

# The Fight for Winning Better Staffing and Better Service





*APWU Family,*

*Postal workers are the beating heart of the country's oldest and most trusted public service – the United States Postal Service.*

*But, years of management “cost cutting” and short staffing undermines postal workers’ ability to carry out our mission to the American people. It results in more workplace stress and drives business and revenue away from the USPS.*

*While we have made some real progress in mail processing staffing, chronic understaffing in many retail units deeply affects the communities served by the country's 31,000 post offices.*

*As a union, we will continue to join with the people of the country and demand the better staffing and hours-of-service levels needed to provide the improved service the public deserves.*

*I am confident you will find this pamphlet a helpful guide to action. The APWU Staffing Committee, made up of various local and state leaders, has given valuable input into this document. Every union member, from every craft, has a stake in a strong and vibrant Postal Service. We can all play a role in the fight for [better staffing](#) and [better service](#).*

*This is a fight that the APWU must lead. If we all get involved, organize and mobilize, it's a fight we can win!*

Mark Dimondstein  
APWU President

## Five Keys for Winning Better Staffing and Better Service

- 1. Grievances are important, but not enough!** Winning better service will require putting more pressure on management than grievances alone can do. Building a community coalition, organizing members to take workplace action, and making public demands are essential to winning.
- 2. Engage your coworkers!** APWU members of all crafts are proud to provide a vital public service. Talk to your coworkers about the issues of understaffing in your local areas and ask them to join you in improving your workplace. Don't forget to include coworkers or the carrier and mail handler crafts.
- 3. Involve the public!** Our communities depend on the “prompt, reliable, and efficient” service promised by law. Contact local organizations and office holders to educate them and bring them into the campaign for better staffing and better service.
- 4. Build the Case!** Management won't admit to staffing shortages or poor service. Make records of vacant positions, long wait times for customers, and box and delivery issues related to understaffing.
- 5. Local strategy, national priority!** The conditions and people involved in your local area will require a specific strategic approach to winning your demands. But the issues you're facing aren't uncommon. Share your experiences and learn from other APWU locals involved in the fight for better service and better staffing.

# WE CAN WIN!

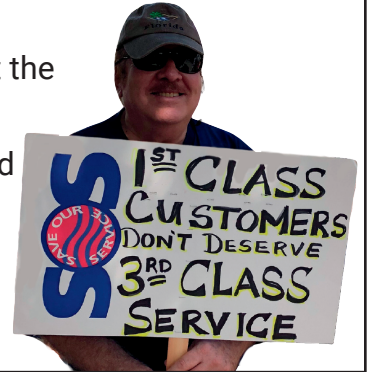
Postal workers like you have already proven that, with a smart and strategic effort, we can win improved staffing in our facilities.

In 2018, post offices in the Florida Keys Area Local were severely understaffed. This led to routine temporary closures of offices and stressed and overworked postal workers. When offices were open, customers faced poor service, long lines, and late deliveries.

United with their sister NALC branch, the Florida Keys Area Local launched a campaign that included informational picketing, a community petition demanding improved service, and outreach to local media.

Their demonstrations garnered dozens of headlines and their demands put the pressure on postal management to improve the situation.

And management felt the heat! Just a month later, management announced the creation of additional clerk and letter carrier positions. With the new hires, service was greatly improved and the local postal workers had the necessary support to serve their community well and get the time off they needed to be with their families.



## **Holding postal management to their word.**

Management says they want better service. Now it's time to deliver on their promises. Management's 10 Year Plan, Delivering for America, calls for a \$4 billion investment in retail services. While many facilities could use some work, there's no substitute for adequate, well-trained postal workers available to serve the public.

## **Collect and share real stories.**

Build alliances with organizations and concerned citizens in your area. You'll find many will have stories of how their postal service has been affected by understaffing. These are powerful stories; share them in your community and with the media.

# MESSAGING MATTERS!

## How to Talk About Better Staffing and Better Service

## **Better service starts with better staffing.**

Sorting, transporting, and delivering the mail relies on thousands of dedicated public servants. So does quality, knowledgeable, and accessible window service. Without adequate staffing, our communities suffer.

## **Focus on service.**

Postal workers are proud to provide an essential service to our communities. But short staffing causes delays, long lines, and shorter post office hours for customers. The public deserves better.



# TACTICS TO WIN!



A winning strategy for better service and better staffing will vary from area to area. Consider who's the "decider" – the person or people in management who can actually deliver on our demands. Focus your efforts on insisting that management do the right thing. Below are some tactics that you can consider to build a winning coalition and to exercise our power.

- **Petitions** – write a petition with our demands and talk to coworkers and members of the community, urging them to sign.
- **Informational pickets** – talk to your coworkers and allies, make signs or banners, and hit the streets.
- **Leaflet customers** – let postal customers know we could do better. Hand out leaflets outside of post offices with our concerns. Give them an action to take – sign a petition, call a congress person, etc.
- **Winning local leaders** – ask for meetings with city councilors, mayors, county commissioners, etc. Tell them about our campaign and ask them to join us in the streets, or in writing to local management.
- **Town Hall meetings** – organize a meeting in your community to share our concerns and invite community members to share how service issues have affected them.
- **March on the boss** – gather coworkers and march on the manager's office. Present your petition or list of demands and demand they take action.
- **Media work** – write op-eds, hold a press conference, or invite the media to your picket. Sharing our story is an important way to win allies and increase leverage.
- **Document poor service** – send "test letters" and note any delays. Develop logs of long lines at post offices. Document unfilled vacancies. Incorporate these into your campaign literature.