

Resolution No. 956-2026

Council Members Starr

AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Urging the United States Postal Service (USPS) to establish an Age-Friendly Mail Access Initiative working committee in partnership with Cleveland City Council, the Administration's Department of Aging, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), senior and affordable housing providers, and property owners to provide secure and accessible outgoing mail collection services for residents living in senior high-rise and senior residential buildings throughout the City of Cleveland.

WHEREAS, the City of Cleveland is committed to ensuring that older adults can remain independent, connected, civically engaged, and able to access essential public services within their communities; and

WHEREAS, many older Cleveland residents live in affordable, subsidized, or income-restricted senior high-rise buildings and apartment communities designated primarily for residents who are 55 years of age or older, 62 years of age or older, or who otherwise qualify as older adults under applicable housing programs; and

WHEREAS, the July 2026 list prepared by the City of Cleveland Department of Aging identifies approximately 95 senior apartment buildings located throughout Cleveland's 15 wards, demonstrating that access to senior housing and related services is a citywide concern; and

WHEREAS, many residents of senior apartment buildings rely on the United States Postal Service (USPS) to mail utility payments, medical and insurance documents, prescription-related correspondence, legal papers, government forms, voter-registration materials, absentee ballots, personal correspondence, and other time-sensitive documents; and

WHEREAS, some senior residential buildings provide centralized receptacles for incoming mail but do not provide a secure and conveniently accessible location where residents may deposit outgoing mail; and

WHEREAS, residents who lack access to an outgoing-mail receptacle may be required to travel outside their buildings to locate a USPS collection box, visit a Post Office, arrange transportation, or depend on another person to mail their correspondence; and

WHEREAS, traveling to an off-site mail collection location can present a significant hardship for older adults with mobility limitations, disabilities, chronic health concerns, limited transportation options, safety concerns, or financial constraints; and

WHEREAS, extreme temperatures, snow, ice, rain, poor sidewalk conditions, inadequate lighting, and the distance between a senior residence and the nearest collection box may further prevent older residents from safely mailing important correspondence; and

WHEREAS, the USPS recognizes blue collection boxes and other approved receptacles as locations where customers may deposit outgoing mail and permits outgoing mail to be collected through several authorized methods; and

WHEREAS, USPS regulations, Operation Manual Sections 632.11 and 632.6, require apartment-house mail receptacles to meet applicable postal standards and generally require building owners or managers to purchase, install, maintain, and replace approved apartment mail receptacles in consultation with local postal officials; and

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WHEREAS, because the appropriate solution may vary according to a building's location, design, ownership, mail-delivery configuration, resident population, security needs, and available space, the City seeks a flexible initiative that allows the USPS and property owners to determine the most appropriate outgoing-mail arrangement for each eligible building; and

WHEREAS, an accessible outgoing-mail system could include a United States Postal Service collection box located outside the building, a secure USPS-approved outgoing-mail receptacle or mail slot inside the building's mailroom or lobby, or another secure collection method approved by the local Postmaster and serviced as part of the building's regular mail-delivery route; and

WHEREAS, improved outgoing-mail access would support older adults' independence, reduce transportation barriers, promote timely payment of bills, protect access to medical and government services, encourage communication with family members, and strengthen participation in elections and civic affairs; and

WHEREAS, this Council respectfully requests that the USPS designate representatives from its appropriate district, delivery, customer-service, and local Postmaster offices to meet with representatives in the working group to develop the initiative; and

WHEREAS, a coordinated assessment of Cleveland's senior residential buildings would allow the USPS, the Department of Aging, CMHA, nonprofit housing organizations, private property owners, building managers, resident councils, local advisory council and Cleveland City Council to identify the buildings with the greatest need; and

WHEREAS, this Council requests that the USPS and participating property owners assess eligible senior residential buildings for one or more of the following service options: 1) installation of a USPS collection box in a safe and accessible exterior location near the primary entrance of the building; 2) installation of a secure, locked, and USPS-approved outgoing-mail receptacle or outgoing-mail slot inside the building's centralized mailroom, lobby, or another accessible common area; 3) authorization for a letter carrier serving the building to collect properly stamped outgoing letter mail from an approved and clearly designated receptacle during regularly scheduled delivery service; or 4) establishment of another secure and accessible outgoing-mail collection arrangement approved by the USPS and the participating property owner; and

WHEREAS, any exterior collection box or interior outgoing-mail receptacle installed under the initiative should, where reasonably practicable: 1) be located along an accessible route and in an area that can be safely reached by residents with walkers, wheelchairs, or other mobility devices; 2) comply with applicable postal, accessibility, property, fire, building, and security requirements; 3) protect deposited mail from theft, weather, tampering, and unauthorized access; 4) clearly display scheduled collection days and times; 5) be accessible during reasonable hours appropriate for the residents of the building; and 6) be serviced with sufficient regularity to allow residents to mail time-sensitive correspondence; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland City Council recognizes that the installation and maintenance of certain mail receptacles may require the participation and financial responsibility of individual property owners or housing providers and therefore seeks a collaborative process rather than the imposition of an unfunded requirement upon the USPS; and

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WHEREAS, this Council requests that the Department of Aging, in consultation with Council members and housing partners, review and update its inventory of senior residential buildings and identify properties that: 1) primarily serve residents 55 years of age or older, 62 years of age or older, or older adults with disabilities; 2) participate in affordable-housing, subsidized-housing, public-housing, or income-restricted housing programs; 3) contain a significant number of residential units or older residents; 4) do not currently provide a secure outgoing-mail collection option; or 5) have residents who face substantial mobility, transportation, health, or accessibility barriers; and

WHEREAS, this Council recommends that the initiative prioritize buildings based on resident needs, building population, distance from the nearest Post Office or public collection box, mobility and disability considerations, security conditions, and the willingness of the property owner or manager to participate; and

WHEREAS, this Council encourages the Age-Friendly Mail Access Initiative working group to begin with a pilot program involving a representative group of senior high-rise buildings and, following evaluation, expand to eligible senior residential buildings throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, this pilot program should involve senior residential buildings in multiple Cleveland wards and represent a range of property types, including buildings operated by CMHA, nonprofit housing providers, faith-based organizations, and private affordable-housing owners, and the pilot program should include a process for: 1) surveying residents and building managers regarding existing mail-access barriers; 2) conducting site assessments; 3) selecting the appropriate collection method for each participating property; 4) determining responsibility for equipment purchase, installation, maintenance, security, and replacement; 5) establishing collection schedules and operating procedures; 6) educating residents about proper use of the outgoing-mail receptacle; 7) reporting service problems or security concerns; and 8) evaluating resident participation, satisfaction, accessibility, security, and operational effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, this Council encourages property owners and housing providers to cooperate with the USPS in purchasing, installing, maintaining, repairing, or replacing approved interior mail receptacles when those responsibilities properly belong to the property owner under applicable postal regulations, including USPS Postal Operations Manual Sections 632.11 and 632.6; and

WHEREAS, this Council requests that no senior housing property be excluded from consideration solely because an exterior collection box is not operationally feasible and that, in such circumstances, the USPS and property owner evaluate an interior outgoing-mail receptacle or another approved collection alternative; and

WHEREAS, this Council requests that the USPS provide the City with information concerning: 1) the criteria used to approve or deny requests for public collection boxes; 2) the standards governing outgoing-mail receptacles in apartment buildings; 3) the responsibility of property owners for approved receptacles; 4) security and accessibility requirements; 5) collection-frequency and mail-volume considerations; 5) procedures for requesting a site assessment; 6) available contacts within the USPS for coordinating a citywide or pilot initiative; and 7) any federal, postal, municipal, philanthropic, or housing-related resources that may support implementation; and

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WHEREAS, this Council calls for an initial organizational meeting of the working committee within 60 days after receipt of this resolution and encourages the participating parties to identify potential pilot locations within 120 days after that meeting; and

WHEREAS, this Council finds that providing safe, secure, accessible, and regularly serviced outgoing-mail service at senior residential buildings would advance Cleveland’s commitment to accessibility, equity, public health, civic participation, and age-friendly community development; now, therefore,

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety, for the reason that older adults should have safe and reliable access to essential postal services; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND:

Section 1. That this Council urges the United States Postal Service (USPS) to establish an Age-Friendly Mail Access Initiative working committee in partnership with Cleveland City Council, the Administration’s Department of Aging, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), senior and affordable housing providers, and property owners to provide secure and accessible outgoing mail collection services for residents living in senior high-rise and senior residential buildings throughout the City of Cleveland.

Section 2. That this Council directs the Clerk of Council to transmit copies of this Resolution to the Postmaster General of the United States, the USPS District Manager responsible for the Cleveland area, the Postmaster of Cleveland, the members of Ohio’s United States congressional delegation, Chief Executive Officer of CMHA, Jeffery K. Patterson, City of Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, and Director of Department of Aging, Mary McNamera.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, property, health, and safety, for the reason that older adults should have safe and reliable access to essential postal services; and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

jho 8-19-26 FOR: Council Members Starr

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READ FIRST TIME on AUGUST 19, 2026
and referred to DIRECTOR of Law;
Committee on Finance, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

REPORTS

CITY CLERK

READ SECOND TIME

CITY CLERK

READ THIRD TIME

PRESIDENT

CITY CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED BY
COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE, DIVERSITY, EQUITY
and INCLUSION

FILED WITH COMMITTEE