

NALC

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Bulletin



NALC President Fredric Rolando delivers his opening statement to the postmaster general and Postal Service executives.

NALC, USPS formally open bargaining talks

The leaders of the National Association of Letter Carriers and the United States Postal Service formally opened negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement on June 26.

In his opening statement, NALC President Fredric Rolando told Postmaster General Megan Brennan, “We are committed to work with you in good faith and to do whatever it takes to achieve a mutually beneficial contract. But we are equally committed to fight for such a contract in interest arbitration, if necessary.”

Joining President Rolando for the event—held in the Benjamin Franklin Room at Postal Headquarters in Washington, DC—were the other members of the NALC Executive Council as well as letter carrier staffers from Headquarters and legal counsel. USPS executives and postal headquarters employees joined Brennan at the Wednesday morning meeting.

Brian Renfroe, who as NALC executive vice president serves as the union’s chief spokesperson for this round of bargaining, kicked off NALC’s presentation, saying, “The Postal Service and our union have a long history of productive and successful collective bargaining, dating back to 1970. As we begin this round of collective bargaining almost 50 years later, we reflect on our long, proud history. But, more importantly, it is an opportunity to address issues confronting America’s city letter carriers and the Postal Service today. We embrace this opportunity.”

Past is present

To begin his statement, President Rolando acknowledged that the Postal Service faces many similar obstacles as it did in the last round of negotiations. “As in 2016, we face the impact of the retiree health pre-funding mandate that continues to distort the overall financial picture surrounding the Postal Service, accounting for 100 percent of the Postal Service’s losses over the past six years,” he said. “The outlook for postal reform legislation to resolve the pre-funding fiasco remains cloudy at best, in the face of congressional gridlock and political dysfunction.”

The problems on the workroom floor remain a persistent issue as well. “Speaking bluntly, it has become clear to us that postal management does not choose to acknowledge—much less address—this problem, which festers and persists in too many post offices across the country,” Rolando said. “We had hoped the workplace culture MOU negotiated in the 2016 contract would result in a serious effort by management to jointly address offices with such work environments. We will aggressively explore other options to improve the workplace environment in this round of collective bargaining.”

The turnover in the ranks of city carrier assistants (CCAs) hasn’t improved, either. “To address these problems, we will propose accelerated CCA conversions to career status and changes that will facilitate a transition to an all-career workforce,” he said.

Rolando acknowledged the simultaneous bargaining the Postal Service was doing with the other postal employee unions, but said that these negotiations would not affect a potential agreement for letter carriers.

The president told the postal executives that, despite these challenges and distractions, “these factors will not affect the NALC’s agenda in these negotiations. Our unique and indispensable role in the success of the Postal Service dictates a concerted focus on city carrier issues.”

Looking forward

Rolando laid out the goals of the union in these negotiations, starting with the most essential: “to preserve and improve the standard of living for city letter carriers,” he said. “We aim to move forward, not backward. There will be no concessions offered or given. But we will work diligently and professionally to find common ground and mutual progress.”

The president emphasized that any agreements must be enforced jointly and that the union will propose “practical solutions to improve safety, efficiency, service and staffing as well as measures to achieve properly adjusted routes,” he said. “Unilateral approaches are not acceptable to us—only jointly developed and administered approaches will work.”

Rolando said that the history of collective bargaining has strengthened USPS and could do so again. “We are truly hopeful because we believe in the process of collective bargaining,” he said. “Our track record as collective-bargaining partners has been excellent—both sides can be proud of it.

“I know we have the capacity, on both sides of this table, to rise to the occasion once again—not just to reach a fair agreement but to advance the interests of city letter carriers and the long-term prospects of the Postal Service, a national treasure that all of us truly love.”

The unique role of letter carriers creates great opportunity for the Postal Service to innovate. “Our competitive advantage, made possible by our unique and unrivaled first-mile collection and last-mile delivery networks, can be strengthened through this process,” he said. “We can and must work together to innovate and diversify our customer base.”

Rolando took a moment to comment on his role in these negotiations. “This is the third time I have had the privilege of leading the NALC in contract negotiations,” he said. “I am extremely proud to be representing America’s city letter carriers in this effort, and I am even more proud to be a letter carrier.”

Management’s turn

In her opening remarks, Postmaster General Brennan thanked Rolando for his active engagement before turning to the challenges at hand.

“Everyone here today is well aware of the enormous challenges the Postal Service continues to face,” she said. “This includes serious financial challenges and an ongoing erosion of mail volume. At the same time we’re adjusting to the ever more competitive market for package delivery in particular. And this requires unprecedented levels of flexibility as we strive to protect the business we have and compete for more customers.”

The postmaster general said that she sees collective bargaining as an opportunity to jointly address those challenges, by modifying “the manner in which we manage our cost structure and flexibility of the NALC workforce in this rapidly changing and increasingly competitive environment. The decisions we will make over the coming months will impact the future success of our organization.”

While she acknowledged the necessity of a legislative solution to the pre-funding burden, “we have a continuing obligation as stewards of this organization to make the difficult choices and devise the creative solutions that will improve our competitive position as we adjust to our new financial reality and to the changing marketplace,” Brennan said.

“I am committed to investing in the future of the Postal Service in order to create long-term opportunities for success. And our customers are continually demanding flexibility in where and how they do business with us. We will continue to invest in technology, our infrastructure and our people, enabling us to better compete for business and continue to provide outstanding service to the American public,” she added.

Ultimately, Brennan said that she remained hopeful that the parties would reach an agreement. “We should take this opportunity to partner together and achieve a negotiated agreement that is both fair to our employees and positions the organization for success moving forward,” she said. “Whatever our disagreements may be, we can always agree that we share a common objective, and that is to ensure the long-term viability of the Postal Service that serves the American people and that [it] is also a great place for our employees to come to work.

“I thank President Rolando, each and every one of you and all of our professional letter carriers throughout the country for their continued service and dedication to the Postal Service and the American public. I have faith that the parties will work together to meet the challenges we continue to face, and know that we will engage in serious and honest discussions in an effort to reach a negotiated agreement. We look forward to continuing the conversation,” she concluded.

Next steps

The present collective-bargaining agreement is set to expire at midnight on Sept. 20. If the parties fail to reach an agreement by then, federal law establishes a system of mediation and binding arbitration to resolve disputes; the law forbids strikes by postal workers. As this issue of the *NALC Bulletin* was going to press, the parties were organizing bargaining committees for negotiations.

President Rolando’s full statement is available on nalc.org and future updates on bargaining will be in the *NALC Bulletin*, in *The Postal Record*, on the NALC Member App and on NALC’s social media accounts.

Report all heat-related injuries

For immediate assistance from Headquarters on heat-related injuries, please download the heat injury report from the NALC Safety and Health page. You can download the form here: nalc.org/workplace-issues/body/Heat-Injury-Initial-Report-Form.pdf. Send the completed form to Director of Safety and Health Manuel Peralta Jr. and to your NBA’s office. Letter carriers are also encouraged to download the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety app referenced in the Contract Talk column in the May 2018 *Postal Record*.

Schedule set for rap session

NALC’s 2019 national conference, known as the “rap session,” will be held the weekend of Aug. 9-11 at the Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center.

The national conference is held in years between NALC’s biennial conventions. Article 3, Section 4(b) of the *NALC Constitution* states: “The National President shall, once each year except in the year of the National Convention, call a national conference. This conference shall be voluntarily attended by only State and Branch Presidents or their designees, with their expenses to be borne by the State Association or Branch represented.”

The weekend’s events will begin with registration on Friday, Aug. 9. A welcome reception will be held that night from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Registration will continue Saturday morning. Tables with information on various NALC programs will be set up in the registration area. For the registration times and more information, go to nalc.org/rapsession.

Classes will be held on Saturday, with four classes offered between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Each class will run two hours, so every attendee will have the opportunity to attend all of the workshops. There also will be a break for lunch. The classes will cover a wide range of issues facing letter carriers and the union. The four training sessions will be led by:

- Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe
- Vice President Lew Drass and Director of City Delivery Christopher Jackson
- Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner and Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr.
- Director, Health Benefit Plan Stephanie Stewart; Director of Retired Members Dan Toth and Director of Life Insurance James “Jim” Yates

The rap session, led by NALC President Fredric Rolando, will be held on Sunday, beginning at 8 a.m., and is scheduled to end at 11 a.m.

Louisiana letter carrier killed on his route



NALC is deeply saddened to learn that letter carrier Antonio Williams, a Shreveport, LA Branch 197 member, was shot and killed while delivering his route on Saturday, June 22. He was making deliveries around 11:20 a.m. when the attack happened, and was declared dead at the hospital.

“On behalf of the NALC, we mourn the loss of Brother Williams,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “A father of eight and grandfather of 13 who would have turned 53 years old on Friday, June 28, Antonio was a dedicated carrier for the past 12 years. He loved his craft and served his customers well. The senseless nature of his death makes it even more heartbreaking. We send our thoughts and prayers to Antonio’s family and loved ones.”

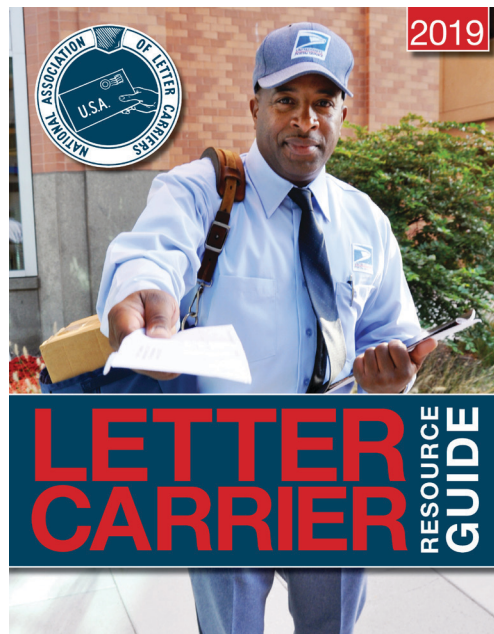
Letter Carrier Resource Guide is available online

NALC’s *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* combines the 2016 *City Carrier Assistant Resource Guide* and the 2014 *Letter Carrier’s Guide* into one merged and updated publication. The *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* is now available in downloadable PDF format on the NALC website at nalc.org/resourceguide. The online version contains links throughout the guide that will connect you directly to additional relevant information.

The guide is a one-stop shop of valuable information for all city letter carriers at every stage of their careers. With a redesigned format and more than 20 pages of new information, the *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* was created to address letter carriers’ concerns throughout their career. For city carrier assistants (CCAs), the guide includes updated CCA rights and benefits reflected in the 2016-2019 National Agreement and the joint Questions and Answers 2011 USPS/NALC National Agreement.

A new “On the Job” section provides information on issues relevant to the workroom floor, such as Delivery Operations Information System (DOIS) projections and PS Form 3996, the MDD, Customer Connect and Sunday parcel delivery. Additional chapters with information on Wounded Warriors Leave, ePayroll, PS Form 3971 and holiday provisions will assist letter carriers in using their contractual rights.

Also in the new guide is a significantly expanded section explaining the changes to letter carriers’ rights and benefits when they become full-time regular (FTR), part-time regular (PTR) or part-time flexible (PTF). This section explains things such as layoff protection, military buyback and contractual overtime provisions.



USPS Fairness Act marks opportunity to address postal finances

When Reps. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Tom Reed (R-NY), Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) introduced the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382) back in April, it provided a serious opportunity to substantially improve the financial situation at the U.S. Postal Service.

The USPS Fairness Act addresses the key issue behind the Postal Service’s red ink: the pre-funding mandate. In 2006, Congress passed the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA), which mandated that USPS pre-fund decades’ worth of health benefits for its future retirees. This mandate has created red ink for USPS at an average of \$5.4 billion annually since 2007; it is responsible for 92 percent of USPS losses over the last 12 years, and 100 percent of losses over the past six years. Were this burden not imposed, USPS would have recorded a surplus of nearly \$4 billion since 2013.

Repealing pre-funding, as the USPS Fairness Act would do, is key to achieving meaningful postal reform, freeing the Postal Service to invest in infrastructure and better utilizing its universal network to serve business and residential customers.

“These are bipartisan goals that can be achieved,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said, “but we need to educate lawmakers on the importance of eliminating this mandate.”

Resources on the NALC Government Affairs web page offer information on pre-funding and on H.R. 2382, including a fact sheet titled “Pre-funding.”

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have signed on to H.R. 2382 as co-sponsors, but at least 218 are needed to reach the required majority support of the 435 House members. In fact, with the new House rules, legislation that reaches 290 or more co-sponsors can be scheduled for a House floor vote.

President Rolando has called on all NALC branches and state associations to make a sustained push over the August congressional recess to mobilize active and retired members of the NALC to contact their representatives in the House of Representatives and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 2382. (See the President’s Message in the August *Postal Record*.)

Even if the number of co-sponsors reaches 218, each additional representative increases the chances of passing this legislation through both chambers.

Letter carriers are encouraged to check NALC’s Government Affairs “News & Updates” web page to see if their member of Congress has co-sponsored the bill (you can also check directly by going to Congress.gov and typing in “HR 2382” into the search bar). If your member is a co-sponsor, please take time to call his or her office or send a message expressing your thanks.

You can reach your representative’s office by calling the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 (be prepared to provide your ZIP code to connect to your representative). Or you can look up their local district offices by visiting their websites on house.gov.

Four of five priority resolutions at majority of support

Thanks to the efforts of letter carriers nationwide, four of the five NALC priority resolutions have reached majority support in their respective chambers. Resolutions opposing postal privatization, supporting continued six-day delivery, and supporting door delivery are above 218 co-sponsors in the House or 51 co-sponsors in the Senate, which represent the majority in each chamber.

H. Res. 60, which calls for strong service standards, has yet to reach 218 co-sponsors. Check nalc.org for the latest numbers on each of these resolutions and for instructions on how to contact your lawmakers.

Food Drive delivers 75.7 million pounds

Letter carriers’ commitment to helping put food on the tables of America’s hungry families has only grown, and this, the 27th year of the Letter Carrier Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, put our commitment on display.

On Saturday, May 11—Food Drive Day—letter carriers delivered on that commitment once again. They brought caring and compassion to their communities by collecting food in the nation’s largest one-day food collection effort. With the help of thousands of family members, friends and volunteers, including fellow postal employees in other crafts and in management, letter carriers in more than 1,400 branches collected bags of non-perishable food that postal customers left next to their mailboxes. Despite bad weather in many parts of the country, letter carriers persevered, filling local food pantries with the donations.

Held each year on the second Saturday in May, the NALC food drive comes at a critical time on the calendar because food donations usually peak during the winter holidays, leaving community food pantries nearly empty by spring. Summer vacation from school also factors in, since free or reduced-cost school meals for the children of families in need tend to be unavailable.

“I am both humbled and proud each May as I see letter carriers demonstrate their support for the communities they serve,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “They always turn out to help the most vulnerable among us—people who may not be sure where their next meal will come from—at this critical time of year.”

The total amount collected nationally stands at 75,676,069 pounds at press time, but results continue to roll in. San Juan, PR Branch 869 topped the list of branch food collection totals by collecting more than 2.3 million pounds. The leading branches among different branch size groups, and results reported from every branch, are listed in the pages of the July *Postal Record*.

“Letter carriers gave it their all again on May 11,” Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson said. “You could see it on their faces. They are proud to serve their communities by helping to put food on the tables of neighbors who rely on it.”

None of this would have been possible without the assistance of the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive’s national partners. “These partners provide tangible support that helps to encourage the generous participation of our postal customers,” Rolando said.

Rolando thanked this year’s national partners: the U.S. Postal Service, the United Food and Commercial Workers International, the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, Valpak, United Way Worldwide, the AFL-CIO, Valassis, the Kellogg Co. and CVS Health.



Deliver the Cure with MDA

Support Team NALC Rolando’s MDA Fundraising Effort:

Make checks or money orders directly out to MDA.

Mail this completed form and your donation to:

Name: _____

Branch # _____ Amount \$ _____

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