

AREA VICE PRESIDENTS
DISTRICT MANAGERS

SUBJECT: Post Plan Instructional Memorandum

This Instructional Memorandum is designed to guide Area and District offices through application of the Post Office Structure Plan (Post Plan), which includes procedures for realignment of a Post Office's retail window service hours or commencement of a discontinuance study. This Memorandum can be followed by utilizing the attached flowchart.

1. Background

As background, the Post Plan is a Management Initiative to review Post Offices (Post Plan excludes Stations, Branches, and Annexes) by examining earned workload. Under Post Plan, Post Offices with low workload may continue to operate with hours adjusted to earned workload. The Post Plan introduces new structural concepts to the management of Post Offices including:

- The Remotely Managed Post Office (RMPO), which is defined as an office that reports to an Administrative Post Office (APO). There are three levels of RMPOs. Level 2 RMPOs have an Adjusted Earned Work Load (AEWL) of 0.00 hours to 1.99 hours. Level 2 RMPOs will offer window service hours for 2 hours per week day; Saturday hours will not change. Level 4 offices have an AEWL of 2.00 hours to 3.99 hours. Level 4 RMPOs will offer window service hours for 4 hours per week day; Saturday hours will not change. The level 2 and the level 4 RMPOs will be staffed by non-career PMRs. Level 6 RMPOs have an AEWL of 4.00 hours to 5.74 hours. Level 6 RMPOs will offer window service hours for 6 hours per week day; Saturday hours will not change. The level 6 RMPOs will be staffed by career EPMs.
- The Part-Time Post Office (PTPO) is defined as any office that would normally qualify as an RMPO, but is beyond a 25 mile radius of the nearest APO, or is more than 25 miles driving distance from the nearest Post Office. PTPOs will offer window service hours of 6 hours per weekday; Saturday hours will not change. PTPOs will be staffed with career, EPM employees. PTPOs report to district offices.
- The APO, for purposes of Post Plan, is a level 18 or above Post Office that has one or more RMPOs assigned to it.

It must be understood that, though this memorandum and the flowchart refer to both hour realignment and the discontinuance study process, these are two separate processes that are independent of one another. The purpose of this Memorandum is to assist District coordinators' decision making. If it is determined that the discontinuance study process is the proper path, Handbook PO-101 procedures must be followed.

To complete either process, field management will need specific information pertaining to each Post Office being reviewed. In following the flowchart, specific information will be utilized to determine the path of the office being considered. The answer to each question will direct the reviewers down the appropriate path.

The operational status of the office will be the first area of consideration utilized to determine whether to pursue realignment of a Post Office's retail window service hours or initiate the discontinuance study process. It must be noted that Post Plan currently applies to operational EAS Level 16 or below Post Offices. If a Post Office is either closed or under suspension, then the correct pathway would be the discontinuance study process in accordance with the guidelines established in Handbook PO-101. Local management may determine to reopen a suspended facility or decide that the facility will be reopened in the future. Closed facilities may not be reopened at the local level.

2. Post Plan Implementation

a. Identification of Offices

Headquarters has already identified the earned workload of operational EAS Level 16 or below Post Offices. Briefly, if an operational EAS Level 16 or below Post Office has an adjusted earned workload (AEWL)¹ of less than or equal to 5.74 AEWL hours, then that office is to be evaluated for realignment of retail window service hours.

For those currently operational EAS Level 16 or below Post Offices that have an AEWL greater than 5.74 hours, Headquarters has determined to upgrade these offices to EAS Level 18 or above.² Other offices with 5.74 AEWL hours or below AEWL may achieve PTPO status based on proximity to the closest Post Office or the APO. These determinations are made by Headquarters.

The Post Plan process started at the Headquarters level. For each affected office, Headquarters validated that the office is operational and that the office does not immediately fit into the category of an office that should be reviewed under Post Plan and not considered for discontinuance study. Next, Headquarters validated that the office is currently level 16 or below and that it earns less than or equal to 5.74 AEWL.

Headquarters has also already evaluated and mapped affected Post Offices nationwide. At Headquarters, each office was mapped and consideration was given to the relationship to other nearby Post Offices. By completing this mapping,

¹ AEWL is derived by multiplying Customer Service Variance (CSV) or Small Office Variance (SOV) by 1.1

² Actual Level would be determined by utilizing the existing Workload Service Credits. The Post Office would be assigned the actual level it earned.

decisions have already been made as to what offices qualify for APO, RMPO, and PTPO status. Headquarters has provided this information to the field and the field was given the opportunity to advise on specific concerns that could not be identified at the national level.

b. Timetable

The field should begin preparing for the Post Plan implementation process. This begins by soliciting community feedback via the customer survey and community meeting. All actions in regard to this implementation will be administered by the Vice President Delivery and Post Office Operations, who will communicate with the Area Vice Presidents on specific rollout activities. The office of the Vice President, Delivery and Post Office Operations, will coordinate specific office activities, such as,

- Selection of Post Offices for each phase of the Post Plan implementation
- Development of the timeframes for scheduling and sending out Customer/Stakeholder Surveys
- Development of the timeframes for scheduling and conducting Community/Stakeholder Meetings
- Development of the timeframes for the effective dates for modified retail hours for any of the RMPOs/PTPOs

These communications will be directed at coordinators at the appropriate time.

c. Survey

When an office is ready to be reviewed under Post Plan, Headquarters will prepare a mailing for the communities of the Post Office being reviewed that will include a brief letter of explanation and the Customer Survey. Copies of the cover letter and survey form are attached. This mailing will be sent to all addresses serviced by the Post Office under consideration, including city delivery, rural delivery, contract delivery, P.O. Box Delivery, and General Delivery. A notice must be posted within the facility explaining that the office is being considered for review under Post Plan and surveys will be made available to customers who request them at the retail counter. There will be an established cutoff date for the survey as determined by Headquarters. The posting will specify that surveys must be returned by a specified date for consideration. The survey will identify four possible paths for the future of the facility and seek customer input on which path is preferred. The paths will include:

1. **Maintain** the Post Office with realigned retail window service hours. AEWL will be utilized to determine the number of window service hours. The community will be informed of the number of hours that an office will be open;
2. **Deliver** service using either rural carriers or HCR; discontinue the Post Office;
3. **Engage** a local establishment within the community and establish a Village Post Office to increase hours of operation; discontinue the Post Office; or

4. **Merge** with nearby Post Office and provide service from that location; discontinue Post Office.

Because Headquarters has already completed the mapping and analyses of all RMPO offices, the survey will include specific information about the individual office under consideration. The survey will include (at a minimum):

- The name of the office
- The ZIP Code of the office
- The total daily hours the office will be open (2, 4 or 6) based on AEWL

d. Survey Analysis

After the deadline for receiving surveys passes, field officials will analyze the data and comments received from all the surveys.

Unless there is a strong preference (measured at sixty percent) for any options relating to the discontinuance study process, the Post Office will be maintained with realigned window service hours. So, if survey respondents express a strong preference (measured at sixty percent) for options involving discontinuance, then follow the Handbook PO-101 process. Include all of the survey responses and an analysis of the surveys in the administrative record. Also, include an analysis of why the option of realigned hours was not selected in the administrative record.

Upon selection of the hour realignment option, the district office should then refer to the Post Plan data provided by Headquarters. These data identify every office that was formerly Level EAS 16 or below and also identify the office level. In addition, the district office must analyze the survey results and determine the respondents' preferences for window service hours. Weekday window service hours correspond to the office level; Saturday hours will remain as they are today. The district does not have the ability to modify the total number of hours established within Post Plan.

In both scenarios (hour realignment or strong preference for discontinuance study), the next step for the District is to conduct a community meeting to share the results of the survey. The date and time of the meeting are determined by the cover letter sent to the community.

e. Community Meeting

The District will host the community meeting. At the community meeting, the results of the survey will be shared. In addition, the community should be informed about the availability of hours at nearby Post Offices and alternate access options. Further, where respondents express an interest in operating a Village Post Office (VPO), the community should be informed to the extent possible of the viability of this option.

If, through the survey, the community expresses a strong preference for discontinuance study, then this outcome will be shared with the community. The Postal Service will then begin the Handbook PO-101 process for a discontinuance study.

If, through the survey, the community did not show a strong preference for discontinuance study, the Post Office will be maintained with retail window service hours adjusted to workload. Field coordinators should use a fact sheet or handout to explain the option. The number of hours of operation for the Post Office was defined by the Post Plan and already communicated through the survey.

f. Discontinuance Study

If a community expresses a strong preference for discontinuance study, the Postal Service will begin the USPS Handbook PO-101 process for discontinuance study.

g. Access to Delivery Receptacles

Before adjusting hours, it is important that hours of access to delivery receptacle be maintain at today's level. This may require retrofitting offices to permit access to the office when window service hours are not available or developing other options. Field official should contact your district facility management office for suggestions if construction options are limited.

h. Annual Review

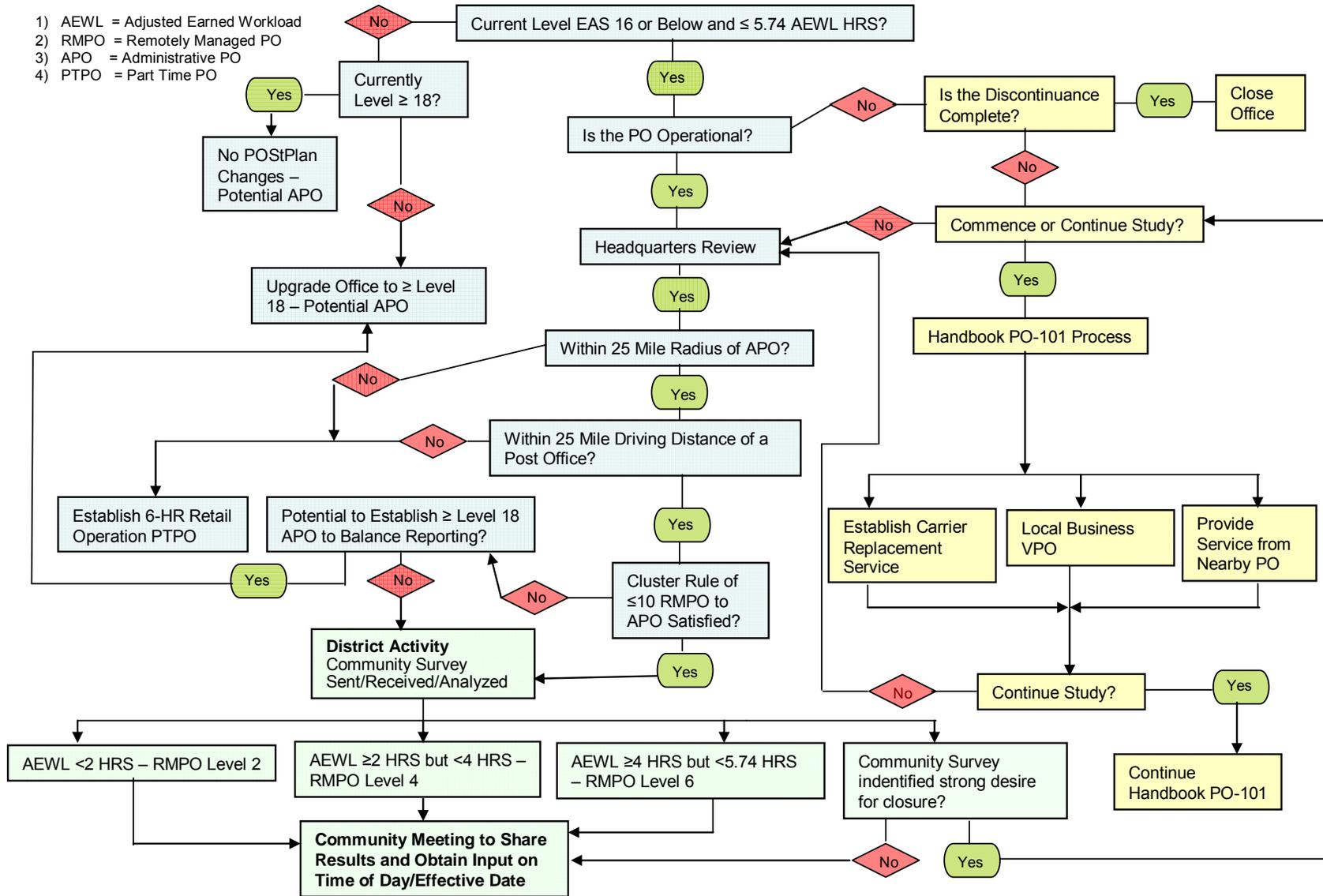
Beginning in FY 2014, the Postal Service will review the AEWL for all Level 2, 4, and 6 RMPOs and PTPOs on an annual basis. Based on this review, the level for these RMPOs and PTPOs may increase, decrease, or remain unchanged. Schedules for reviews and adjustments to window service hours will be announced in the future.

We look forward to your continued dedication as we roll out this important initiative. Please contact Jeffrey Day, Manager, Post Office Operations, at (202) 268-5484 if further information or assistance would be helpful.

Dean Granholm

Attachments: Post Plan Flowchart
Survey Cover Letter
Survey

- 1) AEWL = Adjusted Earned Workload
- 2) RMPO = Remotely Managed PO
- 3) APO = Administrative PO
- 4) PTPO = Part Time PO



(Date)

Postal Customer
(City, State, ZIP Code)

Dear Customer:

The Postal Service recently announced the Post Office Structure Plan (Post Plan), which establishes a review process for certain Post Offices. The **[[Name]]** Post Office is a candidate for Post Plan. The Postal Service is soliciting community input through this survey to help guide the Postal Service in determining the best course of action for providing postal service to your community.

After receiving the results of this survey, the Postal Service will examine the responses and unless the community has a strong preference for discontinuing the **[[Name]]** Post Office and offering one of the replacement services described below, the Postal Service intends to maintain the **[[Name]]** Post Office with **[[Hours]]** of window service on weekdays. Saturday window service hours and access to delivery receptacles will not change as a result of the Post Plan realignment of weekday window service hours.

In addition to this survey, the Postal Service will hold a meeting at **[[Location of community meeting, date and time]]** to answer questions and provide additional information about Post Plan. At the meeting, local management will share the results of the survey and answer questions.

The Postal Service is also seeking locally established businesses or organizations to serve as contractor-operated retail units in communities like yours. If you are interested in operating a retail unit, please visit the website at <http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/expandedaccess/welcome.htm>

Please return the enclosed survey in the pre-paid envelope provided by **[[DATE]]**. Please note that your response may be entered into a publicly accessible record.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Name
Title

Post Plan Customer Survey

[[Name]] Post Office [[ZIP Code]]

I. Mailing Address: _____

II. Please select the alternative below which you most prefer (choose only one):

1. Keep the office open, but at reduced weekday window service hours, based on actual office workload. In the case of the [[NAME]] Post Office, hours would be reduced from X:XX hours per weekday to XX hours per weekday. Saturday hours will not change as a result of Post Plan and access to your delivery receptacles will not be impacted by Post Plan
2. Discontinue the office and offer curbside delivery. Retail and delivery service would be provided through a rural carrier. Mail delivery points will be established and customers can purchase most postal services through the carrier or other alternate access points.
3. Find a suitable alternative location operated by a contractor, usually at a local business. When businesses are found that meet the criteria, these establishments are contracted through the US Postal Service and offer stamps and flat rate products with service hours generally more expansive than what the local Post Office may be able to offer.
4. Provide P.O. Box service via another nearby Post Office and relocate P.O. Box delivery to that Post Office.

III. In the event that window service hours are reduced to XX hours per weekday, please indicate your preferences for weekday window service hours. Please note that the “box up” time, *i.e.* the time when mail is normally delivered to mail receptacles, could be affected by the range of hours selected.

My preference for window service hours each weekday would be:

IV. Additional Comments:
