

A History Of Postal Workers' Salaries

The chart below shows the progress of postal workers' salaries, beginning immediately before postal employees won the right of genuine collective bargaining, and continuing through the current agreement. Salaries are shown at Level 5, Step 0, and reflect pay rates at the end of each contract.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Increase</u>
1969	\$8,442	

(Prior to the enactment of the Postal Reorganization Act)

1970	\$9,657	14.39%
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Following the March 1970 strike by postal employees, the enactment of the Postal Reorganization Act mandated salary increases of no less than 6 percent effective Dec. 27, 1969, and 8 percent effective July 18, 1970, as well as a continuation of federal benefits.

1971 – 1973	\$11,073	14.66%
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The 1971 negotiations resulted in a contract that continued postal work rules and working conditions; provided for salary increases, and included a “capped” cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). All the major postal unions were part of a single bargaining committee, and the two-year agreement was ratified by the members of the unions.

1973 – 1975	\$13,483	21.76%
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Agreement was reached prior to the expiration of the statutory negotiations period (90 days). The COLA cap was lifted. The two-year agreement was ratified by the membership. All major postal unions were included in a single bargaining committee.

The Progress of Postal Workers' Salaries

1975 – 1978 **\$16,501** **22.38%**

A negotiated agreement was reached within the statutory period, with flat dollar salary increases in each year of the contract. The three-year agreement was ratified by union members. All major postal unions participated in the bargaining committee.

1978 – 1981* **\$21,630** **31.08%**

Negotiations resulted in a tentative agreement that included a capped COLA. The APWU Rank-and-File Bargaining Advisory Committee rejected the agreement, as did union members. Binding arbitration – provided for under the Postal Reorganization Act – was invoked to resolve the impasse. Arbitrator James J. Healy was retained to decide the COLA and no-layoff provisions. Locals threatened to strike. The bargaining committee included the APWU, National Association of Letter Carriers, and National Postal Mail Handlers Union. The National Rural Letters Carriers Association negotiated separately. The arbitrator's ruling uncapped the COLA and required six years of continuous service to achieve protection against layoff. The contract term was three years.

1981 – 1984 **\$24,173** **11.76%**

Negotiations resulted in a tentative agreement within the statutory period. The bargaining committee included the APWU and NALC. The three-year agreement was ratified by the membership of the two unions. The National Postal Mail Handlers Union and National Rural Letter Carriers Association negotiated separately.

1984 – 1987* **\$27,401** **13.35%**

Negotiations resulted in arbitration. Arbitrator Clark Kerr interpreted the standard of "wage comparability" required by the Postal Reorganization Act, and issued an award covering a 42-month period. The bargaining committee included the APWU and NALC.

1987 – 1990 **\$31,766** **15.93%**

Negotiations resulted in a three-year tentative agreement, which was ratified by the membership. The bargaining committee included the APWU and NALC.

1990 – 1994* **\$35,604** **12.08%**

Negotiations resulted in referral to arbitration. Arbitrator Richard Mittenthal imposed a four-year agreement, which included Transitional Employees. He referred the issue of the employer's contribution to health benefit premiums to a separate process. Arbitrator Rolph Valtin decided the issue of health benefits premium payment in 1993, which resulted in a 4 percent increase in employees' share of healthcare costs. The APWU and NALC bargained together.

1994 – 1998* **\$37,831** **6.25%**

Negotiations resulted in referral to arbitration. Arbitrator Jack Clarke imposed a four-year agreement. Each of the postal unions bargained separately.

1998 – 2000 **\$40,472** **6.98%**

Negotiations resulted in a two-year agreement, which was ratified by the membership. Each of the postal unions bargained separately.

2000 – 2003* **\$43,099** **6.49%**

Negotiations resulted in referral to arbitration. Arbitrator Stephen B. Goldberg imposed a three-year agreement. Each postal union negotiated separately.

** Indicates contracts that were decided in arbitration.*

Postal Workers' Salaries

2003 – 2005 **\$45,997** **6.72%**

APWU and USPS agreed to a two-year extension of the 2000-2003 contract. The extension was ratified by the membership.

2005 – 2006 **\$47,996** **4.35%**

APWU and USPS agreed to a one-year contract extension, which was ratified by the membership.

2006 – 2010 **(Estimated at) \$52,747** **9.90%**

APWU and USPS agreed to a four-year contract, which was ratified by the membership.

The chart above reflects the contracts between the USPS and the major postal unions. Other postal employees represented by labor unions also have engaged in bargaining with the Postal Service. In total there have been 88 agreements – with 64 agreed to voluntarily, 20 referred to impasse arbitration, three involving fact finding, and one referred to mediation.

At the conclusion of the 2006-2010 contract, postal workers' salaries will have increased – from \$8,442 in 1969 – to an estimated \$52,747.

The logo for the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) is displayed in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are thick and closely spaced, with a slight slant to the right.

American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
William Burrus, President