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SUBJECT: White Paper on the Nature of Grievances and the Initiatives Taken to
Reduce and Prevent Them (Report Number HM-OT-05-001)

This white paper presents the results of the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) review of the nature (type and number) of backlogged grievances,¹ filed by the Postal Service's four major unions—the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU), and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA) (Project Number 04YO005HM000). Our objectives were to determine: (1) the nature of backlogged grievances for fiscal years (FY) 1999 through 2004 by location and identify any trends that indicate systemic issues, and (2) the effectiveness of the initiatives the Postal Service has implemented to reduce the number of backlogged grievances and to prevent the filing of new grievances.

This white paper identifies for the Postal Service the top 10 types of grievances unions file, and the ones that could cause a backlog. The Postal Service could use this information to reduce the number of filings and the backlog, by establishing new initiatives to target the causes for the grievances. By reducing the number of grievances and settling them at the lowest possible level, the Postal Service can reduce costs associated with grievances and improve labor relations with its unions.

Background

The national agreements signed by senior-level Postal Service management and the union presidents include grievance-arbitration procedures Postal Service management,

¹The Postal Service defines "backlogged grievances" as those that remain at Step 3 of the grievance process for more than 56 days.

bargaining unit employees,² and union representatives follow. These procedures allow bargaining unit employees (also referred to as craft³ employees) and the four major unions to resolve workplace disputes, disagreements, complaints, and concerns.

The grievance-arbitration process generally consists of three steps⁴ to resolve grievances. The process includes a fourth step that is available at the national level and used only when a case of contract interpretation is at issue.

Generally, the first step in the process requires bargaining unit employees who feel aggrieved to discuss the issues with their immediate supervisors. Employees may also seek union assistance at this step. If the employee and supervisor do not reach a resolution, the employee can file a formal grievance through the union or the union can do so on its own initiative. The next three steps involve formal discussions with appropriate management and union representatives at the local, regional, or national level. The process also allows appeals of unresolved grievances to arbitration, where a Postal Service and union selected arbitrator makes a binding decision. (See Appendix B for an illustration of the grievance-arbitration process.) The national agreements also assume the Postal Service and its unions will “observe in good faith” the grievance-arbitration process to settle or withdraw grievances at the lowest level whenever possible.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported in 1997⁵ there had been little progress in improving persistent labor-management problems due to the adversarial attitudes of employees, unions, and management. In September 2003,⁶ we reported on Postal Service and union labor relations, finding three primary reasons the Postal Service and the four major unions did not follow the grievance-arbitration procedures: (1) negative attitudes and behaviors exhibited by some Postal Service managers and union representatives, (2) a lack of incentives or administration of penalties for reaching agreements, and (3) differing business interests. Our report also acknowledged, however, the cooperative efforts of Postal Service management and union officials to implement new initiatives to help resolve grievances at the earliest step and improve labor-management relations.

²Most bargaining unit employees are represented by one of the four major unions that negotiate with the Postal Service for wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment. Bargaining unit employees include city and rural letter carriers, clerks, mail handlers, special delivery messengers, maintenance employees, and motor vehicle operators.

³Employees are organized along craft lines. The APWU represents clerks, motor vehicle operators, building and equipment maintenance personnel, and vehicle maintenance personnel; the NALC represents city delivery carriers; the NPHMU represents mail handlers; and the NRLCA represents rural delivery carriers.

⁴The APWU, NPHMU and the NRLCA refer to the various levels as Step 1 through Step 4. The NALC refers to the levels as Step A and Step B, and as informal and formal. For the purpose of this report, we will refer to the levels as Steps 1 through 4, with Step 1 meaning informal Step A, Step 2 meaning formal Step A, and Step 3 meaning Step B, etc.

⁵U.S. Postal Service: Little Progress Made in Addressing Persistent Labor-Management Problems (Report Number GAO/GGD-98-1, October 1997).

⁶Postal Service and Union Labor Relations (Report Number LR-AR-03-012, September 30, 2003).

This report shows the progress the Postal Service and its four major unions have made in improving the effectiveness of the grievance-arbitration process and their relationships since September 2003.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We discuss our objectives, scope, and methodology in detail in Appendix C.

Prior Audit Coverage

We list our prior audit coverage in detail in Appendix D.

Results

From FYs 1999 through 2004, the Postal Service experienced an overall 21 percent decrease in the number of grievances filed by the four major unions, with a 15 percent decrease occurring from FYs 2003 to 2004 alone. This decline was generally across-the-board, with the exception of the Pacific and Southwest areas. However, all nine of the Postal Service areas experienced decreases in grievances filed between FYs 2003 and 2004, with the Western and Southeast Areas experiencing the biggest decreases. Even more significant was the overall 83 percent decrease in the number of backlogged grievances from FYs 1999 to 2004 and the 66 percent decrease just from FYs 2003 to 2004.

We can largely attribute the reductions in grievances to several initiatives the Postal Service and its four major unions have successfully implemented to improve labor-management relations and the grievance-arbitration process. These include establishment of a new performance-based pay system to evaluate and hold Postal Service managers and supervisors accountable for improving the labor management climate, and the development of joint contract interpretation manuals to provide all parties a better understanding of the national agreements.

Even though the numbers of filed and backlogged grievances are at an all-time low, we identified several trends related to issues that traditionally generate grievances. For example, for the last two years (FYs 2003 and 2004), the top three issues grieved pertained to letters of warning, overtime assignments, and cross craft assignments. Further, we estimated the Postal Service could incur approximately \$1.3 billion in costs associated with labor-management issues for FYs 2000 through 2005, including \$807.6 million in known costs, and an additional \$499 million in estimated costs through the end of FY 2005. However, this amount should decrease over time due to the reduced number of filed and backlogged grievances.

In addition, although the Postal Service cannot accurately attribute all costs to specific grievances, management said they will be able to do this once they complete a

modification to the Grievance-Arbitration Tracking System⁷ (GATS) in December 2005 and implement it nationwide.

Number of Grievances Filed by the Four Major Unions

As shown in Table 1, from FYs 1999 to 2004, there was an overall 21 percent decrease in the total number of grievances filed by the four major unions; and from FYs 2003 to 2004 alone, there was a 15 percent decrease. Specifically, unions filed 198,525 grievances in FY 2003 and the number dropped to 168,902 in FY 2004.

The NRLCA experienced the largest overall decrease of 23 percent from FYs 2003 to 2004; for the same time period the NPMHU showed a slightly lower decrease of 20 percent; and the NALC and APWU had decreases of 17 percent and 12 percent, respectively.

In addition, the ratio of grievances filed per 100 bargaining unit employees was 25:100 in FY 2004—its lowest since FY 2001 when it was 31:100. There was a 12 percent decrease in this ratio from FYs 2003 to 2004. While this is an improvement, 25 grievances filed per 100 bargaining unit employees is still high and indicates the need for the unions and management to continue their efforts to prevent the filing of grievances.

Table 1: Number of Grievances Filed by the Four Major Unions and Ratio of Grievances to Bargaining Unit Employees

Union	Number of Grievances Filed						FYs 2003 to 2004 Percentages Decrease/ Increase	FYs 1999 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease/ Increase
	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004		
APWU	122,303	82,181	136,867	138,104	99,255	87,710	-12	-28
NALC	59,276	47,495	62,614	63,216	64,187	53,183	-17	-10
NPMHU	29,288	20,789	31,716	31,920	29,776	23,899	-20	-18
NRLCA	2,680	2,335	3,605	3,659	5,307	4,110	-23	+53
Totals	213,547	152,800	234,802	236,899	198,525	168,902	-15	-21
Number of bargaining unit employees	765,599	755,706	745,600	721,574	702,341	682,769	-3	-11
Ratio of grievances to bargaining unit employees	28:100	20:100	31:100	33:100	28:100	25:100	-12	-12

Source: GATS

Note: Percentages were rounded

It should also be noted the number of bargaining unit employees represented by the four major unions has decreased from FYs 1999 to 2004 by 11 percent. Table 2 shows

⁷GATS is the system the Postal Service uses for tracking grievances filed, obtaining grievance data, and scheduling arbitration cases.

the number of bargaining unit employees represented by each of the four unions during the 6-year period.

Table 2: Number of Bargaining Unit Employees by Postal Service Union

Union	Number of Bargaining Unit Employees						FYs 2003 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease/ Increase	FYs 1999 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease/ Increase
	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004		
APWU	349,117	281,956	327,279	312,026	298,099	280,695	-6	-20
NALC	242,300	241,079	240,295	232,684	229,404	228,140	-1	-6
NPMHU	62,237	60,851	60,102	58,940	56,776	54,769	-4	-12
NRLCA	111,945	114,643	117,924	117,924	118,062	119,165	1	6
Total Number of bargaining unit employees	765,599	755,706	745,600	721,754	702,341	682,769	-3	-11

Source: Postal Service Annual Report for FYs 1999–2001, 2003 and 2004, and the Human Resource Management Information System for FY 2002

Note: Percentages were rounded

Number of Grievances Filed by Postal Service Area

Seven out of nine Postal Service areas of operation⁸ experienced decreases in the number of grievances filed between FYs 1999 and 2004. For example, the Western Area experienced the biggest decrease (44 percent) with 27,025 grievances filed in FY 1999 and 15,068 filed in FY 2004. The Eastern/Allegheny Area experienced a similar decrease (40 percent) with 43,490 grievances filed in FY 1999 and 26,012 filed in FY 2004.

Conversely, the Pacific Area experienced the biggest increase (25 percent) with 20,246 grievances filed in FY 1999 and 25,390 in FY 2004. The Southwest Area also experienced an increase (8 percent) with 17,930 grievances filed in FY 1999 and 19,317 in FY 2004.

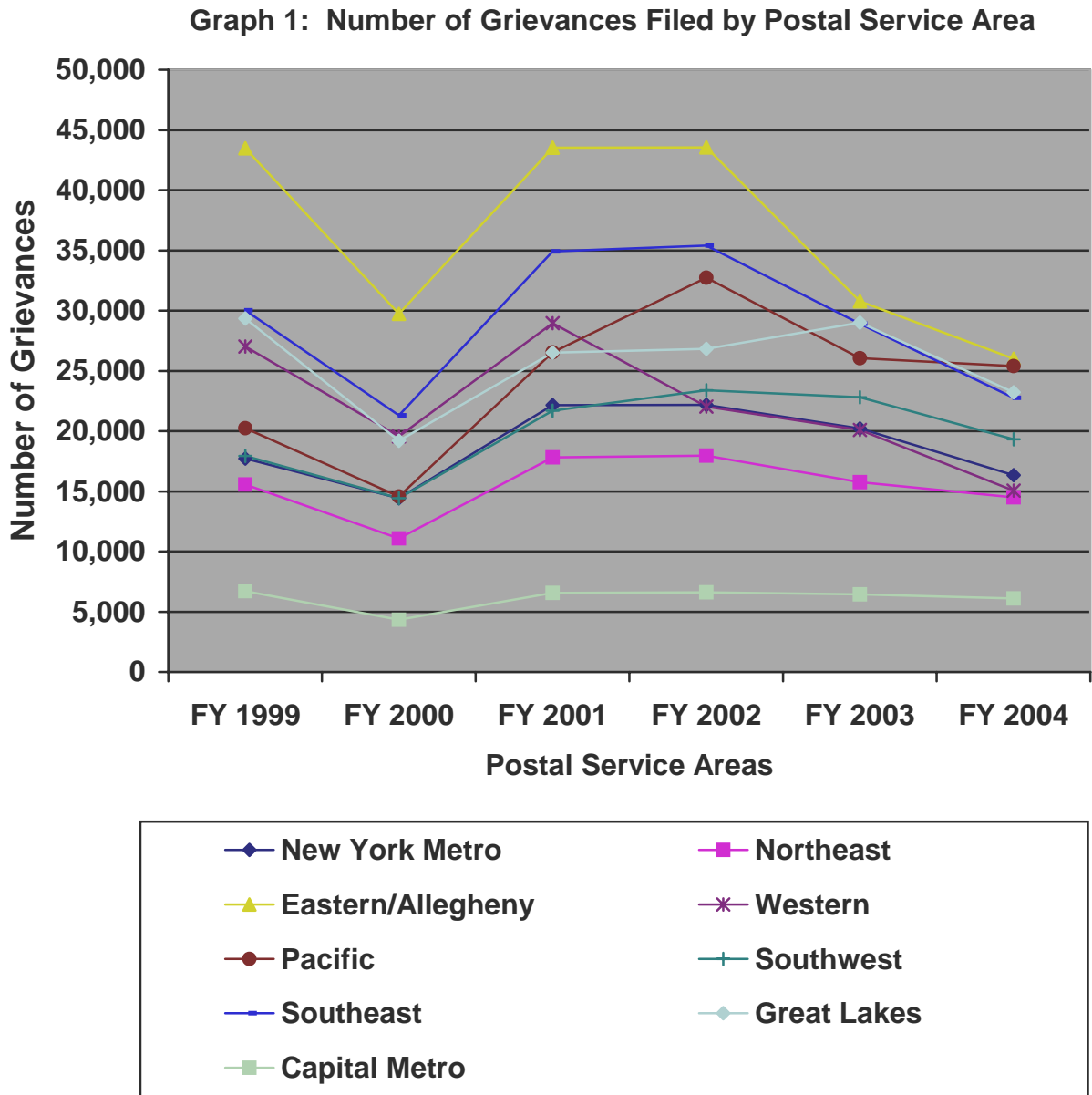
Additionally, there were decreases in the number of grievances filed between FYs 2003 and 2004 in all nine Postal Service areas:

- The Western Area experienced the biggest decrease (25 percent) with 20,097 grievances filed in FY 2003 and 15,068 filed in FY 2004.
- The Southeast Area experienced a similar decrease (21 percent) with 28,900 grievances filed in FY 2003 and 22,759 filed in FY 2004.

⁸The nine areas of operation are Capital Metro, Eastern/Allegheny, Great Lakes, New York Metro, Northeast, Pacific, Southeast, Southwest, and Western.

- The Pacific Area experienced the smallest decrease (3 percent) with 26,050 grievances filed in FY 2003 and 25,390 filed in FY 2004.

Graph 1 illustrates the trends for the numbers of grievances filed on behalf of employees for FYs 1999 to 2004 by Postal Service area.



Source: GATS

Types of Grievances Filed

Even though the number of grievances filed is at its lowest since FY 1999, we identified several trends related to issues that traditionally generate grievances. Specifically, from FYs 1999 through 2004, the top 10 issues were generally the same each year, with nine types of grievances consistently appearing:

- Letters of warning
- Cross craft assignments
- Overtime assignments
- Workhours
- Suspensions of 14 days or less
- Performance of bargaining unit work
- Handbooks and manuals
- Grievance and arbitration process
- Unilateral action

We also determined the number one issue grieved for the last 5 years (FYs 2000 through 2004) was letters of warning (discipline). For the last 2 years (FYs 2003 and 2004), the top three issues pertained to:

- Letters of warning
- Overtime assignments
- Cross craft assignments

Appendix E is a complete description of the types of grievances filed. Appendix F is a table of the top 10 types of grievances filed for FYs 1999 through 2004.

Number of Backlogged Grievances Filed by Four Major Unions

Like the number of grievances filed, the number of backlogged grievances is at its lowest since FY 1999. As shown in Table 3, all four major unions significantly reduced the number of backlogged grievances from FYs 1999 to 2004. Overall, there was an 83 percent decrease for the 6-year period and a 66 percent decrease from FYs 2003 to 2004 alone.

The NALC had the biggest decrease (93 percent) in its backlog, falling from 7,979 in FY 1999 to 532 in FY 2004, followed by the APWU, with a decrease of 83 percent from 19,270 in FY 1999 to 3,217 in FY 2004.

Table 3: Number of Backlogged Grievances Filed by Union for FYs 1999 to 2004

Union	Number of Backlogged Grievances							FYs 2003 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease	FYs 1999 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease
	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004			
APWU	19,270	16,169	21,472	15,414	8,762	3,217	-63	-83	
NALC	7,979	8,812	5,015	2,068	2,018	532	-74	-93	
NPMHU	2,789	3,585	3,902	4,474	3,876	1,208	-69	-57	
NRLCA	128	176	194	251	318	90	-72	-30	
Totals	30,166	28,742	30,583	22,207	14,974	5,047	-66	-83	

Source: GATS

Note: Percentages were rounded

Number of Backlogged Grievances by Postal Service Areas

The Postal Service's nine areas of operation had significant reductions in the number of backlogged grievances between FYs 1999 and 2004, with each area decreasing its backlog by at least 70 percent:

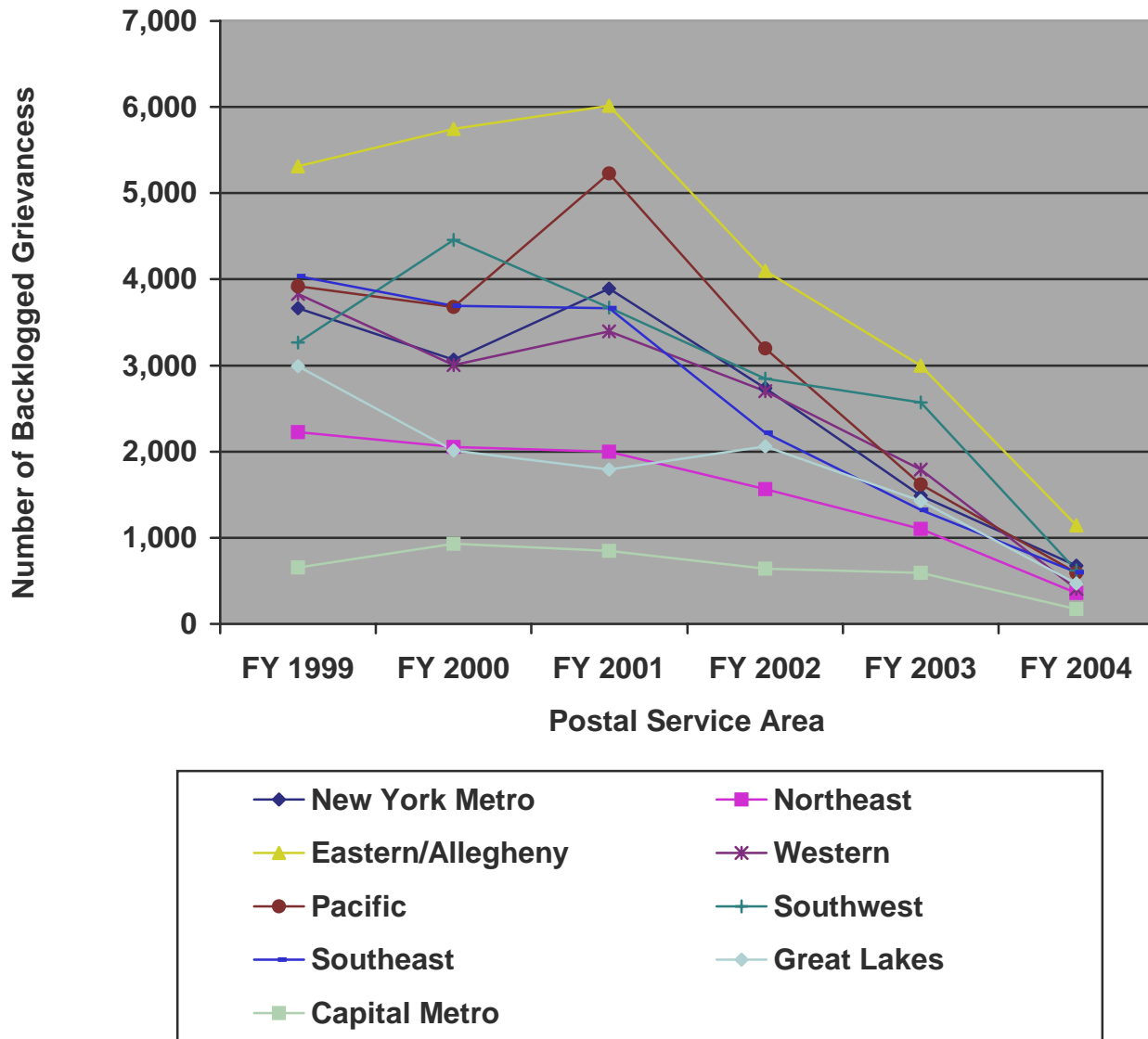
- The Western Area had the biggest decrease (89 percent), going from 3,833 grievances in FY 1999 to 406 in FY 2004.
- The Southeast Area experienced a similar decrease (85 percent), going from 4,040 grievances in FY 1999 to 599 in FY 2004.
- The smallest decrease was in the Capital Metro Area (74 percent), going from 654 grievances in FY 1999 to 172 in FY 2004.

The nine areas of operation also had significant reductions in the number of backlogged grievances between FYs 2003 and 2004, with each area decreasing its backlog by at least 50 percent:

- The Western Area had the biggest decrease (77 percent), going from 1,788 grievances in FY 2003 to 406 in FY 2004.
- The Southwest Area experienced a similar decrease (76 percent), going from 2,572 grievances in FY 2003 to 623 in FY 2004.
- The smallest decrease was in the New York Metro Area (54 percent), going from 1,486 grievances in FY 2003 to 678 in FY 2004.

Graph 2 illustrates trends in backlogged grievances for FYs 1999 to 2004 by Postal Service Area.

Graph 2: Number of Backlogged Grievances by Postal Service Area



Source: GATS

Types of Backlogged Grievances

Although the number of backlogged grievances is at its lowest, we identified several trends related to issues that traditionally generate grievances. For example, the top 10 types of backlogged grievances represented approximately 30 percent of all grievances in the backlog. In addition, from FYs 1999 through 2004, five types of grievances consistently appeared each year:

- Cross craft assignments
- Employee classification
- Handbooks and manuals
- Unilateral action
- Workhours

In FYs 2003 and 2004, the three most common grievances in the backlog were:

- Cross craft assignments
- Employee classification
- Unilateral action

We noted several additional trends pertaining to the issue of performance of bargaining unit work, which was also in the top 10 from FYs 2001 through 2004, and the grievance and arbitration process, which was in the top 10 every year except FY 2001. Further, the issue pertaining to the reversion of positions appeared for the first time as one of the top 10 in FY 2004, along with clerk craft issues, which reappeared in the top 10 for the first time since FY 2002.

We also noted some reversed trends. Specifically, overtime assignments was a top 10 issue from FYs 1999 until 2003, but not in FY 2004. Suspensions of 14 days or less was also an issue in the top 10 in FYs 1999 and 2000 but it has not appeared in the top 10 since then. Appendix E is a complete description of the types of backlogged grievances. Appendix G is a table of the top 10 types of backlogged grievances for FYs 1999 through 2004.

We discussed these trends with the vice president, Labor Relations, who told us the high number of backlogged grievances related to cross craft assignments is probably the result of the Postal Service downsizing its workforce, coupled with local Postal Service management attempting to maximize the flexibility of a reduced workforce. He also believes the high number of backlogged grievances pertaining to a unilateral action and the grievance and arbitration process are the result of union representatives ensuring their interests are protected when they believe the National Labor Relations Act has been violated. He said this is the case even if the issues do not necessarily pertain to hours, wages, or other terms in conditions of employment.

Comparison of Top 10 Types of Grievances Filed to Backlogged Grievances

A comparison of the top 10 types of grievances filed to backlogged grievances in FY 1999 through 2004, showed several trends. For example, the top 10 types for both categories (filed and backlogged unless otherwise noted) contained the following six:

- Cross craft assignments
- Prohibition of unilateral action
- Handbooks and manuals

- Grievance and arbitration process (except for FY 2001 for backlogged)
- Performance of bargaining unit work (was prevalent FYs 2001 to 2004 for backlogged and FYs 2000 to 2004 for grievances filed)
- Work hours

We also found several grievance types that consistently appeared in the top 10 types of grievances backlogged, but did not appear as frequently in the top 10 grievances filed. Specifically, issues pertaining to casuals employed “in lieu of” were in the backlogged grievances from FYs 2000 through 2004; however, this issue did not appear in the top 10 filed for FYs 1999 through 2004. We also found issues pertaining to employee classification were in the top 10 grievances backlogged each year from FYs 1999 through 2004, but appeared in the top 10 grievances filed only in FYs 1999 and 2001.

We also noted several grievance issues that appeared consistently in the top 10 types of grievances filed, that did not appear in the top 10 types of backlogged grievances. Specifically, grievances pertaining to discipline, which include letters of warning and suspensions of 14 days or less, were found every year for grievances filed for FYs 1999 through 2004. However, there were no issues pertaining to discipline in the top 10 backlogged grievances from FYs 2001 through 2004. This was likely caused by discipline related grievances being resolved at lower step levels.

Number of Grievances Pending Arbitration

The vice president, Labor Relations, told us his office reviews statistics on pending grievances to provide an indication to the Postal Service of its success in reducing the backlog. Reviewing these statistics allows the Postal Service to ascertain the effectiveness of changes made to ensure issues are resolved at the lowest levels of the grievance-arbitration process. As shown in Table 4, the Postal Service reduced its number of grievances pending arbitration by 38 percent between FYs 2003 and 2004 alone and overall by 63 percent between FYs 1999 and 2004.

Consistently between FYs 1999 through 2004, the NRLCA contributed no more than 2 percent of the overall cases pending arbitration each year. These numbers increased by 180 percent, however, between FYs 1999 and 2004. According to Postal Service management, this is likely due to an increase in disciplinary actions for NRLCA employees, which they said represent 75 percent of the cases the NRLCA appealed to arbitration. Postal Service management told us they were not aware of any national condition or initiative responsible for the number of disciplinary actions issued that would warrant action at their level. Management also explained this type of grievance is based on the specific circumstances of each individual case.

Table 4: Number of Grievances Pending Arbitration for FYs 1999 through 2004

Union	Number of Grievances Pending Arbitration							FYs 2003 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease/ Increase	FYs 1999 to 2004 Percentages of Decrease/ Increase
	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004			
APWU	93,972	67,877	82,385	93,819	58,505	37,171	-36	-60	
NALC	18,147	19,290	15,387	9,673	5,117	2,503	-51	-86	
NPMHU	4,829	5,781	6,348	7,483	6,875	3,651	-47	-24	
NRLCA	56	65	76	60	159	157	-1	+180	
Totals	117,004	93,013	104,196	111,035	70,656	43,482	-38	-63	

Source: GATS

Note: Percentages were rounded

Postal Service Management Initiatives

The Postal Service has implemented a number of initiatives over the past 5 years that have led to the overall reduction in the number of grievances filed and the number of backlogged grievances. Specific initiatives implemented are as follows:

- In August 2002, the Postal Service issued the Human Resources Transformation Plan (the “Plan”) consisting of several strategies. In particular, Strategy VI of the “Plan,” Build the Labor Management Relationship, expands various joint employee involvement and quality of work-life initiatives with labor unions and provides training to both management and bargaining unit employees in administering the union contracts. In addition, it includes development and expansion of alternatives to traditional discipline and dispute resolution methods.
- In FY 2002, the Workplace Environment Improvement Advisory Committee was tasked with identifying troubled worksites and tracking the progress of action plans implemented to improve work environments. Since the inception of the program, the number of troubled worksites has been reduced from 39 to 8.
- In FY 2003, the Postal Service created managerial accountability for workplace environment issues by including the Voice of the Employee (VOE) Survey⁹ in the National Performance Assessment (NPA).¹⁰ As a result, each area and district is *required* to improve their VOE Survey Index¹¹ score.

⁹The VOE survey is a data collection instrument the Postal Service uses to obtain information from all employees (Postal Service-wide) regarding how they feel about their workplace environment.

¹⁰The NPA was implemented in FY 2003, to improve individual evaluations, with an emphasis on individual and unit contribution towards organizational goals.

¹¹The VOE Survey Index tracks employee responses to six VOE survey questions focused on key barriers to an improved workplace as perceived by employees. The six questions that make up the index address recognition, accountability, exclusion, sexual harassment, being treated with dignity and respect, and communication.

- In FY 2003, the Postal Service initiated a new Performance-Based Pay System for 800 executives to improve accountability and recognize individual and team efforts.¹² In FY 2004, 78,000 non-bargaining employees joined the 800 participating executives in the pay-for-performance (PFP) program. The program includes core requirements specifically related to supervisor and manager duties in the dispute resolution process.

Joint Initiatives Between Postal Service Management and the Four Major Unions

The Postal Service has implemented a number of joint initiatives with its four major unions that have both positively impacted the number of grievances filed and led to the overall reduction in the number of backlogged grievances. For example, in June 2004 the Postal Service developed a joint contract manual with the APWU. In July 2003 it developed a contract interpretation manual with the NPMHU. These manuals, along with a joint contract manual previously negotiated with the NALC, were an effort to reduce tension between labor and management on the workroom floor and eliminate disagreements over the meaning of the provisions of the national agreements. These and other joint initiatives include:

- Postal Service management and the APWU:
 - Negotiated a national agreement from 2000 through 2004, which included a reassessment of the grievance procedures to enhance efficacy during contract negotiations. Actions taken include an in-depth examination of the propriety of discipline during the first and second grievance steps.
 - Agreed on December 19, 2002, to jointly develop a Maintenance Skills Development Program. As a result, hundreds of maintenance employees have successfully developed new skills which have enhanced the employees' upward mobility and provided the Postal Service with a pool of skilled employees.
 - Developed a training program for their Joint Contract Interpretation Manual in June 2004. The target audience includes local union and Postal Service management officials who routinely administer the collective bargaining agreement. It is anticipated completion of training will be no later than the end of FY 2005.
 - Agreed on June 3, 2004, to jointly review/remand/settle every grievance pending at the national level that was appealed prior to 1998. This directly led to the reduction of several hundred of the oldest grievances at the national level.
 - Issued on May 18, 2005, a jointly developed Article 12 "Principles of Seniority, Posting and Reassignments" Questions and Answers (Q&A) to assist local parties in employee reassignment issues. It is anticipated that the Q&As will

¹²This initiative was recommended by the Postal Service OIG in its report entitled Effectiveness of United States Postal Service (USPS) Grievance-Arbitration Procedures (Report Number LM-MA-99-002, March 26, 1999).

- directly reduce the number of disputes, inquiries and grievances arising from reassignments.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in June 2005 updating procedures for reviewing grievances and scheduling arbitration hearings. The MOU requires management and the union to review all pending Step 3 grievances and appeals to arbitration, including cases that have been appealed directly from Step 2 to arbitration. The goal of the MOU is to “improve the grievance-arbitration process” and reduce the backlog of grievances. The MOU extends and supersedes an agreement signed in February 2003, which did not provide for a review of cases that were appealed to arbitration from Step 2.
 - Developed in June 2005, a Joint Retail Training, Lead Sale and Service Associate course for all new sales and service associates to ensure the continued high quality of retail personnel.
 - Agreed on July 11, 2005, to include sales and service associates in the Postal Service Ambassador program. This program entails the joint selection of one retail sales and service associate from each district to serve as an ambassador who will champion the benefits of upgrading Postal Service lobby environments for marketing products and services. The ambassador also appears in internal promotions and local publicity events.
 - Signed a contract extension agreement in August 2005 to extend the current 2000 through 2005 national agreement through November 2006. Noneconomic highlights of the extension include:
 - Priority reassignment for employees from facilities undergoing excessing.
 - Expansion of the Modified Work Week pilot.¹³
 - Increased on-line access to information.
 - Priority scheduling of certain grievances for national arbitration.
 - Postal Service management and the NALC:
 - Wrote a Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM) in 1998. The JCAM provides a joint explanation of the collective bargaining agreement for proper application. It is intended to enable the local parties to resolve problems without grievances and to resolve grievances early in the grievance-arbitration procedures. The JCAM is updated annually.
 - Developed and piloted an alternative grievance procedure called the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) jointly in 1998 to decide grievances swiftly, educate the local parties on contract compliance and cooperation, and reduce/prevent future grievances.

¹³The contract extension agreement provides for the establishment of a minimum of 18 pilot sites during the term of the extension. Modified work-week programs allow employees to select work schedules of four 10-hour days.

- Trained Dispute Resolution Teams¹⁴ (DRT) to apply the JCAM when deciding grievances at Step B—the second formal step of the process. The DRTs educate the local parties on contract compliance through decisions and local training to avoid “repeat grievances” on the same issues and to prevent other grievances. This joint training is done annually.
- Achieved, according to Postal Service officials, a 96 percent reduction in the number of grievances pending regional arbitration from September 1998 to September 2005 (from 25,479 to 1,089); and a 46 percent reduction in arbitration appeals from 2002 to 2005. The parties have also reduced the number of grievances flowing from the local level as well as the number of grievances initiated. For example, Step B appeals for 2005 are down 32 percent from 2002, and Step A appeals are down 13 percent for the same period.¹⁵
- Negotiated a 5-year collective bargaining agreement in 2001 ensuring long-term stability. The new agreement included the replacement of the former grievance procedures with the DRP.
- Signed a MOU in April 2002 to implement an intervention process to identify and correct troubled work places. Five Postal Service districts were test sites for refining the intervention process. As a result, successful interventions were conducted in 10 more sites. In addition, they initiated national joint training for the process in January 2004 and completed the training in the spring of 2005.
- Postal Service management and the NPMHU:
 - Negotiated a national agreement from 2000 through 2004 which included a reassessment of the grievance-arbitration procedures to enhance efficacy during contract negotiations. Actions taken include an in-depth examination of the propriety of discipline during first and second grievance steps as well as deferral of suspensions which removes back pay as one of the former impediments to resolution.
 - Implemented the results of a container towing test in December 2004 that resulted in the resolution of pending safety grievances and an update to the Safety Handbook. This was a joint endeavor that allowed an increase from three to seven pieces of powered industrial equipment employees could tow safely and productively in the Postal Service’s Priority Mail Processing Centers and Logistic and Distribution Centers.
 - Signed a contract extension agreement in May 2003 to extend the 2000 through 2004 national agreement through November 2006.
 - Trained more than 1,000 union and management representatives between July and October 2003 on how to use their Contract Interpretation Manual to resolve disputes without the need to file a grievance or proceed to arbitration.

¹⁴The DRT consists of a management and union designee.

¹⁵These dates were outside the scope of our review and, therefore, do not appear in the tables or graphs contained in this report.

- Worked to resolve workplace issues which resulted in the elimination of two offices from the list of troubled work sites.
- Postal Service management and the NRCLA:
 - Signed, in conjunction with the NALC, a MOU in May 2003 to establish a joint task force to expedite resolution of the backlog of grievances on all city/rural jurisdictional disputes. In May 2004, they signed a second MOU to establish a process and guidelines for a review of all outstanding city/rural grievance issues.
 - Signed a contract extension agreement in November 2004 to extend the 2000 through 2004 national agreement through 2006. This contract extension included a MOU establishing a joint task force consisting of national union officers and Postal Service Headquarters operations and labor relations leaders, to discuss future developments that may impact the rural carrier craft.

In discussions with the presidents of the APWU and the NPMHU, they affirmed that the introduction of the joint contract interpretation manuals and associated training have helped to reduce the number of grievances filed and backlogged. They also pointed to an increased commitment by all parties to quickly resolve grievances. The president of the NRCLA stated that in addition to the partial resumption of joint training¹⁶ on mail count procedures, which has traditionally generated considerable grievance activity, his union has been aggressively pursuing meetings with Postal Service management to resolve issues. He also stated the Postal Service's PFP program has changed attitudes within the organization to resolve grievances more quickly. Additionally, while they generally do not conduct trend analyses of the grievances filed and backlogged, all three union presidents indicated they track grievances either by contractual issues or by areas of the country to identify troubled work sites and reinforce measures to reduce the backlog. They further stated they expect the number of filed and backlogged grievances to continue to trend downward.

Postal Service Management Conducts Trend Analyses

According to Postal Service officials, the implementation of trend analyses has resulted in some reverse trends in grievance issues. Specifically, the vice president, Labor Relations, told us his office regularly reviews GATS reports to identify potential issues and to determine if trends in the grievance data are developing. One of their analyses is to compare the overall number of cases pending arbitration on the first day of each month to the number of cases at the beginning of the FY, and note the variance. For example, the manager, Labor Relations Systems provided us the analysis conducted for the month of July 2005, where it was noted that every Postal Service area decreased its

¹⁶The NRCLA president stated there has been a gradual return to normalcy following a contentious 2002 national mail count, in which numerous grievances were filed by the union, and management withdrew from participating in joint mail count training. A mail count is the evaluation of a route to determine eligibility for evaluated compensation or adjustment in evaluated compensation.

number of cases pending arbitration except for the Capital Metro Area where the pending cases increased by two.

The vice president, Labor Relations, also told us that if negative trends are developing, his office notifies the respective area officials so they can work directly with union representatives to determine why the trends are occurring. This information can be used to determine if the issues are due to interpretations of the contract, personality issues, or other reasons. The Labor Relations office can modify the contract interpretation manual(s) if necessary to provide a better understanding for employees and management.

Known Costs Associated With Postal Service Labor-Management Issues

We estimate the Postal Service could incur about \$1.3 billion in costs associated with Postal Service labor-management issues for FYs 2000 through 2005.¹⁷ This figure includes \$807.6 million in known costs (listed in Table 5) and an additional \$499 million in estimated costs through the end of FY 2005.

Also shown in Table 5 is a significant increase in known costs for FY 2003. In fact, costs almost doubled from FY 2002, when the Postal Service spent \$113.6 million compared to \$225.3 million in FY 2003. The majority of this cost increase was associated with grievance settlements; however, steward costs also significantly increased in FY 2003 compared to FYs 2001 and 2002.

Table 5: Known Costs Associated With the Postal Service’s Labor Management Issues (In Millions)

Known Costs	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	Totals
Arbitrators’ Costs	\$ 6.6	\$ 7.7	\$ 6.4	\$ 7.4	\$ 1.8	\$29.9
Grievance Settlements	63.1	54.2	41.2	118.6	112.0	389.1
Interest Back Pay	2.2	1.5	2.0	1.9	.1	7.7
Steward Costs	35.3	17.1	31.4	58.9	61.7	204.4
Equal Employment Opportunity	5.0	5.0	3.2	5.6	3.5	22.3
Merit Systems Protection Board	2.3	2.4	1.6	1.6	1.1	9.0
Salaries for Labor Relations Personnel ¹⁸	25.8	27.1	27.8	31.3	33.2	145.2
Totals	\$140.3	\$115.0	\$113.6	\$225.3	\$213.4	\$807.6

Source: GATS and the Payroll Employee Master File

¹⁷It should be noted that in April 2002, the Postmaster General estimated that \$300 million was spent each year on labor-management disagreements.

¹⁸According to Postal Service management, Labor Relations personnel do not spend 100 percent of their time processing and resolving grievances and, therefore, salary costs would be realized whether or not there were grievances.

According to Postal Service management, the grievance settlements during FYs 2003 and 2004 were the result of the initiatives implemented by the Postal Service and the four major unions to resolve disputes at the earliest possible step. Costs related to labor-management issues should decrease in future years due to the reduction in the total number of grievances backlogged and grievances filed.

Additionally, management has pursued initiatives aimed at more accurately attributing labor-management costs to specific types of grievances. For example, Postal Service management implemented a GATS modification in October 2003, as recommended in our September 2003 report, which attributes settlement costs to the corresponding formal grievances. In addition, management told us they are piloting another modification to the GATS that will accurately attribute settlement costs to the corresponding informal grievances. Management stated they expect this modification to occur by December 31, 2005, and then be implemented nationwide. As a result of these modifications, management can better determine which grievances are costing the Postal Service the most money.

Conclusion

This white paper identifies for the Postal Service the top 10 types of grievances unions filed, and the ones that could cause a backlog. The Postal Service could use this information to reduce the number of filings and the backlog, by establishing new initiatives to target the causes for the grievances.

The initiatives implemented by the Postal Service and the labor unions have already yielded positive results, including a significant reduction in the number of grievances filed and backlogged. By reducing the number of grievances and settling them at the lowest possible level, the Postal Service can reduce costs associated with grievances and improve labor relations with its unions.

While the Postal Service has experienced a significant increase in known costs related to labor-management issues for FY 2003, costs should decrease in future years due to the reduction in the total number of grievances backlogged and grievances filed. In addition to potential cost savings, relationships among Postal Service management, employees, and unions should continue to improve.

With the modification to GATS in December 2005, the Postal Service should have a proper and accurate means of assigning costs associated with labor-management issues to specific grievances.

The vice president, Labor Relations, reviewed this report prior to issuance and stated the report accurately reflects the initiatives taken to prevent and reduce grievances filed and backlogged. Because the report does not contain any recommendations, no written response from management was required.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the audit. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Chris Nicoloff, Director, Human Capital, or me at (703) 248-2300.

/s/ Mary W. Demory

Mary W. Demory
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Core Operations

Attachments

cc: Patrick R. Donahoe
Mary Anne Gibbons
Steven R. Phelps

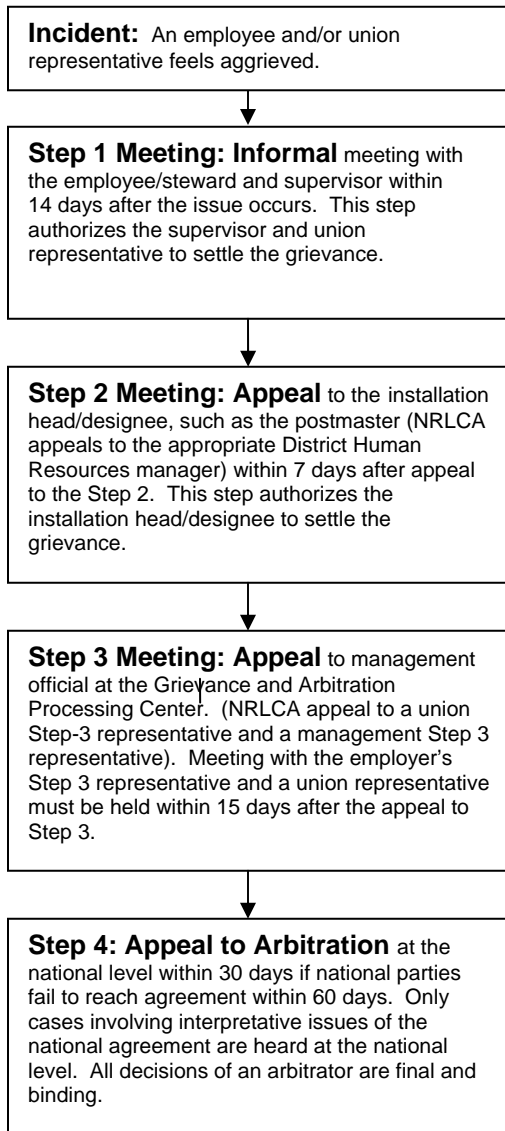
APPENDIX A. ABBREVIATIONS

APWU	American Postal Workers Union
DRP	Dispute Resolution Process
DRT	Dispute Resolution Team
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GATS	Grievance-Arbitration Tracking System
HRIS	Human Resource Management Information System
JCAM	Joint Contract Administration Manual
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NALC	National Association of Letter Carriers
NPA	National Performance Assessment
NPMHU	National Postal Mail Handlers Union
NRLCA	National Rural Letter Carriers' Association
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PFP	Pay for Performance
Q&A	Questions and Answers
VOE	Voice of the Employee

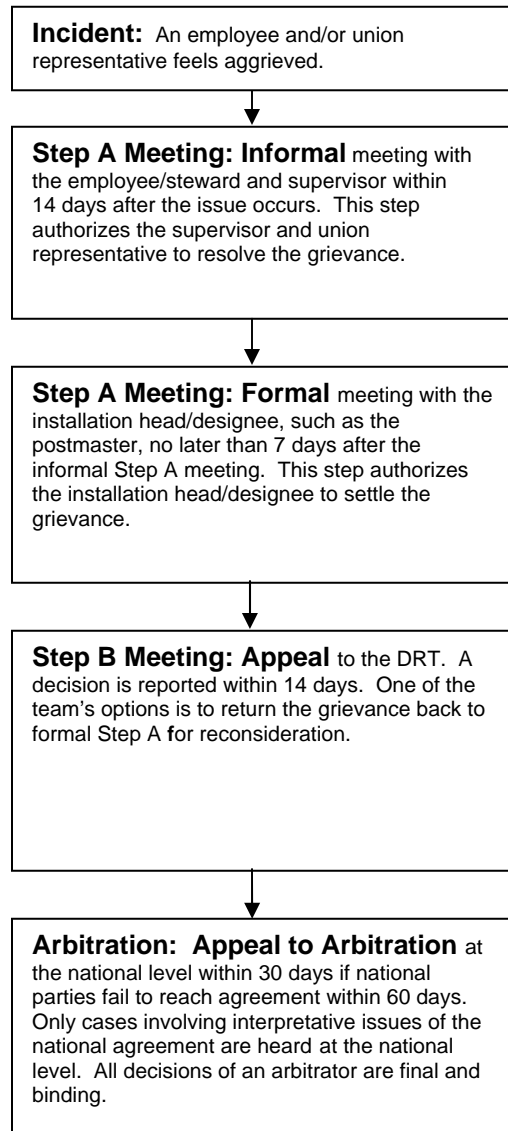
APPENDIX B. GRIEVANCE-ARBITRATION PROCESS

The flowcharts below demonstrate the grievance-arbitration process steps of the four major unions—the APWU, the NPHMU, the NRLCA, and the NALC.

APWU, NPHMU, and NRLCA Grievance-Arbitration Process



NALC Grievance-Arbitration Process



Source: National agreements with the Postal Service and the APWU, NALC, NPHMU, and NRLCA

APPENDIX C. OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objectives were to determine: (1) the nature of backlogged grievances for FYs 1999 through 2004 by location and identify any trends that indicate systemic issues, and (2) the effectiveness of the initiatives the Postal Service has implemented to reduce the number of backlogged grievances and to prevent the filing of new grievances.

To accomplish our objectives, we interviewed Postal Service management; analyzed grievance-arbitration data extracted from the GATS; reviewed the OIG's March 2004 Semiannual Report to Congress; and obtained bargaining employee data contained in the Human Resource Management Information System (HRIS) for FY 2002 and the Postal Service's Annual Reports for FYs 1991-2001, 2003, and 2004. In addition, we reviewed prior OIG audit reports; reviewed the national agreements and Web sites of the APWU, NALC, NPMHU, and NRCLA; and evaluated the APWU-Postal Service and NALC-Postal Service Joint Contract Manuals and the NPMHU's Contract Interpretation Manual. We also interviewed the presidents of the APWU, NPMHG, and NRLCA. The NALC president could not meet with us due to other commitments. In addition, we evaluated witness testimony from Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearings conducted in February and March 2004.

We also researched the Postal Service's intranet; and reviewed the President's Commission Report dated July 2003, the Postal Service's Transformation Plan dated April 2002, and the Postal Service's Transformation Plan Progress Reports dated November 2003 and November 2004. In addition, we reviewed GAO and Postal Service OIG reports written on the subject matter.

We also obtained labor-management cost data for FYs 2000 through 2004 and estimated some costs through the end of FY 2005. This data included arbitrators' costs, grievance settlements, interest back pay, and steward costs. In addition, we obtained salary information for Labor Relations personnel from the HRIS for FYs 2000 through 2004. We also obtained some cost data related to other labor-management issues from the Postal Service's Law Department including arbitration, Merit Systems Protection Board, and Equal Employment Opportunity award payments the Postal Service made in FYs 2000 through 2004. In addition, we interviewed Postal Service Labor Relations personnel to ensure data provided to support our findings was properly extracted from the application system, if grievance settlement costs and arbitration payments were being captured in GATS, and why costs increased/decreased from previous years.

We conducted the review from October 2004 through September 2005, and discussed our observations and conclusions with appropriate management officials and included their comments where appropriate. We did not determine the reliability of the data and did not rely solely on the data to draw the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report. We used the data as an indicator of the Postal Service's progress to resolve grievances. However, an OIG Computer Assisted Assessment Techniques employee verified grievance-arbitration data with Postal Service management to ensure

data provided to support our findings was properly extracted from the application system.

APPENDIX D. PRIOR AUDIT COVERAGE

U.S. Postal Service, Labor-Management Problems Persist on the Workroom Floor Volumes I and II (Report Number GAO/GGD-94-201A and -201B, September 29, 1994). The GAO reviewed the labor-management conflict that existed on the workroom floor of the vast mailing processing plants and post offices; and past and current efforts by the Postal Service, employee unions, and management associations to end the conflict. The GAO found adversarial labor-management relations at the national level and long-standing quality of work/life issues on the workroom floor. The GAO detailed the labor-management environment in the Postal Service and included the opinions of Postal Service management, union officials, management association officials and employees on the underlying causes of workroom conflict. The report also identified past and current initiatives to change that climate. The GAO made several recommendations, including establishment of a framework agreement to develop common goals and strategies, and the development and testing of approaches for improving working relations at Postal Service sites. The Postal Service accepted the report's recommendations stating they were very ambitious, but needed in order to resolve the longstanding problems. The Postal Service also indicated it was more than willing to continue to work closely and cooperatively with union and management associations at all levels and would take a number of corrective actions to improve the conditions found in the report, including the establishment of an Associate Supervisor Program, designed to prepare candidates to assume Postal Service supervisory positions; and a task force consisting of Postal Service management, the four major unions, and three management associations, to address the labor-management relations problems discussed in the report.

U.S. Postal Service: Little Progress Made in Addressing Persistent Labor-Management Problems (Report Number GAO/GGD-98-1, October 1, 1997). The GAO reviewed the Postal Service's efforts to improve employees' working conditions and the overall performance of the Postal Service as identified in their 1994 report. It focused on: (1) the status and results of efforts to improve various labor-management relations problems, including how the Postal Service implemented specific improvement initiatives and (2) approaches that could help the Postal Service and its four major labor unions and management associations achieve consensus on how to deal with the labor problems. In general, the GAO found the Postal Service had not made significant progress in improving labor-management relations problems and the problems contributed to a contentious work environment, lower productivity, and increased employee grievances. The GAO provided the Postal Service with no recommendations. In its response, the Postal Service agreed that little progress had been made in the last several years in resolving the long-standing labor-management problems, and stated that, on the whole, progress toward more productive relations between Postal Service management and the unions had been limited, isolated, and generally less than impressive.

Supervisor Knowledge of Union Contracts (Report Number LM-MA-98-001, September 30, 1998). The report found supervisors needed a better understanding of

the union contracts. A better understanding of union contracts could help supervisors avoid actions that give rise to grievances and would facilitate resolution of more grievances at earlier stages of the process.

Grievance and Arbitration Management Information (Report Number LR-MA-99-001, March 26, 1999). The report found systems were not in place to monitor, track, or analyze grievance arbitration activity, to include capturing key costs. The report states that in the opinion of the OIG, if such information existed, Postal Service managers could analyze trends and patterns within their areas and districts, and headquarters labor relations staff could more easily identify systemic issues throughout the Postal Service. To capture key costs associated with grievances, the OIG recommended the Postal Service modify the Grievance and Arbitration System.

Effectiveness of United States Postal Service Grievance-Arbitration Procedures (Report Number LM-MA-99-002, March 26, 1999). The report found Step 1 and 2 grievance-arbitration procedures were not administered in accordance to the national agreements, resulting in grievances not being resolved at the lowest level possible. To continue to improve the labor-management relationship and the grievance-arbitration process, it was recommended the performance evaluation system for Postal Service supervisors and managers include compliance with the grievance-arbitration procedures.

USPS Labor and Management Workplace Disputes (Report Number LR-AR-99-002, March 31, 1999). The report found workplace disputes were not resolved before becoming formal grievances. To improve labor-management relations and to resolve grievances at the lowest level possible, the OIG recommended the Postal Service and its unions continue their joint proactive efforts for improving the understanding of the grievance-arbitration process and the responsibilities of labor and management.

Postal Service and Union Labor Relations (Report Number LR-AR-03-012, September 30, 2003). The OIG reported on the status of corrective actions taken to implement their prior suggestions/recommendations to the Postal Service related to resolving grievances as early as practical. The report established that management did not fully implement most of the recommendations/suggestions. The report also identified external best practices that would improve the Postal Service grievance and arbitration practices (resolve grievances timely and at the lowest possible step and improve labor-management relations). Further, the report found the Postal Service did not have current data on all costs associated with labor-management issues resulting in the Postal Service's inability to accurately identify areas for potential cost savings.

APPENDIX E. DESCRIPTIONS FOR TYPES OF GRIEVANCES FILED AND BACKLOGGED IN FYs 1999 THROUGH 2004

The following grievance descriptions correspond with the articles and sections of the national agreements between the Postal Service and its four major unions. The grievance descriptions are as follows and pertain to the top 10 types of grievances contained in Appendices F and G of this report:

- Casuals employed “in lieu of.” This issue coincides with Article 7, Section 1. These grievances pertain to employee classifications and the use of the regular work force to include full-time, part-time, and supplemental employees such as casuals and transitional employees.
- Clerk craft. This issue coincides with Article 37, Section 10. These grievances are related to duty assignments for the clerk craft to include preferred duty assignment, bid, application, abolishment, reversion of position, residual vacancy, etc.
- Cross craft assignments. This issue coincides with Article 7, Section 2C. These grievances relate to the assignment of bargaining unit employees from one craft to another (e.g., clerk to letter carrier or maintenance to mail handler). Normally management will not combine different crafts, occupational groups, or levels into one job. For flexibility purposes, management may cross crafts, occupational groups, or levels only after certain actions have taken place.
- Discipline procedure. This issue coincides with Article 16. These grievances relate to the administration of discipline.
- Employee classification. This issue coincides with Article 7 and is general in nature. These grievances relate to provisions establishing limits on the workhours of noncareer casual and transitional employees to protect career employment and the workhours of career employees.
- Employment and work assignments. This issue coincides with Article 7, Section 2. These grievances relate to employment and work assignments.
- Grievance and arbitration process. This issue coincides with Article 15 and is general in nature. These grievances relate to the steps followed in the grievance-arbitration process.
- Handbooks and manuals. This issue coincides with Article 19 and is general in nature. These grievances are related to changes management makes to handbooks, manuals, and policies directly related to wages, hours, or working conditions at the national or local level. Any changes must be fair, reasonable, and equitable and not in conflict with the national agreements.
- Letters of warning. This issue coincides with Article 16, Section 3. These grievances relate to the disciplinary action Letter of Warning.
- Management’s rights to direct employees. This issue coincides with Article 3. These grievances allege violations of management’s rights to direct employees in

the performance of official duties, including hiring, promoting, transferring, assigning, retaining, taking disciplinary action, determining how operations will be conducted, etc.

- Overtime assignments. This issue coincides with Article 8, Section 5. These grievances relate to how management assigns overtime to employees.
- Overtime work. This issue coincides with Article 8, Section 4. These grievances relate to the rate of overtime pay (e.g., time and a half) and when management will pay overtime to employees for work performed (e.g., after 8 hours in a work day or after 40 hours a work week).
- Performance of bargaining unit work. This issue coincides with Article 1. These grievances relate to the performance of bargaining unit work to include prohibitions and exceptions for post offices with more than or less than 100 bargaining unit employees, emergencies, training, proper operation of equipment, safety, and protecting Postal Service property.
- Reversion of position. This issue coincides with Article 37, Section 17. A reversion of position is a management decision to reduce the number of duty assignments in an installation when there are vacancies in the installation's duty assignments.
- Safety and health. This issue coincides with Article 14. These grievances relate to the process for ensuring safe working conditions exist at all installations.
- Suspensions of 14 days or less. This issue coincides with Article 16, Section 4. These grievances relate to the disciplinary action "Suspensions of 14 days or less."
- Suspensions of more than 14 days. This issue coincides with Article 16, Section 5. These grievances relate to the disciplinary action "Suspensions of more than 14 days" or "Discharge."
- Unilateral action. This issue coincides with Article 5 and is general in nature. These grievances are related to unilateral actions taken by Postal Service management that affect wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment.
- Workhours. This issue coincides with Article 8 and is general in nature. These grievances are related to workhours issues with work schedules, overtime assignments, Sunday premium pay, night differential, and wash-up time.

APPENDIX F. TOP 10 TYPES OF GRIEVANCES FILED FOR FYs 1999 THROUGH 2004

The table below shows the top 10 types of grievances filed for FYs 1999 through 2004.

#1-10 Ranking of Issue	Top 10 Grievances Filed by Fiscal Year					
	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
#1	Overtime assignments	Letters of warning	Letters of warning	Letters of warning	Letters of warning	Letters of warning
#2	Handbooks and manuals	Overtime assignments	Cross craft assignments	Cross craft assignments	Overtime assignments	Cross craft assignments
#3	Letters of warning	Cross craft assignments	Handbooks and manuals	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Cross craft assignments	Overtime assignments
#4	Workhours	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Overtime assignments	Handbooks and manuals	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Workhours
#5	Unilateral action	Workhours	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Overtime assignments	Workhours	Suspensions of 14 days or less
#6	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Handbooks and manuals	Workhours	Performance of bargaining unit work	Handbooks and manuals	Performance of bargaining unit work
#7	Cross craft assignments	Overtime work	Unilateral action	Workhours	Performance of bargaining unit work	Handbooks and manuals
#8	Employee classification	Grievance and arbitration process	Performance of bargaining unit work	Unilateral action	Unilateral action	Grievance and arbitration process
#9	Safety and health	Performance of bargaining unit work	Grievance and arbitration process	Grievance and arbitration process	Discipline procedure	Unilateral action
#10	Grievance and arbitration process	Unilateral action	Employee classification	Discipline procedure	Grievance and arbitration process	Discipline procedure

Source: GATS

Note: The number one issue represents the grievance issue filed most frequently.

APPENDIX G. TOP 10 TYPES OF BACKLOGGED GRIEVANCES FOR FYs 1999 THROUGH 2004

The table below shows the top 10 types of backlogged grievances filed for FYs 1999 through 2004.

#1-10 Ranking of Issue	Top 10 Backlogged Grievances by Fiscal Year					
	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
#1	Overtime assignments	Overtime assignments	Handbooks and manuals	Cross craft assignments	Cross craft assignments	Cross craft assignments
#2	Handbooks and manuals	Cross craft assignments	Cross craft assignments	Performance of bargaining unit work	Employee classification	Employee classification
#3	Unilateral action	Handbooks and manuals	Unilateral action	Unilateral action	Unilateral action	Unilateral action
#4	Employee classification	Unilateral action	Employee classification	Handbooks and manuals	Handbooks and manuals	Handbooks and manuals
#5	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Workhours	Overtime assignments	Employee classification	Performance of bargaining unit work	Grievance and arbitration process
#6	Cross craft assignments	Employee classification	Performance of bargaining unit work	Casuals employed "in lieu of"	Overtime assignments	Reversion of positions
#7	Suspensions of more than 14 days	Suspensions of 14 days or less	Workhours	Clerk craft issues	Management's rights to direct employees	Performance of bargaining unit work
#8	Work hours	Grievance and arbitration process	Clerk craft issues	Workhours	Workhours	Clerk craft issues
#9	Management's rights to direct employees	Casuals employed "in lieu of"	Casuals employed "in lieu of"	Overtime assignments	Casuals employed "in lieu of"	Casuals employed "in lieu of"
#10	Grievance and arbitration process	Letters of warning	Employment and work assignments	Grievance and arbitration process	Grievance and arbitration process	Workhours

Source: GATS

Note: The number one issue represents the grievance issue with the largest backlog.