

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Advisory Committee (AC) Guidelines

**Sponsored by:
The EAP National Joint Committee**

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Employee Assistance Program (EAP) National Joint Committee (NJC)

The EAP NJC was established under Article 35 of the APWU and NALC National Agreements. On 12-14-21 an MOU agreement was signed to include the NPMHU in the EAP Joint Committee at the National and District levels. The EAP NJC is comprised of officer representatives from the APWU, NALC, NPMHU and the USPS EAP Manager. The EAP Administrator is an ad hoc member. Representatives from the General Counsel's Office and Labor Relations serve in an advisory capacity. The NJC meets on a regular basis for the purpose of discussing program related issues.

Current Members:

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Article 35

Article 35 of the APWU and NALC National Agreements establish a National EAP Committee [NJC]. The committee provides oversight of the EAP for the Postal Service (see Appendix B). The Committee will have responsibility for jointly:

1. Assessing the effectiveness of EAPs operating inside and outside the USPS, and
2. Developing on an on-going basis the general guidelines with respect to the level of services and the mechanisms by which services will be provided.

The NJC is not responsible for day-to-day administration of the program. EAP Contract between the USPS and Vendor

The original interagency agreement between the USPS and Federal Occupational Health (FOH) was signed in 1992 when the Program for Alcoholic Recovery (PAR) program was expanded to become the EAP.

Because of the experience that FOH already had in 1992 in procuring, developing, evaluating, and administering EAP services for other government agencies, the Postal Service turned to it to assist in the same activities for the USPS program. From December 2001, all EAP counselors (except the Los Angeles and Philadelphia JCEAPs) and affiliates, as well as, the national service center and crisis response have been provided by Magellan Behavioral Health under its contract with FOH. The FOH contract was terminated on December 31, 2006. From January 2007 through March 2019, EAP national service were provided by Magellan Health Services.

In April 2019, New Directions Behavioral Health became the national service provider (Vendor).

Vendor Responsibilities and Obligations

The vendor's role is to provide EAP services including:

- assessment
- short term counseling
- training and education
- consultation to management and union leaders
- referral and follow-up
- crisis intervention
- assisting the USPS in defining its EAP service needs, desired outcomes and service options
- selecting consultants and staff who provide high quality, best value services that meet EAP needs
- managing the contract and ensuring that services are being appropriately delivered and desired outcomes are reached
- overseeing continuous quality improvement efforts to ensure that professional standards and confidentiality and privacy rules required by Federal regulations and laws are maintained
- ensuring the database which contains all of the records remains confidential
- preparing management reports for the EAP manager, the districts, the areas, the NJC, EAP District ACs (DAC) and Joint Committee EAPs (JCEAP).
- providing web-based resources and reports
- maintaining currency in new developments in the EAP field, technology, and related fields and incorporating that knowledge in its consultation with the USPS, NJC, and other EAP
- providing guidance, consultation, and support to USPS management, the NJC and DAC/JCEAPs to ensure EAP standards and expectations are being met and value is being provided to the USPS

The vendor, as the provider of services, must comply with the USPS design requirements and

professional standards as described in the statement of work (SOW). Compliance must be carefully monitored to satisfy USPS procurement requirements. The vendor must be professionally prepared to create, evaluate, and maintain legally and professionally compliant policies and procedures. For example, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) required additional protections, e.g., written authorization for counselors to confirm on-the-clock attendance at EAP, which was properly implemented in 2003. The vendor is also better equipped than USPS to manage the very complex elements of the contract and is also able to provide updates and guidance regarding the EAP field which will allow the NJC to shape the program most appropriately.

Finally, maintenance of confidential records and development of management reports using confidential records must be managed by the vendor, not the USPS.

Employee Assistance Program AC

The USPS EAP

The USPS EAP represents the best efforts of Postal Service management, the APWU, the NALC and the NPMHU to provide a comprehensive work-life resource for all employees and their immediate family members. A family member is defined as any legal dependent of the employee, or anyone living in the employee's household, with the exception of tenants or employees of the postal employee who live in the household. Article 35 of the APWU, NALC and NPMHU National Agreements provide for joint commitments to support the EAP.

Purpose

Experience at the national level, the work of the four local JCEAPs, and the local DACs demonstrates that everyone benefits when the unions and management work together to promote the EAP and assist in resolving local issues.

Composition

The composition of an AC includes local representatives of the APWU, NALC, NPMHU and USPS senior management, (*i.e.*, Human Resources (HR) Manager or equivalent, at the district level).

AC members are appointed by their respective national union representative serving on the NJC. Management members are appointed by the District HR Manager.

Each organization will be entitled to two voting members and two alternates. Both voting and alternate committee members will attend the meetings. The position of chairperson should rotate among the four represented organizations.

The District EAP Consultant is an ad hoc member of the committee. They are not expected to run the meeting, nor should they be the committee's messenger. The EAP consultant's role is to offer ideas, provide information, and support the committee. The JCEAP counselor's role will align with information set out in the section titled, Joint Committee Employee Assistance Program (JCEAP).

Purpose of the Committee

The Committee will have four major functions, not all of which are equally important at any given time. While the national EAP contract sets forth the parameters for program delivery and evaluation, the Committee assists by assuming local responsibility for each of the following:

- Program promotion
- Assessing program effectiveness and providing feedback
- Organizational issues
- Program content and delivery issues unique to the district

The NJC views the AC as the eyes and ears of the program from the local perspective. Experience tells us that poor communication and lack of information lead to misunderstandings and other problems. The NJC will depend on the ACs to surface and resolve local issues. The ACs will use consensus to resolve all conflicts. In the event conflicts arise regarding delivery of services including personnel issues that cannot or should not be resolved at the local level, the AC and the NJC will work together for resolution.

EAP AC Role in Program Promotion

The AC is an extremely valuable resource for program promotion. Program promotion activities the ACs should perform include:

- Providing time for EAP information sessions in functional and union meetings
- Generating opportunities for publicity
- Supporting an EAP booth at health fairs and similar events
- Designing and distributing promotional materials and giveaways
- Promoting EAP in new employee orientations and other employee information sessions
- Initiating special events around mental health emphasis months

Promotional Videos

ACs may decide to create videos as part of their promotional initiatives. The script and video must be forwarded to the NJC before final production and distribution to ensure it is close-captioned and provides a message consistent with the national program.

Most importantly, AC members serve as ambassadors for the program by promoting use, explaining how the program works, emphasizing confidentiality, and stressing the breadth of services that EAP offers to employees and their families. ACs and the program benefit when they share successful promotional initiatives among themselves. This sharing can occur through informal discussions, inclusion of the initiatives and materials in the AC minutes posted on the EAP website (AC webpage).

EAP AC Role in Assessing Program Effectiveness

On a regular basis, the AC is an important source of informal feedback on how the program is working. The AC seeks feedback on ease of access to services, office locations, feelings of trust and confidence in the program, feelings of satisfaction with service delivery, and problem resolution. It also seeks opportunities to dispel misunderstanding and correct misperceptions about the program.

In turn, the advisory members can communicate with each other and with other members of the district community regarding any specific concerns about EAP related workplace issues that may require attention.

Some ACs may choose to initiate local surveys about awareness of, and satisfaction with, EAP services. The results of the surveys can be used to inform the AC about promotional opportunities and information gaps that should be addressed. In addition, the information can be used to inform the NJC about service and delivery issues that should be addressed by the national EAP contract.

The NJC views the AC as the group to resolve local issues that have been referred to the NJC members. The NJC will also look to the ACs to provide local perspectives and feedback on national design and delivery issues as they arise.

The AC will be a part of any site visit conducted by the vendor for the purposes of evaluating the program at the local level.

EAP AC Role in Organizational Issues

- The AC should perform intangible functions such as keeping EAP out of the labor/management issues within the organization.
- Members of the AC should assist in safeguarding the neutral role of the EAP.
- AC members will avoid conflict by monitoring themselves and others when involving EAP in consulting situations.
- The AC can help the program become more effective in the organization by explaining EAP to “constituents” and identifying areas requiring attention before problems occur.

EAP AC Role in Program Content and Delivery Issues

ACs are most helpful to the district when engaged in:

- Identifying presentation topics that can be addressed by the local counselor or other mental health professionals.
- Improving access to the program.
- Making the EAP an integral part of the efforts to provide a supportive environment for employees.

In addition to attending to local EAP issues, the AC should make suggestions to the NJC about design changes that would benefit the program nationwide. Selected ACs will be called upon to review proposed changes in protocols or program structure as needed by the NJC.

The AC should be involved with program implementation such as the location and proper furnishing of office space, addressing access issues for employees and family members, and using EAP data regarding program usage to determine local needs for program promotion, etc. Although final selection of counselors and affiliates are the primary responsibility of the vendor, the AC will have the right to meet and interview the final counselor candidate before hiring. In addition, the AC should always be alerted to concerns among employees regarding satisfaction with services provided by the counselor and affiliates and provide both positive and negative feedback when solicited by the vendor.

What an EAP AC Cannot Do

AC members must have a very professional understanding of the limitations of their role. First, the AC role is advisory only. The AC can make recommendations but does not have the authority to make changes in the EAP program design, delivery, or staff. The NJC will welcome all recommendations for consideration. However, the NJC must always consider the national EAP contract and the benefits to the program as a whole as its first priority.

The AC must avoid any appearance of breaching confidentiality by actions or words. Members of the AC must seek to understand and protect the confidentiality guidelines at all times and in all situations.

Therefore, the AC cannot:

- Know the names of people using the EAP unless a person self-discloses or written permission from the individual is obtained. The AC should never request a written release of information and access to EAP records for DAC purposes.
- Become involved in specific cases.
- Ask to review case records.
- Attempt to solve problems if to do so would require access to confidential information.
- Gossip or speak in a way that implies to others that the EAP may not be confidential.
- Engage in any other behavior which would suggest even the appearance of a breach of confidentiality.
- Present themselves as “the EAP” as it may cause people to expect confidentiality or a counseling relationship with an AC member.

Other Attendees

Representatives from other unions and organizations, including outside visitors, may be invited to attend the meetings of the AC. While they will not have a voting voice, their comments and suggestions relative to the purpose of the DAC would be welcomed.

How the EAP AC Will Organize and Conduct Business

Meetings

At a minimum the AC will meet once a quarter and more frequently as needed.

In order for the committees to meet on a regular basis, the NJC recommends the following steps:

1. Each entity (USPS-APWU-NALC-NPMHU) must keep the committee updated when changes are made to the composition of the committee following approval by the appropriate authority level of that entity. Each member of the committee must keep the committee updated on changes to email address or phone numbers.
2. Meeting should be scheduled 1 to 2 months in advance, so bring your scheduling calendar/commitments to the meetings to make your best effort to schedule yourself at all meetings.
3. As soon as practicable following a DAC meeting scheduling commitment, each member should provide advance notice to their supervisors/managers so as to make certain that they are released and available to attend the meetings and fulfill their responsibilities to the committee and the EAP process. Members need also to update their supervisors/managers on any scheduling changes.
4. The HR manager/designee should promptly send notice of the scheduling commitment to the necessary parties (committee member and their supervisor/manager).
5. The HR manager/designee should issue reminder notices (by email or text message) to all members of the AC about 1 week before the meeting. On receipt of the reminder all parties should communicate with their supervisors/managers to verify that they will be released for the meeting.
6. If there are problems that arise as to release of an employee to meet their AC obligations, such party should notify the Manager of HR seeking assistance to resolve the issue. Keeping copies of all communications will help identify problems that need to be addressed.
7. If the problem is not resolved, and if necessary, these problems should be brought to the attention of union and management leadership.
8. The goal is to attend the meetings and fulfill the obligations of the AC.

Decision making of Advisory Committees require attendance of all four entities.

Individual members of the AC may request a meeting at any time to address emerging issues. Requests should be in writing, except in unusual circumstances. Requests should not be unreasonably denied. Alternate appointees may only vote in the absence of a voting appointee.

Minutes should be approved and maintained by the AC. Once approved, a copy of the minutes of each meeting must be entered into the EAP4YOU.com website under the AC information page. It is recommended that the minutes be approved prior to the next scheduled AC meeting to avoid an extended delay in posting the minutes on the website.

District Advisory Committee Spotlight Reports

Your EAP District Advisory Committee (DAC) and JCEAP Committee plays an important role in monitoring your success in providing Postal Employees information, support, and access to the EAP program. The National Joint Committee (NJC) wants to publicize “Spotlight Reports” on our National EAP Website. We want to raise up your great works and motivate other District Advisory Committees (DAC) and JCEAP Committee.

Spotlight Reports are vital to ensure we are sharing ideas across the country that will help provide and promote a healthy, safe work environment and a safe home life for our employees. Your creative inspiring activities and events will provide value to EAP.

How can your DAC/JCEAP be selected for a Spotlight Report?

Below are guidelines required:

- You must maintain regular DAC/JCEAP meetings and provide meeting minutes to the National Joint Committee website in a timely manner.
- You must be promoting an effective EAP activity and explain how providing that activity produced successful results.
- Provide a summary of the message you wanted to raise, and the steps you took to achieve that goal. Provide pictures of your committee members as well as pictures of your activity. Submit your report to: (a Spotlight email)

The DAC/JCEAP provides appropriate training presentations, health fair events, EAP Awareness Month, Suicide Awareness Month, facilitating a contest, utilizing a calendar to distribute information on various EAP topics. The topics may include workplace bullying, coping with sexual harassment, workplace civility, post- traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), dealing with a pandemic, natural and civil disasters and tragedies including death. You may have designed great EAP wall display boards around the district, stand up talks, district mailings, surveys, district videos, facility visits, successful presentations at orientations, training for supervisors and managers, and health and wellness seminars.

A successful DAC/JCEAP encompasses assessing the effectiveness of EAP operating inside your district and how you promote better opportunities for employees and their family to engage.

We hope to see your District Advisory/JCEAP Committee in the “Spotlight” soon.

Leadership

The AC will determine how it will assign leadership in the form of a chairperson and it is recommended that the chairperson be rotated periodically. The AC will designate someone to be responsible for recording minutes of the meeting and posting them on the EAP website (AC webpage).

Consensus

While there is provision for two voting members from the APWU, NALC, NPMHU and USPS, the desire of the NJC is that the AC conducts business by consensus rather than formal vote. The work of the AC is to benefit the employees in the District; therefore, the AC should be looking for best-fit solutions for issues they address.

The NJC should be consulted if the AC needs further information or insight into the intended work of the AC. The NJC will be available to participate in conference calls with the local AC as needed.

Problem Resolution Process

The AC is encouraged to consult the NJC when problems or concerns arise beyond the scope of the work of the AC to promote the program.

Confidentiality

Preservation of confidentiality is the responsibility of everyone who represents the EAP. The AC must take care to avoid any appearance of inserting itself into individual cases. If the AC learns of concerns about a breach of confidentiality, the District EAP Consultant should be notified immediately. The District EAP Consultant will manage the investigative process while maintaining the integrity of the EAP. If the potential breach involves the District EAP Consultant, both the District EAP Consultant's Clinical Supervisor and the respective EAP National Consultant should be informed immediately. In this case, the District EAP Consultant's Clinical Supervisor and the EAP National Consultant would direct the investigation. If the breach of confidentiality occurs in a JCEAP, the EAP Administrator and the NJC should be notified immediately. The NJC will oversee the investigatory needs with the EAP Administrator, who would use an independent agent to bring things to a resolution.

Budget

Local

Districts are responsible for maintaining appropriate office space, furniture, supplies, and telephone connections for the District EAP Consultant and clinician(s). The vendor will provide all computer equipment and related computer services needed to perform under the contract. Promotional materials are available on the EAP website for downloading and printing. Any additional promotional costs are the responsibility of the District HR Office as deemed appropriate. Districts who have an internal JCEAP are responsible for the aforementioned and also all computer equipment and related services.

National

The national budget is devoted to providing EAP services through the contract with the vendor. There are no discretionary funds to be distributed to the ACs.

Counselor Selection

Counselor selection and employment are the responsibility of the vendor. They are responsible for ensuring that counselors have appropriate experience and maintain proper credentials. The AC will be given the opportunity to interview a candidate before the hiring process is complete. The AC will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the District EAP Consultant and/or Clinician. The AC cannot dismiss the District EAP Consultant or Clinician. The AC can register concerns about counselor performance to the NJC or to the vendor to investigate and resolve. JCEAPs are responsible for the counselor selection information contained in the Jointly Operated Postal Employee Assistance Program Memorandum of Understanding signed January 3, 1994.

Website resources

The EAP website which directly supports the ACs is www.EAP4You.com. This website contains a broad range of information and resources that can be used by the AC for promotion and education. There are informational posters, as well as, other promotional material representing monthly mental health emphasis and employee support related to EAP. In addition, "Best Practices" by the ACs; minutes of the AC and NJC meetings; aggregate EAP reports and a variety of other helpful resources are posted on this website.

Joint Committee Employee Assistance Program (JCEAP)

There are 4 JCEAPs. They are located in Detroit, Michigan; Los Angeles, California; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and St. Louis, Missouri. Each JCEAP's composition is similar to the District ACs. The primary difference between the two types of committees is the administrative responsibility for EAP and contracts for local services. The JCEAPs are required to adhere to these Guidelines except as specified otherwise in the Jointly Operated Postal Employee Assistance Program Memorandum of Understanding signed January 3, 1994. Counselors in Los Angeles and Philadelphia are USPS employees. Counselors in St. Louis and Detroit are contract personnel.

EAP Database

Reports

The EAP database is maintained by the vendor. The Postal Service has no access to the database. The database is used to maintain consultant and clinician records and other information related to the USPS EAP. The vendor provides quarterly reports to the USPS to assist in determining the use of the program and needs for promotion. Each district AC has access to information regarding the use of the program in the district. National information is also available.

Reading EAP reports

The District EAP Consultant or JCEAP Counselor will be responsible for assisting the AC in interpreting the EAP report. The AC should review the data and compare it to former quarters and years to develop a picture of EAP use in the district. The reports can be very useful in planning promotion and information materials.

EAPA Standards

The EAPA provides standards to be maintained by all programs. The USPS program voluntarily complies with those standards. Information regarding the standards is provided in the ‘*EAPA Standards and Professional Guidelines for Employee Assistance Programs*’ maintained and published by EAPA

Evaluation

Consultants

The District EAP Consultants’ evaluations are the responsibility of the vendor. The AC may be asked to provide input into the evaluation. As discussed earlier, concerns about performance should be discussed with the NJC or to the vendor for resolution.

Client Satisfaction

A client satisfaction survey form is given to each employee at the final session with a consultant, clinician, or counselor. Similarly, feedback forms are to be provided to service users after consultations, trainings, and critical incidents. The AC should encourage employees to use the surveys to provide feedback about the program. The District AC survey is sent to the vendor for entry into the database and the JCEAP survey is returned to the counselor. Results are only shared with USPS in aggregate form.

Appendix A – Program Description

Appendix A – Program Description

United State Postal Service Employee Assistance Program

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1. Purpose

This Statement of Work (SOW) describes the basic program services sought by the United States Postal Service (USPS) for its employees and their family members and describes key specifications for these services.

The USPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) represents the best efforts of Postal Service management, the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) to provide a quality, highly accessible, service delivery focused, resource rich program for all employees and their family members that fully embraces all of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA) core technologies.

2. Background

a. History

Article 35 of the APWU, NALC, NPMHU National Agreements provide for joint commitments to support the EAP. The agreements also provide for the establishment of the EAP National Joint Committee (NJC). While the USPS EAP Manager maintains administrative and fiscal responsibility for the program and management of the national EAP contract, the NJC maintains general oversight of the program. The NJC is composed of officer representatives from the APWU, NALC, NPMHU and the USPS EAP Manager. Representatives of the USPS General Counsel's Office and Labor Relations service in an advisory capacity. The USPS EAP Administrator is an ad hoc member of the committee.

b. Current Program

The current program design emerged from a USPS decision in 1993 to provide a comprehensive EAP managed and delivered by an interagency agreement with Federal Occupational Health Service (FOHS); as the EAP became established, the interagency agreement with FOHS was terminated and the EAP is now supplier contracted. With the exception of two Joint Committee Employee Assistance Program (JCEAP) sites, which are Los Angeles, CA and Philadelphia, PA; all EAP staff are provided by contract through the supplier.¹ In all cases, records are kept using an electronic record keeping system(s) that is managed under the supplier contract. Data information available to the USPS from the electronic information system(s) is and will continue to be in the form of aggregated data including management reports. Data will never be individual in nature. Requisite services including, but not limited to, hiring and supervision of EAP staff, program promotion, crisis intervention, and the 1-800-EAP-4-YOU service are managed by the contracted supplier.

c. Program Elements

To further improve the accessibility and effectiveness of the current program, the following core program elements are specified. The EAP shall include at least one field staff counselor in each of the participating districts.

1. A sufficient number of fully qualified counselors and affiliate counselors to serve USPS employees and their family members.
2. EAP assessments leading to either appropriate assignment to a counselor or affiliate counselor, or referral to external services/resources based upon treatment plans that take into consideration client preference.
3. A dedicated toll-free 24-hour, 365 days per year telephone service center. The center shall be continually staffed with Customer Service Associate (CSA) that have a high school degree and experience in customer service/health care environment, a customer service orientation, good communication skills, good computer skills, an appreciation for the importance of EAP services, and a thorough understanding of the overall service delivery system and their role within that system. The center shall also have a sufficient number of fully qualified counselors available to handle calls requiring immediate assessment and referral.
4. Web-based, enhanced, general resource and referral information services.
5. Telephone and web-based screening for depression and other problems.
6. Crisis intervention services for employees, eligible family members, and the organization.

¹ EAP services, including the provision of EAP counselors for the JCEAP in Detroit, MI and Gateway JCEAP are provided by contract with the national supplier.

7. A process for case management of affiliate assigned cases that appropriately involve the district counselor.
8. A confidential record keeping system.
9. An information system that will monitor counselor and supervisor efficiency and effectiveness. The information system should also provide management reports that assist in evaluating the program's effectiveness at the district and national levels.
10. Clinical supervision, affiliate consultation, and evaluation to ensure quality services.

3. Eligibility

The USPS EAP is available to all postal employees and their family members. Postal employees are those on the rolls who are located in every city throughout all 50 States, as well as, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands. Family members are any legal dependent of the employee, or anyone living in the employee's household, with the exception of tenants who live in the household.

4. Services

a. EAPA Standards and Guidelines²

The USPS supports and adopts the EAPA standards and professional guidelines which define the core functions of the EAP program.

1. Consultation with, training of, and assistance to work organization leadership (managers, supervisors, and union stewards) seeking to manage troubled employees, enhance the work environment, and improve employee job performance.
2. Active promotion of the availability of EA services to employees, their family members and the work organization
3. Confidential and timely problem identification/assessment services for employee clients with personal concerns that may affect job performance.
4. Use of constructive confrontation, motivation, and short-term intervention with employee clients to address concerns that affect job performance.
5. Referral of employee clients for diagnosis, treatment, and assistance, as well as case monitoring and follow-up services
6. Assisting work organizations in establishing and maintaining effective relations with treatment and other service providers, and in managing provider contracts

² EAP Standards and Professional Guidelines for Employee Assistance Programs, 2011 Edition.

7. Consultation to work organizations to encourage availability of and employee access to health benefits covering medical and behavioral problems including, but not limited to, alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental and emotional disorders; and,
8. Evaluation of the effects of EA services on work organizations and individual job performance.

b. Service Scope

1. The scope of services includes information, consultation, crisis counseling, assessment, short-term counseling, referral, affiliate network development, case management, case monitoring, and follow-up as appropriate, for employees, and family members. This includes but is not limited to the following: work relationships, substance abuse, chemical dependency, parenting, childcare, financial issues, legal concerns, elder care, grief, gambling, mental health problems, and workplace violence. While it is desirable to provide face-to-face EAP counseling, areas do exist where this is not always possible, and situations exist where it is not desirable on the part of the client. Telephone counseling may be offered if it is consistent with the treatment plan and acceptable to the client.
2. Clients with employment related problems, such as an EEO or sexual harassment complaint, which are not compounded by emotional distress, mental health or substance abuse problems, will be referred to the appropriate representative or department at USPS instead of EAP. The EAP, however, can provide the employee on-going supportive counseling during the process.

c. Specifications for Program Elements

1. Dedicated Service Center

A 24-hour, 365 day per year dedicated service center will be provided and accessible through a toll-free 24-hour telephone line, 1-800-EAP-4-YOU. The center shall be continually staffed at a minimum with specially trained Customer Service Associate (CSA) that have a high school degree and experience in customer service/health care environment, a customer service orientation, good communication skills, good computer skills, an appreciation for the importance of EAP services, and a thorough understanding of the overall service delivery system and their role within that system. The center shall also have a sufficient number of fully qualified counselors available to handle calls requiring immediate assessment and disposition. For calls that require immediate in-person counseling attention, the service center will attempt to assign and link a caller immediately to a counselor or an affiliate counselor in the client's community or vicinity. If necessary, to ensure the immediacy of service access, referral and linkage will be made to a local community resource with the ability to provide immediate attention. Service center staff will refer and link callers who present urgent and /or emergent needs directly

to a community resource(s) for intervention. The district counselor will be notified promptly by the service center of any high-profile case that was assigned to an affiliate counselor or referred and linked to a community resource(s) by its staff.

2. 800-EAP-4-YOU

A toll-free 24-hour telephone line, 1-800-EAP-4-YOU, will be provided for employees and their family members to access the EAP. This 24-hour telephone line will be used both to address emergent needs and as a first step in service delivery. A toll-free TTY telephone line for the deaf and hard of hearing will also be provided.

The toll-free numbers will connect to the dedicated service center with trained professional responders who will determine what the caller is requesting (e.g., emergency intervention, information, referral or assignment for services). The responders will: provide information if requested, including referral information available on the resource rich website, EAP component; make immediate assignments to the district counselors in the field or to a local affiliate, or warm transfer the call to a service center counselor.

The service center will always choose timely contact with the district counselor in a high-profile situation even though the client may be seen immediately by an affiliate or community service. The client will be given choices about location of the affiliate. The appointment may be made while the client is on the phone with the service center under emergency or special circumstances. In most cases, the client will be responsible for making the appointment.

A follow-up system will be developed and implemented to monitor caller follow-through and satisfaction.

3. Crisis Intervention

When an event occurs at a facility or to an employee that creates concern, anxiety, and/or grief within the employee family, the district counselor works with the district leadership to implement an appropriate intervention strategy. These strategies include, but are not limited to, the EAP providing individual counseling intervention or individual or group debriefings. Depending upon the severity of the situation, the district counselor may call upon other contracted resources to assist. The district counselor is available to provide consultation and referral sources to the threat assessment team as necessary. The district counselor will not provide or participate in fitness-for-duty examinations (FFD) to determine return to work or dangerousness to self or others. The district counselor's role in crisis intervention will remain consistent in providing voluntary, confidential assessment and planning.

4. Consultation with Local Leadership

The district counselor provides local leaders with resources to enhance the local work environment. Any role that EAP plays in working with the district leadership shall not compromise the neutral position of the counselor or the EAP. Counselors may continue to be called upon to provide health and wellness seminars to support assessed needs in the district.

ACs, are trained and in place in the 50 districts served by the contracted supplier. The other districts will continue with their JCEAPs. The counselor will interface with the DACs, or the JCEAPs to determine efficient and effective ways to promote the program. The role of the district counselor will provide routine visits to facilities in the district to meet with union and management to determine the effectiveness of the program and to offer appropriate support. The counselor will also be expected to be proactive with the DACs/JCEAPs where applicable in developing and presenting appropriate training and presentations regarding EAP services.

5. Program Awareness

The district counselor will work with the DAC to develop a plan to promote program awareness among all employees and family members in the district. The plan shall include but not be limited to facility visits; presentations at employee orientations; targeted training for supervisors in the Associate Supervisor Program (ASP); training for supervisors and managers; union official and management association meetings and representative briefings; health and wellness seminars; and national mental health related emphasis information.

6. Referrals to Treatment Covered by Health Insurance

Clients are referred to services that are covered by their personal health insurance plans when such services are warranted.

7. Management Information System, Program Information and Record Keeping System

The electronic record keeping system is managed and maintained by the contracted supplier. Counselors in the field are responsible for maintaining records by entering data in the supplier's information system. Data input by the counselors includes information related to affiliate cases that they manage.

All information provided to the USPS is in the aggregate and used by management and the NJC to make program decisions. Information generated is used internally by the supplier for counselor and record keeping evaluations.

The information system is required to include maintenance of confidentiality of individual information, the ability to produce appropriate management reports using

aggregated data on the district and national level in a timely manner. Additionally, the information is to provide appropriate information for the supplier to effectively manage and evaluate counselors, affiliates, and overall program effectiveness.

8. Statistical Reports and Data

USPS will receive quarterly reports based on data from the information system(s). The report will include aggregated client data and other information that allows on-going evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. The reports will provide the data by district with a national roll-up. If possible, district and national trends should be included in the report.

An annual report will be provided within 45 days of the end of the USPS fiscal year. The report will provide additional information and a management synopsis of the program. Aggregate data will also be made available on a website for use by the district counselor and the DAC.

9. Program Evaluation

The supplier will work with the USPS to develop an evaluation system that is aligned with the goals of the program's mission and purpose. The components will include, but not be limited to: 1) case record reviews, periodic site visits, policy and administrative reviews and personal and telephone interviews with union and management leaders; 2) client utilization and demographics; 3) counselor assessment of case outcomes; 4) client questionnaires, and 5) supporting the local DAC in an aggressive client satisfaction/survey campaign which may include informal employee surveys.

5. Other Specifications

A. Access

Employees on the rolls and family members are eligible for EAP services. Participation is voluntary and confidential. Employees and their family members can refer themselves. Employees can also be encouraged to contact EAP by a union steward or supervisor. Access can be gained through a direct call or visit to the district counselor's office, or a call to the toll-free number, 1-800-EAP-4-YOU.

A web-based, resource rich, EAP component will offer additional access to resource information and assistance to those who may not otherwise contact the EAP. The web-based component will be integrated to provide enhanced EAP resource information and referral services, strengthening this form of additional assistance provided by the program.

B. Confidentiality

1. Client records will be managed consistent with governing federal and state regulations, as well as, professional standards of practice to maintain confidentiality of client data and files that are acceptable to the USPS. All EAP records are maintained using secured electronic and where appropriate, paper record keeping systems. The Postal Service does not have access to records.
2. File destruction will be accomplished using policies and procedures consistent with federal and state regulations and professional standards. These policies and procedures are subject to review by the Postal Service.
3. Management reports will be provided to the USPS on a quarterly basis. The reports will provide aggregated data that will be useful at the district and national level for the sole purpose of determining program activity, program effectiveness, areas of concern, and opportunities for program promotion. Similarly, an annual report will be provided that provides summary information for all data points collected throughout the year. Aggregate reports for use in monitoring and evaluating basic elements of the program contain no identifying information about individual EAP clients.
4. The Supplier must treat any USPS client information as proprietary. Such information may only be used for the purposes of supporting this contract. Under no circumstances should this information be shared with any third parties without the written permission of the Contracting Officer Representative (COR).
5. Participation in the EAP is voluntary and confidential. EAP services by the supplier are delivered by non-postal, fully credentialed licensed counselors and qualified affiliate counselors.
6. Release of client information shall be allowed following the policies and procedures consistent with federal and state regulations and professional standards. These policies and procedures will be reviewed by the USPS General Counsel's office to assure that there are no discrepancies based upon internal policies or union agreements. USPS policies and procedures will prevail if discrepancies are determined.

C. EAP Counselors

1. Program Staff Counselors

Professional program staff counselors are based both in the centralized service center and in locations throughout the United States within all districts that receive EAP services by the contracted supplier.

Program counselors provide consultation; EAP assessment and the development of an appropriate treatment plan; referral to external resources as warranted; practice or case management for cases assigned to affiliates; follow-up on calls received through 1-800-EAP-4-YOU; consultation with district leadership (managers, supervisors, and union leaders); promotional activities; and record keeping for personnel and affiliate cases.

There will be at least one counselor located in each district covered by contracted supplier. They will represent the interests of the district in providing EAP services and work closely with the DAC to make sure that EAP services are available for all employees and their families. Their job description will be consistent with the EAPA standards for EAP core technology as described earlier in this document. This dedicated district counselor provides all EAP services with a special focus on high profile cases and situations, consultation, training, promotional activity, critical incident response (CIR) service coordination and/or delivery and work with the DAC.

The determination regarding placement of additional counselors will be based upon the density of the district population and the efficiencies of service to employees. Additional counselors placed in districts will be focused to a large degree on the delivery of direct clinical services.

District counselors will continue to be available for EAP assessments, support and responsibility for high profile cases. The district counselors will be more focused and available to the DAC and district leadership to ensure an efficient and effective program. The client's preference to be seen by an affiliate or district counselor will be mutually agreed upon.

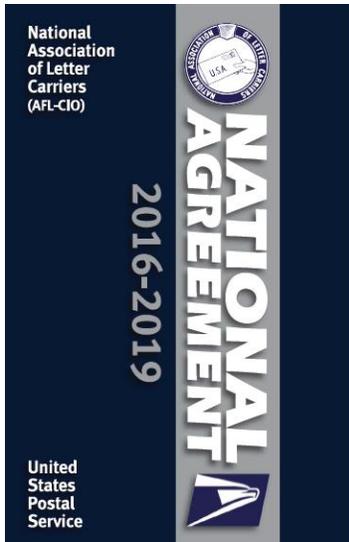
2. Affiliate Counselors

Employees and their families will be able to request affiliate assignment regardless of where they live or work. Most clients will be assigned to affiliates including, but not limited to those where; a) the client's treatment plan indicates a need for a service that is best delivered by a specific type of counselor; b) the client lives a sufficient distance from the district counselors to warrant assignment, or c) timeliness of service delivery is best served by an assignment. Affiliates will continue to be chosen based upon their qualifications as counselors and/or specialists in their field. With the exception of high-profile cases, case management or practice management for affiliates is to be managed as a part of the centralized service center operation.

3. Substance Abuse Professionals (SAP)

Staff counselors do not serve as SAPs for USPS.

4. Professional Qualifications for EAP Counselors and Affiliate Counselors
 - a. All district counselors will meet the following qualifications: (1) a master's and/or doctorate degree from an accredited college or university recognized by the corresponding professional association(s) in a clinical mental health field; (2) a current state license or state certification to practice as a mental health practitioner (e.g., social worker, clinical psychologist, marriage and family counselor, and professional counselor) in the state(s) where practice takes place. If such licensure/certification is not available in that state, the individual will hold appropriate certification from a recognized national certification organization or board; (3) authority to practice at the independent level without requiring state-mandated clinical supervision; (4) demonstrated capability to complete accurate bio-psycho-social assessments, including substance abuse assessments; (5) professional liability insurance coverage of at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence; \$1,000,000 aggregate; (6) specialized experience and/or training in phone counseling (Applicable only to Staff Counselors who perform phone counseling); (7) a minimum of five years of clinical experience after receiving the graduate degree; and (8) staff counselors will be knowledgeable about federal and state laws governing privacy, confidentiality, duty-to-warn, child and elder abuse reporting requirements.
 - b. An on-going training program will be provided by the supplier for the benefit of counselors at least annually. Counselor evaluations should provide the basis for intermittent training in the form of updates on activities within USPS, changes or modifications to policies, record keeping, etc.
 - c. USPS can request replacement of a counselor believed unable to carry out the responsibilities of the contract. This would include loss of confidence in the counselor due to perceived breaches in confidentiality or inability to work with the local DAC after intentional intervention and efforts to restore the relationship. This will not lessen the supplier's responsibility for proper selection, assignment, management, and discipline of their staff.



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

Between **American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO**

And
U.S. Postal Service

September 21, 2021
September 20, 2024



Appendix B – American Postal Workers Union (APWU), National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU) Article 35 Agreements

Article 35 (NALC) – Employee Assistance Program

Section 1. Programs

The Employer and the Union express strong support for programs of self-help. The Employer shall provide and maintain a program which shall encompass the education, identification, referral, guidance and follow-up of those employees afflicted by the disease of alcoholism and/or drug abuse. When an employee is referred to the EAP by the Employer, the EAP staff will have a reasonable period of time to evaluate the employee's progress in the program. This program of labor-management cooperation shall support the continuation of the EAP for alcohol, drug abuse, and other family and/or personal problems at the current level.

An employee's voluntary participation in the EAP for assistance with alcohol and/or drug abuse will be considered favorably in disciplinary action proceedings.

Section 2. Joint Committee

For the term of the 2016 National Agreement, the Employer and the Union agree to establish at the national level a National EAP Committee. The Committee will have responsibility for jointly assessing the effectiveness of EAPs operating inside and outside the USPS, and for developing on an ongoing basis the general guidelines with respect to the level of services and the mechanisms by which the services will be provided.

The Committee is not responsible for day-to-day administration of the program.

The Committee shall convene at such times and places as it deems appropriate during the term of the 2016 National Agreement. No action or recommendations may be taken by the Committee except by consensus of its members. In the event that the members of the Committee are unable to agree within a reasonable time on an appropriate course of action with respect to any aspect of its responsibility, the Vice President, Labor Relations, and the National Union President shall meet to resolve such issues.

The Committee is authorized to obtain expert advice and assistance to aid its pursuit of its objectives. The apportionment of any fees and expenses for any such experts shall be by consensus of the Committee.

The Employer and the Union agree that they will cooperate fully at all levels towards achieving the objectives of the EAP. This joint effort will continue for the term of the 2021 National Agreement.

Article 35 (APWU) – Employee Assistance Program

Section 1. Programs

The Employer and the Union express strong support for programs of self-help. The Employer shall provide and maintain a program which shall encompass the education, identification, referral, guidance and follow-up of those employees afflicted by the disease of alcoholism and/or drug abuse. When an employee is referred to the EAP by the Employer, the EAP staff will have a reasonable period of time to evaluate the employee's progress in the program.

This program of labor-management cooperation shall support the continuation of the EAP for alcohol and/or drug abuse at the current level. In addition to the current EAP, the EAP will be expanded, as provided in Section 2 hereof, to encompass the education, identification, referral and guidance of

1. employees' family members afflicted with alcoholism and/or drug abuse which could or does have a negative impact on the employee's work performance, and
2. those employees and their families experiencing other family and/or personal problems which could or do have a negative impact on the employee's work performance.

An employee's voluntary participation in the EAP for assistance with alcohol and/or drug abuse will be considered favorably in disciplinary action proceedings.

Section 2. Joint Committee

For the term of the 2021 National Agreement, the Employer and the Union agree to work jointly in the development of the expanded EAP and in improvements in the existing EAP. The parties agree to establish at the national level a National EAP Committee. The Committee will have responsibility for jointly:

1. assessing the effectiveness of EAPs operating inside and outside the USPS, and
2. developing on an ongoing basis the general guidelines with respect to the level of services and the mechanisms by which the services will be provided.

The Committee is not responsible for day-to-day administration of the program.

The Committee shall convene at such times and places as it deems appropriate during the term of the 2021 National Agreement. No action or recommendations may be taken by the Committee except by consensus of its members. In the event that the members of the Committee are unable to agree within a reasonable time on an appropriate course of action with respect to any aspect of its responsibility, the Vice-President, Labor Relations, and the National Union President shall meet to resolve such issues.

The Committee will submit to the Vice-President, Labor Relations, and the President of the Union, a comprehensive report on the general guidelines for changes, if any, in the level of EAP services and the mechanism by which the services will be provided.

The Committee is authorized to obtain expert advice and assistance to aid its pursuit of its objectives. The apportionment of any fees and expenses for any such experts shall be by consensus of the Committee.

The Employer and the Union agree that they will cooperate fully at all levels towards achieving the objectives of the EAP.

The parties recognize the issues of child and elder care and the potential challenges many employees may face as a result of these issues during their postal careers.

Therefore, the parties agree that for the term of the 2021 National Agreement child and elder care means, methods, and programs may be included as a topic of discussion of the Employee Assistance Program Joint Committee established under Article 35.

This joint effort will continue for the term of the 2021 National Agreement.

Article 35 (NPMHU) – Alcohol and Drug Recovery Programs

Section 1. Programs

The Employer and the Union express strong support for programs of self-help. The Employer shall provide and maintain a program which shall encompass the education, identification, referral, guidance and follow-up of those employees afflicted by the disease of alcoholism and/or drug abuse. When an employee is referred to the EAP by the Employer, the EAP counselor will have a reasonable period of time to evaluate the employee's progress in the program. The parties will meet at the national level at least once every 6 months to discuss existing and new programs. This program of labor-management cooperation shall support the continuation of the EAP Program, at the current level. In addition the Employer will give full consideration to expansion of the EAP Program where warranted.

An employee's voluntary participation in such programs will be considered favorably in disciplinary action proceedings.

In offices having EAP Programs the status and progress of the program, including improving methods for identifying alcoholism and drug abuse at its early stages and encouraging employees to obtain treatment without delay, will be proper agenda items for discussion at the local regularly scheduled Labor-Management Committee meeting as provided for in Article 38. Such discussion shall not breach the confidentiality of EAP participants.

Section 2. Referral Information

In Postal installations having professional medical units, the Employer will insure that the professional staffs maintain a current listing of all local community federally-approved drug treatment agencies for referring employees with such problems. A copy of this community listing will be given to the local union representative.

(The preceding Article, Article 35, shall apply to Mail Handler Assistant employees)

Appendix C – Definitions

- a. Alcoholism – a complex disease characterized by the uncontrolled use of alcohol.
- b. Drug Abuse – an improper or illegal use of or dependency on drugs.
- c. EAP District AC – a committee located in a district that acts as the eyes and ears of the EAP program from a local perspective. The committee has responsibility for assisting with program promotion, program evaluation and feedback, organizational issues, and program content and delivery issues unique to the district.
- d. External EAP Service Provider – an individual or group external to the Postal Service providing EAP services on a contractual basis.
- e. Family Member – any legal dependent of the employee or anyone living in the employee’s household, with the exception of tenants or employees of the postal employee who live in the household.
- f. Internal EAP – employee assistance services provided by employees of the Postal Service.
- g. Other Problems – include, but are not limited to, gambling, stress, and emotional, family, marital financial, and legal problems.
- h. Self-initiated Referral – an employee’s voluntary referral of him- or herself for assistance from the EAP, made by directly contacting an EAP consultant or clinician. An employee’s first visit to the EAP may be on the clock, provided the manager receives advance notice and concurs. Subsequent consultations are on the employee’s own time. If a reasonable period of time has elapsed since a previously disclosed self-referral, the manager or supervisor may, at his or her discretion, approve an additional on-the-clock session.