



October 15, 2007

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Dear Jim:

Please find below responses to questions posed by the union regarding the Human Capital Enterprise System (HCES) and the Human Resources Shared Services Center (HRSSC). These questions were received via email from Mike Morris of the APWU on July 24, and discussed at length at meetings attended by APWU representatives, U.S. Postal Service program personnel, and Patrick Devine of my staff, held on August 1 and 6.

SHARED SERVICES Q&A

Vacancy Postings

1. How will job bidding occur during the down time created by the migration process?

At the outset, it should be noted that the Postal Service has notified the national unions, including the APWU, in advance of all periods of data migration. The first notification was sent April 17, concerning data migration in the Capital Metro, Eastern, New York Metro, Northeast, and Southeast Areas. The second notification, concerning data migration in the Great Lakes, Pacific, Southwest, and Western Areas, was sent on July 27. In both letters, the unions were advised that during the specified 2-week period there would be no job postings or bidding. This temporary suspension of postings or bidding is permissible under the requirements of the National Agreement.

As indicated by correspondence dated June 5, from John Dockins of the U.S. Postal Service to Jim McCarthy of the APWU, the union has been advised that, as Article 37.3.A.1 requires that newly established and vacant duty assignments be posted within 28 days, it is clear that the 14-day temporary suspension does not rise to the level of a contractual violation.

As discussed during the meetings, other measures, including in some instances manual bidding, where necessary, have been developed to accommodate posting and awarding of vacancies during data migration.

2. *Will vacancy postings show who the duty assignment was "vacated by"?*

Positions that are vacated in the Human Capital Enterprise System (HCES) and subsequently posted in HCES will include "vacated by" on the posting after data migration is completed.

3. *Will vacancy postings include the pay location?*

At the outset, it should be noted that inclusion of this information, as suggested by the union, is not required by the National Agreement. Moreover, as discussed, pay location information was originally used for purposes of paycheck distribution. Inclusion of pay location information may be confusing to employees who have not committed pay location numbers to memory. Nevertheless, in some locations, the parties by local agreement have agreed to the inclusion of such information. The "comments" section of the vacancy posting can include text identifying the work area, rather than, a number code for pay location. This inclusion should help clarify for employees the work area identified in the vacancy posting.

4. *Will vacancy postings reflect varied start times?*

Currently, it will be necessary for local services to provide the varied start times in the Job Comments Section. The U.S. Postal Service is exploring whether the system can be modified to report actual varied start times in the posting.

5. *What can be done to ensure the vacancy posting is identical for prospective bidders whether they bid manually, by telephone, or by computer?*

As discussed at length during the August meetings, the U.S. Postal Service is currently developing changes to the system software which will address distinctions between the various bidding mechanisms.

6. *Can the vacancy posting be made more legible; either by increasing font-size or by being provided to local human resources in Excel or similar format?*

The font-size is the same as has been previously used in the Complement Management System (CMS). Nevertheless, the U.S. Postal Service is currently implementing changes, including the omission of the underlining of the job number, to create additional space on the posting. This increased space should accommodate an increase in font-size. Any other posting visibility issues can be addressed at the local level.

7. *Can duty assignments be consistently grouped in the vacancy posting by section, rather than, by job number?*

The default mechanisms in the system, which currently group duty assignments by job number, can be modified to accomplish this request by the union.

8. *Is there a limitation on the number of words or letters that may be included in the comments section of a posting?*

The "Job Comments" section includes five (5) lines of space, consistent with space availability under the CMS.

9. *Can an LMOU or a binding practice that establishes a bid closing time other than at midnight be accommodated by Shared Services? If not, is there a report available to show the date and time that bids were placed?*

As discussed at the meeting, the closing time established in the system is midnight. However, the U.S. Postal Service can provide a report to local services showing date and time of all bidders, so that bidders who bid after the closing time and date mandated by the LMOU can be disallowed. This disallowance will avoid any unnecessary conversion to manual bidding, which was requested by the union.

10. *What instructions are given to local management to accommodate situations when the computer system is down during the bidding window?*

Local Services and District Transition Coordinators have been instructed that when the computer system is down, based upon necessity, manual bidding may be accepted.

Award Notices

11. *How soon after bidding closes can the award notice be posted?*

Local Services has to confirm any applicable bidding restrictions, live records, light/limited duty status, etc. This information is then sent back to Shared Services. The current process complies with any and all requirements under the National Agreement. It is expected that the eventual conversion to a web-based system may allow more-immediate input from Local Services.

12. *Can award notices include the pay location from which the successful bidder came?*

The Final Award notice reflects exactly what is displayed on the Final Posting. Position comments on a Final Award must not be changed to display information that differs from the Final Posting. The pay location of the successful bidder cannot be entered or displayed in the position comments on the Final Award.

Interim Qualifications Report (IQR)¹

13. *Do these reports originate from Shared Services or are they to be prepared locally from data received from Shared Services?*

These reports are prepared by Local Services from data received from Shared Services.

14. *Has a specific timetable for providing this information been established?*

Information is being provided to Local Services as it becomes available.

15. *What is the turn-around time for reporting the qualifications and failures after reporting by local training technicians on Form 1400?*

The turn-around time is three (3) working days.

16. *How are qualification records for individual clerks downloaded during migration to Shared Services, and how are errors corrected?*

Any issues can be addressed with Local Services.

17. *Can employees becoming unassigned regulars be reported in the IQR?*

Any issues can be addressed with Local Services.

18. *Can duty assignments become residual be reported in the IQR?*

Any issues can be addressed with Local Services.

19. *Can the IQR report reverted duty assignments?*

Any issues can be addressed with Local Services.

20. *What controls are in place to differentiate between newly established, vacant, and re-posted duty assignments for bidding eligibility purposes?*

HCES personnel are familiar with these distinctions and comply with requirements under the National Agreement. As discussed during the meetings, if a vacancy gets cancelled in one posting and placed in another posting, it will likely change from "newly established" to "vacant" because it was previously posted. When this same vacancy gets a new job number, it appears in the Pre-Vacancy Report as "newly created." Local Services can address these distinctions.

¹There appears to be different names for this report depending upon the installation, e.g., it is called the "Tuesday Bulletin" in Minnesota and it is called the "Hand-downs and Qualifications Report" in Tampa. The report shows the bidders who have qualified and bids that have dropped to a junior bidder since the previous award notice.

Pre-Vacancy Report (PVR)

21. Can a firm schedule, including date and time, be established for providing the PVR?

A firm date has been established for each bid cluster on which the U.S. Postal Service provides the vacancy report. That date is dependent upon the opening date of each posting. Additionally, the time established is close-of-business on the established date.

22. How are necessary changes and corrections to the duty assignments made to the PVR? Could the data be downloaded from Local Services, instead of input by Shared Services?

Local Services and Local Management can provide necessary information to be input into the system. Currently, Local Services does not enter data directly into the system. It is expected that the eventual conversion to a web-based system may allow more-immediate input from Local Services or other authorized local managers.

23. Under what circumstances are new job numbers being assigned?

HCES does not require the creation of new position numbers when there are title/occupation code changes to positions as CMS did. Rather than create new position numbers, HCES places a system indicator on the position which shows when a change such as an occupation code or job title is made.

PTF Preferencing

24. Can the system accommodate PTF preferencing?

Yes. However; to date, the HRSSC has not yet processed any PTF Preferencing activity for HCES migrated districts. It is has been advised that PTF Preferencing activity will be accomplished after Full-Time/Part-Time Regular job bidding activity has been analyzed. Until that time, PTF Preferencing will be a non-automated process accomplished at the local level.

Communication

25. What time-frame is appropriate for reporting retirements, resignations, transfers, craft changes, deaths, conversion of PTF's, etc.

The system can accommodate events upon the receipt and inputting of required information.

26. What are the guidelines for accepting locally forwarded information regarding eligibility to bid, training, qualification, status and other comments to be placed on bids?

All postings are created and information displayed, as required by Article 37.3.E.8. The HRSSC will input information relevant to the employee bidding on a position, within a limit of five (5) lines of text. Examples of information normally included are variable schedule

information, previous CMS Job Slot ID information, and information regarding the need to report to various physical locations.

27. Who is providing contract guidance, whether on the national or local agreements, to Shared Services personnel?

USPS Headquarters Labor Relations has taken the lead in providing guidance to the HRSSC.

28. Who is available for the local union to contact regarding questions and issues that arise with posting?

Any issues can be addressed with Local Services and Local Labor Relations.

29. What is Shared Services doing to provide appropriate training to ensure mistakes, regardless of whether the mistakes are made by Shared Services personnel or local personnel, are not repeated?

Local Services is being trained and information is being shared in a timely manner.

Uniform and Work Clothes Allowance

30. When will the system be corrected to return uniform and/or work clothes allowance information to posted bids?

These issues are currently being addressed. These issues will be resolved in the short-term by Local Services being instructed to put uniform and/or clothing allowances in the "Job Comments" section. Authorizing and administering the Uniform Program has always been the responsibility of local management in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the ELM.

31. Is the software currently capable of assigning either a uniform or clothing allowance to employees?

To address these issues, Local Services is expected to complete the necessary paperwork and forward it to the HRSSC. Shared Services will then enter the information into the system and forward the paperwork to St. Louis for processing. The HRSSC is currently removing the uniform allowance when employees bid out of duty assignments with uniform allowances.

32. When will local management be trained on how to ensure uniform and clothing allowances are given?

Local Services has been trained on the appropriate methodology. Any issues can be addressed with Local Services. Each District may determine if Local Services will initiate the processing of these allowances or give the responsibility back to local management in accordance with the provisions of the ELM.

Additional Questions

33. *What is being done about the problems currently experienced by employees withdrawing bids on the computer bidding system?*

A procedure designed to alleviate these problems is currently being tested.

34. *What instructions have been given to the field about the September migration and its impact on bidding, either in the offices being migrated or already on line?*

The system will be unable to accommodate posting or bidding anywhere in the country for a period of five (5) or six (6) days while the data for the new sites is migrated into the system. As noted above, Article 37.3.A.1, requires that newly established and vacant duty assignments be posted within 28 days. Given the brief transition period, it is not anticipated that any contractual violation(s) will take place.

35. *Will the Job Comments section be included in LiteBlue?*

Yes.

36. *Are staffing levels at Shared Services adequate to take on the additional sites coming on line?*

Yes.

Sincerely,



John W. Dockins
Manager
Contract Administration (APWU)

for