee’s tenure. The Postal Service began tracking detailed retention rates among non-career employees in April 2019 and found that 38 percent of newly onboarded employees left the Postal Service within the first 90 days of employment.¹² In contrast, only 18 percent of non-career employees left after the initial three months were over.

11 U.S. Postal Service, *Delivering for America: Our Vision and Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence*, March 23, 2021, https://about.usps.com/what/strategic-plans/delivering-for-america/assets/USPS_Delivering-For-America.pdf, p. 8.

12 Seasonal and peak hires were not included in this analysis because the Postal Service is contractually unable to retain them.

Non-career workers can gain full benefits and additional job security after converting to career positions, but, as mentioned above, the process of conversion varies by craft and is negotiated by unions. Between 8 to 26 percent of all non-career employees converted each year between FY 2016 and FY 2020. Within each craft, conversion rates varied even more; these rates ranged from 3 percent for RCAs in FY 2016 to 44 percent for MHAs in FY 2019. RCAs consistently held the lowest conversion rates. Meanwhile, CCAs saw a 30-point increase in their rates between FY 2016 and FY 2020 — largely due to a national agreement that made CCAs automatically eligible for conversion after 24 months of employment.¹³

Administering Postal Surveys

In addition to measuring turnover, retention, and conversion rates, the Postal Service also administers three large-scale surveys to its employees: the Postal Pulse, the Non-Career Employee Stay Survey, and the Non-Career Employee Exit Survey. These surveys are non-compulsory and are administered roughly annually (for the Postal Pulse) or monthly (for the Non-Career Stay and Non-Career Exit Surveys).¹⁴ The survey results show employees at the Postal Service understand how their work contributes to the agency's success, but are facing challenges with engagement, supervisors, communication, and a lack of flexibility with schedules.

The Postal Pulse

The Postal Pulse is a national survey given to all employees — both career and non-career alike — using questions from Gallup, Inc.'s Employee Engagement Survey.¹⁵ The Postal Pulse aggregates results

According to the FY 2020 Postal Pulse survey, three-quarters of respondents were either unengaged or actively disengaged.

into an employee engagement score that is broken out into three categories: “Engaged,” “Not Engaged,” and “Actively Disengaged.” In FY 2020, the Postal Pulse results demonstrated that three-quarters of respondents were either unengaged or actively disengaged employees — a number that remained between 74 and 78 percent between FY 2016 and FY 2020. According to Gallup, an employee who is not engaged is psychologically unattached to their work, while an actively disengaged employee is resentful and can potentially undermine the work of other engaged employees. Between FY 2016 and FY 2020, 38 to 40 percent of respondents were not engaged, and 35 to 38 percent were actively disengaged. More than 90 percent of organizations who also used this survey received higher employee engagement results than the Postal Service did.¹⁶

The Postal Pulse's areas of strength and opportunities for improvement for the Postal Service were consistent with other survey and review results. Between FYs 2016 and 2020, postal employees who took the Postal Pulse indicated they knew what was expected of them at work and had the opportunity to do what they do best every day. These were presented as “Strength” categories for the Postal Service because it scored highest on these two measures. Over the same period, the same employees reported the Postal Service could make improvements in communicating employees' progress, providing opportunities to learn and grow, and making employees feel that their opinions mattered. These were “Opportunity” categories in which the Postal Service received its lowest scores.

Postal Pulse results from two management-related questions indicated there was also room for improvement regarding employees' interactions with, and views of, management. Between FY 2016 and FY 2020, slightly more than half of all respondents felt their supervisor — or someone at work — seemed to care about them as a person.¹⁷ By contrast, 26 to 30 percent of all respondents did not agree that their supervisor, or someone else at work, cared about them.¹⁸ Over the

¹³ Conversion rates among CCAs increased from 10 percent in FY 2016 to 40 percent in FY 2020.

¹⁴ The Postal Pulse was administered twice in FY 2017: once in Q1 and once in Q4. It was otherwise administered once per fiscal year.

¹⁵ In FY 2020, 197,102 employees responded to the survey, which is about 30 percent of all postal employees.

¹⁶ Results from the Postal Pulse are measured against other organizations within Gallup's Overall database, which consists of all types of industries. The Postal Service's mean percentile ranks are calculated against survey results from all industries and is not a comparison against other logistics or delivery companies.

¹⁷ Fifty-one to 56 percent of respondents indicated they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the statement, “My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.” The Postal Service received a mean percentile ranking between 9 and 11 on this question over the years of our scope, meaning that 89 to 91 percent of employers that also used this survey ranked higher than the Postal Service.

¹⁸ The percentage refers to respondents who indicated they “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” with the statement, “My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.”

same period, only 35 to 40 percent of respondents indicated they had received recognition or praise for doing good work in the past seven days.¹⁹

The Non-Career Stay and Non-Career Exit Surveys

The Postal Service administers Non-Career Stay and Non-Career Exit Surveys to non-career employees who either entered or left the rolls, respectively, within the past month.²⁰ Non-Career Stay Survey respondents were most likely to connect their day-to-day work with the USPS mission: 89 percent of respondents understood how their work helped the Postal Service succeed. Respondents also expressed general agreement that their supervisor addressed their concerns at work (68 percent), that the Postal Service was a place in which they could build their career (79 percent), and that the job was what they had expected it to be (69 percent).

Almost nine-in-ten non-career respondents understood how their work helped the Postal Service succeed.

Strong, positive sentiments towards the Postal Service on the Non-Career Stay Survey declined between FY 2016 and Q2 FY 2021. There was a 15-point decrease in the percentage of Non-Career Stay Survey respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, “My supervisor addresses my concerns at work,” a similar 17-point decrease in respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, “I have not considered leaving USPS,” and a 14-point decrease in those who strongly agreed that the Postal Service was a workplace that supported its employees.²¹ Instead, more people agreed with, felt neutral about, or disagreed with these statements in FY 2021.

According to the Non-Career Exit Survey, the main reasons for non-career turnover have been consistent across the years. In the aggregate, non-career

employees listed a lack of flexibility in schedules, dislike of one’s supervisor, and the physical demands of their job as their top reasons for leaving. Among specific crafts, respondents who were CCAs, MHAs, and PSEs indicated that a lack of schedule flexibility was the main reason they left the Postal Service, while RCAs said their main reason was not receiving enough work hours.²²

Postal Initiatives Addressing Turnover

In its 10-year plan to stabilize its finances and services, the Postal Service identified “unacceptably high rates of non-career employee turnover” as a key challenge.²³ The plan calls for cutting that turnover in half as one way to increase employee retention and development. The Postal Service created an initiative to address the two biggest reasons for turnover uncovered by the Non-Career Exit Surveys: challenges with schedule flexibility and supervisor relations for non-career employees.

More than 30 percent of new non-career workers leave during the first 90 days on the job, and the Postal Service has targeted that initial period of employment for a series of reforms that cover five areas.

- **Step 1: Pre-Hire Preparation and Connections**, which includes conveying realistic job expectations to prospective employees; assessing an office’s ability to provide on-the-job training before assigning a new employee to that location; and assigning new hires to a key operational point of contact.
- **Step 2: Initial Training and Coaching for Success**, which calls for training to be completed within the initial day(s) of employment; for investment and planning when scheduling course instructors; and for accurate timekeeping of employee training hours.

¹⁹ The percentage refers to respondents who indicated they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with this statement. The Postal Service received a mean percentile ranking between 10 and 14 on this question over the years of our scope, meaning that 86 to 90 percent of employers that also used this survey ranked higher than the Postal Service.

²⁰ In FY 2020, 13,488 non-career employees responded to the Non-Career Exit Survey and 17,639 non-career employees responded to the Non-Career Stay Survey, which are about 9 percent and 12 percent of all non-career employees, respectively.

²¹ The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement, “My supervisor addresses my concerns at work,” dropped from 49 percent in FY 2016 to 34 percent in FY 2021. The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed they “have not considered leaving USPS” declined from 62 percent in FY 2017 to 45 percent in FY 2021. The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed that, “The Postal Service is a workplace that supports employees” declined from 45 percent in FY 2018 to 31 percent in FY 2021.

²² Lack of schedule flexibility accounts for the top reason that CCAs (17 percent), MHAs (23 percent), and PSEs (21 percent) left. Seventeen percent of RCAs indicated their main reason for leaving was because they could not procure enough workhours.

²³ U.S. Postal Service, *Delivering for America: Our Vision and Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence*, March 23, 2021, p. 2.

- **Step 3: Scheduling Flexibility/Front Line Supervisor Relationships**, which calls for a maximum of 40 hours per week and a weekly day off during employees' first 30 days to acclimate them to the demands of the job; better cooperation between unions and the Postal Service to onboard new workers; and frequent check-ins with supervisors.
- **Step 4: Probationary Success**, which calls for the timely completion of new employee evaluations, which would be completed at 30, 60, and 80 days from the date of hire.
- **Step 5: Separation Oversight**, which calls for an improved process for terminating underperforming employees, including documentation of performance issues; discussions with, and concurrence from, multiple departments; and justifications for why further training would be ineffective at helping the employee improve.

The Postal Service rolled out internal training for the initiative in February 2021.

Conclusion

Postal workers are a vital and integral part of the Postal Service — they pick up, sort, transport, and deliver mail, as well as manage sales, respond to customer needs, and run post offices. While postal workers play an essential role in the operations of the Postal Service, high non-career turnover rates, declining ratings, and multiple survey results indicate postal workers enjoy contributing to the Postal Service's success but may sometimes feel dissatisfied or unengaged with their work.

Dissatisfaction in the form of lower average ratings on Glassdoor was a persistent theme among non-career respondents, whose low ratings outnumbered high ratings for each of the past six years. When considering a potential employment opportunity with the Postal Service, prospective employees would see fewer and fewer recommendations of USPS as an employer. Instead, they would see praise for pay and benefits at the Postal Service, as well as reviews about long hours, difficulties with work-life balance, and complaints about management.

The Postal Service has taken steps to examine the employee experience, beginning with efforts to track turnover and measure engagement, and continuing with new initiatives to address top complaints uncovered by internal surveys. Considering unofficial sources, such as online job-related websites, can serve to augment and expand upon the information USPS receives from more official sources and inform its attempts to improve employee retention. These sites can also function as an important location where the Postal Service can understand future applicants' perceptions of the Postal Service as an employer, thereby improving recruitment and hiring as well.

Postal employees' day-to-day work connects the country and is critical to every aspect of the Postal Service's operations. Postal employees' engagement and satisfaction are tied to the success of the Postal Service — a fact USPS noted in its 10-year plan: "Our people are our greatest asset, and our success depends on investing in their future."²⁴ Continuing endeavors to reduce turnover and address emerging complaints will empower a workforce that is vital to the future success of the Postal Service.

Summary of Management's Comments

Management stated the Postal Service believes the white paper's use of data from employment websites is exaggerated and overstated. They stated that the sample of reviewed ratings is a fraction of the workforce, indicating they have their own internal data from employee surveys and exit surveys, as well as data they receive from other organizations. Management asserts that Glassdoor and Indeed are for-profit businesses rather than independent survey organizations.

Additionally, management stated that white paper acknowledges there are many sources of data about the Postal Service as an employer and added that the Postal Service has been recognized as a most trusted agency by various groups. Management mentioned its own survey data, management initiatives, and the collective bargaining process as examples of their recognition of employee-related issues and steps to improve employee turnover. They believe the initiatives they have been working on will be effective in stabilizing their workforce and reducing the non-career separation rate.

²⁴ U.S. Postal Service, *Delivering for America: Our Vision and Ten-Year Plan to Achieve Financial Sustainability and Service Excellence*, March 23, 2021, p. 37.

See [Appendix B](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG appreciates management's comments on our white paper. Regarding management's comments on the size of the OIG's sample of reviews from employment websites, our sample was designed to provide a snapshot of postal employee views. Our sample was not designed to be a statistical sample. The information we reviewed from Glassdoor and Indeed covers a range of both career and non-career employees, and their ratings and reviews generally align with the comments employees have provided via the Postal Service's own surveys.

Regarding management's comments on the relevance of information from Glassdoor and Indeed, the OIG acknowledges the companies running the website are for-profit businesses. However, these websites provide public

information on employee views of the Postal Service to prospective applicants who do not have access to data from internal Postal Service surveys. Additionally, employment websites can be helpful for the Postal Service because they provide a way for the Postal Service to respond to reviews and to alter prospective employees' views of the Postal Service. According to Glassdoor, three-out-of-four users said they were more likely to apply to a job when an employer was active on their site.

The methodology for our research included reviewing internal postal survey results and turnover data and was expanded to include two reputable employment websites to provide additional perspective. Although the OIG recognizes the career turnover rate is lower than the provided national quit rate, the non-career turnover rate remains above this rate. Our white paper acknowledges the Postal Service's continuing endeavors to measure and reduce employee turnover, and we hope those efforts are successful.

Appendices

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to determine how employees perceive the Postal Service as an employer. The analysis covered FY 2016 through Q2 of FY 2021 unless otherwise noted.

To gather data for our analysis, we used the following methods:

- **Examined Glassdoor and Indeed Results:** The OIG examined overall ratings from Glassdoor and Indeed, as well as results from Indeed’s Work-Happiness survey results.
- **Analyzed Ratings and Reviews on Glassdoor:** The OIG prepared and cleaned a dataset of Glassdoor ratings and reviews from October and April of FY 2016 through FY 2021. We then analyzed individual Glassdoor ratings in our dataset by employee status (whether they were former or current employees of USPS), job category (whether they were career or non-career

employees), and position. We looked for differences within categories and for change across time.

- **Reviewed and Analyzed Relevant USPS Surveys:** We examined results from the Postal Pulse, Non-Career Exit Survey, and Non-Career Stay Surveys across FY 2016 to Q2 of FY 2020 to look for trends in employee sentiment.
- **Conducted Desk Research:** The team also examined union agreements, postal documents, Annual Reports to Congress, and prior OIG work to gather relevant background information on Postal employees, particularly of those in non-career crafts.

We conducted work for this white paper in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on September 15, 2021, and included their comments where appropriate.

Prior Coverage

Title	Description	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact
<i>Non-Career Employee Turnover</i>	To assess non-career employee turnover and identify opportunities to optimize non-career staffing.	HR-AR-17-002	December 20, 2016	\$53 million
<i>Assessing Postal Service Employee Engagement Activities</i>	To assess the Postal Service’s Human Resources employee engagement activities to determine whether they are effective in enhancing employee engagement.	HR-AR-17-013	September 21, 2017	\$0
<i>First-Line Supervisors in the U.S. Postal Service</i>	To examine key human capital and performance areas related to first-line supervisors.	19SMO005HR000-R20	December 9, 2019	\$0

Title	Description	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact
<i>Effectiveness of the Postal Service's Efforts to Reduce Non-Career Employee Turnover</i>	To assess the Postal Service's effectiveness in reducing non-career turnover and evaluate underlying reasons for non-career employee turnover.	19POG001SAT000-R20	February 12, 2020	\$13.7 million

Appendix B: Management's Comments

SIMON M. STOREY
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES



October 4, 2021

JENNIFER MYKIJEWY
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS CENTRAL
RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS SOLUTION CENTER

SUBJECT: Views of the Postal Service as an Employer – Final Review Draft
(Project No. 2021RISC008)

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) white paper: *Views of the Postal Service as an Employer*.

The Postal Service believes the white paper's focus and conclusion on the value of the data from two online employment sites is exaggerated and overstated. The paper reviewed ratings and reviews of 1,408 career and noncareer employees. In context, we have 653,000 career and non-career employees. The on-line sample is a fraction of our workforce. The Postal Service recognized through its own survey data and has been addressing the high separation rate of our pre-career employees through our collective bargaining process and other management initiatives. As an example, the new negotiated contract with the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC-AFLCIO) includes a negotiated provision to automatically convert an employee to career status at 24 months of service. This is one example of many that pre-date this paper of our recognition of this issue and taking steps to improve.

Titled "Views of the Postal Service as an Employer" this white paper's focus is clearly on the information it obtained from the Indeed and Glassdoor, which is described in the paper as "popular job review websites". It was stated in the exit conference that the paper was finalized based on Glassdoor results only. While the Postal Service will not question the data reviewed by the OIG, Indeed and Glassdoor are for profit businesses which have business relationships with employers and agencies. They are not independent survey organizations.

This paper cites 26,000 survey results from Indeed and Glassdoor. The Postal Service currently has over 653,000 employees and approximately 600,000 retirees receiving an annuity. This does not include thousands of seasonal employees who have worked for the Postal Service over the years. The cited survey results are limited to the specific demographic that uses sites like Indeed and Glassdoor. It does not include employees enjoying a 30, 40 or even 50 year career with the Postal Service. While the Postal Service acknowledges a high separation rate for our pre-career employees, however, its turnover rate for career employees (excluding retirements) is at 2%. The Bureau of Labor & Statistics cites the 2020 national quit rate at 25.5 %.

The Postal Service also has data from its own internal data from employee surveys and exit survey data and receives various inputs from other organizations. It does not believe that the information from these two data sources (Indeed and Glassdoor) deserve any preference or is of any exceptional value.

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This white paper acknowledges there is a great deal of data available about the Postal Service as an employer and cites the recent Forbes Magazine recognition as a top employer. The Postal Service has also received numerous other recognitions from various groups recognizing them as a most trusted agency.

The Postal Service believes the initiatives we have been working on will lead to stabilizing our workforce and reduction in our con-career employee separation rate.



Simon Storey
Vice President, Human Resources

cc: *Manager, Corporate Audit Response Management*



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