



## **Buffalo Passport Agency Negotiated Seating Agreement**

Between

**The Bureau of Consular Affairs, Passport Services, Buffalo Passport Agency  
(PPT/BU)**

And

**The Buffalo Passport Agency Bargaining Unit Employees**

October 24, 2017

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This local agreement is entered pursuant to Article 12, Section 16 (f) of the Master Agreement between Passport Services and the National Federation of Federal Employees – Local 1998, effective July 20, 2009. This local agreement may change upon the establishment of a new negotiated agreement between Passport Services Management and NFFE 1998, and may be renegotiated at the written request of either party at any time.

### **1. Purpose**

The Buffalo Passport Agency has acquired new space on the second floor of the building where the agency is presently located. This agreement covers desk assignments for the bargaining unit employees (BUE) whose 30 desks will be located in that space.

### **2. Definition of Seniority**

For the purposes of this agreement, seniority is determined by a BUE's EOD in Passport Services.

### **3. Desk Locations**

- a. All 13 desks in the old building (217A-217F and 218A-218G) will be occupied by members of the two teams assigned to the supervisors located in rooms 215 and 216 in the old building.
- b. Of the 17 desks in the new building, 14 of them (202A-202F, 206D-206G and 208A-208D) will be occupied by members of the two teams assigned to the supervisors located in Rooms 203 and 204 in the new building.
- c. The remaining 3 desks in the new building (206A-206C) will be assigned only if needed to provide additional desks for remaining members of any of the four teams.

#### **4. Initial Seat Selection Process**

- a. A current list of BUEs in order of seniority in Passport Services will be provided to the Union. The list will be updated for each annual Open Season.
- b. Management will provide a seating chart to all BUEs, showing the locations of all 30 desks.
- c. Employees will be given a tour of the new space prior to making seating selections. Employees are allotted 60 minutes of official time for desk selection and may enter the time as "Other" in MIS.
- d. Passport specialists will be able to choose the desks they want from among the group of desks designated for the pair of teams that they belong to.
- e. Employees who are on leave will be given 60 minutes on another day (in advance of the selection day) to rank all available desks (among those available to the members of their team) in their order of preference. That preference ranking will be provided to Management and the Union for reference on selection day. When all higher seniority BUEs have chosen their desks in that section, the absent employee will be assigned to the highest ranked desk remaining vacant on the employee's list. Alternatively, an absent employee may designate (in writing) another employee to make the selection by proxy. Such selections will be as binding as if the employee made the selection in person.
- f. Employees will be given 4 hours to empty their old desks and relocate to their new desks, and may enter the time as "Other" in MIS.
- g. Union stewards will be given an additional 2 hours to arrange and relocate documents, and may enter the time as "Union Time" in MIS.

#### **5. Open Season**

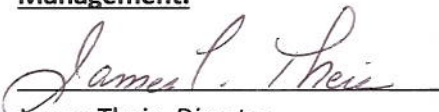
- a. Re-assignment of desks for passport specialists will occur during an "open season" at the beginning of each year, to coincide with re-assignment of passport teams among the supervisors. To the extent possible, passport specialists will occupy desks in the same section of the second floor as their supervisors, as described under "Desk Locations."
- b. The first open season will occur in January 2018. Each open season will take place during the first five-day work week in January. For 2018, open season will be the week of January 8-12.
- c. When supervisors move offices and have new team compositions at the beginning of each year, BUEs who are then assigned to a supervisor in the other section of the second floor must vacate their old desk and select a new desk (in the other section) during the open season.
- d. In addition, any BUEs remaining in the same section of the second floor may voluntarily choose to change desks within that section during the open season. Employees who wish to voluntarily participate in the open season must notify Management in writing before the open season week begins (for 2018, no later than Friday, January 5). Once that deadline has passed, no employee who has chosen to participate may opt out, and no employee who has chosen not to participate may opt in.
- e. BUEs who are not required to move to the other section of the second floor may keep the same desk that they occupied the previous year.

- f. On Monday of open season week, Management will prepare, post, and distribute a seating chart for each section of the second floor, showing all desks vacated under paragraphs 3 and 4 above.
- g. On Thursday of open season week, BUEs participating in the desk selection will choose new desks in order of seniority, from among the vacated desks within their assigned section of the second floor.
- h. On Friday of open season week, BUEs participating in the desk selection will be given 2 hours to empty their old desks and relocate to their new desks, and may enter the time as "Other" in MIS.
- i. Employees who choose to voluntarily participate in open season will do so with the understanding that they may end up in a less desirable location than the one they already have, and that they will be bound by the results of the open season selection process.
- j. If there are more than 30 passport specialists on board at the beginning of an open season, the two passport specialists assigned to customer service and fraud (for the January-March rotation) will not be assigned desks on the second floor. At each change of rotation, the departing rotational passport specialists will move into the desks vacated by their successors, per prior practice at the agency.

**6. Open Desks and Seating Changes Outside of Open Season**

- a. Pursuant to Article 6, Section 14 (Personal Hardship), of the Master Agreement between Passport Services and the National Federation of Federal Employees – Local 1998, effective July 20, 2009, "Any bargaining unit employee may request special consideration due to personal hardship." Management will notify the Union if a BUE requests a desk change under this provision. Requests to switch desks with another employee outside of the open season will not be considered by Management (unless the Agency is directed to do so).
- b. Bargaining unit employees who enter on duty at the agency outside of the open season will be assigned to a vacant desk for the duration of that year. They will be required to vacate their desks and participate in the next open season, regardless of which section of the second floor they are assigned to at that time.

**Management:**

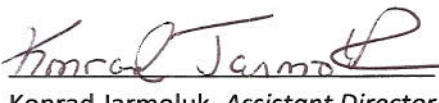
  
James Theis, Director

Buffalo Passport Agency

**Union:**

  
Jeri Titus, Senior Steward

NFFE Local 1998 (Buffalo)

  
Konrad Jarmoluk, Assistant Director

Buffalo Passport Agency

  
Nick Sciortino, Steward

NFFE Local 1998 (Buffalo)