

# Carrier Academy



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**T**he Postal Service is currently in the process of hiring more than 32,000 city carrier assistant (CCA) letter carriers nationwide. So far, 11,500 of the 24,000 CCAs who have been hired are former transitional employees (TEs) who already know how to do the job. However, thousands are new letter carriers from outside the Postal Service who are going through the hiring process as I write this.

So what's the story with the training for new letter carriers? I can report that Carrier Academies have been set up and are operational in most districts around the country. We're struggling in many places with the competing events of get-

ting the Carrier Academy program up and running again and the influx of new letter carriers being hired.

Now take that dynamic and add it to the numerous problems one expects to be associated with a joint project that affects so many places (such as Carrier Academy), and you have an idea of what we are trying to work through.

**The Carrier Academy is a joint project** originally rolled out in 2005. President Rolando (then director of city delivery) worked jointly with the Postal Service to create the Carrier Academy. The joint training program was a huge success. However, hiring virtually stopped after 2007 and training of new city carriers found its way to the back burner. As a result, many of the established Carrier Academies were abandoned and, in many cases, dismantled.

All that changed when the Das award came out in January. New city letter carrier training instantly found its way to the front burner. We began working with Postal Service representatives on this project in early February and have been in a race against time ever since.

When we started looking at this project, it didn't take very long to figure out that the area of the Carrier Academy program most in need of rebuilding was the on-the-job training (OJT). To be honest, we really had no idea as a group of who our on-the-job instructors (OJIs) were or what

training new letter carriers were getting from them when the new carriers got to the station.

When we started meeting, the Postal Service presented its need to transfer the hands-on practice to the OJT portion of the program. We presented our needs to re-establish classroom training in many locations and to ensure that the OJT is structured in such a way that it would really take place in the field as originally intended when the Carrier Academy program was created in 2005. Here's what we came up with.

**We created a joint training program called the Standard Training for City Letter Carriers** (Course 10021875). The program consists of 17 hours of Carrier Academy classroom training, 1.5 hours of NALC introduction, four hours of web-based driver training, a one-hour debrief with the driving instructor, one-day defensive driver training and road test, and a minimum of 24 hours on-the-job training over a minimum of three days.

The newly published *Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers Administrator Guide* contains a chart on page 7 that illustrates the structure of the program. It is reproduced below.

Day	Course	Course Number	Duration
1 – 2	Standard Training for City Letter Carriers	10021875	16 hours
3	Standard Training for City Carrier Assistants		1 hour
	Union Representation Introduction		1.5 hours
	SAF: DDC-USPS RHD & Delivery Vehicle WBT & CD	4360106	4 hours
	VEH: USPS Defensive Driver Course Debrief	4360106CL	1 hour
4	VEH: EL 804 Vehicle Familiarization: LLV	1920208	45 minutes
	VEH: EL 804 Delivery Skills: LLV	1920219	3 hours 30 minutes
	SAF: Controlled Drive (Safe Driver Program)	10020526	45 minutes
	VEH: Right-Hand Drive Privilege Certification	4360106CERT	1 hour 30 minutes
5-7	On-the-Job Training (OJT)	10021876	24 hours

All of the associated publications that are used for the program have been updated and revamped. We tried to make them as easy to understand as possible to avoid confusion.

An important aspect of the program involves the instructors or facilitators who will deliver this training. We came up with a process for selecting our people that we believe gets us the best people and that is fair to everyone involved.

First, we jointly chose at least one master facilitator in each of the 67 districts around the country. National business agents and USPS management officials jointly selected the master facilitators.

All of the master facilitators attended one of two national “train the trainer” sessions we held during the last week of February and the first week of March. This was to prepare them to go back to their respective districts and train other classroom instructors who will also be teaching the classroom portions of the Carrier Academy.

Each classroom instructor is to be selected in a similar way. The national business agent or designee has submitted a list of names to the district manager or designee. The district manager or designee is supposed to select the instructors from that list.

The same selection process is to be used for OJIs. The national business agent or designee has submitted a list of names in each delivery unit to the district manager or designee. The district manager or designee is supposed to select the instructors from that list.

The OJT program has been changed as well. The OJT guide has been changed to list and outline in detail specific tasks that will be covered during OJT.

The OJI is expected to explain duties and allow the new letter carrier to perform these duties on all three days. The OJI is to coach the new letter carrier as he or she performs the duties and provide feedback. This interactive approach is designed to help the new letter carrier retain more of what he or she learns, by practicing each task right after it is demonstrated and explained by the OJI.

The OJI guide also includes a checklist that the OJI and the new letter carrier are supposed to use. This checklist contains more than 100 specific skills or items divided into 20 categories, such as conducting vehicle inspections, carrier route book, receiving/delivering accountable and extra services mail, using scanners, handling undeliverable-as-addressed mail, casing and pulling down mail, leaving the office, loading vehicle and traveling to route, delivering mail, collecting outgoing mail, PM office duties, etc.

The OJI and the new letter carrier are supposed to initial off each task completed. If either the OJI or the new letter carrier feel that additional training is needed on a task, there is a place to indicate that.

A certification sheet is included that is supposed to be signed by the OJI, the new carrier, the manager and the shop steward to certify that the OJT has been properly completed. The form is then entered into the Postal Service records and a copy is supposed to be sent to the appropriate national business agent’s office.

Page 3-2 of the *On-the-Job Training Guide* instructs man-

agement to provide the on-the-job instructor (OJI) with copies of the *On-the-Job Training Guide* and the *Participant Guide* of the *Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers*. It also instructs management to give the OJI four hours on the clock to read and review these materials prior to training new letter carriers. Additionally, page 2-2 directs management to plan on providing auxiliary assistance for the OJI on each day of on-the-job training.

If all these things that are supposed to happen actually do happen, this should take care of most of the problems and obstacles that prevent new carriers from being properly trained.

**The question is, how do we get from where we are now** in many locations to getting the Carrier Academy training program to function the way it is supposed to?

Here’s what we have in place to try to resolve Carrier Academy problems that arise: Each NBA office and each postal district have designated a point person. If anything regarding the Carrier Academy or the on-the-job training is not going the way it is supposed to, then the starting point is for you to contact your NBA office and report the problem to our NALC point person. The NALC point persons and phone numbers for each region are:

1	NBA Chris Jackson	714-750-2982
2	RAA Coby Jones	360-892-6545
3	RAA Tony Hutson	217-787-7850
4	NBA Roger Bledsoe	501-760-6566
5	RAA Mike Birkett	314-872-0227
6	NBA Pat Carroll	586-997-9917
7	RAA Troy Fredenburg	612-378-3035
8	RAA Steve Lassan	256-828-8205
9	RAA Paul Barner	954-964-2116
10	RAA Javier Bernal	281-540-5627
11	RAA Mark Camilli	440-282-4340
12	NBA Bill Lucini	215-824-4826
13	RAA Vada Preston	757-934-1013
14	RAA Jerry Ugone	617-363-9299
15	NBA Larry Cirelli	212-868-0284

The next step is for the point person in the NBA office to contact the point person in the appropriate postal district and attempt to resolve the problem(s). If your NBA office can’t get the problem fixed, they will forward the problem to my office, and we will contact the USPS at headquarters and try to resolve the problem.

**I’m not saying I am ready to pinky-swear that we will be** successful at resolving every problem that is presented, but one thing is for certain: We won’t be able to solve any of your Carrier Academy problems if you don’t report them to your NBA office.