



Office of Inspector General | United States Postal Service

Audit Report

Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations - Select Baltimore Units, Baltimore, MD

Report Number 21-194-R22 | November 4, 2021



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Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

November 4, 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR: LORA MCLUCAS
MARYLAND DISTRICT MANAGER

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sean Balduff", is positioned above the "FROM:" field.

FROM: Sean Balduff
Director, Delivery and Retail Response Team

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Mail Delivery and Customer Service
Operations – Select Baltimore Units, Baltimore, MD
(Report Number 21-194-R22)

This report presents the results of our audit of Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations at Select Baltimore Units in Baltimore, MD.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Jennifer Schneider, Operations Manager, Delivery, Retail, and Response, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Delivery Operations Vice President
Area Retail & Delivery Operations Atlantic Vice President
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Background

This report responds to requests from U.S. Representatives C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger and Kweisi Mfume, for the 2nd and 7th Congressional Districts of MD, respectively, to review mail delivery and customer service operations at select units in the Baltimore, MD, region (Project Number 21-194). In May 2021, Representatives Ruppersberger and Mfume sent letters requesting reviews at several units in the Baltimore region based on an increase in constituent complaints in the months prior. Congressman Ruppersberger requested reviews at the Dundalk Sparrows Point (Dundalk), Essex, Rosedale, Parkville, Middle River, and Towson (served by Loch Raven) branches. His request specifically mentioned constituents not receiving mail, including paychecks and life-saving prescriptions, for weeks at a time. Congressman Mfume’s request specifically mentioned an increased lack of service, non-delivery of mailpieces, and customer service complaints in ZIP Codes 21213 (Clifton East End Station), 21217 (Druid Station), and 21229 (Carroll Station).

Baltimore Region

To determine the extent of service performance issues in the Baltimore region, we analyzed service performance scores¹ for seven products from October 4, 2019, through July 2, 2021, for the entire former Baltimore District.² Four products never met their service target in any of the 92 weeks reviewed (see Table 1). Parcel Select was the only product that met its service standards target more than four times during this period. See [Appendix B](#) for the average monthly service performance scores for the seven products we reviewed.

Table 1. Baltimore District Service Performance

For a 92-week period from October 4, 2019, through July 2, 2021, the former Baltimore District did not meet the service target for four products in any of the 92 weeks we reviewed. Parcel Select was the only product that met its service standards target more than four times during this period.

Mail Type	Service Target	Weeks Meeting Service Target	Weekly Average	High Score	Low Score
First Class Composite	96.00%	0	72.95%	93.12%	25.19%
Marketing Mail End to End	91.80%	0	51.68%	75.82%	10.22%
Periodicals Composite End to End	91.80%	0	54.11%	86.02%	14.81%
Priority Express	96.85%	0	83.94%	94.79%	29.38%
First Class Package Composite	94.80%	1	78.07%	95.04%	18.99%
Priority Air / Surface	94.80%	4	75.96%	97.34%	16.24%
Parcel Select	99.80%	51	99.79%	99.95%	99.29%

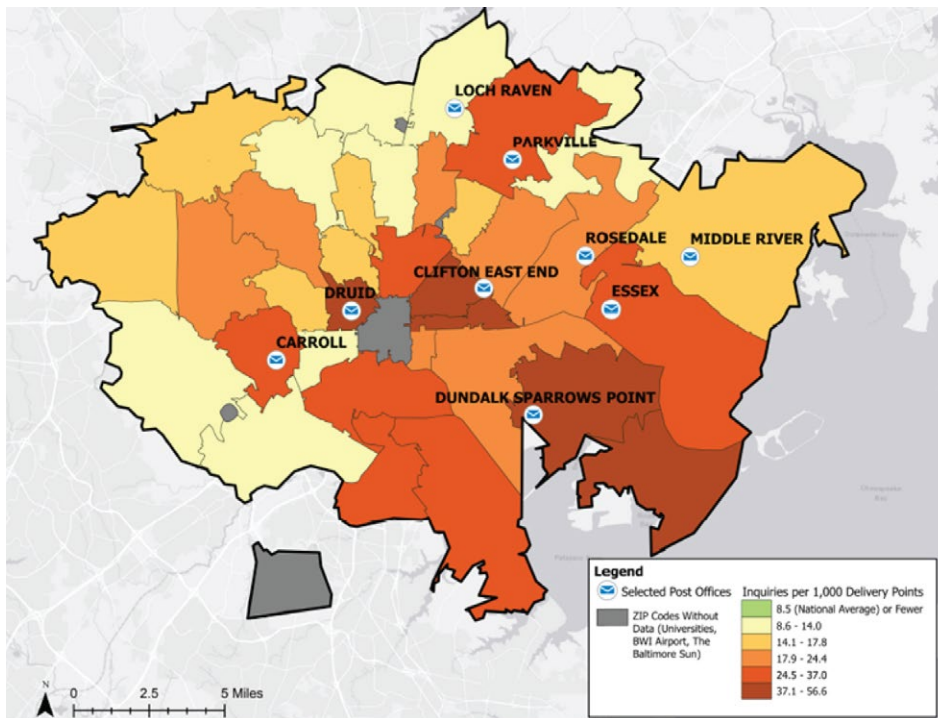
Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of Informed Visibility data.

¹ A measure of the time it takes to process letters, flats, and parcels from collection to delivery.

² In March 2021, the Postal Service announced a reorganization which incorporated the former Baltimore District along with the former Capital District into a newly formed Maryland District. These organizational changes became effective in June 2021.

In addition, since October 2019, the number of customer inquiries related to missing mail for the Baltimore region has been above the national average. We analyzed missing mail inquiries³ from the Postal Service's Customer 360 (C360)⁴ database from October 2019 through June 2021. We determined that units in the Baltimore region consistently received more inquiries than the national average of 8.5 inquiries per 1,000 delivery points, with some units having over 37.1 inquiries per 1,000 delivery points (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Missing Mail Inquiries for the Baltimore Region From October 2019 - June 2021



Source: OIG analysis of C360 data.

We also compared C360 missing mail inquiries from October 2019 through June 2021 for the Baltimore region to those in other major metropolitan areas. We found that the Baltimore region had the second highest number of inquiries compared to other major metropolitan areas, with more than three times the national average of 8.5 inquiries per 1,000 delivery points (see Table 2).

Table 2. Top 10 Regions for Missing Mail Inquiries October 2019 - June 2021

City	3-Digit ZIP Code	Number of Delivery Points	Count of Inquiries	Inquiries Per 1,000 Delivery Points
Chicago, IL	606	1,136,535	40,473	35.61
Baltimore, MD	212	529,212	14,885	28.13
Washington, D.C.	200	343,469	8,631	25.13
Philadelphia, PA	191	709,738	15,900	22.40
Atlanta, GA	303	512,155	10,856	21.20
Bronx, NY	104	512,490	8,258	16.11
St. Louis, MO	631	437,236	6,924	15.84
Los Angeles, CA	900	1,001,971	15,228	15.20
Dallas, TX	752	615,111	9,181	14.93
Denver, CO	802	521,972	7,519	14.40
National	N/A	136,811,025	1,163,131	8.50

Source: OIG analysis of C360 data.

³ The specific category is "I have not received my mail in more than two days".

⁴ A cloud-based application containing feedback submitted by customers which enables Postal Service employees to diagnose, resolve, and track customer issues.

Nine Units Reviewed

The nine units we reviewed in the Maryland District have a combined total of 276 city routes. As of June 2, 2021, staffing at the units included 301 full-time (FT) city carriers and 59 part-time (PT) city carriers⁵ (see Table 3).

Table 3. City Routes and Carriers at Selected Units

Unit	City Routes	FT City Carriers	PT City Carriers
Carroll	31	33	8
Clifton East End	26	32	5
Druid	16	16	7
Dundalk	45	48	7
Essex	24	17	9
Loch Raven	46	55	4
Middle River	18	19	1
Parkville	50	59	13
Rosedale	20	22	5
Total	276	301	59

Source: OIG analysis of data from City Delivery Variance.

We reviewed package and missing mail inquiries for the nine units from October 2019 through June 2021 and compared them to the national average. We found that each of the nine units had more package and missing mail inquiries per 1,000 delivery points than the national average. Dundalk, Loch Raven, and Essex had the most package inquiries per 1,000 delivery points, while Dundalk, Clifton East End, and Druid had the most missing mail inquiries per 1,000 delivery points (see Table 4).

Table 4. Package and Missing Mail Inquiries

Between October 2019 and June 2021, each of the nine units received more package and missing mail inquiries than the national average.

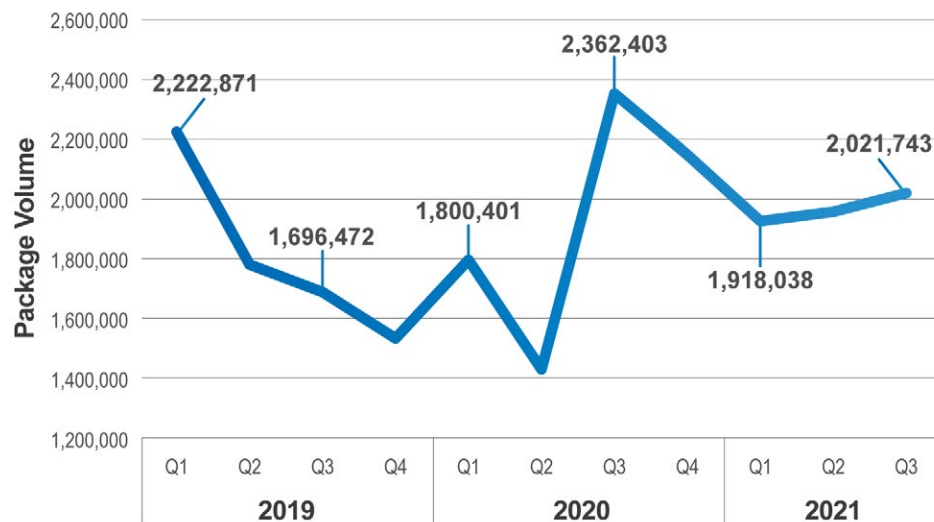
Unit	Delivery Points	Count of Package Inquiries	Package Inquiries Per 1,000 Delivery Points	Count of Missing Mail Inquiries	Missing Mail Inquiries Per 1,000 Delivery Points
Dundalk	29,336	6,780	231.12	1,659	56.55
Clifton East End	21,153	2,690	127.17	971	45.90
Druid	17,827	3,041	170.58	760	42.63
Essex	19,087	4,058	212.61	707	37.04
Carroll	20,002	3,363	168.13	686	34.30
Parkville	30,108	5,558	184.60	837	27.80
Rosedale	14,007	2,397	171.13	276	19.70
Middle River	18,926	3,348	176.90	310	16.38
Loch Raven	22,823	5,118	224.25	301	13.19
National Values	136,811,025	16,249,051	118.77	1,163,131	8.50

Source: OIG analysis of C360 data.

⁵ For the purposes of this report, we will refer to city carrier assistants as PT city carriers. These are non-career employees who perform the full range of city carrier duties, but do not have an assigned route and can be moved to other units as necessary.

Since April 2020, shortly after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the nine sites we visited experienced an overall increase in package volume, which increased the workload at the units. Specifically, package volume was higher in the first three quarters of fiscal year (FY) 2021 compared to the first three quarters of FYs 2019 and 2020 by about 3.6 and 5.5 percent, respectively (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Package Volume at the Nine Units From FYs 2019 - 2021 (by Postal Quarter)



Source: OIG analysis of eFlash data.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to evaluate mail delivery and customer service operations on selected routes at the following delivery units in the Baltimore, MD, region: Dundalk, Essex, Rosedale, Parkville, Middle River, Loch Raven, Clifton East End, Druid, and Carroll.

To accomplish our objective, we reviewed delivery metrics for the nine sites we visited including the number of routes and carriers, mail arrival time, amount of reported delayed mail, package scanning, and distribution up-time.⁶ In addition, we reviewed C360 package and missing mail inquiries, service performance data for select products in the former Baltimore District, employee availability, and COVID-19 leave usage. We visited nine selected delivery units from June 22-24, 2021, to observe delivery operations. During those observations, we counted any identified delayed mail and analyzed the scan status of judgmentally selected packages at the carrier cases and in the “Notice Left” areas.⁷

We conducted this audit from June through November 2021 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on October 5, 2021, and included their comments where appropriate.

We relied on computer-generated data from the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS), Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS)⁸, Workforce Dashboard, and the National Delivery Intelligence Dashboard. Although we did not test the validity of controls over these systems, we assessed the accuracy of the data by reviewing existing information, comparing data from other sources, observing operations, and interviewing Postal Service officials knowledgeable about the data. Therefore, we determined the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

⁶ The time of day that clerks have completed distributing mail to the carrier routes.

⁷ The area of a postal facility where letters or packages that the carriers were unable to deliver are stored for customer pickup.

⁸ A tool for unit management to manually self-report delayed mail, which provides a snapshot of the daily mail conditions of the mail at the point in time when the carriers have departed for the street.

Findings Summary

We identified delivery and customer service issues at all nine sites we visited. These issues included delayed mail, inaccurate reporting of mail conditions, and improper scanning.

Finding #1: Delayed Mail

We identified delayed mail at each of the nine units during our site visits from June 22-24, 2021. Specifically, we found about 972,457 pieces⁹ of delayed mail, the majority of which was made up of letters and flats. We found very few delayed packages at the nine units and both unit management and carriers stated that there was an emphasis on getting all packages delivered each day (see Table 5 and Figure 3).

Table 5. OIG Analysis of Identified Delayed Mail

Unit	Date of Site Visit	Delayed Letters and Flats	Delayed Packages	Total Delayed Mailpieces
Essex	June 22, 2021	197,107		197,107
Clifton East End	June 22, 2021	188,374		188,374
Dundalk	June 24, 2021	163,808	2	163,810
Druid	June 24, 2021	159,052	43	159,095
Carroll	June 24, 2021	144,940		144,940
Parkville	June 23, 2021	84,969		84,969
Middle River	June 22, 2021	22,284	63	22,347
Rosedale	June 23, 2021	10,169		10,169
Loch Raven	June 23, 2021	1,646		1,646
Total		972,349	108	972,457

Source: OIG count of delayed mail pieces identified during our visits June 22-24, 2021.

⁹ OIG analysis is based on Postal Service conversion factors in Handbook M-32, *Management Operating Data Systems*, Appendix D.

¹⁰ The Postal Service uses the word “flats” to refer to large envelopes, newsletters, and magazines.

¹¹ Mail that arrives at a unit in sequential order and is ready to be taken directly to the street for delivery.

Figure 3. Examples of Delayed Mail



Source: OIG photos taken June 22-24, 2021.

Examples of the delayed mail we identified included:

- During our observations at Essex on June 22, 2021, we found flat mail¹⁰ dating back to May 24, 2021 that had not been sorted or delivered. At the time of our visit, there were postmasters and carriers from units outside of the immediate Baltimore region who district management brought in to help sort and carry delayed mail.
- During our observations at Carroll on June 24, 2021, we found Delivery Point Sequence (DPS)¹¹ letter mail dating back to June 11, 2021 that had not been delivered and undelivered mail for a customer hold request that ended in February 2021.
- During our observations at Dundalk on June 24, 2021, we found letter and flat mailpieces postmarked December 2020 and magazines from April 2021 that had not been delivered.
- During our observations at Druid on June 24, 2021, we found DPS letter mail from June 19, 2021 and weekly flyers dating back to May 18, 2021 that had not been delivered.

- During our observations at Parkville on June 23, 2021, we found Every Door Direct Mail¹² dating back to May 3, 2021 that had not been delivered.
- During our observations at Middle River on June 22, 2021, we found DPS letter mail from June 19, 2021 and flat mail dating back to June 4, 2021 that had not been delivered.
- During our observations at Clifton East on June 22, 2021, we found letters postmarked March 2021 that had not been delivered.
- During our observations at Rosedale on June 23, 2021, we found DPS mail from June 22, 2021 that had not been delivered.
- During our observations at Loch Raven on June 23, 2021, we found mail from two partially delivered routes from June 22, 2021. Other than these two routes, the unit was clear of undelivered mail.

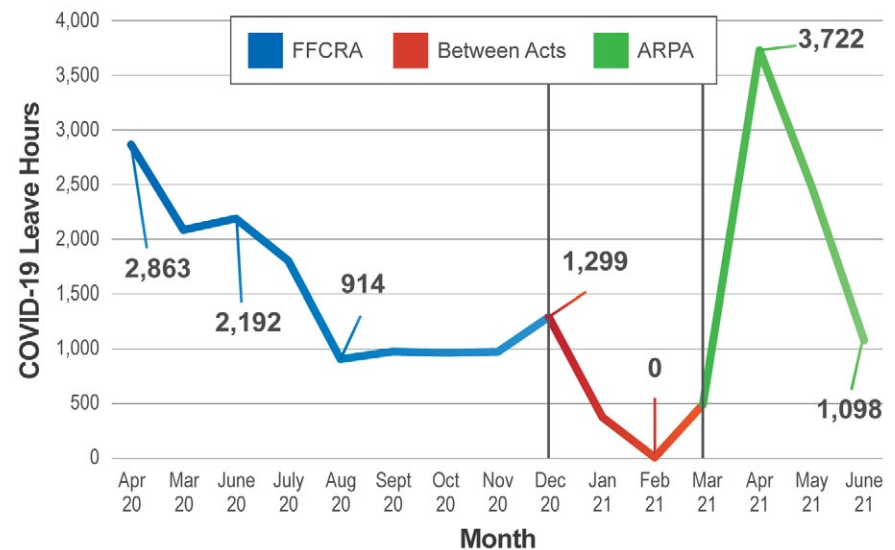
Postal Service policy¹³ states that all types of First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Priority Express Mail are always committed for delivery on the day of receipt. Any committed mail not processed and taken out for delivery on the day of receipt is delayed. In addition, policy states that managers must be sure replacement employees are available for unscheduled absences and develop contingency plans for situations that may interfere with normal delivery service.¹⁴

According to management, the main cause of the delayed mail was a lack of available staff. Specifically, a significant number of carriers took authorized COVID-19 leave during March and April 2021. We analyzed city carrier COVID-19 leave from April 2020 through June 2021, which covered the timeframes during which both the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)¹⁵ and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)¹⁶ were in place. We found that COVID-19 related city carrier leave usage at the nine units we visited was high in April and decreased through August 2020, and then spiked

significantly again in March and April of 2021 after ARPA was implemented (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. COVID Leave Hours for City Carriers at the Nine Units

COVID-19 leave usage by city carriers at the nine units we visited was high from April through August 2020, when the FFCRA was in place, and then spiked significantly in March and April of 2021 after ARPA was implemented.



Source: OIG analysis of TACS data.

We also analyzed employee availability data for city carriers at each of the nine units and found that it generally decreased during March and April 2021 and was usually below the national average. The three units impacted most by the low employee availability were Carroll, Clifton East End, and Dundalk (see Table 6). Carriers and management at the units we visited stated that the prolonged lack of employee availability has had a significant impact on their ability to deliver mail timely.

¹² An efficient and affordable service for businesses that want to target specific areas in their local market without requiring names and addresses on the mailpieces.

¹³ *Committed Mail & Color Code Policy for Marketing Mail* stand-up talk, February 2019.

¹⁴ Handbook M-39, *Management of Delivery Services*, Transmittal Letter 14, Section 111.2, June 2019.

¹⁵ FFCRA was signed into law on March 18, 2020 and became effective on April 1, 2020.

¹⁶ ARPA was signed into law on and became effective on March 11, 2021.

Table 6. City Carrier Employee Availability at the Nine Units From October 2020 - July 2021¹⁷

Pay Period End Date	National Average	Carroll	Clifton East End	Druid	Dundalk	Essex	Loch Raven	Middle River	Parkville	Rosedale
Oct 23	81.37%	71.34%	68.12%	84.99%	68.57%	63.15%	76.92%	83.92%	71.11%	87.84%
Nov 6	81.58%	65.20%	64.43%	86.58%	72.85%	65.31%	81.03%	84.68%	68.61%	77.83%
Nov 20	80.89%	68.52%	67.70%	89.35%	71.86%	73.01%	81.09%	74.81%	70.55%	76.47%
Dec 4	79.48%	67.64%	63.23%	83.26%	62.58%	69.18%	79.54%	84.86%	67.90%	70.76%
Dec 18	83.29%	76.30%	75.94%	83.82%	71.38%	74.67%	83.61%	82.13%	71.53%	75.31%
Jan 1	79.54%	70.36%	68.67%	66.98%	66.20%	61.62%	74.92%	83.14%	70.19%	81.83%
Jan 15	81.41%	68.86%	76.41%	63.52%	71.34%	69.55%	76.95%	81.81%	73.88%	87.27%
Jan 29	81.09%	67.49%	66.80%	76.48%	67.33%	76.24%	75.89%	78.10%	70.77%	85.88%
Feb 12	80.06%	60.96%	63.67%	74.73%	62.24%	66.89%	74.29%	78.64%	67.49%	82.22%
Feb 26	78.50%	66.12%	68.61%	70.19%	62.46%	70.07%	74.41%	81.15%	76.50%	87.85%
Mar 12	82.61%	68.98%	71.35%	81.66%	70.65%	67.24%	78.54%	77.80%	79.26%	83.12%
Mar 26	80.27%	68.06%	59.91%	70.85%	53.72%	70.61%	77.28%	76.39%	73.83%	87.67%
Apr 9	79.03%	61.83%	57.66%	62.92%	59.96%	73.35%	72.23%	79.53%	68.03%	75.96%
Apr 23	79.39%	54.12%	60.92%	67.30%	62.78%	69.37%	78.47%	75.92%	73.03%	72.15%
May 7	79.47%	53.58%	52.29%	61.92%	63.46%	68.61%	79.46%	77.43%	63.95%	65.61%
May 21	79.60%	51.84%	51.69%	65.88%	68.98%	75.72%	76.20%	83.52%	72.20%	71.13%
Jun 4	77.90%	57.92%	52.71%	66.67%	64.10%	79.90%	70.42%	79.49%	64.13%	83.07%
Jun 18	78.41%	66.76%	61.50%	61.37%	58.25%	71.24%	74.72%	77.97%	68.17%	72.18%
Jul 2	77.08%	68.76%	57.30%	65.15%	64.40%	66.28%	71.63%	76.97%	72.86%	77.96%

Source: OIG analysis of TACS data.

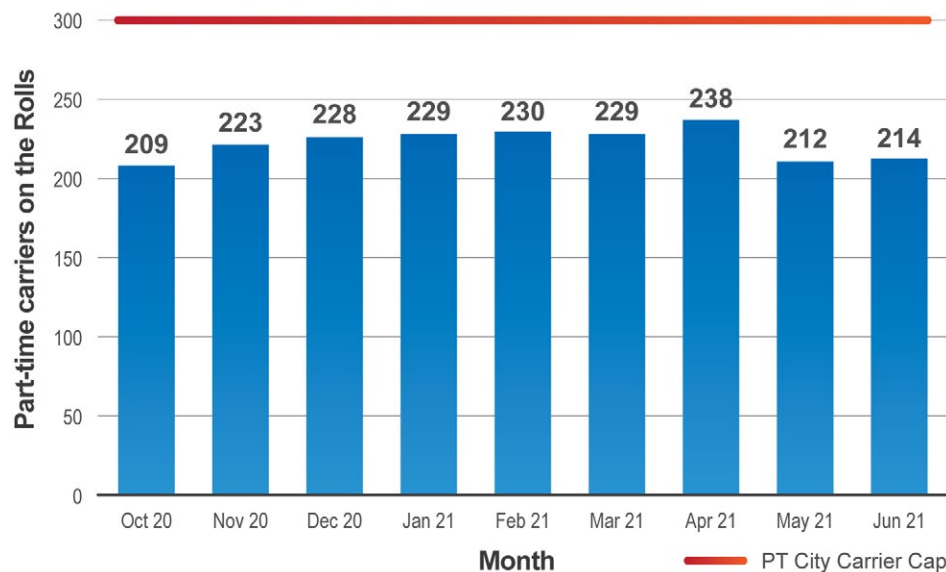
¹⁷ The Postal Service Pandemic Influenza Plan says that they should be able to operate with up to 60 percent employee availability for up to 12 weeks. This was previously discussed in the OIG report, *Mail Service During the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, (Report Number 20-275-R21, dated January 4, 2021).

While these units faced external challenges with employee availability due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we also found that management could reduce delayed mail by improving hiring and retention procedures, training availability, and the use of diagnostic tools.

Hiring and Retention

The Baltimore Post Office¹⁸ did not maintain enough carriers to ensure timely mail delivery. We analyzed the total number of PT city carriers on the rolls for the Baltimore Post Office from October 2020 through June 2021. We found that the highest number of PT city carriers on board for any of these months was 238 in April 2021. This was well below the authorized PT city carrier cap of 300 established in June 2021¹⁹ (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. PT City Carriers on the Rolls for the Baltimore Post Office



Source: Postal Service Workforce dashboard.

¹⁸ The Baltimore Post Office includes 28 units, including the nine we reviewed.

¹⁹ This cap was established in June 2021, after the Baltimore District was combined with the Capital District. Management has been unable to provide us with the authorized PT city carrier cap for the Baltimore Post Office prior to June.

²⁰ At full capacity the facility could accommodate 10 employees, but they were limited to seven due to social distancing guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

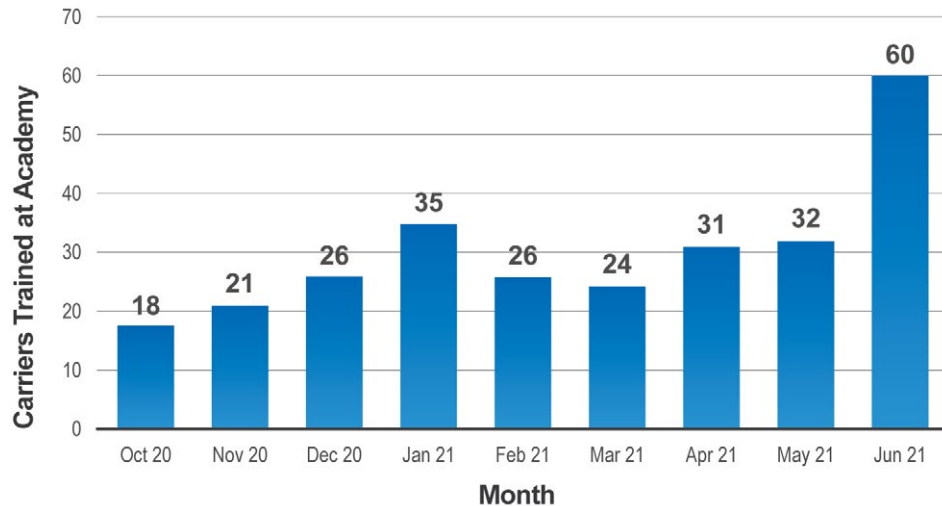
Further, unit management did not remove PT city carriers from the employee rolls in a timely manner and Baltimore Post Office and district management did not provide adequate oversight to ensure that the employee rolls were accurate. According to management, there were about 40 PT city carriers who either resigned or were terminated during January and February 2021, but were not taken off the rolls until March 2021. Therefore, management did not actively recruit new PT city carriers during January and February.

Management stated they have had trouble retaining carriers in the Baltimore region. Specifically, management stated that many carriers leave the job because they realize it's much more physically demanding than they had anticipated. Management acknowledged that they have not sufficiently prepared prospective employees for the physical demands of the position. As of June 18, 2021, the Baltimore Post Office was 98 PT city carriers under its authorized cap of 300 and the nine units we visited had 45 vacant FT city carrier positions.

Training

Management can only train a limited number of new carriers at one time due to capacity restrictions. Before May 17, 2021, the Baltimore region only had one training academy that could accommodate seven new carriers²⁰ at a time. On May 17, the district opened a second training academy where they could train an additional 14 new carriers. In June 2021, they trained 60 new carriers, which is nearly double the amount trained in prior months (see Figure 6). While opening a second training academy is a step in the right direction, opening a third academy could further expedite new carrier training and give management more flexibility to move new carriers to locations that are in greater need of delivery assistance.

Figure 6. Baltimore Carriers Completed Training by Month



Source: Baltimore training academy.

Diagnostic Tools

Baltimore Post Office and district management had insufficient tools to identify units that needed assistance. Management generally relied on self-reported data entered by unit management in CSDRS, which was not always reported accurately. The Postal Service recently developed two tools to help identify units that are having issues with timely mail delivery:

- *National Delivery Intelligence Dashboard* – This dashboard uses available data, including scanner data, to identify delivery points that did not receive mail on a particular day. The acting Baltimore postmaster received access to the dashboard at the beginning of June 2021.
- *Triangulation report* – This report has key metrics, including employee availability, non-deliveries, and C360 inquiries, that are used to rank individual units by performance. The acting Baltimore postmaster began receiving this report at the end of April 2021.

According to management at the units we visited, the delayed mail issues at their units significantly increased in March and April 2021. However, district management did not begin to provide additional resources from outside the Baltimore region until the week of June 21, 2021, the same week we made our site visits. By that time, six of the nine units we visited already had over 80,000 pieces of undelivered mail each. If management had access to better analytical tools and established thresholds for key metrics, such as employee availability, undelivered routes, and C360 inquiries, they could have more effectively identified and addressed struggling units earlier. Baltimore Post Office management said they now use these tools daily to identify units that are having the most issues with mail delivery and to determine where they need to shift carriers.

During the week of our visit, the National Delivery Intelligence Dashboard indicated that about 14 percent of the routes at the nine units did not have delivery to at least 50 percent of their delivery points (see [Table 7](#)).

Table 7. Routes Without at Least 50 Percent Delivery - Week of June 21, 2021

Unit	Total Routes	June 21	June 22	June 23	June 24	June 25	Percent of Routes for the Week ²¹
Carroll	31	11	9	8	4	6	25%
Clifton East End	26	9	5	5	0	8	21%
Druid	16	2	1	2	3	2	13%
Dundalk	47	11	13	15	14	5	25%
Essex	27	4	3	2	4	2	11%
Loch Raven	46	2	2	2	2	3	5%
Middle River	25	2	6	1	2	3	11%
Parkville	50	4	6	2	8	2	9%
Rosedale	22	1	0	0	0	0	1%
Total	290	46	45	37	37	31	14%

Source: National Delivery Intelligence Dashboard.

When mail is delayed, there is an increased risk of customer dissatisfaction, which may adversely affect the Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #1

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, develop and implement a process to ensure managers at units in Baltimore complete the removal process for part-time city carriers that are no longer employed and identify part-time city carriers who should be taken off the rolls.

Recommendation #2

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, develop and implement a plan to hire and retain enough carriers to consistently reach and maintain authorized complement.

Recommendation #3

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, open another city carrier training academy to efficiently train new carriers as they are hired.

Recommendation #4

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, develop and implement a plan to analyze available data and establish thresholds for key metrics to determine when the Baltimore postmaster should request additional resources from outside the Baltimore region to help deliver mail.

²¹ This column was derived by adding the number of routes that did not have at least 50 percent delivery for the five days of our visit, dividing by five, and then dividing the result by the total number of routes. For example, the calculation for Carroll would be $((11+9+8+4+6) / 5) / 31 = 24.52$. We rounded to the nearest whole number.

Finding #2: Inaccurate Reporting of Mail Conditions

Management did not accurately report delayed mail in CSDRS. Specifically, on the day prior to our visit, management at Dundalk, Parkville, and Rosedale did not report any delayed mail in CSDRS, and management at the other six units only reported 200,817 pieces of delayed mail. However, this only represented about 21 percent of the 972,457 delayed mailpieces we identified at the units at the time of our visits (see Table 8).

Table 8. OIG Analysis of Under Reported Delayed Mailpieces

Unit	Date of Site Visit	OIG-Identified Delayed Mailpieces	Delayed Mailpieces Reported by Unit	Under Reported Delayed Mailpieces
Essex	June 22, 2021	197,107	121,000	76,107
Clifton East End	June 22, 2021	188,374	15,867	172,507
Dundalk	June 24, 2021	163,810	0	163,810
Druid	June 24, 2021	159,095	31,321	127,774
Carroll	June 24, 2021	144,940	21,453	123,487
Parkville	June 23, 2021	84,969	0	84,969
Middle River	June 22, 2021	22,347	9,676	12,671
Rosedale	June 23, 2021	10,169	0	10,169
Loch Raven	June 23, 2021	1,646	1,500	146
Total		972,457	200,817	771,640

Source: OIG analysis of reported mail data from CSDRS and OIG observations.

Managers are required²² to report all mail in CSDRS that remains in a unit after the carriers have left the unit to begin their street duties. However, unit management did not always monitor and follow-up to ensure the data was

²² Customer Service Daily Reporting System, Guidelines and Definitions, September 2016.

²³ A scan event that indicates the Postal Service has completed its commitment to deliver or attempt to deliver the mail piece. Examples of STC scans include "Delivered", "Available for Pick-up", "No Access", and "Business Closed".

entered into CSDRS accurately. In addition, management at some units were not aware they should be entering all accumulated delayed mail daily. Instead, they were only entering delayed mail for the current day.

Inaccurate reporting of delayed mail in CSDRS provides management at the local, district, area, and headquarters levels with an inaccurate status of mail delays. This lack of visibility into unit conditions inhibits management's ability to take necessary actions to address mail processing and delivery issues.

Recommendation #5

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, develop and implement a plan to ensure all delayed mail is reported daily in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System and monitor for accuracy. This plan should include providing training to the employees responsible for reporting delayed mail.

Recommendation #6

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, develop a list of at-risk units and require them to use available technology to provide pictures or video to support the accuracy of delayed mail reported in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System.

Finding #3: Improper Scanning

Employees improperly scanned 172 of 409 (42 percent) packages sampled at the nine units. We judgmentally selected and reviewed scan information for 210 packages found at carrier cases and 199 packages found in the "Notice Left" areas (see Appendix C for individual unit details).

Of the 409 packages we reviewed, 172 were missing a "Stop-the-Clock" (STC)²³ scan, had improper scans, or were improperly scanned at a location other than the delivery point. Specifically:

- Sixty-six packages had an STC scan at a location other than the delivery point. All package delivery attempts should be made at the delivery point.

- Fifty-five packages were missing an STC scan to let the customer know the reason for non-delivery.
- Forty-six packages were scanned “Delivered”. A “Delivered” scan should only be made when a carrier successfully leaves a package at the delivery address.
- Three packages did not have an “Arrival at Unit” (AAU) scan,²⁴ which is a required scan for performance measurement.
- Two packages were scanned “Held at Post Office at Customers Request” in error.

Further, we observed that 77 of the 199 packages (76 domestic and one international) in the “Notice Left” areas were past the date that they should have been returned to sender.²⁵ These packages ranged from four to 472 days past their return dates. The Postal Service’s goal is to ensure proper delivery attempts for mailpieces to the correct address with proper service,²⁶ which includes scanning packages at the time and location of delivery.²⁷ These package scanning issues occurred because management did not adequately monitor scan performance or packages retained at the unit.

Customers rely on accurate scan data to track their packages in real time. When employees do not scan mailpieces correctly, customers are unable to determine the actual status of their packages. By improving scanning operations, management can potentially improve mail visibility, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance the customer experience and Postal Service brand.

Recommendation #7

We recommend the **District Manager, Maryland District**, develop and implement a plan to monitor and ensure compliance with package scanning and handling procedures.

²⁴ Clerks perform an AAU scan when packages arrive at the delivery unit.

²⁵ *Notice Left and Return Guidelines*, dated July 2007, states that domestic packages should be returned to sender on the 15th calendar day after a notice is left and international packages should be returned to sender on the 30th calendar day after a notice is left.

²⁶ *Delivery Done Right the First Time* stand-up talk, March 2020.

²⁷ *Carriers Delivering the Customer Experience* stand-up talk, July 2017.

Management’s Comments

Management agreed with all findings and recommendations in the report. See [Appendix D](#) for management’s comments in their entirety.

Regarding recommendation 1, management stated that they will hold weekly attendance control telecons with the Attendance Control Officer and Baltimore Post Office management. During these telecons, they will discuss zero work hours; employees on the rolls, but not available; removals; and separations. In addition, management will hold weekly complement telecons to discuss removals and approved staffing at the individual unit level. Management’s target implementation date is November 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 2, management stated that the city of Baltimore has a Complement Coordinator who works with the lead Manager Customer Service Operations (MCSO) of Baltimore to handle future career carriers who have expressed thoughts of resignation. They will conduct one on one interviews with those employees to determine what factors led them to the decision and what potential changes could be made for the employee to stay with the company. In addition, management will hold weekly complement telecons to review and discuss staffing and ensure hiring is approved through weekly calls with Headquarters Human Resources. Management’s target implementation date is November 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 3, management stated that the Maryland District Manager, Human Resources Manager, and Manager of Employee Development will coordinate opening another city carrier training academy. Management’s target implementation date is November 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 4, management stated that daily district-wide telecons will be hosted by the Operations Integration Manager where key metrics for the entire district will be discussed. During these telecons, action plans will be developed and implemented to include moving resources where needed. The

Baltimore Postmaster will review staffing variances weekly for the city and ask for assistance for units falling below the threshold to ensure service to customers. Management's target implementation date is November 30, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 5, management stated that MCSOs will be responsible for monitoring and validating CSDRS data for their area of responsibility. Once the entries are validated, the information will be reported up to the Baltimore Postmaster and lead MCSO. In addition, there will be district wide training for station management teams to include reporting delayed mail in CSDRS. Management's target implementation date is November 19, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 6, management stated that there is a Service Performance Task Force that includes Maryland district management as well as members of four Postal Service unions. This task force visits at-risk units in the city to conduct audits on delivery, delayed mail, customer service, and retail operations. In addition, the Supervisor Customer Service Support and MCSO will require daily audio-visual evidence of the delayed mail reported in CSDRS, to ensure accuracy. This evidence will be provided to the Baltimore Postmaster and Maryland District Manager. Management's target implementation date is November 19, 2021.

Regarding recommendation 7, management stated that directives have been sent to the Baltimore Postmaster to conduct deep dives into various types of scanning activity. Once the deep dives are conducted, the station managers are to report non-compliance with package scanning and handling procedures. The Baltimore Postmaster will follow up to ensure the directives are being followed. Management's target implementation date is November 19, 2021.

Evaluation of Management's Comments

The OIG considers management's comments responsive to the recommendations in the report.

All recommendations require OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when actions are completed and supporting documentation for those actions upon completion. Recommendations should not be closed in the Postal Service's follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

Appendices

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Appendix A: Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact (in millions)
<i>Mail Delivery and Retail Services - [Redacted] Branch, [Redacted], MD.</i>	Assess mail delivery and retail services at a branch in MD.	DRT-AR-19-019	9/10/2019	None

Appendix B: Monthly Service Performance Scores

Table 9. Baltimore District Average Monthly Service Performance Scores

We reviewed the average monthly service performance scores for seven products for 21 months from October 2019 through June 2021 and found that the district only met the target for two products. They met the goal for Priority Air/Surface for one month and Parcel Select for 12 months.

Month	First Class Composite	Marketing Mail End to End	Periodicals Composite End to End	Priority Express	First Class Package Composite	Priority Air/Surface	Parcel Select
Target	96.00%	91.80%	91.80%	96.85%	94.80%	94.80%	99.80%
Oct-19	92.28%	56.32%	74.87%	92.42%	93.24%	94.83%	99.94%
Nov-19	90.93%	53.31%	71.58%	90.24%	91.29%	91.85%	99.86%
Dec-19	84.55%	44.30%	69.63%	82.65%	83.35%	91.39%	99.84%
Jan-20	87.33%	44.20%	79.56%	91.48%	89.78%	92.15%	99.86%
Feb-20	91.15%	69.08%	83.90%	92.30%	93.40%	94.54%	99.89%
Mar-20	90.74%	70.46%	81.40%	93.94%	91.51%	94.24%	99.89%
Apr-20	89.13%	65.48%	70.19%	92.35%	84.13%	85.39%	99.72%
May-20	84.53%	61.43%	52.13%	88.43%	82.63%	80.75%	99.87%
Jun-20	83.29%	61.36%	62.56%	89.86%	84.64%	81.39%	99.82%
Jul-20	82.48%	59.92%	62.69%	89.41%	86.75%	85.03%	99.74%
Aug-20	65.32%	50.54%	42.17%	86.41%	68.30%	67.37%	99.50%
Sep-20	60.07%	52.76%	48.24%	86.30%	75.83%	73.53%	99.74%
Oct-20	64.47%	59.54%	50.39%	90.11%	83.94%	81.34%	99.80%
Nov-20	73.93%	62.01%	49.75%	87.92%	86.48%	84.69%	99.81%
Dec-20	47.37%	48.19%	33.83%	52.64%	38.54%	32.12%	99.82%
Jan-21	32.54%	13.88%	20.27%	75.98%	43.68%	34.05%	99.79%
Feb-21	37.71%	23.71%	34.92%	64.47%	64.33%	57.79%	99.78%
Mar-21	64.46%	48.67%	43.14%	79.76%	72.69%	65.00%	99.84%
Apr-21	63.33%	49.78%	37.98%	72.08%	65.99%	58.68%	99.67%
May-21	65.53%	45.94%	41.19%	74.18%	73.10%	65.11%	99.75%
Jun-21	77.82%	55.21%	36.30%	87.60%	81.90%	78.22%	99.71%

Source: OIG analysis of Informed Visibility data.

Appendix C: Improper Scanning by Unit

Table 10. Carrier Case Packages with Scanning Errors

Unit	Packages Selected for Review	Scanned Delivered	Missing STC Scan	Not Scanned at Delivery Point	Missing AAU Scan	Incorrectly Scanned "Held at Post Office at Customers Request"	Total Errors
Carroll	28	6	8	10	0	0	24
Druid	21	3	5	12	0	0	20
Middle River	30	2	3	8	0	0	13
Loch Raven	28	3	3	7	0	0	13
Essex	14	4	1	6	0	0	11
Dundalk	30	0	8	1	1	0	10
Parkville	14	4	4	0	0	0	8
Clifton East End	15	0	2	0	0	2	4
Rosedale	30	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total	210	22	37	44	1	2	106

Source: OIG observations and analysis.

Table 11. "Notice Left" Packages with Scanning Errors

Unit	Packages Selected for Review	Scanned Delivered	Missing STC Scan	Not Scanned at Delivery Point	Missing AAU Scan	Total Errors
Essex	28	7	5	1	0	13
Clifton East End	30	3	0	0	1	4
Dundalk	1	0	1	0	0	1
Druid	30	9	4	6	0	19
Carroll	10	2	2	1	0	5
Parkville	28	1	2	4	0	7
Middle River	30	1	1	3	0	5
Rosedale	12	0	0	0	1	1
Loch Raven	30	1	3	7	0	11
Total	199	24	18	22	2	66

Source: OIG observations and analysis.

Appendix D: Management's Comments

DISTRICT MANAGER
MARYLAND DISTRICT



October 27, 2021

JOSEPH WOLSKI
DIRECTOR, AUDIT OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Mail Delivery and Customer Service Operations – Select Baltimore Units,
Baltimore, MD (Project Number 21-194-DRAFT)

Thank you to you and the team for providing a critical review of mail delivery and customer service operations at select units in the Baltimore, MD region, and for providing your findings presented in your October 6, 2021 Draft Report.

I can assure you that exceptional service to our customers is my top priority. I will ensure the listed units continue to have a higher level of oversight by executive leadership, to make certain continuous improvements are made and all deficiencies are abated. I am implementing district wide training for station management teams to boost knowledge and skills on key items. Management does agree with the findings.

Our responses to the Recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation #1:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, develop and implement a process to ensure managers at units in Baltimore complete the removal process for part-time city carriers that are no longer employed and identify part-time city carriers who should be taken off the rolls.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with the recommendation.

The District Manager holds weekly attendance control telecons with Attendance Control Officer, PCES Postmaster, POOMS, and local level Post office management. On this telecon we discuss zero work hours, ORNA, removals/separations. Weekly complement telecons have been implemented to review, discuss removals and approved staffing at the individual unit level.

Target Implementation Date: November 30, 2021

Responsible Official: Baltimore Postmaster & Attendance Ambassador

Recommendation #2:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, develop and implement a plan to hire and retain enough carriers to consistently reach and maintain authorized complement.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with the recommendation. Complement is a key component to daily operations. The City of Baltimore (POOM A) has a Complement Coordinator, who works with the Lead MCSO of Baltimore handling future career carriers that have expressed thoughts of resignation. We conduct one on one interviews with those employees to determine what factors led them to the decision and what potential changes could be made for the employee to stay with the company. Weekly complement telecons have been implemented to review, discuss staffing and ensure hiring is approved through weekly calls with Headquarters Human Resources and individual drill down for the need at local unit level.

Target Implementation Date: November 30, 2021

Responsible Official: Complement Coordinator POOM A & Lead MSCO

Recommendation #3:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, open another city carrier training academy to efficiently train new carriers as they are hired.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with the recommendation.

District Manager, District Human Resources Manager and Manager of Employee Development will coordinate opening another city carrier training academy. The timeframe from onboarding employees to them attending city carrier training academy is an issue within the city.

Target Implementation Date: November 30, 2021

Responsible Official: District Manager & District Human Resources Manager

Recommendation #4:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, develop and implement a plan to analyze available data and establish thresholds for key metrics to determine when the Baltimore postmaster should request additional resources from outside the Baltimore region to help deliver mail.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Daily district wide telecoms are held and hosted by Manager Operations Integration where key metrics for the entire district are discussed and action plans are developed and implemented to include moving resources where needed.

The Baltimore Postmaster will review staffing variances weekly for the city and will ask for assistance for units falling below the threshold to ensure service to customers.

Target Implementation Date: November 30, 2021

Responsible Official: Baltimore Postmaster, Manager Operations Integration

Recommendation #5:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, develop and implement a plan to ensure all delayed mail is reported daily in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System and monitor for accuracy. This plan should include providing training to the employees responsible for reporting delayed mail.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Managers of Customer Service Operations (MCSO) will be responsible for monitoring and validating Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS) for their area of responsibility. Once the entries are validated, the information will be reported up to Postmaster and Lead Manager of Customer Service Operations (MCSO), who in turn reports information to the Postmaster.

There will be district wide training for station management teams to include reporting delayed mail in Customer Service Daily Reporting System (CSDRS).

Target Implementation Date: November 19, 2021

Responsible Official: Managers of Customer Service Operations (MCSO)

Recommendation #6:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, develop a list of at-risk units and require them to use available technology to provide pictures or video to support the accuracy of delayed mail reported in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System.

Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

There is a Service Performance Task Force that includes the District Manager, Postmaster, Retail Subject Matter Expert, Delivery Subject Matter Expert and District Customer Relations Coordinator. Members of the following local unions branches as well American Postal Workers Union (APWU), National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), National Rural Letter Carrier Association (NRLCA) United Postmasters and Managers Association (UMPA). The Service Performance Task Force visits at risk units within the city to conduct audits on delivery, delayed mail, customer service and retail operations.

An addition to these Task Force audits, the Supervisor Customer Service Support and Manager Customer Service Operation (MCSO) will require daily audio-visual evidence of the delayed mail reported in the Customer Service Daily Reporting System to ensure accuracy. They will then filter information up to Postmaster, who will in turn report out to the District Manager.

Target Implementation Date: November 19, 2021

Responsible Official: District Manager

Recommendation #7:

We recommend the District Manager, Maryland District, develop and implement a plan to monitor and ensure compliance with package scanning and handling procedures.

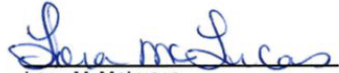
Management Response/Action Plan:

Management agrees with this recommendation.

Directives have been sent to the Postmaster to conduct deep dives into AAU No STC, Parcel Select, No Access Scans, Failed First Attempts and Sampling. Once deep dives are conducted the station managers are to report out on non-compliance with package scanning and handling procedures. The Postmaster will follow up to ensure the directives are being followed.

Target Implementation Date: November 19, 2021

Responsible Official: District Manager



LORA M. MCLUCAS
DISTRICT MANAGER MARYLAND DISTRICT

cc: Postmaster General
Delivery Operations Vice President
Area Retail & Delivery Operations Atlantic Vice President
Corporate Audit Response Management

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