

February 25, 2026

# **LATEST UPDATE RE: Postal Service Announces Intent to Cease Off-Site Training Per Diem in Maintenance Craft**

***UPDATE: After a meeting with APWU President Jonathan Smith, DIR Charlie Cash and Maintenance Director Balogun; the Postal Service has decided to delay the discontinuance of the NCED Per Diem Pilot until June 1, 2026, for the purpose of facilitating further discussion regarding this matter.***

During the 2024 contract negotiations, the APWU submitted a proposal to make per diem rights permanent for APWU-represented employees. The Postal Service balked at this proposal but ultimately agreed to extend the Per Diem Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through the life of the agreement (2024-2027).

However, on Nov. 6, the Postal Service notified the APWU that they intend to cease per diem payments for students attending off-site training effective Jan. 1, 2026, and return to simply providing three meals a day at the Three Squares Eatery. This is the very definition of bad faith bargaining and is indicative of the obstructionist management officials that the APWU deals with on a daily basis.

“This notice from the USPS is deeply troubling and unexpected,” said Maintenance Division Director Idowu Balogun. The Per Diem MOU was jointly negotiated, mutually agreed upon, and has governed travel reimbursement practices for years. It cannot be—nor has it ever been—subject to termination by one party acting alone.

The Postal Service’s attempt to retract this MOU outside of traditional bargaining procedures represents a step backward in labor-management relations. If allowed, it could jeopardize the financial stability of employees who rely on standardized per diem provisions while performing required travel assignments.

## **Let us be clear:**

- The APWU does not recognize any unilateral attempt to terminate a joint agreement.
- The Per Diem MOU remains in effect, intact, and enforceable.
- Any effort by the USPS to disregard this agreement violates established contractual principles and undermines the rights we have fought hard to secure.

The APWU has already met with and will continue to meet with the Postal Service and has initiated a comprehensive review. We will take every necessary action—contractual, administrative, and legal—to challenge this improper action. We are fully prepared to defend the negotiated protections that ensure our members are not forced to incur out-of-pocket travel costs while performing essential duties for the Postal Service.

We encourage Local and State organizations to remain vigilant and file individual grievances for every single instance where management refuses to provide per diem for students. We will continue to advocate that students be reimbursed for any money spent on food out of their own pocket (up to the maximum allowable per diem) while attending off-site training.

The APWU stands united in protecting the rights and benefits that our members deserve. We will not allow the erosion of jointly negotiated agreements, nor will we stand by while management attempts to bypass the bargaining process. Email us at [maintwebinar@apwu.org](mailto:maintwebinar@apwu.org) with comments.



**If you have any additional questions, please contact your Maintenance Craft Director, Sherry Pierre or Assistant Maintenance Craft Director, Tia Lockett.**