



Going Postal

Managing your mailing to maximize savings and delivery service

New York Press Association, April 23, 2026

***Two of our biggest
challenges in circulation:***

- **Minimizing Costs**
- **Maximizing Service**



Acronyms, Acronyms, Acronyms...

The Postal Service LOVES acronyms. Here are some I'll be using today.

BCG – Business Customer Gateway (USPS business portal)

CASS – Coding Accuracy Support System (defined later)

DDU – Destination Delivery Unit (Namely, a post office)

LPC – Local Processing Center

RPDC – Regional Processing and Distribution Center

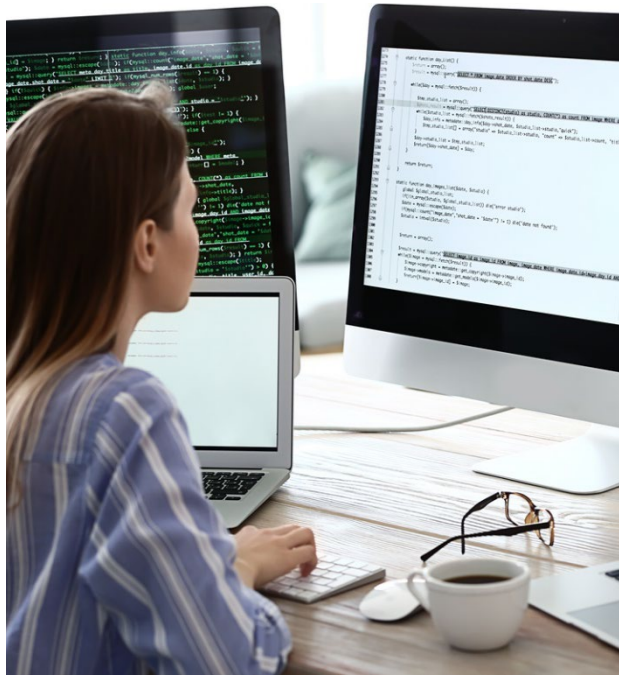
S&DC – Sortation and Distribution Center



Things You Can Do To Save On Postal Costs

How to minimize costs **1**

Use good software designed for newspaper Periodicals mail.



Software designed for mailing newspapers, should ensure:

- Your mailings get the most accurate and cost-effective sortation.
- You get all discounts available to you.
- Minimizes or eliminates mailing errors that can cost penalties from USPS
- Minimizes the workload for your team.



The best software for your newspaper may not be the cheapest, or the most expensive, but the package that fits your needs the best.

Look at all the functions needed in circulation

- **Subscription management**- renewal notice generation, stop lists, holds, gift subs, subscription rate management, single copy and/or carrier sales.
- **Mailing management** – labels or label files, container tags, CASS certification, NCOA (National Change of Address) interface, mailing statement generation, PostalOne integration, sampling and non-subscriber support.

- **Management of e-edition and/or web subscriptions** through integration with those vendors.
- **Ability to manage and process lists for Marketing Mail mailings.**

Software that manages more functions, meaning less work for your staff, may be worth the extra money. On the other hand, if you don't need the bells and whistles, don't pay for what you don't need.

Possible Software Vendors

(Note: Not all software provides all aspects of circulation management)

- Interlink (www.ilsw.com)
- BCC (bccsoftware.com)
- AccuZIP (accuzip.com)
- SmartSoft (www.smartsoftdq.com)

USPS's Postal Wizard mail entry portal

USPS offers a mailing entry portal called Postal Wizard, through the Business Customer Gateway (BCG), found at gateway.usps.com.

- Postal Wizard allows the mailer to enter the details of the mailing – piece weight, advertising percentage, number of copies in each sortation category, etc.
- Postal Wizard **will** calculate the postage, and prepare and file the mailing statement.
- Postal Wizard will **not** print labels, tray tags or manage your circulation. To get Automation and Carrier Route rates, you must CASS process your list regularly. This requires the appropriate software.

Business Customer Gateway (BCG) main screen

The screenshot displays the USPS Business Customer Gateway (BCG) main screen for user Matthew Paxton. The browser address bar shows the URL `gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/action/homepage`. The page header includes the USPS logo, the text "BUSINESS CUSTOMER GATEWAY", and navigation links for "Home" and "Hello Matthew!". Below the header, there are links for "Mailing Services", "Shipping Services", and "Additional Services", along with "Alerts", "Pending Requests", "Manage Account", "USPS.com", and "Help".

The main content area features a dropdown menu for the account name: "NEWS GAZETTE (4684175), PO BOX 1153, LEXINGTON, VA 24450-1153". To the right, it shows "Next Permit Fee: Loading..." and a link for "Balance and Fees".

The "Account Overview" section includes tabs for "By EPS#" and "By Permit#". Under "Select EPS#", the "News Gazette EPS account - 1000030398" is selected. The "Current Balance" is displayed as "\$0.00". The "Pending Transactions" section notes that debit transactions are aggregated and withdrawn at 6:00 PM Eastern. The "Account Status" is "ACTIVE". A link for "Enterprise Payment System" is provided at the bottom.

The "Mailer Scorecard" section has tabs for "eDoc Submitter", "Mail Preparer", and "Mail Owner". The date "April 2026" is shown, and the status is "Loading...". A link for "Mailing Report" is at the bottom.

The "Favorite Services" section, which can be edited, lists several options: "Dashboard", "MTEOR", "Mailer ID", "Mailing Reports", "Manage Permits", "Online Enrollment", and "Postal Wizard". The "Postal Wizard" link is circled in red.

The system tray at the bottom shows a temperature of 54°F, "Mostly sunny", and the date and time: 12:56 PM, 4/19/2026.

How to minimize costs

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The Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) is a USPS certification program that evaluates and certifies address-matching software. It ensures that software accurately standardizes addresses, adds ZIP+4 codes, and validates delivery points to improve mail deliverability and qualify for bulk postage. Mailing lists have to be submitted for comparison against the Postal Service's address database regularly. This is called CASS processing.

Eliminate (as much as possible) addresses that do not CASS process. This is most often because of an error in the address – wrong street number, incorrect spelling, etc. It can also result when new streets or housing developments open, and that information hasn't been updated in USPS's database.

PAGE NOT FOUND

In most software, these labels will appear at the beginning or end of a sortation group (carrier route, PO box section.)

Fix addresses that will not CASS process.

Typically, your software will default to a 5-Digit sort for those labels. You can identify those subscription by the 5-DIGIT routing in the upper right corner of the label.

#BXNHJVF ***** **5 DIGIT-20003**

12345 12/14/1799

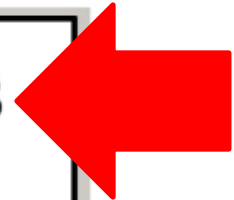
B1 P3

JOHN ADAMS

THE WHITE HOUSE

1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVE NW

WASHINGTON DC 20003-3229



At current (April 2026) rates, an in-county newspaper at the 5-Digit Automation rate (barcoded), will have a piece rate of **37.6 cents**. (This is added to the pound rate to get the overall per-piece cost of mailing.)

That same in-county newspaper that is CASS processed and sorted to Carrier Route Basic has a piece rate of **13.7 cents**.

20 copies a week at the 5D rate over a year will cost you \$248.56.

How to minimize costs

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Make sure your software (or Postal Wizard) is calculating all discounts.

- Preferred Price (Limited Circulation) discount.
- Full-Service Intelligent Mail discount.
- DDU pound rate on Exceptional Dispatch copies

On our 4/1/2026 In-County mailing of 3,215, these discounts totaled \$17.88. (\$929.76 over a year.)

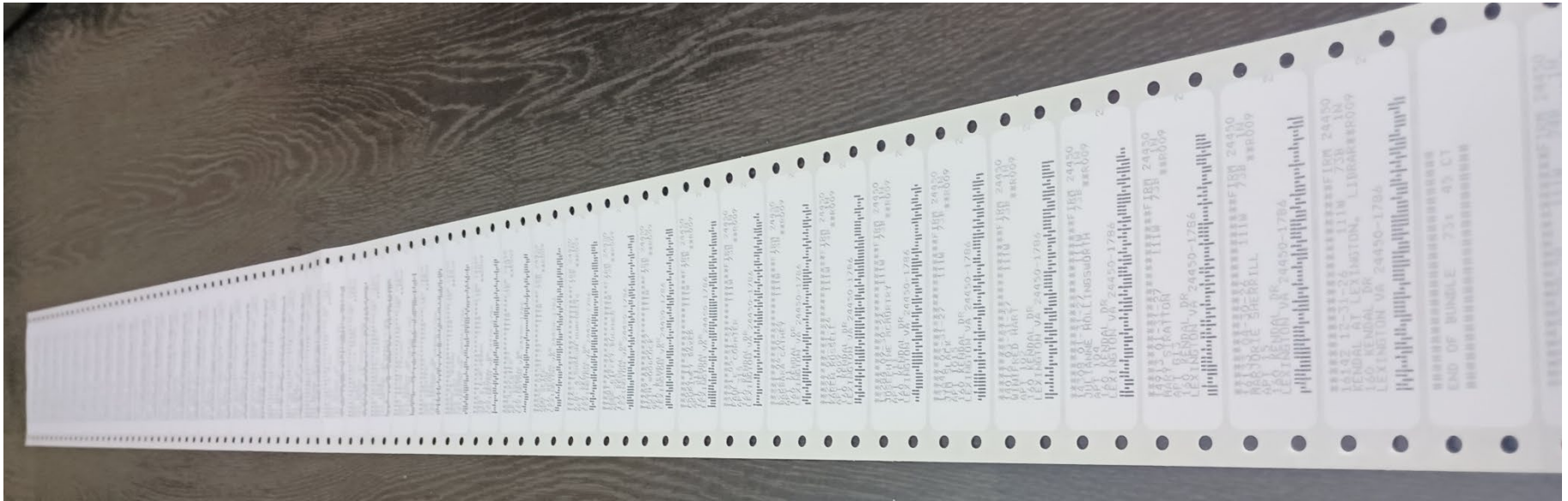
How to minimize costs

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Look for opportunities to create firm packages. A firm package is made up of mail pieces all going to the same address. These can be bundled, and count as only one piece on your mailing statement, though you do pay the pound rate on the total weight.

The piece rate is the larger component of the rate calculation – the other being the pound rate based on the weight of the mail piece.

All of these papers count as one piece!



Good mailing software will create these when sorting. However, sometimes you have to be creative.

Look for retirement facilities, or possibly apartment buildings with a central mail room, all going to the same street address but with different apartment numbers. There may be a way to include the apartment number on a secondary address line, that will allow the software to create a firm package for all the papers going to that central mail room.

67 papers into 1 firm package saves \$9.04 per mailing. (.137 CR Basic in-county piece rate X 66 – you do pay for one piece.) **\$470.18 saved in a year.**

How to minimize costs



This combines cost savings with service improvement – both important goals.

Papers that you deliver to outlying post offices under Exceptional Dispatch (more later on this) qualify for DDU rate on the pound price.

In-county DDU pound price is **15.6 cents/pound**. Non-DDU is **20.4 cents/pound**.

Example: 571 lbs at DDU vs. Non-DDU rate = **\$27.41**

(To figure net savings from Exceptional Dispatch, subtract the weight of papers already going to your Entry Post Office – you're already getting the DDU rate on those.)



Things You Can Do To Get The Best Service From USPS

How to maximize service



For subscribers within your county or contiguous counties, consider an Exceptional Dispatch program. You deliver, at your expense, directly to the delivery offices, bypassing postal transportation (and the new one-truck-a-day rule), delays in the RPDC and time to transport back to the DDU – 3-5 days. With Exceptional Dispatch, you should get next-day, or even same-day delivery.

- Exceptional Dispatch costs you to deliver to post offices, but it retains subscribers.
- DDU rate for Exceptional Dispatch-delivered papers provides some offset to cost.
- Exceptional Dispatch puts you in control of when your papers arrive at outlying offices.
- Your Entry Postmaster can approve you for Exceptional Dispatch with simply a letter from the publisher.
- **(See <https://postalpro.usps.com/node/9657>)**

- Intended for local distribution (Zones 1 & 2).
- Newspaper's total circulation > 25,000.
- Eligible for DSCF (Out-of-County) or DDU (In-County rates).
- Local postmaster can approve.
- Publisher must file a letter of request for Exceptional Dispatch privileges with the office of original or additional entry where postage is paid. The request must include fully the proposed Exceptional Dispatch, including the mode of transportation and approximate time of arrival and the number of pieces qualifying for and mailed at the various presort level prices in detail. If the number of qualifying pieces mailed at such prices changes more than 2%, the publisher must file an amended request letter with the approving office. No form is provided for this process.

How to maximize service

2

Always install upgrades to mailing software promptly. The Postal Service changes routings and mailing schemes frequently, and upgrades insure that your mail is being sorted for most efficient processing.

How to maximize service



Use flats tubs, not sacks for your Out-of-County.

Tubs are easier for the Postal Service to handle in their sortation centers. The barcoded sack tags have to be scanned manually, while tub tags can be read as the tub travels on a conveyor.

Most RPDCs allow tubs to be nested, eliminating the gripe that tubs with lids take up too much space in trucks. Check with your Bulk Mail Entry person at your entry post office.

Note: In-County mail doesn't require a container. You can deliver bundles to your DDU and Exceptional Dispatch offices.

“Sack The Sacks”



How to maximize your service

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- Keep a log of service problems.
- Track systemic delivery problems.
- For persistent delivery issues, contact the USPS's customer assistance line at 1-800-ASK-USPS. (800-275-8777)
- If you're an NNA member, contact us through the Postal Hotline on the NNA website. We have a monthly call with USPS to coordinate action on these systemic delivery problems.

How to maximize service

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- Have a “missed paper” program. Develop a way to deliver a paper to subscribers who call in complaining of not receiving their paper.
- We ask members of our staff to drop off a copy to subscribers who live conveniently near our employee’s way home. (This is purely voluntary, but our experience is that subscribers are so pleased to get their paper that our folks enjoy it.)

The reality of Out-of-County delivery

The reality is that delivery to Out-of-County is never going to be what it once was. Current USPS delivery standards for Periodicals are 4 days for even nearby deliveries. Subscribers insistent on hard-copy paper delivery need to be aware of that, and know that it's not something the newspaper can control. We urge subscribers wanting prompt service to opt for our e-edition of the paper, for same-day service.

What's ahead from USPS

Rate increases (unless Congress intervenes)

- Periodicals postal rates to increase an average of 6.8% in July, 2026. In-county increase 9.3%, out-of-county 6.3%.



Coming this July...

Container charges (bundles, sacks, trays, pallets) will no longer be charged separately but rolled into overall piece/pound rate structure. This is supposed to be revenue-neutral.



You can expect...



Continued disruption to the USPS network as new/revamped Regional Processing and Distribution Centers (RPDCs), Sorting and Distribution Centers (S&DCs) and Local Processing Centers (LPCs) come on line.

Questions?

