

Resolution Statement: Workgroup # 171 - Improving Accuracy and Use of UAA Reason Codes

[Official date of completion: October 28, 2015]

Purpose of the Workgroup

This workgroup was tasked with reviewing UAA Reason Codes. Focus will be on making recommendations for improvements to the definitions, refinements, and changes to codes and/or processes and procedures in an effort to improve the accuracy, application, and use of UAA Reason Codes in order to reduce undeliverable mail, saving USPS and mailer costs associated with addressing and delivery.

Participation and Discussion Format

Industry Leadership: Adam Collinson and Dan O'Brien
USPS Leadership: Kai Fisher and Bonita Brown

Attendees included members of the USPS, vendors, service providers, and mailers. Effort was made to gain participation from mailers that have been using and analyzing ACS information. Mailer participants included representatives from Telco, Financial, and Insurance as well as First-Class and Standard Mailers. Effort was made as well to include package mailers.

Meetings were scheduled every 2 weeks and were cancelled if significant action items from a prior meeting were still being worked on. Meeting notes were maintained tracking the individual conversations and the progression of those conversations.

Recommendations

Opportunities were identified to make improvements in the definition, use, determination/assignment, methods of assignment (use of technology), and monitoring of Carrier NIXIE assignment to improve the consistency and accuracy of the NIXIE code assignment. Additional focus should be initially given to Moved Left No Address as analysis performed by the Workgroup indicates that the primary source of inaccurate NIXIE assignment is related to pieces that originally should have been identified as a MLNA. Opportunity was identified to establish a new feedback loop to mailers for postal carrier corrections that allowed for a piece to be delivered.

1) Wording changes: Vacant: Change current description:

“House, apartment, office, or building not occupied. (Use only if mail addressed “Occupant.”)”

To reflect that pieces:

- a) may also get marked Vacant if the carrier knows that the address is vacant (even, perhaps after holding the mail to see if someone new was moving in)

b) that it is not just when addressed "Occupant", but when addressed using an alternative addressing format such as "Occupant" or "Current Resident" or "...Or Current Resident"

2) Purpose Change / Clarification: Q - NDA/UTF: Currently:

"Mail undeliverable at address given; no change-of-address order on file; forwarding order expired."

But: Also covers other reasons that are not covered by other reason codes

Request: Have this code be specifically (and only) for when the Forwarding Time Has Expired.

This will allow the mailers to focus their actions on Q code results.

Pieces previously assigned Q for other reasons would become A's (Attempted Not Known)

3) Training - USPS Internal:

Create and distribute an internal communication "blitz" regarding UAA reasons and their appropriate use/meaning (i.e. USPS TV, posters, screensavers, etc.).

Documentation / explanation of Reason codes should include examples for each scenario that applies to a particular NIXIE code (so document is also a reference source for the carriers).

If a new scenario is identified that is not an example under any of the reason codes, add the scenario to the document, re-distribute, and evaluate if explanation in the DMM needs to be updated (as way of communicating with the Industry).

Include / emphasize how inaccurate code assignments leads to more efforts by carriers in the long run, more costs to the USPS, waste and risk for mailers, and a reduction in the overall value of mail to mailers and recipients.

Based on findings, emphasize the importance of creating MLNA records when applicable.

4) Monitoring:

The USPS should evaluate ways to monitor carrier actions in the identification of NIXIEs

(disproportionate volume and assignment of reason codes by carrier) to alert supervisors to review the cause - to determine if retraining is needed.

NOTE: While we identified that the USPS has a lot of data to do this with – it is a LOT of data and a LOT of carriers. So, developing a system to properly handle and process all this will be a challenge. Suggest:

Do in pieces / sections at a time

Start on Q codes - and what really was a Q Code by definition

Look at consistency over a shorter running window at first (2 months)

5) Technology / Enhancements: (to improve both processes and/or monitoring)

a) The USPS should evaluate new technology as it becomes available for how it may be used to facilitate the accurate identification and communication of UAA mail and the reasons. Examples:

Could the new scanners being given to carriers have been used to capture UAA reasons more easily at the point of delivery

Technology that gives more visibility into the system (like in the IV system) and what is happening

b) To address the primary issue identified, evaluate and implement ways that make it easier for carriers to complete MLNAs.

After completion of such a project (and in place for a while), re-perform the analysis done by this group to both measure the improvement and identify the next biggest areas of opportunity for improvement.

c) Establish a feedback loop for postal carrier corrections allowing for delivery. Create a proactive process to get feedback to mailers when carrier used their knowledge to get the piece delivered to an address (corrected from what was on the piece). Benefits:

USPS: carrier does not need to use knowledge to determine delivery on future pieces

Mailer: allows mailer to take actions to confirm and update information to be applied on future pieces

Mailer & Recipient: delivery is not dependent on carrier identifying and applying knowledge for piece to get delivered.

6) Education - Industry:

Update the AMEE White Paper on ACS:

Based on information from this workgroup

With the changes that occurred in ACS options and data since it was last updated

Recommend the formation of either a TT or sub-group of UG#5

Conclusion:

The workgroup (as tasked) has made recommendations for improvements to the definitions, refinements, and changes to codes and/or processes and procedures in an effort to improve the accuracy, application, and use of UAA Reason Codes. This workgroup is ready to conclude with recommendations to be filed in RIBBS and followed up on by UG #5.