



2023-2028

# STRATEGIC PLAN



# Contents



<b>Message from the Chairman</b>	▶	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	▶	<b>2</b>
About the Postal Regulatory Commission		2
Snapshot of the Commission's Role		4
Leadership		5
Organization		6
<b>Foresight and Scenario Planning</b>	▶	<b>7</b>
<b>2023-2028 Strategic Plan</b>	▶	<b>9</b>
2023-2028 Strategic Goals		10
Strategic Goal 1 - Anticipate and adapt to an evolving postal system through a responsive and trusted regulatory framework.		11
Strategic Goal 2 - Enhance and expand communication of accurate and relevant information to postal stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public.		12
Strategic Goal 3 - Develop an internal infrastructure to support and strengthen our regulatory capabilities through adaptive policies, efficient processes, and scalable platforms.		13
Strategic Goal 4 - Build an organization that will attract, develop, and retain a diverse workforce of experts.		14
Strategy Implementation		15
Strategy Updates		15
<b>Conclusion</b>	▶	<b>15</b>





# Message from the Chairman

The postal system continues to play a central role in the economy and daily lives of hundreds of millions of stakeholders in every corner of America. The Postal Regulatory Commission is here, as it has been since 1971, to ensure the transparency and accountability of this vital system. Our new *Strategic Plan* for 2023-2028 leverages strategic foresight methodology. Working with Toffler Associates, a strategic foresight firm, the Commission analyzed multiple scenarios to take into account a wide range of possibilities for the future of the postal system and the Commission as its regulator. The environment enveloping the Postal Service, the Commission, and their stakeholders is being shaped by a number of factors:

- Economic and operational challenges posed by a long-term decline in letter mail volume
- Opportunities and challenges created by the increased importance of e-commerce
- The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, which provided critical relief for the Postal Service; added measures aimed at holding the Postal Service accountable, such as a new service dashboard and Commission reports on longstanding service and operational problems; and removed the Commission from the appropriations process to match the budgetary treatment of the Postal Service
- The impact of technological innovations on the efficiency of the postal network, service quality, and transparency

The *Strategic Plan* takes into account the developments shaped by these key drivers and refines the role of the Commission in addressing them proactively. Consistent with the state of the postal system as a whole, the Commission's strategy is marked by both continuity and progress. As the Commission enters the 2023 - 2028 period, we will be prepared to address multiple potential scenarios using an approach that is highly analytical, data-driven, and objective.

I look forward to working with my distinguished colleagues and the Commission's skilled, experienced, and multidisciplinary career staff to implement this plan.

**Michael M. Kubayanda**

*Chairman*

Postal Regulatory Commission

December 2022



# Introduction

## About the Postal Regulatory Commission

### ▶ Who We Are

The Postal Regulatory Commission (Commission) is an independent federal agency that regulates the United States Postal Service (Postal Service). The Commission ensures transparency and accountability of the Postal Service by providing objective, accurate, and timely regulatory analyses and decisions. The Commission has exercised regulatory oversight over the Postal Service since its creation by the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, with expanded responsibilities under the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 augmented the Commission's responsibilities in certain areas.

### ▶ What We Do

- Ensure the Postal Service complies with laws regarding the services that it offers
- Establish and oversee the ratemaking system for the Postal Service's non-competitive offerings
- Provide transparency and expert guidance on the Postal Service's finances, delivery speed, efficiency, and other aspects of postal service quality and operations
- Contribute to strong postal policy within the Commission's jurisdiction
- Ensure that the Postal Service complies with pricing rules for its competitive offerings aimed at ensuring a level, competitive playing field

### ▶ How We Regulate

- Develop, amend, and enforce regulations and guidance that the Postal Service must follow to meet relevant statutory and other legal criteria
- Optimize stakeholder access and engagement through open, fair, and clearly defined regulatory processes
- Monitor the postal system and anticipate changes to enhance agility, responsiveness, and effectiveness of Commission decisions
- Provide impartial, technically rigorous, and timely analyses and opinions based on merit
- Present data in an accessible and informative way to enhance understanding of Postal Service actions



## ▶ How We Operate

- Approach our regulatory responsibilities using a multidisciplinary, data-driven, and highly analytical framework
- Enable a collegial, professional, and respectful environment for all individuals working for or with the Commission
- Cultivate staff expertise to ensure that the Commission is a center for excellence in postal regulatory matters
- Embody a spirit of excellent customer service to recipients of our analyses and other work, as well as in relationships within the Commission
- Maintain open lines of communication with the Postal Service, Congress, and all other stakeholders
- Ensure efficient use of our limited resources
- Value integrity and adaptability across changing environments

## ▶ Who Are Our Stakeholders

- Users of the mail: individual and organizational mailers and mail recipients who rely on a stable and universal postal system
- Entities that support, compete with, analyze, or are impacted by the postal system
- Congress
- Executive Branch policymakers, including the Postal Service Board of Governors





# Snapshot of the Commission's Role

The Commission is unique as a regulator: everything we do involves regulation of a single entity, the Postal Service. Our role is limited and defined by the responsibilities that Congress has given to us. This role frequently generates questions related to the Commission's scope and authorities. The following table provides an overview of the Commission's role across a variety of topics.

## The Postal Regulatory Commission does...

- ✓ Regulate and approve postal rates for consistency with legal criteria.
- ✓ Regulate and approve changes, consistent with legal criteria, in the services that the Postal Service offers.
- ✓ Hear appeals on whether the Postal Service followed proper procedures when closing or consolidating post offices.
- ✓ Advise Postal Service decision-makers considering changes that affect postal service on a nationwide or substantially nationwide level.
- ✓ Regulate and approve the methods used to measure Postal Service costs and service performance.
- ✓ Collect and publish cost and service performance data.
- ✓ Hear complaints about Postal Service compliance with certain statutory requirements governing rates, service, and competition.
- ✓ Advise the U.S. Department of State on treaty matters affecting postal rates and services.
- ✓ Study and report on the value of the Postal Service's universal service obligation and postal monopolies.
- ✓ Analyze and report on the Postal Service's strategic plans and finances.

## The Postal Regulatory Commission does not...

- ✗ Set postal rates.
- ✗ Within jurisdictional bounds, make business or policy decisions about what services the Postal Service should offer.
- ✗ Make or override Postal Service policy decisions about facility closings and consolidations.
- ✗ Make or override operational/network decisions, even for major nationwide changes.
- ✗ Make Postal Service leadership decisions, including the selection of the Postmaster General.
- ✗ Determine Postal Service compensation, benefits, organizational structure, or other personnel-related matters.
- ✗ Make U.S. foreign policy regarding international postal affairs.
- ✗ Change the statutory scope of the Postal Service's universal service obligation or postal monopolies.
- ✗ Make, approve, or modify the Postal Service's strategic and financial plans.
- ✗ Oversee postal law enforcement by the Postal Inspection Service.
- ✗ Oversee the Postal Service's purchasing, leasing, or sustainability initiatives.







# Leadership



*From left to right: Vice Chairman Ann C. Fisher, Commissioner Robert G. Taub, Commissioner Ashley E. Poling, Chairman Michael M. Kubayanda, and Commissioner Mark Acton*

▲ The Commission is composed of five Commissioners, each of whom is appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for a term of six years. A Commissioner may continue to serve after the expiration of his or her term for up to one year or until a successor is confirmed. Not more than three Commissioners may be adherents of the same political party. The President designates one of the Commissioners to serve as Chairman. The Chairman directs all the executive and administrative functions of the Commission.





# Organization

Assisting the Commission is a staff with expertise in law, economics, finance, statistics, and cost accounting. The Commission is currently organized into four operating offices:



## Office of Accountability & Compliance

The Office of Accountability & Compliance is responsible for technical analysis and formulating policy recommendations for the Commission on domestic and international matters.

## Office of the General Counsel

The Office of the General Counsel ensures the Commission fulfills its statutory and regulatory obligations by providing legal guidance on matters involving the Commission's responsibilities.

## Office of Public Affairs & Government Relations

The Office of Public Affairs & Government Relations facilitates prompt and responsive communications with the public, Congress, federal agencies, the Postal Service, and the media.

## Office of the Secretary & Administration

The Office of the Secretary & Administration records the Commission's official actions; manages the Commission's records, human resources, budget and accounting, and information technology; and provides other support services.





# Foresight and Scenario Planning



The Commission's recognition and anticipation of a potentially significant degree of change to the postal system and the Postal Service during the strategic planning period led to a foresight-based strategic planning process that explored multiple future scenarios.

To support a foresight-based strategic planning effort, the Commission engaged Toffler Associates, a strategic advisory firm that assists civilian and defense government organizations and commercial entities with scenario planning.



# Scenario Planning Approach

Using scenario planning during strategy development helps an organization prepare for a variety of future scenarios rather than develop a strategic plan based on one predicted future. The process begins with an external perspective of the changes, trends, and disruptions that could occur across the entire postal system environment, then examines the impact of those changes on the Commission. This approach ensures the *Strategic Plan* is resilient to both probable and plausible events outside of the Commission's control.

## ► Results

The result of the scenario planning exercise was an appreciation for the range of plausible situations that may emerge and the degree of change in the postal system over the 2023-2028 strategic planning period. There was also recognition that, in all scenarios, there will likely be meaningful change in the postal system over the next five years, requiring a commensurate change in how the Commission should operate as a regulator.

## ► Insights

Insights from the scenario planning exercise then informed the development of a resilient 2023-2028 *Strategic Plan* designed to be applicable, relevant, and impactful across a variety of potential future scenarios.



# 2023-2028 Strategic Plan

In recognition that the future may be very different than the past, the Commission has developed a *Strategic Plan* that is designed to support the evolution of the Commission as a relevant and adaptive regulatory agency.

## There are three core elements that define the *Strategic Plan*:

### ■ Strategic Goals

These are the targeted areas of focus for the Commission over the next five years to prepare for and adapt to a changing postal system.

### ■ Strategic Objectives

These provide more specificity on the elements within each Strategic Goal, and they inform the actions needed to achieve the Goal.

### ■ Performance Indicators

These are the primary measures to assess progress of each Objective, which then support attainment of their respective Goal.

Together,  
these elements  
provide the  
strategic focus  
and priorities for  
the Commission.





# 2023-2028 Strategic Goals

The four Strategic Goals balance an external focus on adapting the Commission's regulatory framework to a transforming Postal Service with an internal focus on strengthening the Commission's capabilities to be an effective and efficient regulator through that transformation.

## Strategic Goal 1

**Anticipate and adapt to an evolving postal system through a responsive and trusted regulatory framework.**

## Strategic Goal 2

**Enhance and expand communication of accurate and relevant information to postal stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public.**

## Strategic Goal 3

**Develop an internal infrastructure to support and strengthen our regulatory capabilities through adaptive policies, efficient processes, and scalable platforms.**

## Strategic Goal 4

**Build an organization that will attract, develop, and retain a diverse workforce of experts.**



# Strategic Goal

# 1

Anticipate and adapt to an evolving postal system through a responsive and trusted regulatory framework.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.1

Monitor for emerging issues to consider regulatory actions or exploratory processes ahead of postal system changes.

### Performance Indicator:

- Established processes, roles, and capabilities that allow the Commission to anticipate potential issues

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.2

Determine potential responses to emerging issues, aligned with limitations set by the Commission's legal authority.

### Performance Indicator:

- Established processes, roles, and capabilities to review and facilitate Commission-wide consensus on anticipated issues

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.3

Increase, refine, and curate publicly-accessible postal data to improve the quality of analysis by the Commission and external stakeholders.

### Performance Indicators:

- Time from when data is available to the Commission to when it is available to stakeholders through reports, dashboards, or downloadable files
- Percentage of postal data held by the Commission made available to stakeholders through reports, dashboards, and other visualizations
- Stakeholder input on accessibility of data

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1.4

Handle routine matters faster without compromising quality.

### Performance Indicators:

- Established processes, roles, and capabilities to categorize cases and identify those that are routine
- Time from when a routine case is submitted to when it is completed



# Strategic Goal

# 2

Enhance and expand communication of accurate and relevant information to postal stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.1

Identify and monitor the Commission's key stakeholders and their content needs and communication preferences.

### Performance Indicators:

- Updated communications plan
- Established processes, roles, and capabilities to monitor stakeholder content needs and communications preferences

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.2

Engage with stakeholders through understandable and accessible work products using the most effective communication methods.

### Performance Indicators:

- Level of stakeholder engagement across channels
- Stakeholder use of communications

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2.3

Cultivate and foster relationships with inter-agency and non-governmental partners

### Performance Indicators:

- Relationships maintained with primary inter-agency partners
- Relationships maintained with primary non-governmental partners





# Strategic Goal

# 3

Develop an internal infrastructure to support and strengthen our regulatory capabilities through adaptive policies, efficient processes, and scalable platforms.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.1

Ensure operational policies support an evolving postal system and efficient execution of regulatory activities.

### Performance Indicators:

- Completed future state operating model design
- Established processes, roles, and capabilities, where necessary, to develop, review, update, store, and communicate operational policies
- Updated and documented operational policies

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.2

Define and improve processes to optimize operational and regulatory activities.

### Performance Indicator:

- Established processes, roles, and capabilities to consider, develop, update, and communicate necessary operational and/or regulatory activities

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.3

Utilize technology and data infrastructure to support scalable, informative, and efficient operations.

### Performance Indicators:

- Standardized tools and software for functions and processes
- Operational process and employee output efficiency
- Established foundational data infrastructure to capture, store, and secure data
- Established data sharing agreements between the Commission and the Postal Service

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3.4

Determine the acquisition requirements for developing and operating the internal infrastructure necessary to support operational and regulatory needs.

### Performance Indicators:

- Established acquisition requirements and timeframes for needed capabilities
- Established hiring plan for development and implementation support
- Benchmarks of the Commission's budget to comparable government agencies



# Strategic Goal

# 4

**Build an organization that will attract, develop, and retain a diverse workforce of experts.**

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.1

Attract an expert and diverse workforce through effective recruitment and a positive candidate experience.

### Performance Indicators:

- Documented and updated position descriptions
- Documented recruiting plan for Offices or positions as appropriate
- Established onboarding guide with pre-employment details for hiring officials, onboarding plan, and post-onboarding survey

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.2

Reinforce an inclusive, engaging, and supportive work environment that fosters development and retention of world-class experts in postal regulation and agency administration.

### Performance Indicators:

- Completed Learning and Development Strategy to ensure knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are trained
- Updated training policy to incorporate Learning and Development Strategy and plan for ongoing employee instructions
- Employee satisfaction and engagement scores within the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)
- Employee attrition rates compared to relevant benchmarks
- Documented and updated compensation plans

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.3

Engage with Commission employees by providing regular and quality communications and facilitating relevant information sharing.

### Performance Indicators:

- Employee satisfaction and engagement
- FEVS scores on communications-related questions

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4.4

Develop and maintain flexible workforce plans that meet regulatory, workforce, and operational requirements as the Commission grows and evolves.

### Performance Indicators:

- Completed organizational assessment to determine skill gaps and workforce needs
- Completed short-term and long-term workforce plan for each Office
- Established change management processes, roles, and capabilities





## Strategy Implementation

After the development of the Strategic Goals, Strategic Objectives, and Performance Indicators, the Commission created a plan to execute the strategy and ensure that the *2023-2028 Strategic Plan* evolves with the changes in the postal system during those five years.

Performance Indicators, related to the Strategic Objectives, are established to specifically monitor and assess progress. The Performance Indicators are designed to focus on key strategic activities; operational metrics will still be captured and tracked to monitor ongoing Commission operations. The Commission's four operating Offices have the ownership and responsibility for executing the actions and

monitoring Performance Indicators to achieve the *2023-2028 Strategic Plan*. Their role is to prioritize actions, monitor progress, manage resources, and ensure collaboration across Offices to coordinate interdependencies and benefit from inter-Office synergies.

The Commission will report on its progress, major accomplishments, and challenges related to each Strategic Goal and Performance Indicator in its *Annual Report to the President and Congress*. The *Annual Report* will focus on the Commission's Strategic Goals, thereby promoting transparency and alignment of the Commission's activities.



## Strategy Updates

Strategic plans are based on certain assumptions and operating parameters about the external environment. Therefore, the Commission will actively monitor changes in the postal system and within the Postal Service to determine if changes to the *2023-2028 Strategic Plan* are necessary, to ensure the Commission's priorities remain relevant to the external conditions. To accomplish this, the Commission will establish an annual strategy review process, emphasizing changes in the external environment, to identify meaningful changes that may impact the Commission's *Strategic Plan*.



## Conclusion

With a resilient *Strategic Plan*, effective assessment of progress toward Strategic Goals, and monitoring of the external postal system, the Commission is prepared to ensure transparency and accountability of the Postal Service as the postal system changes and operates within an increasingly competitive industry. By being at the forefront of the evolution of the world's largest postal system, the Commission's *Strategic Plan* reinforces its position as an impartial organization that attracts, develops, and retains world-class postal expertise.

The amount of change anticipated over the next five years requires the Commission to remain firmly focused on being an effective and objective regulator that is trusted by the American public, policymakers, and all interested stakeholders.





**Postal Regulatory Commission  
2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan**

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