



# NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Government and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

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## Who we are: Veterans, community leaders, neighbors

The National Association of Letter Carriers represents 277,000 active and retired letter carriers who live or work in virtually every community in America, and serves as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative for the 204,000 active city letter carriers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. We are just as dedicated to preserving affordable, high-quality, universal mail and package delivery service for all American businesses and households as we are to defending our members. But we are so much more than this.

**We are diverse:** Letter carriers are as diverse as the communities we serve. For example, women comprise nearly 30 percent of the letter carrier workforce; African-Americans, 21 percent; Latinos, 12 percent; Asian-American/Pacific Islanders; 9 percent. The average age of letter carriers is 48, and the average job tenure of our members is almost 17 years.

**We are retirees:** NALC represents nearly 73,000 retired letter carriers, who both sustain the history and traditions of the letter carrier craft and provide support for a new generation of letter carriers. Indeed, retired members play a prominent role in NALC's legislative outreach efforts. Respecting the service of retired letter carriers by preserving their retirement benefits is a top priority for the NALC.

**We are veterans:** Letter carriers are dedicated citizens, many of whom have traded a military uniform for a letter carrier uniform. Our military veterans worked hard to protect this country, and they work just as hard to ensure the mail is safe and secure. Nearly a third of letter carriers have served in the military, and the Postal Service is the largest employer of veterans outside of the Department of Defense.

**We are neighbors:** No one knows America's neighborhoods like letter carriers do because the Postal Service's unique delivery networks rely on letter carriers' ability to reach every residential and commercial address six (and sometimes seven) days a week. That's one reason why, in 2003, the federal government turned to letter carriers and USPS' unique house-to-house network to help protect Americans under the Cities' Readiness Initiative. CRI is a completely voluntary service envisioned as a way to protect citizens by delivering medical supplies within 48 hours of a biological incident or terrorist attack. CRI has been tested in several cities across America, and in all cases, letter carrier-volunteers look upon the initiative not as a chore, but as another form of service. The type of inter-agency cooperation within the federal

government that makes such a program possible also provides an example for other public-service agencies.

**We are community leaders:** Each year, countless letter carriers donate time and effort to innumerable causes, partnering with community allies to strengthen the neighborhoods we serve:

- Recognizing that the need for food assistance remains a problem in America, the NALC organizes the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive, the nation's largest single-day drive. In 2014, 72.5 million pounds of food was collected, which brought the grand total of donations to more than 1.3 billion pounds of food collected since the drive began in 1992. NALC partners with groups such as Feeding America and United Way to help make this effort a success.
- In the 1950s, the NALC became the first national sponsor of the *Muscular Dystrophy Association*, and letter carriers are among MDA's top fundraisers. Each year, NALC members use scores of techniques to raise money for MDA, from raffles and golf tournaments to canister collections at road blocks and backyard carnivals with dunk tanks. Thanks to the efforts of thousands of concerned letter carriers, MDA research has realized dramatic research breakthroughs in recent years, solid evidence that letter carriers' persistent efforts have made a difference.
- As one of the few—and some days, only—point of human contact for elderly or disabled patrons, letter carriers are particularly attuned to signs of distress that indicate an accident or illness. In 1982, NALC and USPS created *Carrier Alert*, a cooperative and voluntary community service program to monitor the well-being of elderly and disabled mail patrons.

**We are heroes:** The nature of letter carriers' jobs puts us in regular touch with the public—perhaps the last public servants to make regular rounds. In some cases, we are the only source of daily contact with homebound Americans, making our community observations and instincts invaluable in detecting trouble. We are often the first to arrive at the scene of a crisis. Every year, during our annual Heroes of the Year Awards, NALC proudly recognizes men and women chosen to represent the countless deeds of good will and heroism performed by letter carriers, including saving children from dangerous situations, rescuing accident survivors, helping to evacuate citizens during fires, serving as first responders during medical emergencies, collecting money for charities and needy families and organizing relief efforts for those in need.