U. S. POSTAL SERVICE

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL INQUIRIES

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VERSION 5.1

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1.0 GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY

1.1 OVERVIEW

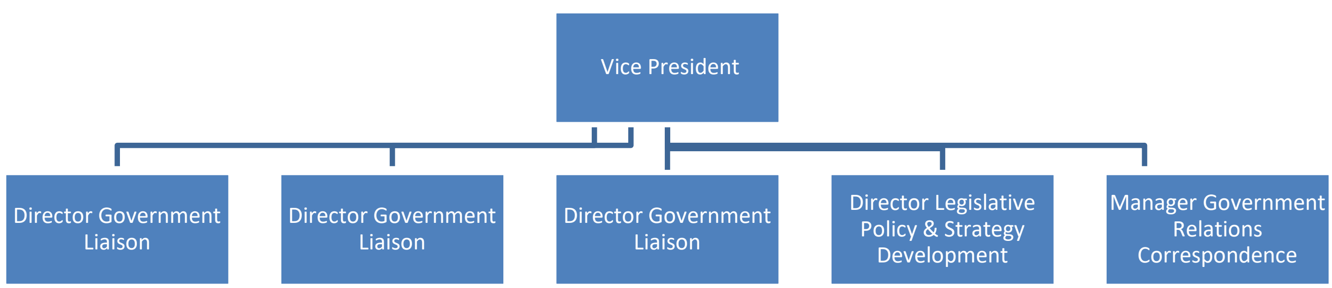
Government Relations and Public Policy is tasked with developing and executing the public policy and legislative objectives of the organization. Specifically, staff members work closely with key stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels to educate them on postal issues and serve as a resource on matters that pertain to the Postal Service or their constituents' interaction with the organization.

Working with appropriate functions throughout the organization, Government Relations and Public Policy ensures that a coordinated and consistent message is communicated to key stakeholders, as well as to the general public.

1.2 LEADERSHIP

The Vice President of Government Relations and Public Policy reports to the PMG and is responsible for developing and executing public policy and legislative objectives on all aspects of postal management and operations. Specifically, the Vice President manages government relations including federal, state, local, and stakeholder relations.

1.3 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



1.4 KEY AREAS

There are three primary roles within the Government Relations and Public Policy function:

- Legislative Policy and Strategy Development Group
- Liaison Group
- Correspondence Group

Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Group – Provides guidance to the Postal Service internally on the legislative landscape and serves as advisor for ongoing operations that may affect the Postal Service's legislative agenda.

Liaison Group – Serves as the liaison and designated primary point of contact between the Postal Service and Members of Congress (MOCs) and their staff, both in Washington, DC, and congressional districts nationwide.

Correspondence Group – Analyzes, researches, and responds to congressional and other inquiries received in a thorough and timely manner, while striving to meet and exceed individual and department service level goals.

2.0 CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

2.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The correspondence process involves the Liaison and Correspondence groups. There are common, shared responsibilities between these groups and also accountabilities that are specific to each group.

- SHARED ACCOUNTABILITIES:
  - Educate and inform MOCs and their staff on the current state of the business and any items on the Postal Service legislative agenda.
  - Work in concert with appropriate Postal Service field personnel, including District Managers and other District-level staff, to collect information needed for responses.
  - Work with subject matter experts in the field and at headquarters to collect information needed to generate content for responses.

- INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:
  - Correspondence Group:
    - Review incoming inquiries and determine most appropriate and expedient course of action to achieve resolution.
      - Leverage field and headquarters contacts to facilitate research process.
      - Estimate time for resolution—if anticipated to be beyond service level goals, surface to management.

      Consolidate input from various sources, review for consistency and compliance with Postal Service policy, and follow up on any discrepancies identified.
    - Review fact set to determine if input received is comprehensive and will allow the inquiry to be answered in its entirety.
      - If necessary, follow up with primary sources to ensure comprehensive fact set.
    - Draft response incorporating the relevant facts to adequately and thoroughly address the original inquiry.

        - Submit to first-level reviewer, follow up to finalize and pass first stage of review process.
        - Submit to second-level review on Liaison team for final review and transmission.
- Liaison Group:
    - Submit incoming congressional requests to Correspondence Group for timely date stamping and controlling.
    - Provide timely final review of written responses drafted by Correspondence Group.
        - Iterate with Correspondence Group until suitable response is developed.

2.2 PRODUCTIVITY GOALS

OVERALL GOALS:

The department's productivity goal is to respond to requests handled by the Correspondence Group within 15 workdays from the date of receipt. The productivity clock starts on the day the inquiry is date stamped by the controller. If correspondence is received after 4 PM, it is date stamped the next work day.

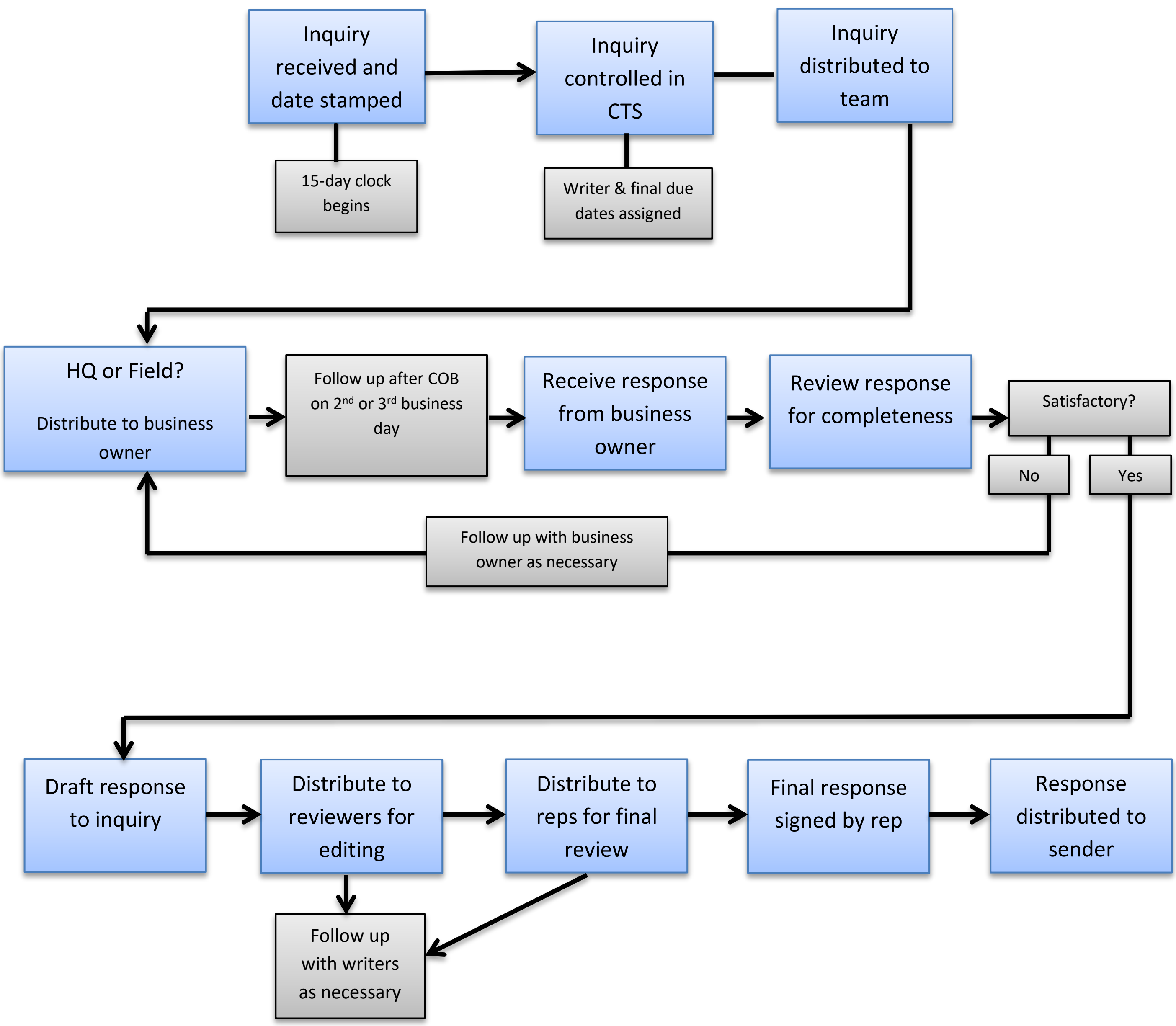
Workdays in the Correspondence Tracking System (CTS) may not always be consistent with normal business days. During instances of government-wide closures such as Presidential Inaugurations, weather-related emergency closures, department-wide training, or other similar occasions, the target productivity goals in CTS may be adjusted to reflect actual workdays, rather than business days.

POSITION SPECIFIC GOALS:

Within this framework, productivity goals for specific positions/functions are noted below:

- Correspondence Analyst/Writer:
  Average of 5 work days to analyze, research, and draft a response.
- Correspondence Analyst/Editor:
  Average of 2 work days to perform a first-level review.
- Government Relations Representative/Liaison Staff:
  Average of 2 work days to perform a second-level review.
- Correspondence Specialist:
  Average of 1 work day to format and prepare the response for signature and mail to the appropriate recipients.

2.3 PROCESS FLOWCHART



2.4 PROCESS STRUCTURE

RECEIPT AND INPUT INTO CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING SYSTEM (CTS)

- When a GR Liaison receives a case, the Liaison acknowledges receipt of the inquiry to the congressional office and then sends the case to the designated internal Correspondence email address. Letters addressed to the PMG should additionally be emailed to the Correspondence Manager.

- The Correspondence Specialist prints out the case from the internal email inbox.

- All incoming inquiries are date stamped upon receipt by the controller.
  - Inquiries received after 4:00 p.m. are date stamped the next work day.

- The controller and the Correspondence Manager monitor inquiries to identify any sensitive issues that should be brought to the attention of higher-level managers.

- Correspondence Manager determines the number of inquiries to control each day based on workload, staffing levels, and other pertinent factors.

- Inquiry and supporting documents are scanned into CTS.
  - Case number is automatically created.
  - Due dates are generated based on department productivity goals.

- Case specific information input into CTS includes:
  - Name of the MOC or other requestor.
  - Constituent name.
  - Constituent's mailing address.
  - Subject of inquiry.
  - MOC or requestor's mailing address for response.

- Controlled cases are assigned to writers by Correspondence Manager or designee based on:
  - Case complexity.
  - Staffing levels.
  - Skill levels.
  - Individual caseload.

- Controller inputs assignments into CTS.
  - Cases distributed to writers.

RESEARCH AND DRAFT RESPONSE

- Review incoming inquiry and determine the most appropriate course of action to address and resolve the pertinent issues.

- Leverage contacts in the field and at headquarters to facilitate the research process.

- Refer to appropriate handbooks and manuals for postal policies and procedures.

- Draft responses incorporating the relevant facts in order to adequately and thoroughly address the original inquiry.

FIRST-LEVEL REVIEW

- Determine whether the research is correct and complete, or if additional information is required.
- Evaluate whether the response accurately communicates the Postal Service's position and policy on the issues.
- Edit response considering grammar, spelling, consistency, style, and tone.

SECOND-LEVEL REVIEW

- Consideration given to:
    - In-depth knowledge of geographic territory and related issues.
    - MOCs:
        - Interests.
        - Committee assignments.
        - Known constituent issues.
- Make edits or request additional information if needed.

FINALIZATION

- After first- and second-level reviews are complete:
    - Correspondence Specialist:
        - Formats and finalizes the letter, including adding the authorized signature.
        - Prints envelope, if a hard copy is being mailed.
        - Sends the final PDF response to the Liaison to be emailed to the congressional office.
        - Uploads the response to CTS.
        - Sends the final PDF response to any bcc'd parties.
        - Mails the response to the recipient, if applicable.
        - Closes case in CTS.

STORAGE

- A copy of the final letter, along with all background notes and other documents collected during the research phase, is uploaded into the CTS system.
- A digital record is retained in accordance with agency retention policies.

2.5 INTERIM RESPONSES

During any phase of the correspondence process, if it is determined that a response will not be finalized until more than 20 work days have elapsed from the date-stamp date, an interim response will be generated to the MOC or other requestor.

When such a determination is made:

- Writer:
  - Advises Correspondence Manager and receives concurrence on sending interim response.
  - Creates an interim response in the CTS case file Word document.
  - Submits interim response for appropriate review.

- Correspondence Manager:
  - Notes case file is "Interim – return to *manager name*" to ensure completed case is returned to Correspondence Manager.
  - Maintains list of open interim cases.

- Correspondence Specialist:
  - Finalizes interim response.
  - Closes CTS case file.
  - Returns case file to Correspondence Manager for tracking and monitoring to ensure completion of final response to inquiry.

2.6 OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL REFERRALS

Cases that are referred from the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) to the Postal Service for response should be directed to the Correspondence Manager. Such cases will then be placed into the routine congressional correspondence process, and a courtesy copy of the final response will be provided to the OIG.

2.7 MISCELLANEOUS

- Decontrolled cases:
  - Should a case need to be decontrolled, appropriate staff should complete the CTS Case Comment Sheet or send a detailed email to the Correspondence Manager, providing pertinent details/reasons for decontrolling the case, and submit form to controller for scanning into electronic case record.

- Additional research:
  - Should additional information need to be added to a closed case file, complete the CTS Case Comment Sheet, attach relevant material, and submit to controller for scanning into electronic case record.

3.0 QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD RELATED TO CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

3.1 PROCEDURES

1. When Government Liaison Director receives Questions for the Record (QFRs) from Committee of jurisdiction, they are provided to the Vice President and the Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Director. The Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Director is responsible for managing to the deadline set by the Committee to receive responses to the QFRs. This is usually two weeks from the date of receipt, but in some cases may be three weeks for complex hearing subjects.

2. Upon receipt of QFRs, immediately determine which ELT members will be responsible for responding to each question and create a WORD document with only those questions that the responsible ELT member is to answer. In some cases more than one ELT member may need to answer the same question in whole or in part.

3. Prepare a message to be sent out via the Vice President's email to each ELT member responsible for responding to QFRs with the WORD documents attached. All efforts should be made to send this message out within 24 hours of receipt of the QFRs. The message should give a response deadline and identify who to send response to—usually the Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Director and responsible Government Liaison Director. Response deadline is typically 3-5 business days from receipt.

4. Upon receipt of draft responses, Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Director will combine all responses, review for accuracy/responsiveness, and ensure information is not conflicting with other responses or earlier hearing testimony. The Vice President and Government Liaison Director usually also review. Depending on nature of the questions and responses, Legal may review at this point.

5. After reviews are completed, edits are made and responses appear complete, draft QFRs are sent to the ELT/PMG for review. Response deadline is usually 2-3 days. General Counsel will review QFRs at this point also.

6. Once comments are received from ELT/PMG, Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Director incorporates changes and finalizes QFR responses for submission to Committee.

7. Final QFR responses are sent to Committee via email by the responsible Government Liaison Director with copies provided to the Vice President and Legislative Policy & Strategy Development Director.

8. At any time during the process if it appears that the requested submission deadline cannot be met, the responsible Government Liaison Director must contact the Committee prior to the deadline to request an extension.

9. A copy of the final QFRs as submitted to the Committee is placed in a designated QFR subfolder on the Policy drive under the hearing folder for that particular hearing.

4.0 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

4.1 POLICY

Individual members of Congress are considered as requesters under the Freedom of Information Act. Government Relations and Public Policy will exercise discretionary disclosure of otherwise confidential information to individual Members on a case-by-case basis, based on a weighing of the various issues involved.