

What's Going on With the USPS?

What is the USPS and what does it do?



The USPS (United States Postal Service) is one of the nation's largest employers, with more than 630,000 staff members. It has been a permanent fixture of the United States Federal Government since The Post Office Act was passed in 1792.¹

The USPS is the only mail and postage delivery service dedicated to getting mail to every single one of the 160 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes in the USA. Its operational costs are funded solely through the sale of postage, products and services.¹ The USPS also handles mail relating to many government services, such as election mail, ballots, passport services, political mail, federal government solutions, and official mail.²

Some Facts About the USPS³:

Globally, the USPS processes and delivers 48% of the world's mail.

The USPS is paid by its competitors (UPS and FedEx) to deliver hundreds of millions of their ground mail, and in return, the USPS pays UPS and FedEx for air transportation.

USPS employees protect elderly and disabled customers through the Carrier Alert Program. Mail carriers alert officials of an accumulation of mail that may indicate an issue or accident at a participating residence.

Most importantly, the USPS is not a privatized business. It is an independent establishment of the executive branch of the government.⁴ It does not run on American taxpayer money and receives no tax dollars for its operating expenses. The USPS's affordable prices for sending postage, and the sale of products and services are what funds its operations.³ However, if it were a company in the private sector, the 71 billion dollar business would have ranked 44th place in the 2019 Fortune 500 list.⁵

What's the issue?



The USPS, which was already in financial trouble⁶, is losing more money for its operational costs due to COVID-19, and the current administration has not provided any relief money as of yet. It is facing changes to the way its budget is used and how fast mail is delivered after a new Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, was appointed in June 2020.⁷ Many mailboxes and sorting machines are being removed from streets and postal facilities, and packages are piling up at postal centers. The USPS is in danger of shutting down.

In 2006, the United States Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), which, among other things, requires the USPS to pre-pay healthcare and retirement benefits for all current and (projected) future employees for the next 50 or more years.⁸ This places a strain on the USPS's finances since its profits are not substantial enough to pay the specified amount each year to fulfill the requirements of the PAEA.⁹ The institution is going deeper into debt each year, and haven't reported actual profits since the PAEA was passed.¹⁰ However, its profits are just enough to keep operations running.

Louis DeJoy, the new Postmaster General, has no previous experience carrying mail and is a major Trump donor.¹¹ There is a conflict of interest between his position as Postmaster General and his financial assets because he holds investments in businesses that compete with the USPS. The new changes he implemented included getting rid of overtime for mail carriers, removing postal boxes and mail sorting machines, and shortening post office hours. These measures have slowed down mail, and are harmful to those who rely on the USPS for paychecks, medicine, and other essentials.²

Why should I care?



The staggered mail flow may eventually cause a massive backlog in deliveries, and the USPS is likely to lose the public's favor due to its unreliability.

Many elderly and disabled people rely on the Postal Service for their medications. Not receiving their medicine on time can cause their health problems to worsen and may even result in death.

Small businesses rely on the affordable price of the USPS's postage to send out their products. If customers aren't experiencing a pleasant experience shopping with them due to the Post Service, small businesses risk losing money and going out of business.

Many Americans, domestic and abroad, use mail-in ballots and absentee voting if they are not able to vote in-person on Election Day. Hundreds of thousands of military and other related service members stationed abroad use mail-in ballots; more than 600,000 ballots were sent by service members and their families in the 2016 election.¹²

Many elderly and disabled people cannot go to the voting polls due to their illness or disability and other Americans are unable to make time to go vote due to work schedules. With COVID-19, more people are likely to vote by mail due to public health and safety concerns. If the USPS is not operating at full capacity, a large amount of ballots may not be counted, which could skew the election.

Even if you are not affected directly, your family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and/or their families may be affected by this.

What if I need to mail in my ballot?



In the state of New York, if you are a registered voter already, you will need to request a ballot in order to vote by mail, and provide an excuse. You can check if your state requires you to request a ballot and/or provide an excuse [here](#).

If you are not a registered voter in the State of New York, you can do so [here](#). If you are outside the State of New York, you can click [here](#) to register to vote.

It is important to understand that mailing in ballots is time sensitive and should not be delayed. New York State starts mailing out ballots on or beginning September 18th to those who have requested for one. The last day to request an absentee ballot for mail-in voting is October 27th. More information is available [here](#).

Since there is an increase in the delay of mail in the nation, it is in your best interest to not procrastinate requesting a ballot and/or sending in your vote. To see an estimate of how long it may take for your ballot to reach the board of elections, click [here](#).

Other alternatives to voting by mail and in person (both [early](#) and on Election Day), such as ballot boxes, and curbside voting, are being explored.¹³

Make sure you are familiar with who is running this election, as there are congressional, state and local races happening along with the Presidential race. You can find more information on your candidates [here](#) and [here](#).

Stay safe and maintain social distancing if you will vote in person.

How You Can Help the USPS

Raise awareness! Let your friends, family and acquaintances know what's going on. A great start is to share this facts sheet!

Text "USPS" (all caps) to 50409 to urge your local representatives to save the post office.

Send a message to your senators by filling out [these forms](#).

Sign the [petition](#)!

[Buy](#) stamps and send mail to your friends and family. The USPS has tons of cute designs, including frogs!

Opt for USPS when choosing from competing shipping services, it can really use the money.

Call your representatives to pressure them to take a stand to save the USPS. Find your representatives [here](#).

Do something nice for your mail carriers! An encouraging message on your mailbox or even sending them a smile from your window can make their day better.

Sources:

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