

Settlement reached in NRP dispute

The NALC and the Postal Service have settled the union's national-level grievance filed over the National Reassessment Process (NRP), a USPS program created to review all current limited-duty job offers and how future limited-duty job offers are made.

From the very beginning of the program in 2007 as a pilot initiative in the New York Metro, Western New York and San Diego districts, the NALC insisted that the process could not compromise an injured employee's rights under Section 546 of the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. Section 546 deals specifically with the reassignment or re-employment of employees injured while on duty.

The union's grievance focused on three key concerns:

- * That through NRP, the Postal Service had created a "necessary work" standard for the creation and continuation of limited-duty and rehabilitation assignments.
- * That the Postal Service had developed new criteria for assigning limited duty as part of NRP.
- * That NRP could affect employees who were assigned to light duty under the 2006-2011 National Agreement's Article 13, "Assignment of Ill or Injured Regular Workforce Employees."

Following months of negotiations, NALC President William H. Young and Postal Service Manager, Labor Relations and Policy Programs Alan Moore signed an agreement in June stating

that NRP in fact does not change management's obligation to provide limited duty to injured employees—that it does not change the provisions of *ELM* Section 546.

The parties also agreed that NRP does not create new criteria for assigning limited duty, and that light-duty carriers will not normally be displaced solely to make new limited-duty or rehabilitation assignments, unless such a displacement is required by law.

The settlement clears the way for processing of hundreds of NRP grievances that had been held up pending the outcome of the national case.

"We will keep monitoring NRP," said Director of City Delivery Dale Hart, "and we will continue to require contractual compliance as management moves forward with this process."

Members with specific questions about the settlement or NRP grievances should contact their region's National Business Agent. The text of the settlement is available at nalc.org/cau. ☒

Failure to counsel charged over VER

The NALC has filed a national-level interpretive dispute with the Postal Service, charging it failed to provide mandatory retirement counseling prior to the June 19 irrevocable decision date for the latest Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) offer extended to letter carriers.

"A lot of our members did not get the help they needed to make a proper and informed decision about whether they should accept this latest early-out," said Executive Vice President Gary Mullins, who headed the union's Contract Administration Unit when the agreement was reached.

Letter carriers who applied for the VER and requested retirement counseling but did not receive it prior to the deadline should get in touch with their region's National Business Agent for more information.

"Our NBAs also need to hear from any carriers who withdrew their appli-

cation for an early out because they couldn't get counseling prior to the irrevocable date," Mullins added.

Twice in the past year, the Office of Personnel Management approved Postal Service requests to offer early-outs as a way to reduce operational costs by cutting from its payroll older, higher-paid workers who were close to retirement. The VER was extended to carriers who were at least 50 years old and had at least 20 years of service, or to carriers of any age with at least 25 years of service. There were no financial incentives to take either VER offer.

This national-level grievance only applies to letter carriers who were in line for the second VER with the June 19 deadline.

Local grievances that have been filed regarding retirement counseling for this latest VER are held in abeyance until the national-level dispute is resolved. ☒