



# A Postal Primer for Printers

## IPMA Educational Conference

June 15, 2026

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[www.berkshire-company.com](http://www.berkshire-company.com)

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## Overview

- Ben Franklin – Printer & Postmaster
- Key USPS Regulations & Programs
  - Mailpiece Design
  - Addressing
  - Intelligent Mail
  - Business Mail Entry
- 2026 USPS Promotions & Incentives
- Ongoing USPS Changes
- Congressional Actions
- Postal Resources for Printers

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# Offspring Of Posties (or Printers)

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# OOPS

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# 1 Ben Franklin

*The Man, The Myth, The Printer & Postmaster General*

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## Ben Franklin – Printer & Postmaster General

- Founding Father, inventor, diplomat, writer – and printer
- Operated his own printing press in Philadelphia
- Appointed Postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737
- Named joint Postmaster General of the Colonies in 1753 by King George III
- Standardized postal routes and introduced accounting methods
- Appointed Postmaster General by Second Continental Congress



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# 2 Key USPS Regulations & Programs

*Mailpiece Design · Addressing · Intelligent Mail · Business Mail Entry*

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# Mailpiece Design

## Letters

Up to 3.5 oz  
Max 11.5" x 6.125"  
Aspect ratio rules

## Flats

Up to 13 oz  
Max 15" x 12"  
Must be flexible

## Self-Mailers

Folded mail pieces  
No envelope needed  
Tab/seal requirements

## Booklets & Catalogs

Bound mail pieces  
Special preparation rules  
Weight & thickness limits

**Publication 25 – Designing Letter and Reply Mail**



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# Addressing

- CASS – Coding Accuracy Support System
  - Validates and standardizes address data
  - Required for automation-compatible mailings
- NCOALink – National Change of Address
  - Identifies movers and updates address files
  - Available through USPS-certified licensees
- Move Update Requirement
  - Mailers must update addresses within 95 days of mailing
  - Non-compliance results in additional postage charges



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# Intelligent Mail

## IMb / Mail.dat

Intelligent Mail barcode encodes routing & tracking data; Mail.dat is the file standard

## Informed Delivery

Email previews of incoming mail sent to recipients – opt-in program

## Informed Visibility

Real-time scan data feed for mailer tracking and logistics planning

## ACS – Address Change Service

Automated electronic notification of UAA mail and address changes

## Mailers Scorecard

Online tool showing quality metrics for Full-Service mailings



# Business Mail Entry

## Post Offices

- Retail window service for smaller mailings
- Accept permit imprint mail
- Staff available to answer basic mailing questions
- Not ideal for large volume presort mailings

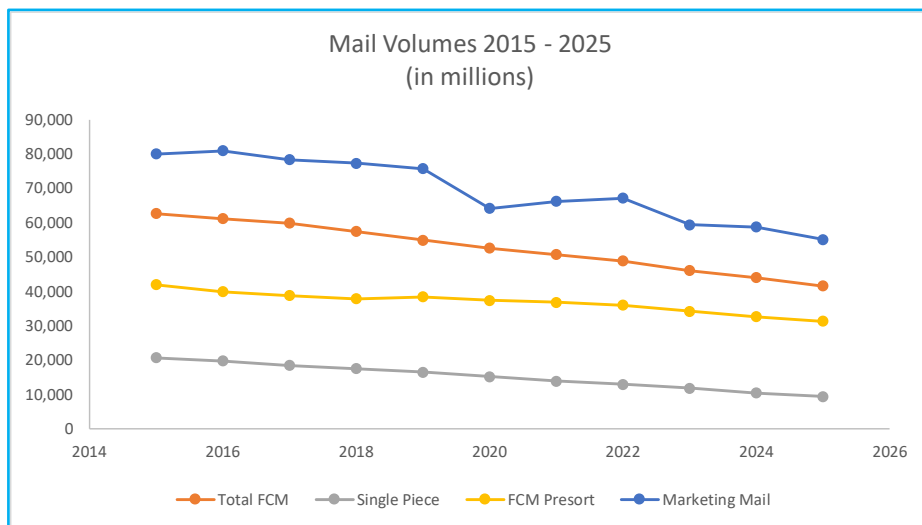
## Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU)

- Dedicated facility for commercial mailers
- Accepts large-volume presorted mail
- Staff specializes in bulk mail requirements
- Verifies postage, sort accuracy, and documentation

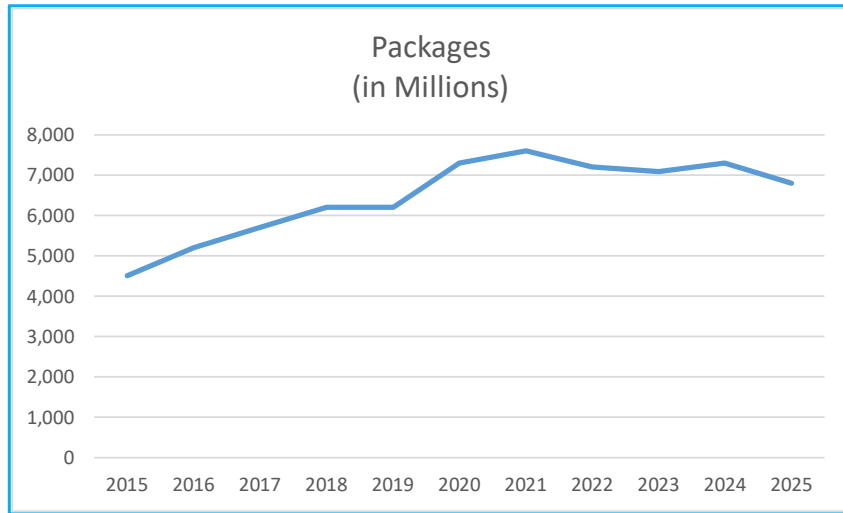
# 3 2026 USPS Promotions & Incentives

*Discounts for innovative and high-value direct mail*

## Physical Mail Remains Relevant



# Packages



Source: <https://facts.usps.com/table-facts/>

## 2026 USPS Promotions – Quick Reference

Promotion	Discount	Mail Class	Dates
Integrated Technology	5%	FCM & Marketing Mail	"Pick Six"
Tactile, Sensory & Interactive	5%	FCM & Marketing Mail	Jan 1 – Jun 30
Continuous Contact	5%	USPS Marketing Mail	Apr 1 – Dec 31
First-Class Mail Advertising	5%	First-Class Mail	Sep 1 – Dec 31
Catalog Insights	10%	USPS Marketing Mail	Oct 2025 – Jun 30

Add-Ons (with main promotion): Informed Delivery +1% / +0.5% | Sustainability +1%

## 2027 PROPOSED PROMOTIONS CALENDAR

Promotions	2027	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Integrated Technology</b> 5% Discount Marketing Mail <a href="#">First Class Mail</a>													
<b>Tactile, Sensory &amp; Interactive</b> 5% Discount for complex finishes 3% Discount for standard finishes Marketing Mail <a href="#">First Class Mail</a>													
<b>Direct Mail Discovery</b> 40% Discount off first 5,000 pieces 5% Credit to eDoc submitter Marketing Mail													
<b>Impact Messaging</b> 5% Discount Marketing Mail <a href="#">First Class Mail</a>													
<b>First-Class Mail Advertising</b> 5% Discount <a href="#">First Class Mail</a>													
<b>Add-Ons   Additional discount applied to Promotions all year round.</b>													
<b>Informed Delivery</b> + 1% to Mailer + 0.5% Credit to eDoc Submitter							<b>Sustainability</b> + 1% to Mailer						

- **TSI** discounts will now differentiate based on finishes, with a 5% discount for Complex finishes; 3% for Standard finishes.
- **Direct Mail Discovery** is a discount for new mailers. A new mailer can receive the discount on up to 100,000 pieces total during the promotion period for Letters. A new mailer is defined as a mailer that has never mailed with USPS or has not mailed in the past 2+ years.
- **Impact Messaging** provides a discount to mailers that include messaging that promotes the impact of direct mail.
- **FCM Advertising** duration has been expanded to 9 months and will now allow a separate coupon to be included in the piece.

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## AI and Postal Promotions



- Integrated Technology Promotion – 5% Postage Discount in 2026
- “Pick 6” Scheduling
- Option 1: Mailpiece Copy
- Option 2: Mailpiece Image
- It’s easier than you think
- Don’t forgot the Add-Ons!

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## Mail Growth Incentive

**30%** postage credit for qualifying volume exceeding your baseline

- Program period: January 1 – December 31, 2026
- Eligible mail classes: First-Class Mail and USPS Marketing Mail
- Baseline determined by previous year's volume
- Minimum threshold: 1 million qualifying pieces
- Credit applied against future postage – not a cash refund



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## 4 Ongoing Changes Within the USPS

*Delivering for America · New Networks · New Leadership*

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# What's Changing at the USPS

## Delivering for America Plan

10-year strategic plan to achieve financial sustainability and service excellence

## New Processing Network

Consolidation into Regional Processing & Distribution Centers (RPDCs)

## Regional Transportation Optimization

RTO initiative restructures transportation lanes and schedules between facilities

## Postage Rates

Next rate adjustment expected July 2026 – plan for increased costs

## PMG Steiner

Postmaster General David Steiner took office in 2025



# New Processing Network

Regional Processing  
and Distribution Center  
(RPDC)



- All outgoing operations
- Destinating Parcels to the 5 digit
- Cross dock destinating 3-digit letters and flats

Local Processing  
Center (LPC)



- Letters and Flats to DPS or carrier route
- Cross dock 5-digit parcels

Sort and Deliver  
Center (SDC)



- Parcels to Carrier Route

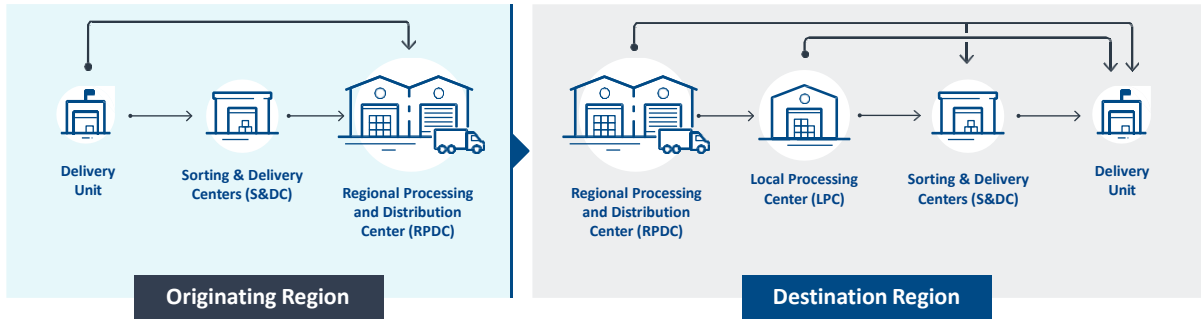
Delivery Unit  
(DU)



- Destinating Entry



# The Future Network Flow: End-to-End Model



**REDUCE COST • IMPROVE ON-TIME DELIVERY • RELIABLE SERVICE STANDARDS**  
**OPTIMIZE RESOURCE & PROCESS YIELD • ENERGIZE EMPLOYEES • EXPAND USPS CONNECT REACH**  
**ENHANCE PRODUCTS • ALIGN NETWORK TO GROUND ADVANTAGE • CAPTURE MORE PACKAGE MARKETSHARE**

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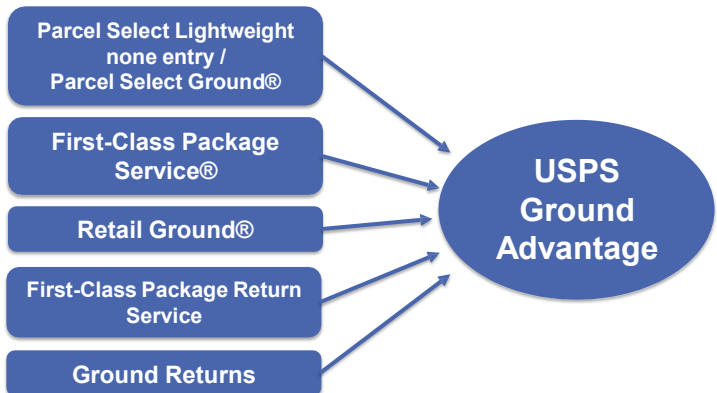
# USPS Ground Advantage

**Features:** \$100 of Insurance for USPS Ground Advantage  
 Added USPS Ground Advantage Return Including \$100 of Insurance

Combines several service offerings into streamlined ground products

Two-to-five-day delivery across entire CONUS ZIP range

Accessible across all USPS outlets and vendor platforms (Retail, Click-N-Ship, PC Postage, eVS, ePostage, Military Overseas Post Offices, GSS)



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## Future Rate Authority Estimates With Current Regulations

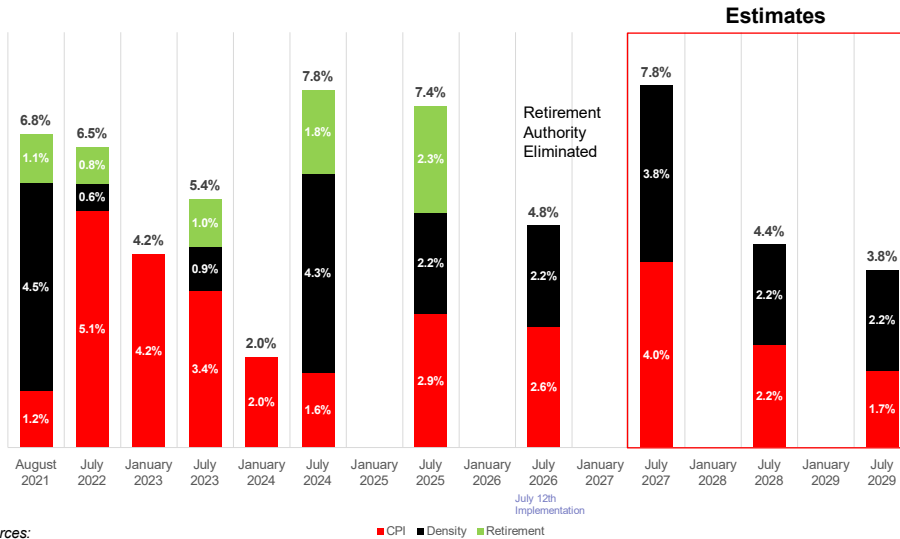


Chart Estimate Sources:  
 CPI: S&P Global Market Intelligence (formerly IHS Markit)  
 Density: Jan 2026

Sensitive Commercial Information – Do Not Disclose / Attorney-Client Privileged / Attorney Work Product



# 5 Congressional Actions

*Presidential Nominees · Legislation*

# Congressional Actions & Postal Reform

## Presidential Nominees

- USPS Board of Governors seats subject to Presidential nomination
- Senate confirmation required for each Governor
- Board composition affects strategic direction and Postmaster General selection

## Legislation

- Postal reform bills periodically introduced in Congress
- Rate-setting authority and price cap rules under review
- Printers and mailers urged to contact representatives and engage with industry advocacy



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# Postal Reform Act of 2022

- Eliminates the prepayment of future retiree health benefits.
- Requires future retirees to enroll in Medicare.
- Allows the USPS to provide non-postal products and services for government agencies – from federal to state to tribal to local.
- Requires an integrated package and mail services network, deliveries 6 days a week.
- Mandates greater transparency on performance, including website.
- Increases the number of copies a rural newspaper can send to nonsubscribers from 10 percent to 50 percent.
- Requires a study and reform of flats processing.
- Adjusts language around selecting transportation methods.
- Includes the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) in the appointment of the USPS Inspector General.

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## USPS: Legislation Update – 119<sup>th</sup> Congress

- 172 Bills focused on or impacting the USPS (as of 5/8/26)
  - 95 Naming post offices
  - 6 Election related
  - 4 Stamp related
  - 2 Drug related
  - 15 ZIP Codes
  - 50 USPS reform, funding, recognition, operations

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## USPS: Legislation Update – 119<sup>th</sup> Congress

- USPS Board of Governors
  - Five open Positions
  - Four nominees – hearing scheduled for June 17, 2026
- Postal Regulatory Commission
  - Chairperson Michael Kubayanda resigned October 3, 2025
  - Acting Chair – Commissioner Taub
  - No nominees at this time

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# 6 Postal Resources for Printers

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## Postal Resources for Printers

### Postal Explorer

[pe.usps.com](https://pe.usps.com)

Complete DMM, publications, postage calculators, and mailing standards

### PostalPro

[postalpro.usps.com](https://postalpro.usps.com)

Industry alerts, training, guides for business mailers

### Mailing & Shipping Solutions Center

[postalpro.usps.com/solutions](https://postalpro.usps.com/solutions)

Live and online support by trained mailing requirements agent

### USPS National Programs

[usps.com](https://usps.com)

Informed Delivery, promotions, tools for national mailers

Other Key Associations:

PCC

AIM

MTAC

IPMA



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# Questions?



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# NETWORK WITH ME



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## **Popular Presentations for Future Events**

- Artificial Intelligence: Help, Not Hype
- Do It Now!
- Social Media: Promoting Your Professional Profile
- The Future of Business
- What's Going On?

# It Begins With The Address

*A Guide for Postal Professionals*

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### Summary

It begins – and ends – with the address

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# 01

## First Contact

*Format and validate addresses the moment they're acquired*

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## First Contact: The Keystone of Address Management

*THE ADDRESS IS THE KEYSTONE – the linchpin that holds together content, creativity, production and delivery.*

### CASS Certification (Address Focus)

USPS-certified software puts addresses into the proper format and validates the correct ZIP Code. Required for postage discounts and automation compatibility.

### NCOALink (People Focus)

Run all new addresses against the National Change of Address database. One of four approved Move Update methods. Best run nightly on batch imports.

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## 5 Ways to Meet the Move Update Requirement

- 1 Ancillary Service Endorsement
- 2 Address Change Service (ACS)
- 3 NCOALink System
- 4 NCOALink for Mail Processing Equipment
- 5 Alternative Move Update Methods (Legal Restraint or 99% Accurate)

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# 02

## Regular Checkups

*Once is not enough — ongoing maintenance keeps addresses current*

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## Regular Checkups: Keeping Addresses Current

**40M+**

people file a change of address with USPS each year

**165M+**

addresses delivered to by USPS every day

**1M+**

new addresses created in most years

### **USPS Standard – First-Class Mail ZIP Codes**

Verify and update once every 180 days (DMM 602)

### **USPS Standard – Move Update**

Verify within 95 days before each mailing

### **Savvy Mailer Best Practice**

Check addresses monthly or bimonthly — exceed the standard

### **Documented Correction Process**

Prioritize severe failures: missing numbers, no ZIP, no apartment

### **USPS Address Element Correction (AEC)**

Use AEC/AEC II for addresses that fail CASS processing

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**03**

## Validate Before Print

*Clean addresses before — or after — document composition*

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# Validate Before Print

## Direct Mail / Catalogs

- Clean addresses BEFORE creating the print file
- Bad addresses eliminated from the job
- Moves updated; only deliverable pieces created
- Side file with corrections sent back to list owner

## Transactional / Statements

- Use post-composition software to extract addresses
- Execute address hygiene on extracted addresses
- Place updated addresses back into the print file
- Add IMb, presort mail, and generate postal documentation

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# Handling Address Errors Before Print

## When an address has significant errors:

- A** Print suppressed; message sent to business unit
- B** Print suppressed; PDF sent to business unit for decision whether or not to print locally
- C** Document printed and mailed; PDF or message sent to business unit

## When NCOALink identifies a move:

- A** Side file of moves sent back to business unit to contact customer
- B** Side file used to generate a separate move verification mailing
- C** Move notice printed boldly on page 1 of the document (recommended — meets notification rules with no extra postage)

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# 04

## Production Process Integrity

*Right document · Right envelope · Right address · Right time*

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## Production Process Integrity

### Common Causes of Return Mail

- Address incomplete or incorrect
- Recipient has moved
- Smearred or illegible ink
- Improper fold — address not in window
- Double-stuffed — wrong pages
- Wrong envelope — wrong recipient

### Job Information Files

Piece- and job-level data including machine instructions and Mail.dat details

### Barcodes

Linear or matrix barcodes with unique identifying information per piece

### Cameras

Track pieces on all equipment — printers, inserters and fulfillment

### Post-Presort Software

Reconciles actual production data to postal documentation and Mail.dat

### Closed-Loop Tracking

Tracks every piece in every job, from data to print to processing to post

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# 05

## Additional USPS Tools

*AEC · AEC II · Address Change Service (ACS)*

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## Additional USPS Tools: AEC & ACS

### Address Element Correction (AEC)

#### AEC -- CASS Plus

Breaks down address elements and performs a series of evaluations and comparisons to fix what CASS cannot.

#### AEC II — Human Review

Addresses sent to local USPS delivery unit. Letter carriers with real-world knowledge of the route correct the record.

#### Best for:

Addresses that are delivered by USPS but don't generate a Delivery Point Validation (DPV) in CASS.

### Address Change Service (ACS)

Electronic notifications of non-delivery or change of address. Approved Move Update method.

#### 1 Traditional ACS

Uses a keyline in the address block to uniquely identify the piece

#### 2 OneCode ACS

Uses the Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMb) for identification

#### 3 Full-Service ACS

Provided free for mail qualifying for Full Service IMb discounts

#### 4 IMpb ACS

For parcel shippers using the Intelligent Mail package barcode

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# 06

## Processing Return Mail

*A six-step approach to turning a nuisance into a tool*

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## Processing Return Mail: 6-Step Approach

- 1 Keep Accurate Measurements** Track volume AND percentage — 100 pieces out of 1,000 = 10%; 100 out of 100,000 = 0.1%
- 2 Update Moves First** Easiest fix — new address attached or customer contacted by phone/email
- 3 Fix Obvious Errors** Missing house number, no apartment, wrong ZIP — search records and update
- 4 Use CASS, NCOALink & AEC** Run tougher problems through software and USPS correction programs
- 5 Turn Off Mail for Repeat Offenders** Send Certified Mail notice, retain returned piece to meet legal obligations
- 6 Repeat** People keep moving and errors keep occurring — the process must be continuous

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# 07

## The Real Costs of Poor Address Management

*Beyond print and postage*

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## The Real Costs of Poor Address Management

*100% of people who don't receive an offer won't respond to it. The loss is more than one sale — it's the lifetime value of that customer.*

### Direct Mail & Marketing

- Lost sales and revenue
- Lost lifetime customer value
- Wasted print and postage

### Billing & Payments

- Delayed or missed payments
- Late fees and service costs
- Certified Mail for cancellations

### Insurance & Legal

- Liability on cancelled policies
- Attorney and court costs
- Returned ID cards → reprints

### Banking & Finance

- Late loan payments and defaults
- Escheatment of unclaimed assets
- Broker liability for stock losses

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# Summary

## IT BEGINS AND ENDS WITH THE ADDRESS

- Format & validate immediately:** Use CASS-certified software the moment an address is acquired
- Maintain regularly:** Run CASS and NCOALink monthly — exceed the USPS standard
- Validate before every print job:** Clean addresses pre- or post-composition; never skip this step
- Control your production process:** Right document · right envelope · right address · right time
- Use all available USPS tools:** AEC, AEC II, and ACS extend what CASS alone can correct
- Manage return mail actively:** Measure, update, fix and repeat — treat it as a quality tool



# The Berkshire Company Free Resources

## It Begins With the Address eBook

<https://www.berkshire-company.com/it-begins-with-the-address-2020-0>



## 110 Tips to Improve Print and Mail Management

<https://www.berkshire-company.com/110-tips>





## Thank You!

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## About The Berkshire Company

An independent management consulting firm, The Berkshire Company specializes in improving your business process, including analyzing your operation, developing and selecting solutions, and providing project management.

The Berkshire Company has helped more than 100 organizations improve their operations with:

- Process Evaluations & Improvements
- Strategy Development
- Project Management
- Outsource vs. Insource
- Mail Center Security
- New Technology

Learn more at: [www.berkshire-company.com](http://www.berkshire-company.com)

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