

Will USPS Offer Another VERA in 2026?

What to Watch For

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If a new VERA is coming, here are the signals to watch. Congressional action on the borrowing cap — if it passes, USPS has less urgency to cut staff. If it stalls, workforce reductions become more likely. Alvarez & Marsal’s recommendations could come as early as the end of FY2026 (September 30). Union communications — VERA offers are negotiated with the unions, so watch APWU, NALC, NPMHU, and NRLCA announcements.

Why Another VERA Is Likely

- **The restructuring firm.** *In early March 2026, USPS hired Alvarez & Marsal — the same firm companies bring in when they need to map out all options, including service cuts and workforce reductions. This isn’t the kind of consultant you hire for minor adjustments.*
- **The financial pressure.** USPS lost \$9 billion in FY2025 and \$1.3 billion in Q1 2026 alone. Steiner has told Congress the agency could run out of cash as early as October 2026. Workforce costs are the single largest operating expense. Another round of voluntary separations is one of the most straightforward ways to reduce costs without resorting to involuntary layoffs.
- **Steiner’s own words.** When asked about layoffs at the March 17 hearing, Steiner said “everything has to be on the table” and explicitly did not rule out a reduction in force. VERA is always the step before a RIF — agencies offer voluntary exits first to avoid the legal complexity and morale damage of involuntary separations.
- **The shift toward pre-career.** Steiner told Congress that USPS is “moving toward more of those employees being pre-career rather than career.” That strategy works best when career positions are vacated through retirement, not replacement.