

Operational and Financial Performance Across Postal Service Regions

AUDIT REPORT

Report Number 25-091-R26 | July 27, 2026



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Highlights

Background

The U.S. Postal Service is undergoing a significant transformation to modernize its network and operations as part of the Delivering for America plan. We have noted variations in impacts to communities across the country, even when the changes themselves have been similar. Differences in workplace culture may help explain regional variations in operational efficiency and service experienced throughout this transformation. As labor makes up 76 percent of the Postal Service's \$89.5 billion annual expenses, the workforce is critical to its modernization success.

What We Did

Our objective was to evaluate operational culture and key performance indicators in places where the performance was varied. We judgmentally selected five low-performing and five high-performing districts for review and conducted site visits and interviews with personnel at facilities in each of these districts.

What We Found

A resilient and engaged workforce is essential for the Postal Service to carry out its Delivering for America plan and achieve long-term goals. However, the Postal Service has faced workforce and culture challenges for years at low-performing sites that have consistently struggled with employee satisfaction, engagement, attendance, and retention; and costly union grievances. We also identified several ineffective management practices that negatively affected workplace culture and performance, such as non-value-added tasks and inadequate operational oversight.

Although these issues occurred across all facilities, they were more severe at low-performing sites, widening regional operational and financial gaps and slowing the Postal Service's progress. We estimate the Postal Service incurred nearly \$437 million in annual questioned costs due to facilities operating below the national efficiency average. However, we identified best practices used at high-performing sites, that, if adopted, could improve leadership effectiveness, employee morale and engagement, and operational performance.

Recommendations and Management's Comments

We made two recommendations to address the issues identified in the report, and Postal Service management disagreed with both. We will pursue the two disagreed recommendations through the audit resolution process. Management's comments and our evaluation are at the end of our recommendations. See [Appendix D](#) for management's comments in their entirety.

Transmittal Letter



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

July 27, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR: ISAAC CRONKHITE
CHIEF PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OFFICER and
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

ELVIN MERCADO
CHIEF RETAIL and DELIVERY OFFICER and
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

PETER ROUTSOLIAS
CHIEF LOGISTICS OFFICER and EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Mary H. Lloyd

FROM: Mary Lloyd
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Operations, Performance & Services

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Operational and Financial Performance Across Postal
Service Regions (Report Number 25-091-R26)

This report presents the results of our audit of Operational and Financial Performance Across Postal Service Regions.

All recommendations require U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General's (OIG) concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. All 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.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesy provided by your staff. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Todd Watson, Director, Network Operations, or me at 703-248-2100.

Attachment

cc: Postmaster General
Corporate Audit Response Management

Results

Introduction/Objective

This report presents the results of our self-initiated audit of the financial and operational performance across U.S. Postal Service regions (Project Number 25-091). Our objective was to evaluate operational culture and key performance indicators. See [Appendix A](#) for additional information about this audit.

Background

The Postal Service is a vital component of the nation's infrastructure, providing universal mail and package delivery services to every U.S. address — urban and rural — at affordable rates. This Universal Service Obligation requires the Postal Service to continuously expand its delivery network to accommodate population and economic growth, which has resulted in the addition of over one million new addresses annually. In fiscal year (FY) 2025, the Postal Service processed approximately 108.7 billion mailpieces, moving nearly 330 million pieces of mail and packages each day through a nationwide logistics network that serves more than 170 million delivery addresses. Its ability to meet service standards directly affects millions of customers and supports the nation's commerce.

Since FY 2012, the Postal Service has faced mounting difficulties in consistently meeting its service goals and being financially self-sustaining. These challenges, which may impact certain locations more than others, include:

- **Negative culture and ineffective management:** A workplace culture characterized by poor communication, lack of support, and ineffective management styles that has sometimes demotivated the workforce and hindered performance.
- **Declining mail volume:** The long-term decline in First-Class Mail has affected revenue and

economies of scale, making it harder to maintain service levels.

- **Growing package volumes:** Increased e-commerce has driven up package deliveries, straining a system originally optimized for letter mail.
- **Increase in severe weather events and natural disasters:** Floods, hurricanes, and wildfires have caused temporary shutdowns and delivery disruptions.
- **Crime:** Some facilities are impacted by local crimes that can affect employee morale or cause disruptions in their area.

To address many of these challenges, the Postal Service launched its 10-year transformation strategy — Delivering for America (DFA) — in 2021. This plan outlines various initiatives aimed at restoring service excellence and achieving financial sustainability. The plan also called for large scale changes to its organizational structure and operating fundamentals to address the following internal challenges:

- **Network consolidation and restructuring:** The Postal Service implemented facility closures and processing center consolidations to reduce costs, which often led to longer mail transit times and disrupted service performance.
- **Aging infrastructure and equipment:** Many facilities still rely on outdated machinery and technology, leading to inefficiencies in mail sorting and tracking.

“In FY 2025, the Postal Service processed approximately 108.7 billion mailpieces, moving nearly 330 million pieces of mail and packages each day.”

■ **Labor shortages and scheduling issues:**

Workforce reductions, coupled with inconsistent staffing and scheduling practices, have impaired the Postal Service's ability to meet delivery schedules.

■ **Policy changes and funding constraints:**

Congressional mandates, including the prefunding of retiree health benefits, have limited the Postal Service's financial flexibility, while regulatory changes can alter service expectations.

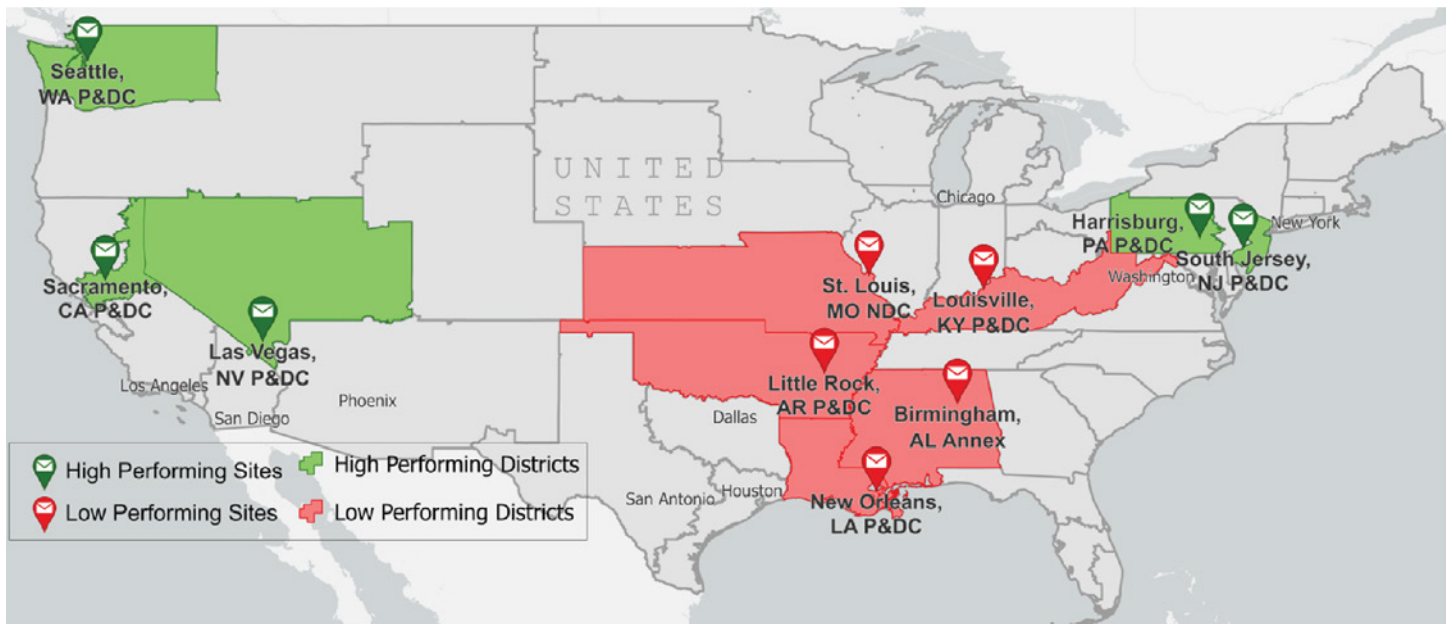
Workplace culture plays a critical role in the Postal Service's ability to implement change. It is also central to improving overall performance and efficiency, especially given that labor accounts for 76.4 percent of the Postal Service's \$89.5 billion in annual expenses.¹ A resilient and engaged workforce is foundational to implementing change and sustaining strong operational performance and reliable service. When employees feel supported, connected, and empowered, they are more likely to take ownership of daily operations, sustain high morale, and contribute to a stable workplace culture. Strong engagement reduces burnout, improves retention, and fosters accountability

—conditions essential for consistently meeting service expectations.

Operational efficiency and service performance vary by region across the Postal Service. To better understand the workplace culture and its relationship to key performance indicators, we judgmentally selected five low-performing and five high-performing districts based on revenue, costs, and operational performance. Within each district, we identified the lowest- and highest-performing processing facilities meeting a defined mail volume threshold and conducted observations and interviews (see Figure 1). We also judgmentally selected delivery units serviced by those processing facilities for additional observation and review.

“Workplace culture plays a critical role in the Postal Service's ability to implement change.”

Figure 1. Selected Processing Facilities, FY 2025



Source: U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of data obtained from Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW).

¹ These are the FY 2024 expenses.

The Postal Service has separate organizational structures and borders between their core functions: retail, delivery, mail processing, and logistics. Management of retail and delivery operations is structured around 50 different districts that are designed to align with state boundaries. Management of mail processing and logistics operations is structured around 17 divisions that span across the country. For the purposes of this report, we included mail processing facilities and data into the retail and delivery districts for which they are geographically located to evaluate workplace culture across the Postal Service's core functions. While each function has its own specific challenges, the overall workplace culture affects everyone and influences how the entire Postal Service operates. See [Appendix B](#) for full list of site locations observed.

Prior oversight² has shown that persistent performance challenges are not limited to a small number of locations but reflect broader issues across the Postal Service's processing network. For example, we found in our prior report assessing historically low-performing facilities that these facilities consistently struggled with service performance and productivity due to factors such as staffing shortages, management turnover, inconsistent training, inefficient workflows, and operational oversight challenges. Our report concluded that several mail processing facilities had been operating below optimal efficiency for years, demonstrating that long-standing operational and management issues can allow performance gaps to persist across multiple facilities in the network.

“Across the sites we reviewed, low-performing districts faced significant workforce, cultural, and leadership challenges.”

Findings Summary

Across the sites we reviewed, low-performing districts faced significant workforce, cultural, and leadership challenges that directly contributed to operational inefficiency and higher costs. These sites experienced lower employee satisfaction and engagement, higher turnover, strained union relationships, and widespread issues with overtime assignment and grievance management. Ineffective supervisory practices — including limited floor

presence, poor communication, heavy involvement in non-value-added tasks, and frequent leadership turnover — further weakened accountability and slowed responses to operational challenges. As a result, low-performing sites operated well below national processing efficiency averages, relied more heavily on overtime, and consistently missed key transportation and service performance metrics. Although culture challenges were not unique to low-performing facilities, generally, the challenges were greater and had a bigger impact than at high-performing facilities. The high-performing sites we reviewed generally demonstrated lasting, strong engagement, stable leadership, and effective operational practices that offer clear best-practice models for improvement.

While this report did not include an extensive review of logistics operations, we included the Chief Logistics Officer in our recommendations as culture spans across all functions and the organization must work together to shift its culture.

² OIG, *Improving Service Performance and Mail Processing Efficiencies at Historically Low Performing Facilities* (Report Number 21-243-R22, dated August 8, 2022).

Finding #1: Workforce and Work Culture Challenges

A resilient workforce and healthy culture are the backbone of any successful organization — and the Postal Service has faced persistent challenges in both in pockets across the country for years. These issues are most pronounced in low-performing districts, which have consistently struggled with employee satisfaction, engagement, attendance, and retention; and costly union grievances. Collectively, these cultural challenges contributed to widening operational and financial performance gaps in certain regions, leading to excessive overtime, inefficient operations, and poor service performance.

Employee Satisfaction and Engagement

Our observations during site visits revealed that employees at low-performing districts appeared to be more disconnected and unengaged compared to employees at sites in the high-performing districts. At one processing and distribution center (P&DC) in a low-performing district visited, we observed employees walking around the facility for extended periods without processing any mail or moving equipment. At another P&DC visited in a low-performing district, the audit team was often unable to identify a supervisor or manager on the work floor of the facility, and employees appeared disengaged and isolated. In contrast, at sites visited in high-

performing districts, we observed more employee-supervisor interactions, and employees responded positively to management and demonstrated higher levels of commitment. When employees are not engaged and satisfied, morale declines and organizational performance suffers, increasing the risk of employee turnover.

“A resilient workforce and healthy culture are the backbone of any successful organization.”

Results from the Postal Service’s annual employee survey showed very low response rates with 8.8 percent of employees at high-performing sites visited and only 4.6 percent of employees at low-performing sites visited responding to the survey (see Table 1). Postal Service employee unions discourage their members from responding to the Postal Pulse employee survey stating, in the past, that management has used the survey as a weapon against them in negotiations and arbitrations. The low response rates may indicate an overall lack of employee engagement, trust, and belief that feedback will lead to meaningful change.

Table 1. Postal Pulse Response Rate for Processing Facilities Visited

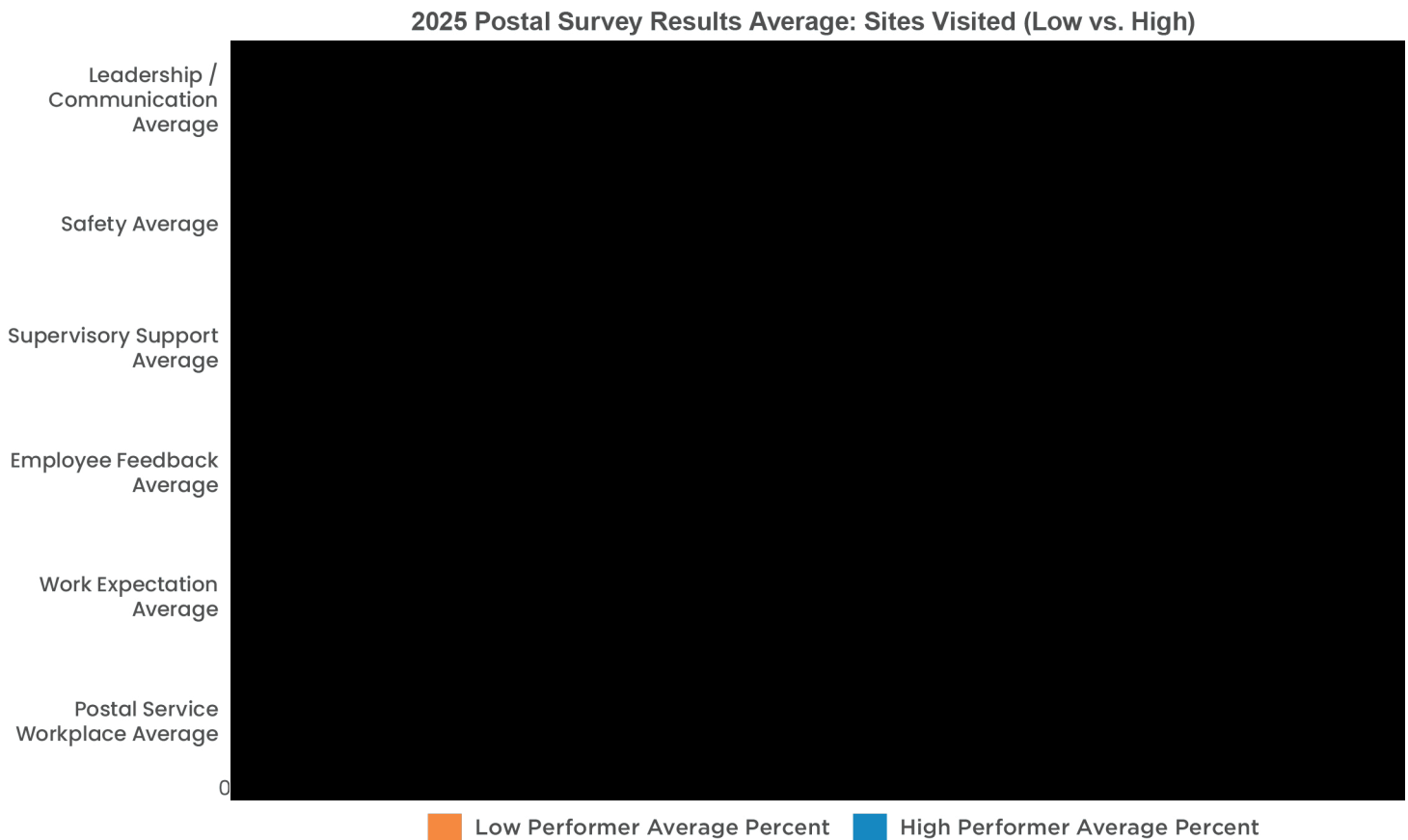
Site	Number of Responses Received	Number of Surveys Sent	Response Rate
Harrisburg, PA P&DC	■	■	■
Las Vegas, NV P&DC	■	■	■
Seattle, WA NDC	■	■	■
Seattle, WA P&DC	■	■	■
Sacramento, CA P&DC	■	■	■
South Jersey, NJ P&DC	■	■	■
High-performing Sites Totals	443	5,030	8.8%
Louisville, KY P&DC	■	■	■
Birmingham, AL Annex	■	■	■
Birmingham, AL P&DC	■	■	■
Little Rock, AR P&DC	■	■	■
Saint Louis, MO NDC	■	■	■
Saint Louis, MO P&DC	■	■	■
New Orleans, LA P&DC	■	■	■
Low-performing Sites Totals	178	3,842	4.6%

Source: OIG analysis of 2025 Postal Pulse Survey data provided by the Postal Service.

While it is difficult to draw conclusions from such a low response rate, based on the employees that did respond to the survey, engagement and satisfaction scores were generally lower at sites we visited in low-performing districts compared to sites visited in high-performing districts. Specifically, the percentage of respondents who agreed or

strongly agreed with positive statements regarding leadership and communication, safety, supervisor support, and overall workplace environment was over 2 to 7 percentage points lower at low-performing sites visited compared to high-performing sites (see Figure 2). Full survey results are provided in [Appendix C](#).

Figure 2. Summary of 2025 Employee Survey Results for Mail Processing Facilities Visited



Source: OIG analysis of 2025 Postal Pulse Survey data provided by the Postal Service.

Employee Availability

Employee availability was an issue at both the high- and low-performing districts we reviewed, making it difficult for the Postal Service to ensure sufficient staffing to sort and deliver mail. The Postal Service measures employee availability by calculating the percentage of employees who report to work compared to those scheduled. In FY 2025, an average of 79 percent of scheduled employees in the low-performing districts reported to work compared to 81 percent in high-performing districts. This was

about 1 percentage point below and above the national average, respectively (see [Table 2](#)).

Employee absences were predominately due to annual leave, sick leave, absence without leave, and leave without pay. When scheduled employees do not report to work, management must constantly move staff across operations to maintain coverage and ensure operations are completed, which disrupts workflow and reduces efficiency.

Table 2. Employee Availability by Districts Visited

Site Visit Location	Employee Availability Percent	Sick Leave Percent	Absent Without Leave Percent	Leave Without Pay Percent
California 2	81.0%	5.8%	0.7%	5.0%
New Jersey	80.2%	5.9%	1.0%	6.9%
Nevada-Utah	81.2%	5.8%	0.3%	6.2%
Pennsylvania 1	81.9%	5.4%	0.7%	6.2%
Washington	83.8%	5.3%	0.4%	3.7%
High-performing Sites	81.4%	5.7%	0.7%	5.8%
Alabama-Mississippi	79.1%	6.1%	1.5%	7.1%
Arkansas-Oklahoma	81.4%	5.9%	0.4%	4.8%
Kansas-Missouri	78.8%	6.1%	1.2%	8.7%
Kentucky-West Virginia	80.4%	6.0%	0.8%	6.6%
Louisiana	75.9%	6.4%	3.5%	7.6%
Low-performing Sites	79.2%	6.1%	1.4%	7.2%
National	80.0%	6.0%	1.3%	6.3%

Source: OIG analysis of Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) data.

Note: Table includes data for all retail and delivery, mail processing, and logistics personnel geographically located in respective districts.

Employee Turnover

Employee turnover was higher in the low-performing districts visited, making it difficult for the Postal Service to maintain a stable workforce to sort and deliver mail. In FY 2025, an average of 14 percent of employees in the low-performing districts visited left the Postal Service. This was 3 percentage points greater than in the high-performing districts (see [Table 3](#)).

When employees leave, the Postal Service loses valuable experience and must spend additional time and resources hiring and training replacements. Higher turnover also places a greater strain on remaining employees. Over time, turnover undermines workforce continuity and makes it more challenging to sustain consistent service and productivity.

“When employees leave, the Postal Service loses valuable experience and must spend additional time and resources hiring and training replacements.”

The Postal Service has historically faced challenges with retaining employees and hiring, taking an average of 32 days to fill a position.³ An extended hiring timeline can delay the onboarding of new personnel and increase workload pressures on existing staff, which may contribute to higher turnover.

³ OIG, *Postal Service Hiring Practices* (Report Number 23-045-R24, dated April 24, 2024).

Table 3. Employee Turnover by Low- and High-performing Districts Reviewed

Selected Districts	FY 2025 Resignations	Total Complement Count FY25	Turnover Rate
Low-performing Districts	8,947	65,917	14%
High-performing Districts	6,740	63,881	11%
Percentage Point Difference			3%
Percent Difference	25%	3%	22%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained from EDW.

Note: Data includes retail and delivery districts and mail processing facilities visited.

Grievances and Union Relationships

We observed notable differences in labor-management relations across sites visited. Sites visited in high-performing districts reported stronger relationships with local unions, which enabled more informal and cost-effective grievance⁴ resolutions. Although the sites visited in high-performing districts paid more grievances overall, the total payouts were 10 percent lower, and the average cost per payout was 27 percent less than sites visited in the low-performing districts. This reduction is largely attributable to proactive engagement and greater use of informal settlements, with the high-performing district sites resolving 44 percent of

“Sites visited in high performing districts reported stronger relationships with local unions, which enabled more informal and cost-effective grievance resolutions.”

grievances informally — 20 percent higher than in low-performing district sites. Informal settlements consistently resulted in the lowest average cost per grievance (see Table 4).

Table 4. FY 2025 Grievances at High-performing Sites Mail Processing Facilities Compared to Low-performing Sites Mail Processing Facilities Visited

Descriptions	Total Grievances Paid	Total Payments	Cost Per Grievance Paid	Settled Informally*
Low-performing Sites	21,226	\$22,505,462	\$1,060	24%
High-performing Sites	26,092	\$20,299,210	\$778	44%
Percent Difference	19%	-11%	-27%	
Difference	4,866	(\$2,206,252)	(\$282.29)	20%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained through the Grievance Arbitration Tracking System (GATS).

*Rounded to nearest percent.

Additionally, our review of grievances in the high- and low-performing districts identified concerning nationwide trends that reflect strained relationships between the Postal Service and unions in certain locations. The Postal Service lacks sufficient controls to identify and remedy locations with high rates of grievance filings or to prevent unnecessary

grievance-related payouts. Most grievances stemmed from preventable issues such as improper overtime assignments. In FY 2025 alone, the Postal Service paid more than \$26 million due to managers not assigning overtime based on the overtime desired lists⁵ or failing to distribute overtime equitably⁶ (see Table 5).

⁴ A grievance is a dispute, difference, disagreement, or complaint between management and an employee related to wages, hours, and conditions of employment.

⁵ Employees who desire to work overtime add their name to a list used to develop overtime assignments.

⁶ Agreements with the unions established that when overtime is available it will be given to eligible employees on an equitable basis.

Table 5. FY 2025 Grievances Related to Overtime

Grievance Descriptions	Total Grievances Paid	Total Payments
Employees Not on Overtime List	30,658	\$14,622,272.85
Equitable Distribution of Overtime ⁷	12,203	\$11,876,900.93
Local Memorandum of Understanding – Overtime by Section and/or Tour ⁸	12,164	\$6,048,648.72
Totals	55,025	\$32,547,822.50

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained through the GATS.

“About 2 percent of the filers accounted for nearly 28 percent of total grievances and 21 percent of total grievance payouts.”

Further, a large portion of paid grievances were filed by a relatively small number of employees. Specifically, about 2 percent of the filers accounted for nearly 28 percent of total grievances and 21 percent of total grievance payouts (see Table 6). This included 56 employees who were awarded, on average, at least one grievance per working day, and one employee who received over 1,200 grievance awards in FY 2025.

In FY 2025, 70 of the 216 top filers (32 percent) spent most of their workhours on steward or union duties, totaling 107,779 of 145,600 hours (74 percent), averaging about six hours a day. These same individuals also logged 19,747 overtime hours. Additionally, two employees spent about 100 percent of their workhours on steward or union duties, and each charged over 1,000 overtime hours in FY 2025.⁹

Management at a delivery unit in a low-performing district reported that one mail carrier dedicated nearly all workhours to union grievance activity. As a result, this person only carried mail, their assigned job, for two weeks during the prior year.

Table 6. FY 2025 Grievances Paid

	Total Grievances Paid	Total Payouts	Filers
All Filers	204,593	\$ 200,802,472.15	11,318
Top Filers	57,123	\$ 41,696,294.23	248
Percent	27.9%	20.8%	2.2%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained through GATS.

Postal Service policy requires management to ensure fair and consistent overtime distribution in accordance with collective bargaining agreements, including adherence to overtime desired lists and equitable assignment practices.¹⁰ The Postal Service allows employees designated as union stewards time to research and file grievances but the amount of time must be approved by a manager as long as it is reasonable. However, management stated that there is no definition of what is reasonable outlined in the union agreements. Union stewards have the right to review records and other documentation, and the Postal Service pays their salary for time spent handling grievances, including investigation and meetings with the employer, provided the activity occurs during the steward's regular workday.¹¹

The current process for assigning overtime is not fully automated and prone to errors. When management determines overtime is needed to ensure operations are completed and mail is sorted and delivered, it must offer overtime using a list of employees who desire overtime. When management does not follow the list or offer the overtime to the correct employees, unions may file grievances on behalf of affected employees, and the Postal Service will have to pay the equivalent overtime. Constructive labor-

⁷ This relates to management not assigning overtime in a way that equally distributes it based on the overtime desired list.

⁸ Some locations have a local agreement with their union, which can establish rules that differ from the national agreements.

⁹ Out of the 248 top filers, we were able to identify workhours for 216.

¹⁰ APWU-USPS National Agreement, Article 8, pgs. 24-29; NALC-USPS National Agreement, Article 8, pgs.18-24; NPMHU-USPS National Agreement, Article 8, pgs.17-22.

¹¹ APWU-USPS National Agreement, Article 17, pgs. 105-112; NALC-USPS National Agreement, Article 17, pgs.79-85; NPMHU-USPS National Agreement, Article 17, pgs.102-105.

management relationships reduce such grievances and improve operational efficiency.

A sustained lack of employee engagement and morale reduces workforce motivation, increases burnout, and contributes to elevated turnover.

High turnover and inconsistent employee availability create staffing gaps, which drive heavier workloads, operational delays, and reduced service performance. At the same time, unresolved grievances and strained union relationships undermine trust between labor and management,

reducing opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Collectively, these conditions weaken organizational culture, increase operational risk, elevate costs associated with hiring and training, and diminish the overall effectiveness and reliability of Postal Service operations.

To address these issues, we make our recommendations after [Finding 3](#) of this report.

Finding #2: Ineffective Management Practices

We identified several ineffective management practices that may have negatively impacted work culture as well as operational and financial performance. Specifically, management did not consistently engage employees, oversee operations, or respond timely to emerging challenges. Additionally, many locations experienced high rates of management turnover, and supervisors spent significant time on non-value-added tasks.

Frontline managers are the critical link between organizational strategy and day-to-day execution. They set expectations, drive performance, foster engagement, and build trust to help the organization meet its goals. Ineffective management practices were most common in the low-performing districts, which have become trapped in a cycle of inefficiency, management instability, and poor workplace culture.

Inadequate Communication and Supervisor Oversight

Managers at the sites visited in low-performing districts did not consistently engage employees, communicate the importance of objectives and processes, or maintain an active presence during operations. For example, while walking the floor at a P&DC visited in a low-performing district, auditors observed one manager on the floor and no supervisors. Similarly, during the visit to another P&DC in a low-performing district, auditors observed a lack of managers and supervisors on the work floor.

When managers at sites visited in low-performing districts met with employees, it tended to be in large group settings where information was shared, but employees did not have opportunities to ask questions or provide feedback. Management at one P&DC visited in a low-performing district reported it did not meet with clerks and mail handlers often except to communicate issues.

Employees in the low-performing districts we visited reported insufficient one-on-one guidance and a lack of context for operational directives, noting that management focused solely on pushing mail rather than explaining processes or objectives. At a P&DC visited in a low-performing district,

management reported a generational divide between older and younger workers that made it challenging to manage people in their facilities. It cited that it was harder to teach younger employees work ethic because they had different expectations about work compared to the older employees, and they often viewed their positions as jobs

rather than long-term careers. While generational differences may be a contributing factor, auditors were unable to identify a manager or supervisor on the floor during much of the visit, suggesting the lack of oversight also contributed to engagement issues.

Non-Value-Added Tasks

During our observations, we noted managers spent several hours on non-value-added tasks rather than directly overseeing employees and operations on the floor. This included spending hours in district, local, and other teleconferences discussing the prior day's operations and challenges, counting containers of mail, and dedicating their supervisor's time solely to reviewing and processing grievances. For example:

- At a processing facility in a low-performing district, frontline managers were required to physically count the number of mail containers awaiting sortation each hour, despite the Postal Service having systems capable of providing near real-time volume data. Managers stated it was hard to properly supervise the work floor while completing counts.
- Two plant managers at separate P&DCs in low-performing districts reported participating in four teleconferences per day. A high-performing P&DC plant manager also stated that he spent a large portion of his time on teleconferences.

“Management did not consistently engage employees, oversee operations, or respond timely to emerging challenges.”

- Some facilities assign one or more employees exclusively to reviewing and processing grievances rather than performing operational work. For example, at one high-performing P&DC visited, an attendance control officer was assigned to review and process grievances, and at another high-performing P&DC, management detailed an experienced employee to review grievances.

Management Turnover and Detail Assignments

Management turnover was higher in the low-performing districts than in the high-performing districts. On average, 15 percent more managers resigned from the Postal Service in FY 2025 in the low-performing districts compared to the high-performing districts we visited (see Table 7).

Table 7. FY 2025 Management Resignations Between Low- and High-performing Districts and Processing Sites Visited

Management Group	Low-performing Districts and Processing Sites	High-performing Districts and Processing Sites	Difference	Percent Difference
Field Managers/Supervisors	53	47	6	11%
Postmasters	17	11	6	35%
Processing Managers/Supervisors	5	6	-1	-20%
Total	75	64	11	15%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained from EDW.

Note: Data includes retail and delivery districts and mail processing facilities visited.

Additionally, three of the five low-performing district facilities visited relied on acting plant managers rather than permanent appointees, while all high-performing facilities had permanent leadership in place. The acting plant manager at one low-performing site reported he was the fourth plant manager the facility has had in recent years. The plant manager role is critical for managing and overseeing the timely processing and dispatch of mail, improving operations, and addressing problems to meet performance goals. When a facility has frequent leadership turnover and relies on temporary managers, it creates workforce instability, weakens trust, and limits supervisory oversight, ultimately affecting operational continuity.

One strategy the Postal Service used to quickly provide leadership support was temporarily detailing

“When a facility has frequent plant leadership turnover and relies on temporary managers, it creates workforce instability, weakens trust, and limits supervisory oversight.”

managers to facilities in need. While this approach provided a stop gap measure for leadership vacancies or needs for additional oversight, it carried significant costs with questionable benefits. Detail assignments resulted in about \$55.5 million in travel expenses in FYs 2024 and 2025, yet lower-performing facilities continued to struggle with operational efficiency and workplace culture (see Table 8).

Table 8. Detail Assignment Costs at Low- and High-performing Locations Visited

Site Visit Location	FY 2024 – FY2025 Expenses	Number of Employees	Percent Expenses	Percent Employees
High-performing Sites	\$762,943	105	29.5%	39.0%
Low-performing Sites	\$1,822,956	164	70.5%	61.0%
Total Site Visit Locations	\$2,585,899	269	100.0%	100.0%
Total Nationwide	\$55,498,547	9,286		
Percent Difference			41.0%	21.9%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained through EDW.

Note: Data includes retail and delivery districts and mail processing facilities visited.

When managers leave, facilities lose leadership and direction, the Postal Service must spend time hiring and training replacements, and employees must adjust to new expectations and management styles. Frequent changes in leadership make it more difficult to achieve efficiency and maintain a consistent workplace culture.

Slow Response to Unique Challenges

Our review found that each Postal Service district faces distinct operational challenges. However, the sites we visited in low-performing districts were often less prepared to plan for and respond quickly to these challenges compared to the high-performing facilities. At the sites we visited in low-performing districts, the Postal Service demonstrated delayed responses to unexpected issues, which were further compounded by persistent, long-standing problems.

For example, in one low-performing P&DC visited, employee availability becomes a recurring challenge during local holidays, often requiring management to reassign staff across operations to maintain mailflow with the expectation of catching up later. During our site visit, we observed little evidence of proactive planning for this predictable annual event, consistent with observations made at this facility

by the OIG earlier in FY 2025.¹² Similarly, in another low-performing district visited, an annex of the P&DC had been processing more packages than it could handle for years. This resulted in frequent congestion, suboptimal mailflow, and operational inefficiency (see Figure 3). Despite this sustained issue, management had been slow to make needed adjustments to reduce the strain on this facility.

Figure 3. Overcrowded Conditions at an Annex in a Low-performing District

Source: OIG photograph taken on August 28, 2025.

¹² OIG, *Network Changes: Local Transportation Optimization in the New Orleans Region* (Report Number 25-057-R25, dated September 9, 2025).

“When supervisors do not communicate clearly or stay involved in day-to-day operations, employees lack the guidance or support they need to work effectively.”

When supervisors do not communicate clearly or stay involved in day-to-day operations, employees lack the guidance or support they need to work

effectively. Time spent on non-value-added tasks reduces managers' presence on the workroom floor, weakening oversight. Frequent management turnover and temporary detail assignments disrupt leadership continuity, causing confusion, inconsistent expectations, and delays in solving operational problems. Slow responses to unique or local challenges further compound these issues, leading to operational delays, reduced productivity, and a workplace that struggles to remain organized and consistently deliver strong performance.

To address these issues, we make our report recommendations after [Finding 3](#) of this report.

Finding #3: Inadequate Operational Performance and Best Practices to Improve

Due in part to their workforce culture challenges and ineffective management practices, the sites visited in low-performing districts were significantly less efficient, incurred higher costs, and struggled to meet key operational metrics. Specifically, these sites were less efficient in sorting mail, relied more heavily on overtime, and did not meet key transportation and service metrics. Conversely, we identified several best practices in high-performing districts that, if adopted by the low-performing districts, could strengthen leadership effectiveness, improve employee morale and engagement, and enhance overall operational performance.

Processing Efficiency

The low-performing districts were less efficient¹³ in several mail processing operations. Sites we visited in low-performing districts operated about 5 to 20 percent below the national average, while the sites

“The Postal Service could have saved 8.7 million workhours, representing about \$437 million in questioned costs for FY 2025.”

visited in high-performing districts operated above the national average for flats and packages (see Table 9). The low-performing district sites used

more workhours per piece of mail sorted than the national average, resulting in increased costs for the Postal Service.

If the low-performing facilities had achieved at least the national average productivity level, we estimated the Postal Service could have saved 8.7 million workhours, representing about \$437 million in questioned costs for FY 2025. While the Postal Service has improved package processing efficiency

over the last few years, these findings show there are additional efficiencies to be achieved, and savings gained at low-performing sites. While it is understood that there are nuances with sites everywhere, there are issues identified throughout this report that can be addressed to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Table 9. FY 2025 Automated Processing Efficiency of Low- vs High-performing Sites by Mail Type

Mail Type	National Average	High-performing Sites Visited	Percent Difference to National Average	Low-performing Sites Visited	Percent Difference to National Average
Letters	6,400	6,042	-6%	6,051	-5%
Flats	1,555	1,638	5%	1,240	-20%
Packages	■	■	■	■	■

Source: OIG analysis of data from Management Operating Data System (MODS) for Labor Distribution Codes 11, 12 and 13.

Overtime Usage

The sites visited in low-performing districts used overtime at a higher rate than the national average. Overtime in these districts accounted for 14 percent

of total workhours, two percentage points higher than the sites visited in high-performing districts (see Table 10). This increased reliance on overtime resulted in increased costs for the Postal Service.

¹³ Processing efficiency is the pieces per hour, based on the total volume, divided by total workhours.

Table 10. Comparison of Overtime Usage at Processing Facilities in High- and Low-performing Districts

	Total Workhours	Total Overtime Workhours	Percent Overtime
High-performing Districts	21,418,276	2,534,684	11.8%
Low-performing Districts	15,993,466	2,240,594	14.0%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained from EDW.

Transportation Metrics

Sites visited in low-performing districts exhibited particularly high rates of late trips, with 33.4 percent in FY 2025, compared to 17.5 percent at high-performing

sites (see Table 11). When transportation does not depart on time, it can lead to increased operational costs and decreased service performance.

Table 11. FY 2025 Trailer Utilization and Late Trips

Site Visit Location	Average Percent Trailer Utilization	Percent Late Trip
Harrisburg, PA	54.0%	21.2%
Las Vegas, NV	45.6%	12.1%
Sacramento, CA	61.1%	17.2%
Seattle, WA	60.1%	19.2%
South Jersey, NJ	53.0%	16.9%
High-performing Sites	55.5%	17.5%
Birmingham, AL	46.7%	34.1%
Little Rock, AR	52.5%	27.2%
Louisville, KY	52.2%	29.3%
New Orleans, LA	56.0%	34.2%
Saint Louis, MO	57.5%	36.7%
Low-performing Sites	53.0%	33.4%
Total	54.4%	24.8%

Source: OIG analysis of Surface Visibility data for FY 2025.

Service Performance

There were significant disparities in on-time performance across the processing facilities we visited. Sites visited in high-performing districts consistently exceeded national averages, while low-performing sites fell short. High-performing district sites visited exceeded national averages by [REDACTED] percent, whereas low-performing district sites visited fell below the national averages by [REDACTED] percent for

Ground Advantage, Priority Mail, First-Class Mail, and Marketing Mail (see Table 12).

“Sites visited in low performing districts exhibited particularly high rates of late trips.”

Table 12. FY 2025 Service Performance for Site Visit Facilities

Site Visit Location	Percent On-Time Mail			
	Ground Advantage	Priority Package	First-Class Mail	Marketing Mail
Nationwide	■	■	86%	94%
Harrisburg, PA	■	■	91%	97%
Las Vegas, NV	■	■	88%	96%
Sacramento, CA	■	■	91%	97%
Seattle, WA	■	■	87%	97%
South Jersey, NJ	■	■	84%	96%
High-performing Sites	■	■	90%	97%
Difference of National Average	■	■	4%	3%
Birmingham, AL	■	■	78%	92%
Little Rock, AR	■	■	78%	90%
Louisville, KY	■	■	75%	93%
New Orleans, LA	■	■	73%	85%
Saint Louis, MO	■	■	66%	77%
Low-performing Sites	■	■	76%	90%
Difference of National Average	■	■	-9%	-3%

Source: OIG analysis of FY 2025 service performance data provided by the Postal Service.

Postal Service Actions and Best Practices

The Postal Service recognizes the importance of maintaining a stable and empowered workforce, and over the past several years has taken actions to improve employee retention and morale. Specifically, the Postal Service developed and required all field managers to complete the Delivering the New Employee Experience training to strengthen onboarding processes for new employees. The Postal Service has also invested money in facility and post office improvements to enhance the physical work environment for employees. Additionally, management is working to improve schedules for newly hired employees by offering days off and reducing mandatory overtime.

While these actions have been implemented nationwide, there are additional actions it can take to improve workplace culture and employee satisfaction in locations with the greatest challenges. We identified several best practices from high-performing districts that, if adopted by low-performing districts, could improve employee

morale, engagement, and operational performance. Specifically:

- Competitions to Drive Performance**
 - The Harrisburg, PA, P&DC reported having performance competitions within tours that results in a “tour champion” who receives a Postal Service cap or T-shirt. Management at the South Jersey, NJ, P&DC previously held competitions in which the machine with the best scores and performance received the “trophy of the night.”
- Emotional Intelligence Training** – At the Sacramento, CA, and Seattle, WA, P&DCs, located within the Pacific Coastal and Northwest Divisions, leadership created its own emotional intelligence and supervisory development curriculum. The program included a series of

“We identified several best practices from high performing districts.”

courses for supervisors — including *Becoming a Supervisor, Cultivating Motivation and Engagement, Emotional Intelligence, Empowering Employees, and Phase 2 Empathy* — designed to strengthen communication, prevent demoralizing interactions, and build essential soft skills that enhance workplace culture.

- **Employee Recognition and Appreciation** – Management at the South Jersey, NJ, P&DC stated it gives gift cards as spot awards for employees. The Seattle, WA, P&DC recognizes employees with good attendance during stand-up talks. At the Las Vegas, NV, P&DC, managers buy food for employees during celebrations like Veteran's Day at their own expense. The Louisville, KY, P&DC recognizes good performance by distributing local P&DC themed shirts and hats.
- **Welcoming Environment** – The Seattle, WA, P&DC creates a welcoming atmosphere from the moment employees walk through the main door of the facility by decorating the entry way (see Figure 4). The Louisville, KY, P&DC has a mural in the employee breakroom to recognize the veterans working in the facility. The South Jersey, NJ, P&DC is well maintained, including clean production areas, restrooms, and break rooms, reflecting pride in the workplace.
- **Prioritizing Engagement With Employees on the Work Floor** – Management at the Sacramento, CA, P&DC stated on most days, meetings are scheduled in the morning hours of the workday to allow the management team to engage employees on the workroom floor throughout the day. Management attributed recent improvements in employee scores on the Postal Pulse Survey to this practice. Management at the Seattle, WA, P&DC stated it prefers being on the floor engaging with employees instead of being in meetings. Similarly, management at the South

Jersey, NJ, P&DC emphasized that consistent interaction with staff is critical for minimizing conflict and enhancing communication.

Figure 4. Entrance Area of the Seattle P&DC



Source: OIG photograph taken at the Seattle, WA, P&DC on November 16, 2025.

“By publicly displaying performance metrics, leadership reinforces accountability, transparency, and real-time awareness of operational goals.”

- **Displaying Operational Performance** – At the Las Vegas, NV, P&DC, service performance and scanning scores were prominently displayed on a large monitor near the employee entrance on the workroom floor (see Figure 5, left photo). The Sacramento, CA, P&DC used live-feed monitors in the management team conference room during daily meetings to provide real-time visibility into the mailflow, identify bottlenecks, and respond promptly to potential emerging issues (see Figure 5, right photos). By publicly displaying performance metrics, leadership reinforces accountability, transparency, and real-time awareness of operational goals. Employees can immediately see how the facility is performing, which helps drive ownership, teamwork, and alignment with service expectations.

Figure 5. Display Showing Performance Scores and Live-Feed Monitors



Source: OIG photos taken at the Las Vegas, NV, P&DC on August 26, 2025, and Sacramento, CA, P&DC on December 3, 2025.

- Communication Strategies** – The Sacramento, CA, P&DC held regular townhalls with employees. During the October 2025 Town Hall, the plant manager emphasized the importance of communication and provided updates on expectations for Peak Season, including for overtime and safety practices, and the impact of regional transportation optimization¹⁴ on volume. He also expressed appreciation for employees' hard work and clarified that a significant increase

“How we treat our people is why our plant has been so successful. The way people are spoken to is important. If they treat them poorly, they are not going to perform.”

Figure 6. Sacramento P&DC Peak Season Townhall



Source: Postal Service provided photo December 2025.

¹⁴ An initiative that reduces the number of truck trips and mail collections at most Postal Service facilities farther than 50 miles from a processing plant. The goal of this initiative is to reduce inefficient transportation runs.

Recommendation #1:

We recommend the **Chief Processing and Distribution Officer, Chief Logistics Officer, and Chief Retail and Delivery Officer**, develop and implement a comprehensive, long-term strategic program with ongoing periodic reviews at low-performing facilities to improve employee morale, increase employee engagement, and raise performance of key metrics.

Recommendation #2:

We recommend the **Chief Processing and Distribution Officer, Chief Logistics Officer, and Chief Retail and Delivery Officer** implement identified best practices at facilities nationwide, as is appropriate for each location.

Postal Service Response

Management disagreed with the report's findings, conclusions, recommendations, and monetary impact estimate.

Regarding the findings, management stated that the report uses conditional language to imply unsupported links between workplace culture, management practices, and operational outcomes, and it also fails to support the conclusions that were drawn with validated statistical correlations or controlled empirical analysis. In support of this position, management cited Postal Pulse survey results showing similar "intent-to-stay" scores across high- and low-performing locations, asserting that the data does not demonstrate meaningful differences in workforce engagement or leadership stability. Management also stated that regional differences in employee availability, turnover, and grievances were minimal and did not fully account for variations in facility size, labor markets, or regional operating conditions.

Further, management disagreed with the conclusion that supervisory oversight contributed to workforce or operational challenges, stating that the audit relied heavily on interviews, judgmental sampling, and site observations

rather than comprehensive data analysis. Regarding operational efficiency, management characterized the cited performance gaps as normal operational variation and stated that the evidence did not demonstrate significantly higher costs in lower-performing districts.

Management also provided the following comments on the report's recommendations and financial impact:

- **Recommendation 1:** Management stated that the Postal Service already uses long-term strategic initiatives, performance review metrics, and employee recognition programs that address the underlying intent of this recommendation.
- **Recommendation 2:** Management indicated that operational best practices are already actively identified and shared nationwide through existing Operational Excellence forums and processes.
- **Monetary Impact:** Management challenged the validity of the \$437 million questioned cost estimate, stating that using national average productivity as a baseline may be impractical because it does not account for structural or regional workload differences, nor does it credit the offsetting productivity gains achieved by facilities operating above the national average.

Finally, management raised concerns regarding the audit scope, stating that while the report referenced delivery unit visits, the analysis primarily focused on processing facilities and district-level data without establishing a direct analytical relationship between the two.

OIG Evaluation

The OIG considers management's disagreements nonresponsive to Recommendation 1 and only partially responsive to Recommendation 2. We view these positions as unresolved and will pursue them through the formal audit resolution process.

Regarding the findings, while management asserts that the report lacks sufficient empirical support, we do not claim direct causality between workplace culture and operational outcomes. Rather, the report identifies operational patterns and institutional relationships supported through quantitative analysis, extensive site observations, management interviews, and document reviews. Identifying contributing operational factors does not require formal statistical correlation testing to be valid.

In addition, management's response relied on a limited interpretation of Postal Pulse survey data. Although "intent-to-stay" responses were similar across locations, management did not acknowledge survey responses related to employee pride and willingness to recommend the Postal Service as an employer. High-performing sites scored significantly higher in these categories, which aligned with the differences in morale and workplace engagement observed during fieldwork.

Further, management's position regarding workforce indicators does not fully reflect the data presented in the report. While workforce challenges existed throughout the network, the report demonstrated that these conditions were more severe in lower-performing districts. Where complete headcount data sets existed within the Postal Service systems, we adjusted those metrics accordingly. While management indicated that existing initiatives are intended to address our recommendations, the efforts have not yet resulted in lasting improvements to workplace culture at the facilities reviewed. Our recommendations are designed to strengthen, refine, and sustain those ongoing initiatives over the long term.

Finally, we maintain that our monetary impact methodology was conservative. The \$437 million financial estimate excluded manual sorting operations and evaluated only automated letter, flat, and package operations that are standardized nationwide. Including manual

operations would have increased the questioned costs. Further, management's position that higher-performing facilities should offset lower-performing facilities misinterprets the purpose of an OIG monetary impact calculation. The estimate was designed to quantify avoidable costs associated with underperforming facilities operating below an achievable national baseline. Improving efficiency at those facilities represents a measurable opportunity for operational savings, reduced unnecessary costs, and enhanced performance.

Looking Forward

The Postal Service faces significant workforce and leadership challenges that continue to affect operational performance and long-term financial stability. In FY 2026, nearly 37 percent of employees will be eligible to retire within the next four years, while approximately 269,039 employees — about 42 percent of the workforce — have fewer than four years of service. This combination creates an urgent risk of institutional knowledge loss alongside a largely inexperienced workforce. Underperforming facilities are further strained by low morale, inconsistent leadership practices, limited supervisory soft skills, and frequent management turnover, all of which weaken accountability and undermine cultural stability. As the workforce shifts, it is critical for the Postal Service to establish a positive culture geared towards operating in the 21st century. To support the goals of the Delivering for America 10-year plan, the Postal Service must strengthen labor-management relations, improve leadership continuity, and invest in comprehensive supervisor development programs that enhance communication, reinforce accountability, align performance management systems, and foster a positive, high-performing workplace culture.

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Appendix A: Additional Information

Scope and Methodology

We reviewed various key financial and operational metrics for FY 2024 – FY 2025, quarter 2 to determine high and low-performing sites. Specifically, we ranked districts based on the following metrics: Operating Expense Per Employee, Cost Per Mailpiece, Four Walls Indicator, Two-Day First-Class Mail Performance (Letters and Flats), Two-Day Ground Advantage Performance (Packages), Package Processing Efficiency, and Mail Processing Operations Completed On Time.

Once we isolated high and low-performing districts, we used the same metrics and methodology to identify the highest and lowest-performing mail processing facilities that support the selected delivery districts. We considered the size and scope of mail processing facilities, only selecting facilities that met a threshold of processed volume for letters, flats, and packages. If our selection included mail processing facilities that are operationally combined in a campus model, we visited all the facilities in the campus. Finally, we judgmentally selected two delivery units to visit that the selected mail processing facility serviced, using real-time data from the Postal Service's Chief Retail and Delivery Operations Dashboard and weekly facility rankings.

We also reviewed various FY 2025 data for mail processing efficiency, transportation impacts, employee turnover and availability, grievances, and employee surveys. To accomplish our objective, we:

- Visited five high-performing and five low-performing districts. While on site, the team observed mail processing operations at a processing facility, visited two connected delivery units, and interviewed key management personnel as well as a sample of craft employees.
- Obtained and analyzed data from the FY 2025 Postal Pulse employee survey.
- Obtained and analyzed FY 2025 Postal Service grievance data for Postal Service's GATS.
- Obtained and analyzed FY 2025 Postal Service staffing and employee retention data from Workforce analytics.
- Obtained and analyzed service performance data from EDW and Informed Visibility.
- Obtained and analyzed FY 2025 transportation data from Surface Visibility.
- Obtained and analyzed FY 2025 mail processing efficiency data from EDW.
- Obtained and analyzed the cost and impact of managers on long-term details from Postal Service's eTravel system and accounting records.
- Conducted interviews with Postal Service executives to better understand the grievance process as well as the rules for craft employees working on union tasks during workhours.

We conducted this performance audit from June 2025 through July 2026 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls as we considered necessary under the circumstances. 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 objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We discussed our observations and conclusions with management on April 17, 2026, and included its comments where appropriate.

In planning and conducting the audit, we obtained an understanding of workforce and key operational areas internal control structures to help determine the nature, timing, and extent of our audit procedures. We reviewed the management controls for overseeing the program and mitigating associated risks. Additionally, we assessed the internal control components and underlying principles, and we

determined that the following five components were significant to our audit objective:

- Control Environment
- Risk Assessment
- Control Activities
- Information and Communication
- Monitoring

We developed audit work to ensure that we assessed these controls. Based on the work performed, we identified internal control deficiencies related to

information and communication and monitoring that were significant within the context of our objectives. Our recommendations, if implemented, should correct the weaknesses we identified.

We assessed the reliability of EDW, Informed Visibility, USPS Postal Pulse Survey Perceptyx Platform, National Performance Assessment, Surface Visibility, TACS, MODS, Workforce, and eFlash data sources by reviewing system controls and performance testing of the data. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

Prior Audit Coverage

Report Title	Objective	Report Number	Final Report Date	Monetary Impact
<i>Improving Service Performance and Mail Processing Efficiencies at Historically Low-Performing Facilities</i>	To evaluate service performance and processing efficiencies at 10 low-performing mail processing facilities and determine potential areas for improvement.	21-243-R22	August 8, 2022	\$82,429,376
<i>Accuracy of Reported Service Performance</i>	To assess the accuracy and reliability of the Postal Service's reported service performance.	23-168-R24	June 26, 2024	N/A
<i>Delivering for America: First-Class Mail and Priority Mail Service Performance Update</i>	To assess the Postal Service's First-Class Mail and Priority Mail service performance, trends, changes to standards, and common service failure points.	25-028-R25	May 7, 2025	\$17,681,645
<i>Grievance Management</i>	To evaluate the Postal Service's management of grievances.	25-068-R26	January 15, 2026	\$284,265,627

Appendix B: Sites Selected for Observation and Interviews

We reviewed various key financial and operational metrics and ranked districts based on the following metrics: Operating Expense Per Employee, Cost Per Mailpiece, Four Walls Indicator, Two-Day First-Class Mail Performance (Letters and Flats), Two-Day Ground Advantage Performance (Packages), Package Processing Efficiency, and Mail Processing Operations Completed On Time.

Based on these metrics, we judgmentally selected five low-performing and five-high performing districts. We used the same metrics and methodology to identify the highest- and lowest-performing mail processing facilities that support the selected delivery districts. We considered the size and scope of mail processing facilities, only selecting facilities that met a threshold of processed volume for letters, flats, and packages. If our selection included mail processing facilities that are operationally combined in a campus model (use of multiple nearby facilities to sort letters, flats and packages for the area), we visited all the facilities in the campus. Finally, we judgmentally selected two delivery units to visit that the selected mail processing facility serviced, using real-time data from the Postal Service's Chief Retail and Delivery Operations Dashboard and weekly facility rankings. See Table 13 for all sites selected and reviewed.

Table 13. Sites Selected for Observation

	District	Site Visited	Mail Processing	Delivery Unit
Low-performing Sites	Alabama - Mississippi	Birmingham, AL P&DC	X	
		Birmingham Annex	X	
		Woodlawn Station		X
		Hoover Branch Station		X
	Arkansas - Oklahoma	Little Rock, AR P&DC	X	
		Little Rock Annex	X	
		Little Rock Package Support Annex (PSA)	X	
		North Little Rock Main Office		X
		Brady Annex		X
	Kansas - Missouri	Saint Louis, MO Network Distribution Center (NDC)	X	
		Saint Louis PSA	X	
		Saint Louis, MO P&DC	X	
		Saint Louis Metro Annex	X	
		Timothy Gaffney Post Office		X
		Mackenzie Pointe Post Office		X
	Kentucky - West Virginia	Louisville, KY P&DC	X	
		Louisville Annex	X	
		Okolona Station		X
		Pleasure Ridge Park Station		X
	Louisiana	New Orleans, LA P&DC	X	
		Saint Rose Annex	X	
		Elmwood Station		X
		North Kenner Station		X

	District	Site Visited	Mail Processing	Delivery Unit
High-performing Sites	California 2	Sacramento, CA P&DC	X	
		Fort Stutter Post Office		X
		Land Park Post Office		X
	Nevada - Utah	Las Vegas, NV P&DC	X	
		Las Vegas PSA	X	
		Las Vegas Mail Processing Annex (MPA)	X	
		Westridge Station		X
		Henderson, NV Valle Verde		X
	New Jersey	South Jersey, NJ P&DC	X	
		Stratford Post Office		X
		Camden Carrier Annex		X
	Pennsylvania 1	Harrisburg, PA P&DC	X	
		Harrisburg PSA	X	
		Dillsburg Post Office		X
		Mechanicsburg Post Office		X
	Washington	Seattle, WA P&DC	X	
		Seattle, WA NDC	X	
		Olympia Main Post Office		X
		Olympia Sorting and Delivery Center		X

Source: OIG analysis.

Appendix C: Full 2025 Postal Pulse Survey Results for Sites Visited

2025 Postal Survey Results Average: Sites Visited (Low vs. High)

Postal Service Workplace	I am proud to work at the Postal Service.
	I intend to stay with the Postal Service for at least the next 12 months.
	I would recommend the Postal Service as a great place to work.
Work Expectation	My work gives me a sense of personal accomplishment.
	I know what is expected of me at work.
	I have the resources to do my job effectively.
	My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
	I am given opportunities to grow and develop in my current role.
	I understand how my job contributes to the success of the organization.
Employee Feedback	My opinions matter.
	I feel that I am a part of a team.
	My team is committed to doing high quality work.
Supervisory Support	My manager or supervisor has created an environment on our team where people feel their work is valued.
	My manager or supervisor recognizes my accomplishments.
	My manager or supervisor gives me regular feedback on my performance.
	My manager or supervisor supports my skill and career development.
	My manager or supervisor recently met with me one-on-one.
Safety	I am comfortable reporting a safety issue.
	Safety hazards are addressed when reported.
Leadership / Communication	My leadership communicates a clear vision for the future related to the Delivering for America plan.
	My leadership explains how operational changes affect me and/or my facility/work unit.
	The Postal Service is committed to equal employment opportunities.
	I believe feedback from this survey will be used to make improvements.



High Performer Average Percent



Low Performer Average Percent

Source: OIG analysis of 2025 Postal Pulse Survey data provided by Postal Service.

Appendix D: Management's Comments



May 13, 2026

LAURA LOZON
DIRECTOR, AUDIT SERVICES

SUBJECT: Management Response: *Operational and Financial Performance Across Postal Service Regions (25-091)*

The Postal Service has reviewed the findings and conclusions contained in the audit report and would like to offer the following as our response.

During our review of the audit, we identified a recurring pattern in which the audit relies on broad, hypothetical language and unsubstantiated assumptions to link workplace culture and management practices to operational and financial outcomes. Specifically, the word "may" is used at least seven times in the report when asserting potential causal relationships between observed conditions and performance results.

Some examples include: "*These challenges, which may impact certain locations more than others.*" Similar language appears throughout the findings, including statements that certain issues "*may have negatively impacted work culture,*" "*may impact certain locations more than others,*" or that practices "*may have negatively impacted... performance.*"

While we acknowledge that correlation exists in some areas, we are concerned that these repeated hypothetical assumptions are presented as supporting evidence for broad conclusions and monetary impact estimates. Many of these causal assertions are not sufficiently supported by the audit's own empirical data, site visit observations, or statistical analysis, particularly given the judgmental nature of the District and Processing facility selection.

We will now address each section of the audit and offer our agreement or disagreement with your findings and recommendations.

Background Information

On page 1 of the audit, it is stated: "*Negative culture and ineffective management: A workplace culture characterized by poor communication, lack of support, and ineffective management styles that has sometimes demotivated the workforce and hindered performance.*"

Management **disagrees** with the prior statement as there is **no specific evidence** provided in the audit which supports this broad theory.

Furthermore, we contend that the Postal Pulse Survey data provided by the OIG in Appendix C substantiates that the statement in the background portion of the report is an incorrect assumption.

For example, the Postal Pulse survey results show that greater than [REDACTED] of the respondents stated they intend to stay with the Postal Service for at least the next 12 months. This statement was true for both "Low performing sites" and "High performing sites".

I intend to stay with the Postal Service for at least the next 12 months.

■ High Performer Average Percent ■ Low Performer Average Percent

Findings Summary

We disagree with the Findings Summary as written.

The OIG states, *"Across the sites we reviewed, low-performing districts faced significant workforce, cultural, and leadership challenges that directly contributed to operational inefficiency and higher costs"*

Using data provided by the OIG in the audit, we found that the aforementioned opening statement for the findings summary is in part factually inaccurate and unsupported with evidence. We will further expound in the breakdown of each finding our reason for coming to this conclusion.

Finding 1) We disagree with this finding as written.

The OIG says, *"A resilient workforce and healthy culture are the backbone of any successful organization — and the Postal Service has faced persistent challenges in both in pockets across the country for years. These issues are most pronounced in low-performing districts, which have consistently struggled with employee satisfaction, engagement, attendance, and retention; and costly union grievances."*

Postal Pulse survey results show this statement is not factually accurate.

Postal Pulse

1. We appreciate the fact that the OIG pointed out the undisputed fact that the unions discourage their members from taking the Postal Pulse Survey on Page 4. This directly impacts the participation rate for Postal Pulse Surveys.

2. We also appreciate the fact that the OIG stated, *"it is difficult to draw conclusions from a low response rate"*. However, the OIG continued to draw conclusions surrounding Postal Pulse results despite Appendix C contradicting numerous conclusions.
3. On page 5 of the audit, the OIG states, *"Based on the employees that did respond to the survey, engagement and satisfaction scores were generally lower at sites we visited in low-performing districts compared to sites visited in high-performing districts."*

The evidence provided by the OIG does not support the statement above. In fact, in several instances the evidence directly contradicts the statement. While we recognize some indicators were lower, the data provided in Appendix C vividly reveals contradictory information to the opening statement.

Using the data provided by the OIG in Appendix C, we found in a variety of instances where the "low performing sites" had comparable (or higher) scores.

Appendix C states:

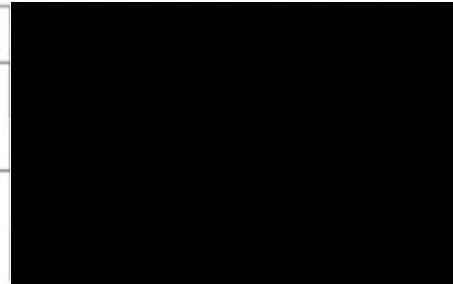
I intend to stay with the Postal Service for at least the next 12 months.

I understand how my job contributes to the success of the organization.

My manager or supervisor recently met with me one-on-one.

The Postal Service is committed to equal employment opportunities.

I am comfortable reporting a safety issue.



■ High Performer Average Percent ■ Low Performer Average Percent

Retention

Managerial / Supervisor Resignations: Table 7 disputes the opening statement (*"consistently struggled with....retention"*) as retention at the low performing processing sites for Managers and Supervisors is higher at the "lower performing sites". In fact, resignations at the "lower performing processing sites" were 20% lower than at the "higher performing sites".

Employee Turnover in Districts: Table 3 attempts to paint a picture that total employee turnover in low performing districts is significantly worse than in the high performing districts. However, the three factors shown below are not discussed.

- *Scale effect:* Higher resignations alone are not proof of worse retention rate unless the sample sizes are identical. In this case, the “low performing sites” have 2,207 more employees so the resignations generally would be higher.
- *Small gap:* A 3-point turnover gap potentially could be meaningful if the sample size was absolute, but there is not enough evidence to prove this theory.
- *No causation shown:* The table only compares resignation values, but it does not take into account unemployment rates, alternative job opportunities, cost of living, and wage competitiveness as all of these factors vary significantly between these regions. Please keep in mind that the selected districts are in very different parts of the country.

Employee Availability

Regarding employee availability on Table 2, the OIG states the National Average is at 80% and the “Low” is at 79.2%.

- A gap of 00.80% is generally not considered statistically significant and we would agree that it is not.
- Furthermore, the OIG says, “*Employee availability was an issue at both the high and low performing districts we reviewed, making it difficult for the Postal Service to ensure sufficient staffing to sort and deliver mail.*” Table 2 does not clearly show site locations to ensure consistency in analysis. For example, no Processing sites are shown in the analysis.
- Regarding sick leave, Table 2 does not differentiate FMLA protected sick leave, so we are unable to properly analyze this section as FMLA protected sick leave is protected by federal laws.

Grievances

On Table 4 it states that the data shows: “*Grievances at High-Performing Mail Processing Facilities Compared to Low-Performing Mail Processing Facilities Visited*”. However, it does not differentiate between Processing Facilities and Retail & Delivery Units in the financial analysis.

- The data set is inconclusive as it should include a column about the total number of bargaining unit employees in those categories to determine if there is a correlation to total grievances and total bargaining unit employees.
- Table 5 shows FY 2025 Grievances Related to Overtime and Equitable Distribution of Overtime, which is specific to the City Letter Carrier craft.

It then goes on to mention in the last paragraph before Table 6. FY 2025 Grievances Paid that “*Management at a delivery unit in a low performing district reported that one mail carrier dedicated nearly all workhours to union grievance activity. As a result, this person only carried mail, their assigned job, for two weeks during the prior year.*”

There is no clarification whether that individual is on assignment with the National Association of Letter Carriers in a position in which they retain their route and perform union duties full time.

The language is misleading in this section as the filer of the grievance may always be a union steward and not the grievant. The grievant can be an individual, a group of individuals or in some cases a class action grievance, but all will be filed by the same representative.

Finding 2) We disagree with this finding as written.

The OIG says, "Specifically, management did not consistently engage employees, oversee operations, or respond timely to emerging challenges." Page 10
"Managers at the sites visited in low performing districts did not consistently engage employees, communicate the importance of objectives and processes." Page 10
"Employees in the low performing districts we visited reported insufficient one-on-one guidance and a lack of context for operational directives, noting that management focused solely on pushing mail rather than explaining processes or objectives." Page 11

We would offer that in Appendix C, the OIG provided actual data from the Postal Pulse Survey which contradicts all three prior statements if the statements are being used to try to show a comparison between "High" and "Low" sites.

I am comfortable reporting a safety issue.
 I intend to stay with the Postal Service for at least the next 12 months.
 I understand how my job contributes to the success of the organization.
 My manager or supervisor recently met with me one-on-one.
 The Postal Service is committed to equal employment opportunities.

■ High Performer Average Percent ■ Low Performer Average Percent

Management Turnover

We appreciate the OIG highlighting in Table 7 that there is no statistical correlation between management turnover in "Low Performing" and "High Performing" Processing Managers/Supervisors analyzed. In fact, Table 7 reveals that "Low Performing" Processing sites were 20% lower for resignations during the sample period.

The data does not show the total population for any of the employee types. Therefore, it is impossible to determine if this is a statically valid analysis or a mere auditor assumption.

Table 7. FY 2025 Management Resignations Between Low- and High-Performing Districts and Processing Sites Visited

Management Group	Low-Performing Districts and Processing Sites	High-Performing Districts and Processing Sites	Difference	Percent Difference
Field Managers/Supervisors	53	47	6	11%
Postmasters	17	11	6	35%
Processing Managers/Supervisors	5	6	-1	-20%
Total	75	64	11	15%

Source: OIG analysis of data obtained from EDW.

Note: Data includes retail and delivery districts and mail processing facilities visited.

Furthermore, Page 12 talks about acting Plant Managers in "Districts". We wish to clarify once again that Districts do not have Plant Managers. Districts have Retail & Delivery Units. Plant Managers are under Divisions and in no way are under the managerial hierarchy of Districts.

Overall, finding #2 lacks sufficient evidence to determine whether, as cited on page 10, "ineffective management practices" actually "negatively impacted work culture as well as operational and financial performance."

- Most of the citations regarding the high and low performing entities are minimally different, and in some cases, performance is higher in the low performing entities.
- The audit specifically identifies Processing facilities, not specific Retail and Delivery sites, and makes assumptions based on small samples and management reporting.

Finding 3) We disagree with this finding as written.

On page 15, The OIG says, "Due in part to their workforce culture challenges and ineffective management practices, the sites visited in low-performing districts were significantly less efficient, incurred higher costs, and struggled to meet key operational metrics. Specifically, these sites were less efficient in sorting mail, relied more heavily on overtime, and did not meet key transportation and service metrics."

As an example, Table 9 showcases Letters, Flats and Packages "Automated Processing Efficiency" as outliers. However, the data does not support this theory for letters in any way.

The evidence provided in Table 9 does not support the stated theory.

Table 9. FY 2025 Automated Processing Efficiency of Low vs High Performing Sites by Mail Type

Mail Type	National Average	High Performing Sites Visited	Percent Difference to National Average	Low Performing Sites Visited	Percent Difference to National Average
Letters	6,400	6,042	-6%	6,051	-5%

Monetary Impact

We disagree with the Monetary Impact stated in the report.

The monetary impact focused on a theory and used broad assumptions much like many of the other aspects of the audit. It assumes the nationwide average is an appropriate benchmark. "Average" does not automatically equal "reasonable expectation." Some sites may have structural disadvantages, facility layout challenges, geographic challenges, local workforce challenges, etc. A site below average is not necessarily underperforming.

The OIG identified processing facilities that were below the average productivity in letters, flats and packages and exclusively used this as a potential savings but failed to recognize or give the postal service credit for the facilities that exceeded the average productivity performance. Additionally, the sites that were identified as performing below the average were not exclusive to the Districts or Plants from the audit but was a broad stroke applied to all facilities nationally.

The OIG cited a potential savings of ~\$437M for the facilities that were below the national productivity average. However, the facilities that achieved above the national average was an actual savings and accounted for ~\$435M versus if these facilities only achieved the national average productivities.

Thus, when comparing sites below the national average productivity versus sites above the national average productivity the variance was ~\$2M. Nowhere in the Monetary Impact study does it account for those facts.

The OIG cited the number of facilities that were below the national average productivity but did not indicate the number of facilities that exceeded the national productivity average. This directs the focus on the opportunity but fails to identify good productivity and achievements or account for assumed actual savings.

	Letters	Flats	Parcels
Facilities under national avg:	73	98	■
Facilities above national avg:	134	99	■

Potential Workhour Savings Sites Above National Productivity
(From OIG Audit)

Automated Processing Mail Type	Number of Facilities	Actual FY 2025 Workhours	Workhours if Met Nationwide Average Productivity	Potential Workhour Saved
Letters	73	17,881,235	15,385,995	2,495,240
Flats	■	3,520,752	2,364,832	1,155,920
Packages	■	22,173,027	17,897,207	4,275,820
Total				8,127,180

*2025 are not unique facilities. It's the sum of letters, flats, and packages.
Total facilities under national average productivity, in one or more category is 108

Actual Workhour Savings – Sites Above National Productivity

Automated Processing Mail Type	Number of Facilities	Actual FY 2025 Workhours	Workhours if Reduced To Nationwide Average Productivity	Actual Workhours Saved
Letters	134	34,353,383	36,852,467	(2,499,086)
Flats	99	1,360,594	2,519,907	(1,159,313)
Packages	■	18,343,847	23,368,994	(5,025,147)
Total				(8,683,546)

Difference of 44,634

Potential Dollar Savings Sites Above National Productivity
(From OIG Audit)

Mail Type	Potential Hours Saved	Average Cost Per Hour	Amount
Letters	2,495,240	\$54.60	\$136,240,104.00
Flats	1,155,920	\$53.67	\$62,038,226.40
Packages	■	■	\$238,674,460.40
Total			\$436,952,790.80

Actual Dollar Savings – Sites Above National Productivity

Mail Type	Hours Saved	Average Cost per Hour	Amount
Letters	(2,499,086)	\$54.60	\$(136,450,302)
Flats	(1,159,313)	\$53.67	\$(62,226,334)
Packages	■	■	\$(236,782,415)
Total			\$(434,952,850)

Difference of \$1,999,941

Data concerns in Monetary Impact:

- LDCs 11, 12, and 13 were used by the OIG in the monetary impact analysis when determined workhours and volumes, not including manual volumes from LDC 14. This artificially increases the productivity capabilities by only including machine volumes and workhours.
- Several facilities identified as under the averaged productivities are incapable of achieving the national productivity averages due to their machine composition, products they process, or other factors specific to those facilities. Examples:
 - Gainesville is a PARS/FPARs only site, would not be able to achieve national productivity
 - New York ISC, Miami ISC, Chicago ISC, and Los Angeles ISC, due to import and export are unable to achieve national average productivity
- The OIG reviewed facilities at the child facility level. Typically, the productivities should be reviewed at the lead facility level due to workhour and volume flows.
- The OIG Totals on the number of facilities are not unique. For example, if a facility was below the average national productivity in letters, flats, and packages, it was counted as three facilities in the total, whereas it would be one facility in the multiple categories

In conclusion regarding the Monetary Impact, the analysis is biased as it only examines below-average sites. By focusing only on below-average sites, the analysis can create a one-sided narrative. Statistically speaking, half of all sites will naturally fall below average in many distributions. This does not prove waste or mismanagement. Being below average is mathematically inevitable for many sites.

Furthermore, let's assume the top 3 performing sites in the nation get even better for productivity due to a new machine or building layout, that in turn would make the average performance higher and would make the lower tiered population look even worse, when their performance did not regress. Using a one-sided analysis is statistically flawed.

What this analysis actually identifies is variance from an average, not proven inefficiency, not validated excess staffing, and not realizable labor savings. Unless the methodology can isolate and control for operational differences, workload complexity, fixed staffing requirements, and statistical normal variation, the conclusion risks converting assumptions into portrayed "facts".

The following are our comments on each of the two recommendations.

Recommendation 1:

We recommend the Chief Processing and Distribution Officer, Chief Logistics Officer, and Chief Retail and Delivery Officer, develop and implement a comprehensive, long-term strategic program with ongoing periodic reviews at low performing facilities to improve employee morale, increase employee engagement, and raise performance of key metrics.

Management Response/Action Plan:

We disagree with the Recommendation as written as there are many active initiatives in place which were not explored or talked about in the audit.

Nowhere in the audit are these initiatives discussed and to our knowledge no one from the Headquarters team was contacted to discuss ongoing initiatives as part of this audit.

- Long-Term strategic processes are in place to review low performing facilities.
- Many of the plants in the "Low Performing" list have annexes and challenged buildings that have the potential to create service and productivity issues specifically with packages and flats. These challenges can correlate to morale challenges. However, we have active equipment and facility modernization efforts developed that are actively being pursued in most of the bottom locations to correct structural issues, improve service and performance and as a result improve morale.

- Scheduled performance reviews are in place (Division Calls, DM Calls, RCI Calls, PEAK Calls) to further identify issues and improve performance.
- Postal Pulse is a formal process which is used to identify morale issues and showcases opportunity areas. These results are shared with our teams to showcase areas of opportunities.
- Improvement tools are emphasized on a regular basis such as Operational Excellence plays, Lean Six Sigma training (Yellow Belt, Green Belt, etc.), Kaizen, GEMBA.
- The Postal Service does have recognition programs such as the Million Mile, Service Pin Awards, Safety Awards, Link Articles, Area Newsletter Articles, and so forth.

Target Implementation Date: N/A

Responsible Official: N/A

Recommendation 2:

We recommend the Chief Processing and Distribution Officer, Chief Logistics Officer, and Chief Retail and Delivery Officer implement identified best practices at facilities nationwide, as is appropriate for each location.

Management Response/Action Plan:

We disagree with this Recommendation as written as there are already measures in place that are actively addressing the intent of this recommendation.

- While we generally agree on the premise of the recommendation, we actively identify best practices and replicate them where applicable. In other words, we are already doing what this recommendation asks for. Therefore, we will continue to share engagement best practices between plants. Also, we have established a best practice sharing forum which aligns with our strategic efforts to modernize these locations.
- We already have processes via Operational Excellence to duplicate best practices at facilities nationwide. This occurs in current facilities and as a part of any new site creation or consolidation.

Target Implementation Date: N/A

Responsible Official: N/A

Additional Information

In the audit, the OIG states that it conducted site visits to both Processing Facilities and Delivery Units; however, the data cited throughout the audit pertains exclusively to unique Processing Facilities or Districts as a whole. It never once showcases

performance at the individual Delivery units visited. The OIG expressly notes that it *"identified the lowest- and highest-performing processing facilities meeting a defined mail volume threshold and conducted observations and interviews,"* and further indicates that it *"judgmentally selected delivery units serviced by those processing facilities for additional observation and review."*

The audit provides no articulated criteria or key performance indicators explaining the selection of the referenced Delivery Units beyond their geographic or operational association with the identified Processing Facilities. Moreover, the audit fails to establish any analytical correlation between Processing Facility performance and Delivery Unit performance. No findings, data, or evaluative conclusions are presented regarding the individual Delivery Units themselves, nor is any hypothesis advanced such as whether deficiencies in Processing Facilities are reflected in Delivery Unit outcomes.

This omission is significant given that Delivery Units operate under distinct performance metrics and are under a totally different managerial structure than the Processing facilities. Aside from a single anecdotal reference involving a Delivery Unit employee's work hours related to union grievance activity without context as to that employee's role or responsibilities, the audit contains no substantive discussion of Delivery operations. Even this isolated reference pertains more to labor relations than to delivery performance or operational culture.

While it is acknowledged that it would be impractical for the OIG to examine every operational unit, including Processing Facilities, Delivery Units, Retail Units, and other specialized facilities, the audit nonetheless relies on a limited sample of Processing Facilities and fails to present corresponding data from the specific Delivery Units reportedly visited. Despite this limited and uneven evidentiary foundation, the audit appears to extrapolate its findings to characterize the broader organizational culture.

Further, the audit's Monetary Impact statement references only Processing operations and omits any consideration of Delivery Unit or Retail Unit financial implications. This exclusion raises additional concerns regarding the completeness of the audit's analysis, as Delivery and Retail functions are integral components of our operations and contribute materially to our overall performance and culture.

The absence of Delivery and Retail data, the lack of defined selection criteria for non-processing facilities, and the failure to correlate findings across operational functions result in an incomplete and inconclusive assessment of our overall culture

Furthermore, we attempted to utilize Pearson's correlation coefficient and other statistical tools, to determine if actual correlations existed between the specific CPDO Processing facilities and CRDO Retail & Delivery units visited rather than making broad assumptions. However, in most instances, the provided evidentiary data only showcased overall District or Processing facility aggregates and did not properly

delineate in an even flow for an actual side by side statistical comparison. This made it nearly impossible to determine if an actual correlation existed.

For the plethora of reasons outlined above, **we hereby disagree with all findings and recommendations as written.**

E-SIGNED by ISAAC.S CRONKHITE
on 2026-05-14 08:54:10 EDT

Isaac Cronkhite
Chief Processing & Distribution Officer and Executive Vice President

E-SIGNED by ELVIN MERCADO
on 2026-05-14 08:30:25 EDT

Elvin Mercado
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on 2026-05-13 14:49:39 EDT

Peter Routsolias
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cc: Corporate Audit & Response Management

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE



This document contains sensitive information that has been redacted for public release. These redactions were coordinated with USPS and agreed to by the OIG.

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