



Representing the bargaining unit employees of Passport Services, a division of the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs

Lee Wentz
President
NFFE 1998

Memorandum of Action

DATE: September 14, 2020
TO: Deputy Assistant Secretary Rachel Arndt
THROUGH: PMO Director Daniel Alessandrini
SUBJECT: Telework for NFFE 1998 BUEs

Passport Services (PPT) operations have been severely impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In an unprecedented step, the Department of State (DoS) designated PPT as Mission Critical in order to reduce the backlog and meet commitments to United States citizens, as well as reverse Congressional dissatisfaction with PPT's reopening plan. In order to adapt to changing demands and model the Department's agile workforce, PPT must reimagine their flow of operations with an emphasis on how employee safety and security can still be achieved while maximizing national redundancy for continued operations during emergencies.

Currently, Passport Services production and issuance of passports to the American public relies on outdated and buggy software. The Travel Document Issuance System (TDIS) was developed three decades ago and has continued to operate through increasing systems issues, some for services that TDIS was never designed to perform. In development for more than a

decade now, ConsularOne is scheduled to replace TDIS at an undetermined date. ConsularOne has suffered from a lack of staffing, priority, and communication; which is partially the cause for delaying the release of the first step, Online Passport Renewal (OPR), for multiple years now.

Roughly two decades ago, Passport Services authorized a type of remote work where a Passport Specialist would take secured containers of physical applications and documents to their house for paper adjudication and approval. Once completed, they would transport all documentation back to the agency for input and approval for issuance in the computer system. This process provided more flexibility for the Passport Specialist, but efficiency was limited by lacking computer systems and the slower physical transfer of applications and documents to and from the agency. The continued use of TDIS and slow rollout of ConsularOne has created a significantly large cost of delay, which continues to increase every day.

All parties have employee safety as a top priority, and the safest option is to limit all physical contact by implementing a plan for Passport Specialists and BUEs to telework and approve issuance of passports remotely. To successfully implement remote adjudication (teleworking) options for Passport Services, the following items need to be completed:

- ConsularOne (or Similar Service*) is operational to allow for OPR and Remote Adjudication.
- Teleworking Agreement negotiated by DoS and NFFE 1998
- BUEs complete telework.gov training
- DoS supplied teleworking hardware (PIV Card Readers+) issued to teleworking BUEs

- Eligible BUEs sign teleworking agreement and enter teleworking schedule at the start of the next pay period.

Passport Services has the support and resources for modernization efforts. Following DoS Chief Information Officer Stuart McGuigan's call for decentralization and further modernization, NFFE 1998 supports efforts for improved communication and coordination for our systems capabilities while sharing the number one value of importance – our people.