

PROCESSING  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
FORM  
(PAF) GUIDE

**United States Postal Service®**  
**National Customer Support Center (NCSC)**  
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# Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) Requirements and Clarifications

## WHY IS THE PAF REQUIRED?

NCOALink® Service Providers licensees are required by their license agreement with USPS® to acquire a Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) for each of their customers. The PAF is not a requirement for the NCOALink End User licensee.

The PAF is an essential part of the NCOALink process because it enables USPS and the mailing industry to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974 by way of a written request to use COA information for mailing purposes. Specifically, section 552a of Title 5 states in part:

“No agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains”

The NCOALink PAF:

- Identifies those mailers to whom USPS has disclosed change-of-address information via the use of NCOALink processing.
- Ensures mailers' acknowledgement use of the COA data is restricted.
- May protect the licensee if a mailer uses the processing results for reasons that abuse the intended use of the product such as creating a list of new movers.

The service provider licensee must acquire this form from each customer before they can perform NCOALink processing. This form must be completed and signed by the mail list owner, the NCOALink licensee and, when applicable, any third parties that are a part of the transaction between the list owner and the licensee.

The PAF must be renewed annually and the NCOALink licensee must retain a copy for six years and must make it available to USPS upon request.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Licensee**
  - Has a signed license agreement with the Postal Service™
  - Receives files from customers for NCOA<sup>Link</sup>® processing
  - Performs the actual processing of the LIST against the National Change of Address data
  - Responsibilities:
    - Adhering to the License Agreement and Performance Requirements
    - Collecting and maintaining all PAFs
    - Policing the Advertising of all BROKERS and LIST ADMINISTRATORS with which they have a business relationship
  
- **List Owner**
  - Person/Company for whom processing will be done
  - The owner of the mail created from this list; the one party in the process that is driving the mail without whom no mailing would occur
  - Is the beneficiary of the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing
  - As stated in the Reports section of the License Performance Requirements (9.3.1 – FSP LPR; 8.3.1 – LSP LPR): *Under no circumstances shall a third party Broker, Agent, or List Administrator be considered the Mailing List owner nor have the authority to sign on behalf of the Mailing List owner.*
  
- **Broker-Agent**
  - Acts as a 'middle-man' between the List Owner (customer) and Licensee
  - Is a 'reseller' for the Licensees service
  - Must not retain the file from the List Owner for more than 45 days
  - May receive updated addresses from the Licensee for the purposes of delivering the same to the List Owner, but is never the final repository for the data
  
- **List Administrator**
  - Houses, maintains, updates and manages the list for the List Owner on an ongoing basis.
  - Usually has a contract to provide the above services to the List Owner (customer).
  
- **List Custodian**
  - Any responsible party/officer in a company (List Owner) who is responsible for an address list within that company

- **List Broker**
  - A third responsible party company whose business is to compile and sell lists of addresses and names.
  - List Rental scenarios have further explanations of when List Brokers should be signing a PAF.
  
- **PAF ID**
  - A four-part 18 byte list/company identification scheme:
    - Bytes 1-4 are the PLATFORM ID of the Licensee assigned by the USPS
    - Bytes 5-10 are the NAICS code for the List Owner
    - Bytes 11-12 are the approximate frequency of processing on an annual basis (usually 01-52 or 99)
    - Bytes 13-18 are the UNIQUE ID to that list assigned by the Licensee
  
- **Broker or List Administrator ID**
  - A three-part 16 byte company identification scheme:
    - Bytes 1-4 are the PLATFORM ID of the Licensee assigned by the USPS
    - Bytes 5-10 are the NAICS code for the Broker or List Administrator
    - Bytes 11-16 are the UNIQUE ID to that company assigned by the Licensee
  
- **Cooperative Database**
  - A cooperative database is a repository for the “house” files of many companies, which holds information on customers and their transactions. These databases are usually maintained (hosted) and managed by data services companies. Many companies will contribute information to a database in return for aggregate information on the customers other companies have provided. Such databases are often used for promotional mailings. (Adapted from Wikipedia - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative\\_database](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_database))
  - A cooperative database requires more than one data owner and the data in cooperative databases is not wholly owned by the company hosting the information, a PAF must be on file for each cooperative database participant in the cooperative database.
  - PAF preparation for cooperative databases,
    - The hosting company must appear as the List Administrator.
    - Each participant must complete a PAF once annually.
    - If the hosting company is also a participant, then they do not have to complete the List Administrator section for themselves.
    - **At NO time can the cooperative database be processed under a single PAF as an internal file**, even when the host

company is a participant in the cooperative database. However, a single PAF ID may be used. The PAF report should contain the cooperative database indicator indicating that this PAF is part of a cooperative database.

- This applies to databases for which the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> licensee is the data host and for databases for which the host is a third party.
- Since the cooperative database is owned by many participants and is used for accessing new clients, New Mover selections from a cooperative database processed against NCOA<sup>Link</sup> is strictly prohibited. As is the case with other NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processed lists, the USPS will only allow a New Mover selection for a company that has an on-going client relationship on its own database.

- **USPS Mailer ID**

- A Unique ID assigned by the USPS for use with the Intelligent Mail<sup>®</sup> Barcode.

- **Required Text Document (RTD)**

- All PAFs refer to an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Information Package that is provided with the PAF.
- At a minimum the Licensee must provide the 'Required Text Document' to the List Owner.
- The RTD contains basic information regarding the change of address data and what to expect with processing.

## TYPES OF PAFS AVAILABLE

- **Service Provider PAF**

- This PAF is used by NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full and Limited Service Provider licensees in most situations. This PAF is should capture information regarding all parties involved in processing a file.
- In the case of multiple third parties, additional copies of this form should be provided to the licensee capturing the data from all parties involved.
  - The List Owner should sign the first PAF and their company name should appear on addition copies of the form with the words “See Attached” in the licensee information section.
  - The Broker-Agent closest to the licensee should complete and sign the Broker-Agent/List Administrator section of the PAF signed by the list owner.
  - Each additional Broker/Agent or the List Administrator should complete and sign additional PAFs as necessary. The licensee section should be completed as above.

- **Combined PAF (*Limited Usage only*)**

- The combined PAF and Required Text Document (RTD) are available for Limited Service Providers who also provide services to Full Service Providers as a Broker-Agent or List Administrator for their direct customers.
- This PAF is intended for use when these customers process their files primarily through a LSP and
  - periodically request the file be processed by a Full Service Provider.OR
  - when the Limited Service Provider provides ANK<sup>Link</sup> processing and submits the ANK<sup>Link</sup> results to the FSP.
- If any additional parties are involved, then this PAF is not to be used. The List Owners should sign the appropriate Service Provider PAFs for both the Full and Limited Service Provider.

- **Mail Processing Agent PAF**

- A Mail Processing Agent (MPA) is an entity that provides printing and mailing services at multiple retail locations. A Mail Processing Agent receives customer’s mails at these locations for mail preparation at centralized print and mail facilities under the same entity. The mail pieces generated from the mailing lists are then presented for depositing into the mail stream for acceptance, handling and distribution by the USPS. Prior approval is required for MPA PAFs.

- **MPE (Mail Processing Equipment) PAF**

- The USPS has introduced the use of the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product with Mail Processing Equipment (e.g. MLOCRS – Multi-Line Optical

Character Readers). This PAF is for licensees using the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE Data User License.

## **The PAF ID – Positions 1-18**

### **Positions 1-4: Licensee Platform ID**

In this field, enter your MPE Platform ID

The fourth position will be a space

### **Positions 5-10: Mail Owner NAICS Code**

Enter the six-digit NAICS code

To obtain the appropriate NAICS code, go to

[www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html](http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html)

For jackpot or consolidator mail, use the NAICS code 561499

### **Positions 11-12: Frequency of Processing**

This field identifies the frequency of MPE processing on annual basis (value range 01-52)

If multiple lists are processed at different frequencies under same ID, enter '99'

Use your best estimation when entering this field

### **Positions 13-18: Mailer ID (Licensee assigned)**

Use your current Job ID. This field is six-digits (alphanumeric)

On the MPE PAF, the field 'USPS Mailer ID' is not related to the Mailer ID field in the Customer Service Log.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- There can only be one List Administrator per PAF.
- Licensees can Broker to other Licensees (commonly LSP to FSP).
- There can be multiple Brokers for a list and when there are multiple Brokers the following applies:
  - a. All Brokers must sign the PAF.
  - b. The Broker closest to the Licensee in the transaction will sign the original PAF as the Broker.
  - c. Additional Brokering parties will each attach an additional PAF, write in the customer's name, fill in the address area with the words "SEE ATTACHED" and complete the bottom section.
  - d. The CUSTOMER does not sign the additional forms.
  - e. The Licensee signs the original PAF and files all copies of the PAF together.
- The PAF must be signed by
  - Always:
    - List Owner
    - Licensee
  - When applicable:
    - Broker(s)
    - List Administrator
- PAFs must be collected to comply with the PRIVACY ACT of 1974.
- There is only one List Owner for a PAF.
- There is only one Licensee for a PAF.
- The List Owner cannot be the Broker for the same list.
- The List Owner cannot be the List Administrator for the same list.
- The Broker cannot be the List Administrator for the same list.
- The List Owner must sign the PAF for all licensees providing processing services.
- All parties signing the PAF must provide a physical address. Use of PO Boxes and PMBs are not acceptable.
- Combined PAF
  - All lists from the List Owner must go to the same Full Service Provider listed on the Combined PAF.
    - If the FSP Licensee changes a new PAF is required.
  - This PAF is not to be used with multiple third parties.
    - The list custody is:
      - List Owner ↔ LSP ↔ FSP**
    - The LSP must have a direct relationship with the List Owner.
  - This PAF must be accompanied by the appropriate Combined RTD which explains the services from both types of processing and can only be used with prior approval from the USPS.
  - The LSP & FSP are both required to maintain copies of the Combined PAF for 6 years as required in the LPR.
  - All other PAF guidelines apply to this PAF.

- The Combined PAF shall be limited for use by United States based companies as List Owners. (No Exceptions)

## **Equivalent Alternative PAF Method**

Equivalent Alternative PAF methods do not replace the paper version of the PAF; they are an alternate method for meeting the requirements of the License Agreement. This option in no way removes the responsibility of the Licensee to meet all of the obligations outlined in the License Agreement or the LPRs and, in particular, the following requirements:

- ✓ To assiduously retrieve and maintain information identified on the PAF as published and updated from time-to-time in the LPR;
- ✓ To assiduously retrieve and maintain a record of client's acknowledgement of restrictions of use of the service; and,
- ✓ To reliably obtain and assiduously authenticate identities for all parties identified on a PAF both at the initial transaction and as a part of the yearly renewal.

The USPS does not at this time endorse any particular alternate methods for verification of client identity. Any system that meets these requirements is sufficient. Licensees must decide what methods best suit their business needs and address their business risk while still maintaining the appropriate PAF information. Licensees may implement multiple methods for verification based on the Licensee's business needs.

In the event the USPS, at its sole discretion, determines a Licensee is not diligently verifying the identity and role of all parties involved in the transaction (including, but not limited to, brokers and list owners) when using equivalent methods, the USPS reserves the right to require the Licensee to revert to the traditional paper method of PAF completion. Any method used by a Licensee for verification under this new ruling applies ONLY to PAF collection under the licenses. There is no implicit or implied application of this ruling to ANY relationship, practice or agreement between the USPS and the Licensee. The USPS offers a wide range of services to its customers, and separately sets the appropriate requirements for each of these services, including PAF processes.

## **Alternative PAF Renewal Policy**

The USPS has modified the existing NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) renewal policy to make the process more effective for both licensees and their customers. The Alternative PAF Renewal policy serves as an option to the existing PAF renewal policy. The two models enable licensees to choose an option that best suits their business needs.

The purpose of the Alternative PAF Renewal policy is to assist Licensees in streamlining their processes of maintaining an accurate account of their customers, while adhering to the guidelines set forth in the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> license agreements. This policy also enables the USPS and mailing industry to continue to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974.

The Alternative PAF Renewal option is not applicable to foreign PAFs since required information for foreign processing often changes for each request.

### **Existing Policy**

- Prior to customers' anniversary dates, Licensees will notify their customers that their current PAFs are nearing expiration and they will need to complete new PAFs, even if contact or address information has not changed.
- Future NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing cannot be performed if the existing PAFs expire before new ones are received.
- Copies of the PAFs are maintained and kept on file for a period of six (6) years from the date of execution.

### **Alternative Policy**

- Prior to customers' anniversary dates, Licensees will send PAF renewal notifications via email, fax, US mail, or website click-through acknowledgement requesting customers to review their existing PAFs and provide any changes to their contact or address information.
- If there are no changes, customers do not have to complete a new PAF. However if any information has changed, customers will need to update their existing PAFs and resubmit them to the Licensee. In cases where the person who completed the original PAF is no longer with the company or is no longer the List Custodian, a new PAF must be completed and submitted to the Licensee prior to NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing.
- A copy of the original PAF and the subsequent annual email, fax or letter sent via US mail should be kept in Licensees' files for a minimum of six (6) years as proof of the annual request for updates to PAF information for their customers.
  - If Licensees choose to send email notifications, a generic email may be sent to many customers at the same time.
  - The email, fax or copy of the letter will be retained for a minimum of six (6) years as proof that all customers were contacted unless customers provide the Licensees with updated information. In these cases, the revised PAF will replace the existing PAF on file.
  - If customers fail to respond to Licenses' annual emails, faxes or letters requesting customers to review their existing PAFs, Licensees should accept that there are no changes to existing PAF and it should remain current and be retained (even beyond six years) until there is a change.
- It is the responsibility of the Licensee to ensure a completed and updated PAF is maintained and on file for each of their customers.

## Foreign Processing

The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full (section 4.4) and Limited Service (section 4.3) Provider License Agreements state the following:

“Licensee agrees that it violates this Agreement to provide Services to an Entity located or operating outside of the Territory or using the Updated Mailing Lists outside of the Territory.”

The USPS® has determined that periodically foreign entities will need to update a mailing list via the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Process for mail submission. All foreign processing must be granted prior approval. The approval process is outlined below:

The Foreign Entity will contact an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full or Limited Service Provider.

The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Licensee will have the customer provide the following items:

1. A completed NCOA<sup>Link</sup> PAF (Processing Acknowledgement Form) identifying all parties in the process.
2. A Letter of Intent (LOI) from the foreign entity requesting the processing.
  - a. The Letter of Intent (LOI) must be on Foreign entity company letterhead and must include information regarding the nature of the mailing(s)
  - b. Must identify all parties in the process.
  - c. Mail Class (ex: First-Class Mail®, USPS Marketing Mail®, Priority Mail®, Periodicals, Bound Printed Matter).
  - d. Mail List processing Frequency
  - e. USPS Permit number that will be used upon entering the mail into the USPS mailstream.
  - f. The USPS Location where the mail will be entered.

### **The USPS will not process incomplete requests.**

The Licensee will then submit the formal request including the above information by one of the following methods:

Letter submitted via USPS Delivery methods to:

NCOA<sup>Link</sup> PRODUCT DEPARTMENT  
NATIONAL CUSTOMER SUPPORT CENTER  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
225 N HUMPHREYS BLVD STE 501  
MEMPHIS TN 38188-1001

FAX: 650-577-5773

Email: [ncoalink@usps.gov](mailto:ncoalink@usps.gov)

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Can a Licensee function as both a Licensee and List Administrator for the same list.
  - a. Yes, in this case, the Licensee will sign both the middle & bottom Sections of the PAF.
2. Can a Licensee be a Broker?
  - a. Yes, Licensees can Broker to other Licensees (commonly – LSP to FSP), but a Licensee cannot Broker a list to themselves.
3. Can there be multiple Brokers?
  - a. Yes, there can be multiple Brokers for one list.
  - b. All Brokers in the chain must sign the PAF.
4. Who should sign the PAF?
  - a. The following people must sign the PAF
    - i. The Custodian of the list as the List Owner
    - ii. The Licensee
  - b. The following people only sign the PAF when applicable:
    - i. All Brokers
    - ii. The List Administrator
5. How is a PAF signed with multiple Brokers/list administrators?
  - a. The initial third party in the chain will sign the original PAF as the Broker.
  - b. Then the next third party will attach a second PAF (or just the bottom third of the page) write in the customer's name and fill in the address area with "SEE ATTACHED" and complete the bottom section. The CUSTOMER does not sign the additional forms.
  - c. Then the final Broker submits all PAFs to the Licensee.
  - d. The Licensee signs the original PAF and files all copies of the PAF together.
6. Can a list administrator or broker sign the PAF on behalf of their clients?
  - a. No, per the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full and Limited Service Provider Licensee Performance Requirements (Section 9.3.1 and Section 8.3.1) This section states that "Under no circumstances shall a third party Broker, Agent, or List Administrator be considered the mailing list owner nor have the authority to sign on behalf of the Mailing List owner.
7. Does a company have to sign one PAF for each LIST?
  - a. "Yes" – if the LIST CUSTODIAN is not the same.
  - b. "No" – if the LIST CUSTODIAN is the same.
8. Can one PAF stand for all lists within a company?
  - a. Yes, if the LIST CUSTODIAN is the same for all lists.
9. How are multiple list IDs assigned to one PAF?
  - a. By noting the PAF ID on the Front of the PAF as MULTIPLE, then listing the individual PAF IDs on the back of the PAF with the corresponding list name.
10. Can processing be done for a foreign company?
  - a. Yes, with prior approval from the USPS.
11. Why must all Brokers and parties involved in the processing of the list sign as a List Owner, Broker or List Administrator?

- a. To comply with provisions of the PRIVACY ACT of 1974. Specifically, data within the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Database is protected under this law. As custodians of the Data the Postal Service is required to maintain an accurate accounting of all disclosures of this data. So, data for any company/person who is handling a mailing list between the LICENSEE and LIST OWNER must be provided to the USPS to comply with this law. Failure to capture all data can result in the Termination of your license.
12. How do I know if a customer is actually a Broker?
    - a. Ask questions of your customer. It is your responsibility to know all your customers.
  13. What will happen if I do not collect the appropriate PAF information?
    - a. Suspension to possible Termination
  14. What is a unique list?
    - a. As defined in Section 1 of the license agreement, a list, system, group or other collection of at least 100 unique names and addresses for addressing Deliverables for delivery by the United States Postal Service<sup>®</sup>.
    - b. A table within a database
    - c. A list that is maintained separately from all other lists within a company
    - d. A unique list does not mean that a separate ID must be assigned every time a company submits a file. Each List should have a separate ID and should be handled accordingly.
  15. I am a Limited Service Provider and my customers file was processed using the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> with ANK<sup>Link</sup> dataset. The ANK<sup>Link</sup> results from this file are less than 100 unique names and addresses. Can I submit this extract to a Full Service Provider for processing?
    - a. No, any processing requires at least 100 unique names and addresses.
  16. Can a BROKER be a LIST ADMINISTRATOR?
    - a. Yes, but not for the same PAF.
  17. Can there be multiple LIST OWNERS?
    - a. No, there is only one LIST OWNER
  18. Can the List Owner, Broker and/or List Administrator be the same?
    - a. These entities cannot be the same on a single PAF.
  19. A Customer states that his business is a Sole Proprietorship and his Social Security Number (SSN) is used for the TIN. He does not want to give us this number, what should we do?
    - a. This is the **ONLY** exception to the TIN rule, in this case collect the last 4 digits of his SSN

**The Tax Identification Number (TIN) has been removed from the PAF and is no longer required.**
  20. My customer only wants to sign one PAF for Limited Service and Full Service processing?
    - a. The Combined PAF can be used for this customer only if:
      - i. There are no other third parties (brokers or list administrators) involved.
      - ii. The file will always be submitted to the same FSP listed on the PAF.

- b. The Combined PAF cannot be used if:
  - i. There are multiple third parties involved.
  - ii. The file will be going to different FSP Licensees.
    - 1. Customer can sign a new PAF for the other FSP.
    - 2. Customer can sign a new Combined PAF.
- 21. Can any mail house become a Mail Processing Agent?
  - a. The scope of this PAF is to allow Full Service Provider Licensees the option provide list processing services to companies whose primary business is to prepare mail pieces to be deposited in the mail stream. This PAF is very restrictive in how the data is allowed to be used and does not allow for any information to be returned to the customer.
- 22. I am a Limited Service Provider Licensee and a mail house. My processes are similar to that of the Mail Processing Agent. Can I use this process to avoid having all of my customers sign a PAF?
  - a. No, the purpose of this PAF is for FULL SERVICE PROVIDER processing only.
- 23. Is a PAF required for a Marketing Test?
  - a. Yes.
- 24. Can a licensee sign a PAF when doing marketing tests for their customers?
  - a. Yes, however the following requirements apply
    - i. Positions 1423-1452 in the Monthly Customer Service Log should be populated with the name of the entity (company name) for whom the processing completed.
    - ii. The Licensee should only provide to that entity the processing summary report and other statistical information.
- 25. Is prior approval required for a US-based business that sends their address file to Canada for mail creation, printing and entry? The processor in Canada will submit the address file to an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Service Provider for Update.
  - a. No. Since the company resides within the United States, no special permission is needed for your NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Service Provider to process your list. It is important that you and your Canadian processor complete the Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) to show that, as the list owner, your place of business is within the United States.
- 26. What happens if we notify a client that their PAF is getting close to expiration and client does not respond? Does the PAF expire or do we assume there is no change and renew the PAF?
  - a. The PAF will not expire. The licensee is to consider the PAF still current.
- 27. Is the new process an option, not a complete replacement for the existing process?
  - a. That is correct.
- 28. Will all licensees have to migrate to the new process if they are still using the existing policy?
  - a. No. Licensees may continue to use the existing annual renewal process if they wish.
- 29. Is there any intent to retire the old policy at some point in the future?
  - a. At this time there is no intent to retire the existing policy.

30. So under this new policy, if the List Owner information has not changed, do we continue to use the original date that the List Owner signed the original PAF, or do we use the date they confirmed that their information is still current?
  - a. The licensee should continue to use the date on the original PAF signed. If the software the licensee uses prohibits the licensee from processing without a renewal date, the licensee should use the date the verification notice was sent.
31. In the case where a Broker or List Administrator is involved, I am assuming that all parties will need to confirm their information, or is it only the List Owner that must confirm?
  - a. Yes. All parties should confirm their information when Broker-Agents/List Administrators are involved. If there are any changes for any party, a new PAF is required.
32. Will there be a new PAF that has to be used to indicate they are using the Alternative Renewal PAF Policy?
  - a. No. Licensees may continue to use the existing PAF forms.
33. How does the new PAF renewal process impact my PAF retention period?
  - a. The requirement to maintain PAFs for a period 6 years still exists. However, the retention period is now a minimum of 6 years. Licensees should maintain PAFs for as long as necessary to cover all processing. For example:
    - i. Customer ABC signs a PAF on January 25, 2013.
    - ii. Licensee contacts the customer annually in January and there are no changes until 2018 (5 years) when the customer submits a new PAF with new contact information and signature.
    - iii. The licensee will then keep both PAFs until February 2024.

## **SCENARIOS**

### **Multiple Customer Lists**

#### **Scenario 1**

ABC Company has 3 mailing lists: 'Current Customers', 'Internal Marketing List' and 'Purchased Marketing Lists'.

John Smith, VP is the custodian of the Current Customer List and Fred Jones, VP is the custodian of both Marketing Lists.

ABC Company would sign two PAFs. John Smith would sign for the 'Current Customers'. Fred Jones would sign for 'Internal Marketing List' and 'Purchased Marketing Lists'. For the PAF signed by Fred Jones, the PAF ID on the front would be multiple and both PAF IDs would be listed on the back with the list name.

#### **Scenario 2**

ABC Company has 3 mailing lists: 'Current Customers', 'Internal Marketing List' and 'Purchased Marketing Lists.'

John Smith, VP is the custodian of all mailing lists stored in the company's data warehouse.

ABC Company would have one PAF signed by John Smith. The PAF ID on the front would be multiple and both PAF IDs would be listed on the back with the list name.

## **Acquisition of Customer by a third party**

### **Scenario 3**

ABC Company acquires XYZ Company. Both companies are customers of the same licensee. No new PAF would be required, processing for XYZ Company would then fall under ABC Company's PAF.

ABC Company acquires XYZ Company. XYZ Company has a business relationship with the licensee and ABC Company does not. A new PAF would be required for ABC Company.

## **Multiple Licensees**

### **Scenario 4**

ABC Company is an LSP. ABC runs all lists, for all customers through an FSP the first time, then run the lists internally to ABC for all future runs.

ABC Company should get two PAFs, one showing the FSP as a Licensee and ABC Company as the Broker or List Administrator. The second PAF shows ABC Company as the Licensee. The MULTIPLE Broker PAF rules may apply.

## **Broker Agent Processing**

### **Scenario 5**

Jones Hardware Co (Jones') goes to Fred's Mailing House (Fred's) for a mailing to their current customer database. Fred's then contacts Sue's Advertising Agency (Sue's) to design and create the mailpieces. As part of creating the mailpieces, Sue's submits the Jones' mailing list to an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Licensee. In this case Fred's Mailing House and Sue's Advertising agency are BOTH Brokers.

**Jones' is the List Owner.** Under no circumstances should a third party sign for the List Owner.

## **List Rentals**

### **Scenario 6**

ABC Company provides mailing services to its customers. Customers hire ABC Company to produce, print and mail for them on a regular basis. ABC Company purchases one or more lists from a list broker for unlimited use and uses these lists to mail the customer pieces. The same lists, or portions of the lists purchased by ABC Company are used for multiple Customers who want to mail to these areas. Customers 'never' see the list, never retain a copy of the list or receive any change of address information from ABC Company. ABC Company maintains, updates and manages these lists. Who is the List Owner and who is the Broker?

As ENTIRE list(s) are processed and no updated data is returned to the List Broker. Then ABC Company is the List Owner. There is no Broker. If a List is rented for a specific client/customer, that specific client/customer is the List Owner.

### **Scenario 7**

ABC Company provides mailing services to its customers. Any Customer hires ABC Company to produce, print and mail for them on a regular basis. ABC Company purchases one or more lists from a list broker for a 'one-time' or multiple use to create and mail for a specific Customer. This Customer 'never' sees the list, never retains a copy of the list or retains any change of address information from ABC Company. Who is the List Owner and who is the Broker?

Since the list(s) purchase is for a specific customer, that customer is required to sign the PAF as the List Owner, ABC Company would be a Broker if they are not the licensee providing the processing. If a List is rented for a specific client/customer, that specific client/customer is the List Owner.

### **Scenario 8**

ABC Licensee is an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Service Provider for a multiple chapters of a National Organization. Each chapter has a completed PAF on file to handle their in-house lists. Twice a year, ABC Licensee rents a number of lists to do prospect mailings for chapters participating in this program. Each chapter is contracted with us separately to handle this. The National Organization is not involved in this process. ABC Licensee will then rent 10 - 15 lists from a list broker. The rented lists are selected for based on the area for the chapters participating in the Prospect mailing. So 10 - 15 lists are rented for 30 - 40 chapters. ABC Licensee would like to process the rented lists through NCOA<sup>Link</sup> upon receipt to have the most current address for merge-purge processing. The participating Chapters will *never* see the list, *never* retain a copy of the list or receive any change of address information from ABC Licensee. Does ABC Company have to split the files by Chapter for NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Processing?

In this scenario, ABC licensee should split the rental lists based on the area covered by each chapter for NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing.

## **Cooperative Databases**

### **Scenario 9**

ABC Company houses a cooperative database for 100 companies. ABC Company wants to process this database through NCOA<sup>Link</sup>. Each of the 100 companies would be required to sign a PAF for the licensee providing the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Service with ABC Company as the List Administrator. A single PAF ID may be used for all 100 PAFs

## **Scenario 10**

XZ Licensee hosts and processes 'US Residential Co-Op Database' for 50 Customers. XZ Licensee is also a participant in this database. How should XZ Licensee Complete the PAFs for ALL 51 Participants of the 'US Residential Co-Op Database'.

For the 50 Participants other than XZ Licensee: XZ Licensee should appear as the Licensee and the List Administrator. The same or different parties at XZ Licensee would sign as Licensee and List Administrator. The signatures are dependent on who is responsible for the maintenance and account management of the 'US Residential Co-Op Database' and who is authorized to sign PAFs as the Licensee representative.

For the PAF for XZ Licensee: XZ Licensee should appear as the licensee. There will be no List Administrator except in rare exceptions. An example of this would be when one division owns the data and a different division provides the hosting services.

## **SAMPLE PAFs and RTDs (Required Text Documents)**

Samples of each PAF described above and the corresponding RTDs are on the following pages.

Service Provider PAF is on page 23.

Service Provider RTD is on page 24.

Combined PAF is on page 28.

Combined RTD is on page 29.

MPA PAF is on page 32.

MPA RTD is on page 33.

MPE PAF is on the page 36.

MPE RTD is on page 37.

Current versions for use are posted to the following USPS PostalPro website at:

<https://postalpro.usps.com/mailing-and-shipping-services/NCOALink>.



# NCOA<sup>Link</sup>® PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The collection of information on this Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) is required by the Privacy Act of 1974. The United States Postal Service® (USPS®) requires that each NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Licensee have a completed NCOA<sup>Link</sup> PAF for each of their NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customers prior to providing the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> service. The Licensee is also required by the USPS to retain a copy of the completed form for each of its customers and to obtain an updated PAF from each of its customers at minimum once per year. Any signature upon this PAF shall be considered valid for all purposes and have the same effect whether it is an ink-signed hardcopy document or equivalent alternative.

## LIST OWNER

I, the undersigned, an authorized representative of:

Company Name

Address

Urbanization

City

State

ZIP+4

Telephone Number

NAICS

USPS Mailer ID (optional)

CRID (optional)

E-mail Address (optional)

Parent Company Name

Marketing or "DBA" Company Name or Primary Affiliate Company Name (if applicable)

Company Website (optional)

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

do hereby acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Information Package supplied to me by (PRE-PRINTED NCOALINK LICENSEE NAME), an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Service Provider. I also understand that the sole purpose of the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> service is to provide a mailing list correction service for lists that will be used for preparation of mailings. Furthermore, I understand that NCOA<sup>Link</sup> may not be used to create or maintain new movers' lists.

## LICENSEE

Business Name (Please print)

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

Telephone Number

Fax Number

**BROKER/AGENT**       **LIST ADMINISTRATOR** (Check applicable box)

Business Name (Please print)

Address

Urbanization

City/State/ZIP+4

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

Telephone Number

NAICS

Company Website (optional)

*For Licensee Use Only*

PAF ID:

Broker/Agent ID:

List Administrator ID:

## NCOA<sup>Link</sup>® SERVICE PROVIDER REQUIRED TEXT DOCUMENT

<<Service Provider>> is a non-exclusive Licensee of the USPS® (United States Postal Service®) to provide <<Full and/or Limited>> Service NCOA<sup>Link</sup>® processing.

It is important to note that not all Service Providers can offer the same level of service. Data quantity differs based on license level. Full Service Providers receive the full 48 month data set while Limited Service Providers receive an 18 month data set. All data fulfillments to Service Providers are provided weekly under direct license from the USPS.

The full NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file is a consolidated file of move information that on average contains approximately 160 million permanent changes-of-address (COAs) filed with the United States Postal Service (USPS). These COAs are retained on the file for a four-year period from the move-effective date and the file is updated weekly.

Before being added to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file, the **Old** address supplied by the Postal customer must be ZIP + 4® coded. The **New** addresses must be ZIP + 4 coded and validated using the USPS' proprietary database of actual delivery points. (NOTE: The delivery point database does not include NAMES or COA information.) Each delivery point confirmed **New** address is included on the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file. If unable to validate the **New** address, the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process will indicate that a move exists but will not provide the undeliverable **New** address.

**New** address information is provided only when a match to the input name and address is attained. The typical profile of the **New** address information contained on the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file is as follows:

- 89.68% Forwardable moves containing delivery point confirmed **New** addresses –  
**New** address provided
- 1.19% Moves containing unconfirmed **New** addresses – **New** address not provided
- 7.44% Moved, left no address
- 1.63% PO Box Closed
- 0.06% Foreign moves

When possible, postal customers who move multiple times within the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> time period are “linked” or “chained” to ensure that the latest address is furnished when an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> match is attained. This is not always possible if subsequent COAs are not filed in exactly the same manner as a COA filed previously (e.g., name spelling differences or conflicting secondary information).

The provision of change of address information is controlled by strict name and address matching logic. NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing will only provide new address information when queried with a specific algorithm of the name and input address from a mailers address list which matches the information on the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product. Data contained in and information returned by NCOA<sup>Link</sup> is determined by the name and move type (Business, Individual, or Family) indicated on a Postal customer's Change of Address form.

The data contained within the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product is comprised of approximately 40% family moves, 54% individual moves, and 6% business moves.

All matches made to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file require a ZIP + 4 coded, parsed input address.

The five types of processing modes are Standard (S); Business and Individual (C); Individual (I); Business (B); and Residential (R).

### **Standard Processing Mode (S)**

- Standard Processing Mode requires inquiries in the following order:
  - Business – Match on business name.
  - Individual – Match on first name, middle name, surname and title required. Gender is checked and nickname possibilities are considered.
  - Family – Match on surname only.
- **Under no circumstances shall there be a “Family” match only option.**

### **Business and Individual Processing Mode (C)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to omit all “Family” match inquiries and allow only “Individual” and “Business” matches to be acceptable. This matching process is also known as C Processing Mode.

### **Individual Processing Mode (I)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may also choose to omit “Business” match inquiries when processing individual names for mailing lists that contain no business addresses.

### **Business Processing Mode (B)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to process for only “Business” matches when processing a “Business-to-Business” mailing list which contains no residential (Individual or Family) addresses.

### **Residential Processing Mode (R)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to omit “Business” match inquiries and allow only “Individual” and “Family” matches to be acceptable under Residential Processing Mode. This matching process is also known as R Processing Mode.

The USPS has opted to remove soundex from the matching logic process. Consequently, the USPS has established a process called the “Rules Table.” This process will produce matches that otherwise would not be possible, i.e. JOHNY and JOHNNY, without the risks associated with soundex.

All nickname possibilities are derived from a standard USPS nickname list. In considering alternate presentations of an input name, only reasonable derivatives of the original input name are acceptable. If an input name and address do not match to NCOA<sup>Link</sup> and alternative queries are attempted, any variations which obtain NCOA<sup>Link</sup> matches will be provided to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer for analysis.

When a match or a near match of an input name and address to NCOA<sup>Link</sup> is identified, a standard NCOA<sup>Link</sup> return code is provided indicating the type of match made or reason that a match could not be made.

The standard output of a USPS NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process is:

- a) Each original unaltered input name and address as it was presented.
- b) The standardized input address appended with the correct ZIP + 4/DPC, other postal values and any other intelligence flags or footnotes that result from the CASS<sup>TM</sup> processing segment.
- c) For each mailing address for which there is a match to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product, a standardized new address with 11-digit Delivery Point Barcode (DPBC) and standard return codes.

- d) When a match is made, the following elements must be returned: the move effective date, the specific name and address utilized in the query that obtained the match, and the move type. The move type is determined by the Interface based on the specific name inquiry utilized to obtain the match.
- e) For each mailing address for which there is not a match to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product, the Interface shall return all elements as appropriate under items a and b as well as any standard return codes as may be appropriate.
- f) The urbanization name information, when applicable.
- g) The carrier route information for new (updated) addresses.
- h) DPV<sup>®</sup> results for the input address, if requested.
- i) LACS<sup>Link</sup><sup>®</sup> results, if requested.
- j) Suite<sup>Link</sup><sup>®</sup> results, if requested.
- k) Processing summary report containing information to identify the specific list and the statistics resulting from the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process performed on the list.

The presentation of name order is established using a pre-process before querying the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> database. However, there are no restrictions on using a process to interchange the name order to yield the best possible results using the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> database. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Mailer Owner working with the Licensee to determine the name order presentation correctly.

Although every record must be returned, the format of the records returned by a Service Provider to their clients is determined by a separate agreement between the processor and the customer.

NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing has the potential to reduce returned mail, yet the USPS does not make any guarantees, express or implied, on the reduction of such mail. Thus any costs associated with returned mail are the Licensees' and/or their customers' sole responsibility.

An NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer with questions about the specific results returned from an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process must first contact the processor for explanation and resolution.

Prior to the processing of NCOA<sup>Link</sup> data, every customer must have completed and returned to their NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Licensee the "NCOA<sup>Link</sup> PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM" provided to them by their Licensee or Agent. It is inappropriate to misrepresent any of the information on the form. Punitive action will be taken by the USPS if the customer, agent or licensee is found to have knowingly supplied false information. Depending on the severity of the offense, actions may include litigious or even criminal charges being brought against the offender.

The ANK<sup>Link</sup><sup>®</sup> option is available through Limited Service Provider Licensees to enable mailers to make informed choices regarding a specific customer contact. If the data indicates a move, the mailer may choose to suppress the record from their list or attempt to determine the actual new address by engaging the services of an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider (FSP) Licensee.

Mailers choosing to engage the services of an FSP Licensee may submit only those ANK<sup>Link</sup> matches for which they need additional processing provided that:

- 1) The mailer informs the FSP Licensee that the list is derived from a prior ANK<sup>Link</sup> process.
- 2) The list submitted to the FSP for processing meets the mailing list requirement of at least 100 unique names and addresses.
- 3) The final results are incorporated back into the original list.
- 4) The records separated for processing are not used to create a derivative product.

The following trademarks are owned by the United States Postal Service®: ANK<sup>Link</sup>, CASS, NCOA<sup>Link</sup>, DPV, LACS<sup>Link</sup>, Suite<sup>Link</sup>, United States Postal Service, USPS and ZIP + 4.



# COMBINED NCOALink® PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

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## LIST OWNER

I, the undersigned, an authorized representative of:

Company Name

Address

Urbanization

City

State

ZIP+4

Telephone Number

NAICS

USPS Mailer ID (optional)

CRID (optional)

E-mail Address (optional)

Parent Company Name

Marketing or "DBA" Company Name or Primary Affiliate Company Name

Company Website (Optional)

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

do hereby acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the NCOALink Information Package supplied to me by \_\_\_\_\_, an NCOALink Full Service Provider Licensee and \_\_\_\_\_, an NCOALink Limited Service Provider Licensee. I further understand that through an agreement with the NCOALink Limited Service Provider NCOALink services may be provided by either of these Licensees. I also understand that the sole purpose of the NCOALink service is to provide a mailing list correction service for lists that will be used for preparation of mailings. Furthermore, I understand that NCOALink may not be used to create or maintain new movers' lists.

## FULL SERVICE NCOALink LICENSEE

Business Name (Please print)

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

Telephone Number

Fax Number

## LIMITED SERVICE NCOALink LICENSEE AND BROKER LIST ADMINISTRATOR TO FULL SERVICE NCOALink

Business Name (Please print)

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

Telephone Number

Fax Number

NAICS

### For Licensee Use Only

FSP PAF ID:

LSP PAF ID:

FSP Broker/Agent ID:

FSP List Administrator ID:

## Full and Limited Service Provider Required Text Document For Combined PAF Use Only

<<Full Service Provider>> is a non-exclusive Licensee of the USPS® (United States Postal Service®) to provide Full Service NCOALink processing, ZIP + 4® Coding, DPV® LACSLink® and SuiteLink®. <<Limited Service Provider>> is a non-exclusive Licensee of the USPS to provide Limited Service NCOALink processing.

It is important to note that not all Service Providers can provide the same level of service. Data quantity differs based on license level. Full Service Providers receive the full 48 month data set, while Limited Service Providers receive an 18 month data set. All data fulfillments to Service Providers are provided weekly under direct license from the USPS.

The full NCOALink file is a consolidated file of move information that on average contains approximately 160 million permanent changes-of-address (COAs) filed with the United States Postal Service (USPS). These COAs are retained on the file for a four-year period from the move-effective date and the file is updated weekly.

Before being added to the NCOALink file, the **Old** address supplied by the Postal customer must be ZIP + 4 coded. The **New** addresses must be ZIP + 4 coded and validated using the USPS' proprietary database of actual delivery points. (NOTE: The delivery point database does not include NAMES or COA information.) Each delivery point confirmed **New** address is included on the NCOALink file. If unable to validate the **New** address, the NCOALink process will indicate that a move exists but will not provide the undeliverable **New** address.

**New** address information is provided only when a match to the input name and address is attained. The typical profile of the **New** address information contained on the NCOALink file is as follows:

- 89.68% Forwardable moves containing delivery point confirmed **New** addresses –  
**New** address provided
- 1.19% Moves containing unconfirmed **New** addresses – **New** address not provided
- 7.44% Moved, left no address
- 1.63% PO Box Closed
- 0.06% Foreign moves

When possible, postal customers who move multiple times within the NCOALink time period are “linked” or “chained” to ensure that the latest address is furnished when an NCOALink match is attained. This is not always possible if subsequent COAs are not filed in exactly the same manner as a COA filed previously (e.g., name spelling differences or conflicting secondary information).

The provision of change of address information is controlled by strict name and address matching logic. NCOALink processing will only provide new address information when queried with a specific algorithm of the name and input address from a mailers address list which matches the information on the NCOALink Product. Data contained in and information returned by NCOALink is determined by the name and move type (Business, Individual, or Family) indicated on a Postal customer's Change of Address form.

The data contained within the NCOALink Product is comprised of approximately 40% family moves, 54% individual moves, and 6% business moves.

All matches made to the NCOALink file require a ZIP + 4 coded, parsed input address.

The five types of processing modes are Standard (S); Business and Individual (C); Individual (I); Business (B); and Residential (R).

### **Standard Processing Mode (S)**

- Standard Processing Mode requires inquiries in the following order:
  - Business – Match on business name.
  - Individual – Match on first name, middle name, surname and title required. Gender is checked and nickname possibilities are considered.
  - Family – Match on surname only.
- **Under no circumstances shall there be a “Family” match only option.**

### **Business and Individual Processing Mode (C)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to omit all “Family” match inquiries and allow only “Individual” and “Business” matches to be acceptable. This matching process is also known as C Processing Mode.

### **Individual Processing Mode (I)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may also choose to omit “Business” match inquiries when processing individual names for mailing lists that contain no business addresses.

### **Business Processing Mode (B)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to process for only “Business” matches when processing a “Business-to-Business” mailing list which contains no residential (Individual or Family) addresses.

### **Residential Processing Mode (R)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to omit “Business” match inquiries and allow only “Individual” and “Family” matches to be acceptable under Residential Processing Mode. This matching process is also known as R Processing Mode.

The USPS has opted to remove soundex from the matching logic process. Consequently, the USPS has established a process called the “Rules Table.” This process will produce matches that otherwise would not be possible, i.e. JOHNNY and JOHNNY, without the risks associated with soundex.

All nickname possibilities are derived from a standard USPS nickname list. In considering alternate presentations of an input name, only reasonable derivatives of the original input name are acceptable. If an input name and address do not match to NCOA<sup>Link</sup> and alternative queries are attempted, any variations which obtain NCOA<sup>Link</sup> matches will be provided to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer for analysis.

When a match or a near match of an input name and address to NCOA<sup>Link</sup> is identified, a standard NCOA<sup>Link</sup> return code is provided indicating the type of match made or reason that a match could not be made.

The standard output of a USPS NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process is:

- a) Each original unaltered input name and address as it was presented.
- b) The standardized input address appended with the correct ZIP + 4/DPC, other postal values and any other intelligence flags or footnotes that result from the CASS™ processing segment.
- c) For each mailing address for which there is a match to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product, a standardized new address with 11-digit Delivery Point Barcode (DPBC) and standard return codes.
- d) When a match is made, the following elements must be returned: the move effective date, the specific name and address utilized in the query that obtained the match, and the move type. The move type is determined by the Interface based on the specific name inquiry utilized to obtain the match.
- e) For each mailing address for which there is not a match to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product, the Interface shall return all elements as appropriate under items a and b as well as any standard return codes as may be appropriate.

- f) The urbanization name information, when applicable.
- g) The carrier route information for new (updated) addresses.
- h) DPV results for the input address, if requested.
- i) LACSLink results, if requested.
- j) SuiteLink results, if requested.
- k) Processing summary report containing information to identify the specific list and the statistics resulting from the NCOALink process performed on the list.

**NOTE:** Full Service Providers are required to offer DPV, LACSLink and SuiteLink processing. These product offerings are optional for Limited Service Providers.

The presentation of name order is established using a pre-process before querying the NCOALink database. However, there are no restrictions on using a process to interchange the name order to yield the best possible results using the NCOALink database. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Mailer Owner working with the Licensee to determine the name order presentation correctly.

Although every record must be returned, the format of the records returned by a Service Provider to their clients is determined by a separate agreement between the processor and the customer.

NCOALink processing has the potential to reduce returned mail, yet the USPS does not make any guarantees, express or implied, on the reduction of such mail. Thus any costs associated with returned mail are the Licensees' and/or their customers' sole responsibility.

An NCOALink customer with questions about the specific results returned from an NCOALink process must first contact the processor for explanation and resolution.

Prior to the processing of NCOALink data, every customer must have completed and returned to their NCOALink Licensee the "NCOALink PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM" provided to them by their Licensee or Agent. It is inappropriate to misrepresent any of the information on the form. Punitive action will be taken by the USPS if the customer, agent or licensee is found to have knowingly supplied false information. Depending on the severity of the offense, actions may include litigious or even criminal charges being brought against the offender.

The following trademarks are owned by the United States Postal Service®: CASS, DPV, LACSLink, NCOALink, SuiteLink, United States Postal Service, USPS and ZIP + 4.



# MAIL PROCESSING AGENT NCOA<sup>Link</sup><sup>®</sup> PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM (FULL SERVICE PROVIDER PROCESSING ONLY)

The collection of information on this Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) is required by the Privacy Act of 1974. The United States Postal Service<sup>®</sup> (USPS<sup>®</sup>) requires that each NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider Licensee have a completed NCOA<sup>Link</sup> PAF for each of their NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Agents prior to providing the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> service. The Full Service Provider Licensee is also required by the USPS to retain a copy of the completed form for each of its Mail Processing Agents and to obtain an updated PAF from each of its Mail Processing Agents at minimum once per year. Any signature upon this PAF shall be considered valid for all purposes and have the same effect whether it is an ink-signed hardcopy document or equivalent alternative.

## MAIL PROCESSING AGENT

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Urbanization \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ NAICS \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ USPS Mailer ID (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ CRID \_\_\_\_\_

Company Website (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, an authorized representative of \_\_\_\_\_, a Mail Processing Agent, do hereby acknowledge that I have received, reviewed and agree to comply with the terms in the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider Mail Processing Agent Information Package supplied to me by \_\_\_\_\_, an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider Licensee. I understand that the sole purpose of the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> service is to provide a mailing list correction service for lists that will be used for preparation of mailings. I understand that NCOA<sup>Link</sup> may not be used to create or maintain new movers' lists. Furthermore, I agree to the following terms and conditions:

- Agent must submit to the Full Service Provider Licensee a minimum of 100 unique names and addresses on each mailing list for NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing for acceptance, handling, and delivery by the USPS.
- Agent will not return updated address records to the original owner nor will the updated list be used for any purpose other than for mailing the original mail pieces from the original mailing list owner.
- Agent must destroy the original and updated mailing list within 30 days from the date the mail pieces are deposited into the mail stream.
- Agent acknowledges that the USPS has the right to audit and inspect the Agent's processes and procedures pertaining to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> service without prior notice.
- Agent shall not disclose any updated address information to any third parties for any purpose whatsoever.
- Agent understands that failure to comply with these terms and conditions may result in the loss of eligibility to participate in the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Agent Program.

Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

## FULL SERVICE PROVIDER LICENSEE

Business Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ PAF ID \_\_\_\_\_

## NCOA<sup>Link</sup>® FULL SERVICE PROVIDER MAIL PROCESSING AGENT INFORMATION PACKAGE

### FOR MAIL PROCESSING AGENT USE ONLY

<<Full Service Provider Licensee>> is a non-exclusive Licensee of the USPS® (United States Postal Service®) to provide Full Service NCOA<sup>Link</sup>, ZIP + 4® Coding, DPV® LACS<sup>Link</sup>® and Suite<sup>Link</sup>® processing to <<Mail Processing Agent>>, a Mail Processing Agent.

Full Service Providers receive the full 48 month data set weekly under direct license from the USPS.

The full NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file is a consolidated file of move information that on average contains approximately 160 million permanent changes-of-address (COAs) filed with the United States Postal Service (USPS). These COAs are retained on the file for a four-year period from the move-effective date and the file is updated weekly.

Before being added to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file, the **Old** address supplied by the Postal customer must be ZIP + 4 coded. The **New** addresses must be ZIP + 4 coded and validated using the USPS' proprietary database of actual delivery points. (NOTE: The delivery point database does not include NAMES or COA information.) Each delivery point confirmed **New** address is included on the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file. If unable to validate the **New** address, the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process will indicate that a move exists but will not provide the undeliverable **New** address.

**New** address information is provided only when a match to the input name and address is attained. The typical profile of the **New** address information contained on the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file is as follows:

- 89.68% Forwardable moves containing delivery point confirmed **New** addresses –  
    **New** address provided
- 1.19% Moves containing unconfirmed **New** addresses – **New** address not provided
- 7.44% Moved, left no address
- 1.63% PO Box Closed
- 0.06% Foreign moves

When possible, postal customers who move multiple times within the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> time period are “linked” or “chained” to ensure that the latest address is furnished when an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> match is attained. This is not always possible if subsequent COAs are not filed in exactly the same manner as a COA filed previously (e.g., name spelling differences or conflicting secondary information).

The provision of change of address information is controlled by strict name and address matching logic. However, some address updates are based on near matches. NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing will only provide new address information when queried with a specific algorithm of the name and input address from a mailers address list which matches the information on the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product. Data contained in and information returned by NCOA<sup>Link</sup> is determined by the name and move type (Business, Individual or Family; however the Family move type is not applicable to the Mail Processing Agent Program) indicated on a Postal customer's Change of Address form.

The data contained within the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product is comprised of approximately 40% family moves, 54% individual moves, and 6% business moves.

All matches made to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file require a ZIP + 4 coded, parsed input address.

The three types of processing modes available to Mail Processing Agents are Business and Individual (C); Individual (I); and Business (B).

### **Business and Individual Processing Mode (C)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to omit all “Family” match inquiries and allow only “Individual” and “Business” matches to be acceptable. This matching process is also known as C Processing Mode.

### **Individual Processing Mode (I)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may also choose to omit “Business” match inquiries when processing individual names for mailing lists that contain no business addresses.

### **Business Processing Mode (B)**

- The NCOA<sup>Link</sup> customer may choose to process for only “Business” matches when processing a “Business-to-Business” mailing list which contains no residential (Individual or Family) addresses.

The USPS has established a process called the “Rules Table.” This process will produce matches that otherwise would not be possible, e.g. JOHNY and JOHNNY.

The USPS has created a standard nickname list, which allows for alternate presentations of an input name, i.e. James and Jim. The standard nickname list allows for potential matches to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> data set. Only reasonable derivatives of the original input name are acceptable.

Occasionally matches will be made based on the above processes.

The standard output of a USPS Full Service NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process for the Mail Processing Agent is:

- a) Each original unaltered input name and address as it was presented.
- b) The standardized new (updated) address from all processes, including CASS, DPV, LACS<sup>Link</sup> and Suite<sup>Link</sup>, appended with the correct ZIP + 4/DPC, 11-digit Delivery Point Barcode (DPBC) and carrier route information.
- c) When a match is made, the following elements must be returned: the move effective date, the specific name and address utilized in the query that obtained the match, and the move type. The move type is determined by the Interface based on the specific name inquiry utilized to obtain the match.
- d) The urbanization name information, when applicable.
- e) The carrier route information for the standardized input address or the standardized new (updated) addresses.
- f) DPV results for the input address, if requested.
- g) LACS<sup>Link</sup> results, if requested.
- h) Suite<sup>Link</sup> results, if requested.
- i) Processing summary report containing information to identify the specific list and the statistics resulting from the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process performed on the list.

The presentation of name order is established using a pre-process before querying the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> database. However, there are no restrictions on using a process to interchange the name order to yield the best possible results using the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> database. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Mailer Owner working with the Licensee to determine the name order presentation correctly.

The Mail Processing Agent must submit a minimum of 100 unique names and addresses on each mailing list for NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing exclusively for acceptance, handling and delivery by the USPS. The Full Service Provider must only return the updated list to the Agent. Upon receipt of the updated mailing lists, Agent must destroy the original and updated mailing lists within 30 days from the date the mail pieces are deposited into the mail stream.

The Mail Processing Agent cannot use this process for the purpose of returning updated mailing lists to its customers. To obtain the updated lists, Agent's customers must use the standard NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process and complete the standard NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF).

The Mail Processing Agent shall not disclose any updated address information to any third parties for any purpose whatsoever.

NCOA<sup>Link</sup> processing has the potential to reduce returned mail, yet the USPS does not make any guarantees, express or implied, on the reduction of such mail. Thus any costs associated with returned mail are the Licensees' and/or their Mail Processing Agent's sole responsibility.

A Mail Processing Agent with questions about the specific results returned from an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> process must first contact the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider for explanation and resolution.

Prior to the processing of NCOA<sup>Link</sup> data, every Mailing Processing Agent must have completed and returned to their NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider Licensee the "MAIL PROCESSING AGENT NCOA<sup>Link</sup> PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM (FULL SERVICE PROVIDER PROCESSING ONLY)" provided to them by their Licensee. It is inappropriate to misrepresent any of the information on the form. Punitive action will be taken by the USPS if the Mail Processing Agent or Licensee is found to have knowingly supplied false information. Depending on the severity of the offense, actions may include litigious or even criminal charges being brought against the offender.

If USPS determines that a Mail Processing Agent is not in compliance with the guidelines set forth in the Mail Processing Agent NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Processing Acknowledgement Form, the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Agent Information Package or any documentation pertaining to this program, the USPS, at its sole discretion, has the right to prohibit all NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Full Service Provider Licensees from entering into an agreement with the Agent to perform mail processing services.

USPS, or its designated agents or representatives, shall have the right to visit Agent's premises and examine Agent's computer systems, processing files, documents, and other materials relating to the Mail Processing Agent program with or without notice to the Agent. Agent shall provide USPS or its agents or representatives access during normal business hours to the premises, books, and records that relate to the use of the program by Agent.

The following trademarks are owned by the United States Postal Service<sup>®</sup>: CASS, DPV, LACS<sup>Link</sup>, NCOA<sup>Link</sup>, Suite<sup>Link</sup>, United States Postal Service, USPS and ZIP + 4.



# NCOA<sup>Link</sup>® MAIL PROCESSING EQUIPMENT PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The collection of information on this Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF) is required by the Privacy Act of 1974. The United States Postal Service (USPS) requires that each NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Equipment (MPE) Data User Licensee have a completed NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE PAF for each of their NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE customers prior to providing the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE service. The Licensee is also required by the USPS to retain a copy of the completed form for each of its customers and to obtain an updated PAF from each of its customers at minimum once per year. Any signature upon this PAF shall be considered valid for all purposes and have the same effect whether it is an ink-signed hardcopy document or equivalent alternative.

## MAIL OWNER

I, the undersigned, an authorized representative of:

Company Name

Address

Urbanization

City

State

ZIP+4

Telephone Number

NAICS

USPS Mailer ID  
(optional)

CRID  
(optional)

E-mail Address  
(optional)

Parent Company Name

Marketing or "DBA" Company Name or Primary Affiliate Company Name

Company Website

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

do hereby acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Equipment Information Package supplied to me by \_\_\_\_\_, an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE Data User Licensee. I also understand that the sole purposes of the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE service is to provide:

1. Mailpiece redirection (via re-addressing) due to customer moves for mailpieces that I have submitted to the Licensee for mailing;
2. A mailpiece correction service for my customer addresses that will be used for preparation of future mailings. The mailpiece facsimiles that I have submitted to the Licensee will be returned within seven (7) business days of processing, unless I authorize a longer time period in writing; or
3. Mailpiece address correction service in which mailpieces that obtain address correction information as a result of this process will be separated from my mailing and returned either in the form hardcopy or photocopied mailpieces and returned within 72 hours of processing by the Licensee, unless I authorize a longer time period in writing. The information provided to me for this service will be used for preparation of future mailings.

Furthermore, I understand that the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE process may not be used to create or maintain new movers' lists.

## LICENSEE

Business Name (Please print)

Name (Please print)

Title

Signature

Date

Telephone Number

Fax Number

## For Licensee Use Only

PAF ID:

## NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> MAIL PROCESSING EQUIPMENT DATA USER REQUIRED TEXT DOCUMENT

<<Licensee company name>> is a non-exclusive Licensee of the USPS<sup>®</sup> (United States Postal Service<sup>®</sup>) to provide NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> MPE processing.

MPE Data Users receive the full 18-month data set provided weekly under direct license from the USPS.

The full NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> file is a consolidated file of move information that on average contains approximately 160 million permanent changes-of-address (COAs) filed with the United States Postal Service (USPS). These COAs are retained on the file for a four-year period from the move-effective date and the file is updated weekly.

Before being added to the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> file, the **Old** address supplied by the Postal customer must be ZIP + 4 coded. The **New** addresses must be ZIP + 4 coded and validated using the USPS' proprietary database of actual delivery points. (NOTE: The delivery point database does not include NAMES or COA information.) Each delivery point confirmed **New** address is included on the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> file. If unable to validate the **New** address, the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> MPE process will indicate that a move exists but will not provide the undeliverable **New** address.

**New** address information is provided only when a match to the old name and address is attained. The typical profile of the **New** address information contained on the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> file is as follows:

- 89.68% Forwardable moves containing delivery point confirmed **New** addresses –  
**New** address provided
- 1.19% Moves containing unconfirmed **New** addresses – **New** address not provided
- 7.44% Moved, Left No Address\*\*
- 1.63% PO Box Closed\*\*
- 0.06% Foreign Moves\*\*

\*\* The literal "NEW ADDRESS INFORMATION UNKNOWN" is provided in lieu of address information for Mailpiece Facsimile, Notification via Returned Mailpiece, DBCS and Flats processing only.

When possible, postal customers who move multiple times within the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> time period are "linked" or "chained" to ensure that the latest address is furnished when an NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> match is attained. This is not always possible if subsequent COAs are not filed in exactly the same manner as a COA filed previously (e.g., name spelling differences or conflicting secondary information).

The provision of change-of-address information is controlled by strict name and address matching logic. NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> MPE processing will only provide new address information when queried with a specific algorithm of the name and old address from a mailers' mailpieces, which matches the information on the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> Product. Data contained in and information returned by the NCOA<sup>LINK</sup> MPE process is determined by the name and move type (Business, Individual, or Family) indicated on a Postal customer's Change-of-Address form.

The presentation of name order is established using a pre-process before querying the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> database. However, there are no restrictions on using a process to interchange the name order to yield the best possible results using the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> database. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Mailer Owner working with the Licensee to determine the name order presentation correctly.

The data contained within the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Product is comprised of approximately 40% family moves, 54% individual moves, and 6% business moves.

All matches made to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file require a ZIP + 4 coded, standardized old address.

There are five separate and distinct services that may be provided to a mailer by the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE Licensee. These services fall under the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE Active mode of processing, in which address information is returned or sprayed on mailpieces only when there is updated COA information.

- **Forwardable Mailpiece** – Processing in which mailpiece redirection due to customer moves via the Licensee’s NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Equipment.
- **Notification Via Returned Mailpiece** – Processing in which updated COA information is sprayed on mailpieces and returned to the mailer via hardcopy or photocopy mailpieces.
- **Mailpiece Facsimile** – Processing in which updated COA information is sprayed directly on mailpiece facsimiles and returned to the mailer.
- **DBCS (Delivery Barcode Sorter)** – Processing of letter mail on DBCS equipment in which no COA information is sprayed on mailpieces. Mailpieces are outsorted to a bin designated for UAA mail and either returned to the mailer or destroyed.
- **Flats** – Flats processing in which mailpiece redirection due to customer moves via the Licensee’s NCOA<sup>Link</sup> Mail Processing Equipment. Can be processed in the following modes: Forwardable Mailpiece; Notification via Returned Mailpiece; and Mailpiece Facsimile. If flat mailpieces are processed on equipment in which COA information is unable to be sprayed on the mailpieces, mailpieces are either returned to the mailer, destroyed or mailed at full rate.

The USPS has established a process called the “Rules Table.” This process will produce matches that otherwise would not be possible, i.e. JOHNY and JOHNNY.

All nickname possibilities are derived from a standard USPS nickname list. In considering alternate presentations of an input name and address do not match to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> file and alternative queries are attempted, any variations which obtain NCOA<sup>Link</sup> matches may be provided to the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE customer for analysis, depending on the mode of processing.

When a match or a near match of an input name and address to NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE Product is identified, a report of the standard NCOA<sup>Link</sup> return codes may be provided by the MPE Data User, upon customer request. This report indicates the type of match made or the reason that a match could not be made.

MPE Data Users must offer the standard output format of the NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE process to customers, if requested, with no file manipulation by the Data User.

NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE processing has the potential to reduce returned mail, yet the USPS does not make any guarantees, express or implied, on the reduction of such mail. Thus any costs associated with returned mail are the Licensees' and/or their customers' sole responsibility.

An NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE customer with questions about the specific results returned from an NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE process must first contact the processor for explanation and resolution.

Prior to the processing of NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE data, every customer must have completed and returned to their NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MPE Data User Licensee the "NCOA<sup>Link</sup> MAIL PROCESSING EQUIPMENT PROCESSING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM" provided to them by their Licensee. It is inappropriate to misrepresent any of the information on the form. Punitive action will be taken by the USPS if the customer or licensee is found to have knowingly supplied false information. Depending on the severity of the offense, actions may include litigious or even criminal charges being brought against the offender.

The following trademarks are owned by the United States Postal Service®: CASS, NCOA<sup>Link</sup>, United States Postal Service, USPS and ZIP + 4.

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