



Nolan selected as neutral arbitrator

Arbitrator Dennis R. Nolan has accepted appointment as the neutral chair of the three-person arbitration board that will be responsible for resolving the current bargaining impasse between NALC and the Postal Service. Under the law, both NALC and postal management are each required to name one arbitrator and select a third neutral arbitrator to serve as the chair of the interest arbitration board. NALC's general counsel, Bruce Simon, will serve as NALC's party arbitrator. Attorney Robert Dufek will represent the Postal Service on the arbitration board. Nolan has previously served as a national arbitrator under the NALC-USPS National Agreement. Hearings in the interest arbitration are expected to begin in the spring.

House votes to repeal pre-funding mandate

On Feb. 5, the House passed the USPS Fairness Act (H.R. 2382). The bipartisan bill seeks to repeal the mandate that the Postal Service pre-fund retiree health care decades in advance. The vote was 309 to 106, with 222 Democrats and 87 Republicans voting to repeal the mandate and with 105 Republicans and Rep. Justin Amash (I-MI) opposed. Only 14 members did not vote (13 of them were co-sponsors of the bill).

Passage of H.R. 2382 is a tremendous achievement for letter carriers and the broader postal community. This is the first major piece of legislation tackling postal issues that has passed the House since the 2006 passage of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006. The hard work of letter carriers across the country made passage possible.

"Letter carriers should be proud of their hard work to educate members of Congress and gain their support on this very important issue," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "House passage is a major victory in the battle to address the pre-funding mandate, but our work is not done. We must now turn our attention to the Senate."

If you have not yet done so, please consider reaching out to your member of Congress, if they voted for H.R. 2382, to thank them for their support. The more that letter carriers can emphasize how important this vote to repeal the pre-funding mandate was and how much we appreciate our allies in Congress, the better off we will be should future legislative fights arise down the road. If you are unsure how your representative voted on this bill, you can check the NALC Legislative Action Center, accessible via nalc.org.

It is now up to the Senate to take action on S. 2965, the bipartisan companion bill. Letter carriers should carry this momentum through to the Senate and be ready to engage and educate their senators and staff on the need to repeal the pre-funding mandate. Fact sheets and talking points are available on the NALC Legislative Action Center.

White House releases FY 2021 budget proposal

The Trump Administration released its \$4.8 trillion Fiscal Year 2021 budget proposal on Feb. 10. With regard to the U.S. Postal Service, as in previous budget requests the White House proposal includes:

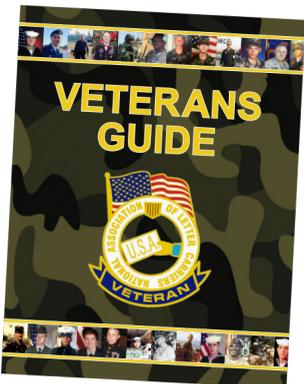
"...changes to how rates are set for products that are deemed outside the universal service obligation; changes to delivery processing, mode, and frequency; increased use of private sector partners; more closely aligning Postal Service employee wages with those of other Federal employees; licensing access to the mailbox; and providing additional Government services at retail locations. In addition to Governmentwide changes to health and pension programs that will reduce Agency operating costs, the Budget also proposes to re-amortize the payments to the Retiree Health Benefits Fund, including those payments missed in previous years, based on the Postal employee population at or near the retirement age."

Major provisions affecting NALC members in the White House budget request are similar to past years. They are detailed on nalc.org and in the March issue of *The Postal Record*.

It is important for letter carriers to urge their representatives in Washington to reject attacks on the federal workforce as well as on the Postal Service and its networks.

NALC will continue to update letter carriers on the process, as additional budget details are released and as the House and Senate begin their budget considerations.

NALC Veterans Guide is available online



Almost a quarter of the active and retired members of the National Association of Letter Carriers are veterans. The NALC Veterans Group was created in 2015 to provide access to information and tools specific to veterans' rights and benefits within the Postal Service. It seeks to provide all NALC military veterans—active as well as retired letter carriers—with resources, information and a sense of camaraderie.

As part of that goal, NALC also developed this new *Veterans Guide* as a quick reference for valuable information relating to military service and the Postal Service.

This guide contains various topics of interest to veterans, including the *Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act* (USERRA), *Wounded Warriors Leave* (WWL), the *Veterans' Preference Act of 1944* and retirement credit for military service. The guide also discusses several National Agreement provisions and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that apply specifically to military veterans.

The *NALC Veterans Guide* is now available electronically on nalc.org. The online version contains links throughout the guide which will connect you directly to additional relevant information.

A hardcopy version of the guide is now being printed. All current members of the NALC Veterans Group will be mailed a printed copy of the guide as soon as it is available. New members of the NALC Veterans Group will be mailed a copy of the guide upon enrollment.

More information regarding the NALC Veterans Group is available on the NALC website at nalc.org/veterans.

Search for a new PMG continues

Postmaster General Megan Brennan, who had announced her intent to retire effective Jan. 31, agreed to delay that retirement as the search by the USPS Board of Governors (BOG) for her successor continues.

"We are grateful to the postmaster general for her continued commitment to the Postal Service, and share her confidence in the Postal Service's strong leadership team members who will ensure that we continue to deliver for the American people," BOG Chairman Robert Duncan said.

Potential nominee for USPS BOG

On Jan. 6, the president nominated William Zollars of Kansas to be a member of the USPS BOG for the remainder of a seven-year term that expires on Dec. 8, 2022. Zollars previously was president and CEO of YRC Worldwide, Inc., a U.S. holding company of freight shipping brands. Prior to that, he was an executive at several other transportation and supply chain management companies. His name has been sent to the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.

Time to register for food drive

The March 9 deadline for branches to register for the 28th annual Letter Carriers' "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive is fast approaching. This year's food drive is on Saturday, May 9, so time is running out to register and prepare.

Branch presidents can register quickly by using the "Member's Only" portal at nalc.org. Once they've logged in to the portal, they can select the "Food Drive" button, enter the information into the fields and select "Complete Registration."

Branch registration locks in a branch's order for food drive reminder postcards, so **it is important for branches to register as soon as possible to ensure proper allocation of postcards.**

Branches also should search for local sponsors of specially-branded food drive bags. Such bags are a win-win, significantly driving up totals of food collected while also putting the sponsor's name right next to the familiar and trusted Stamp Out Hunger logo, creating a positive association for both the sponsor and the Postal Service. For information on ordering bags, go to the online food drive toolkit at nalc.org/food.

The toolkit also contains contact information for regional and state food drive coordinators. If a food drive coordinator encounters problems working with local managers on food drive logistics, the branch president or the regional food drive coordinator can lend a hand.

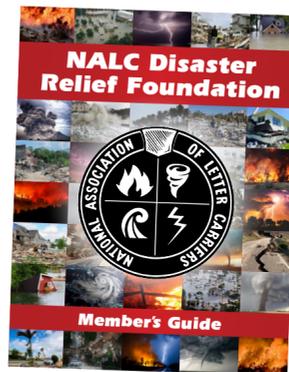
For questions or more information, please contact NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson at 202-662-2489.



NALC Health Benefit Plan

Take advantage of Telehealth

New for the 2020 High Option Plan: receive high quality, affordable care for minor acute conditions wherever you are! A virtual visit with a physician or nurse practitioner for things such as sinus problems, allergies, abrasions and minor wounds can save you time and money. Doctors can assess your condition, provide a treatment plan and send a prescription to the pharmacy of your choice. Keep in mind prescription availability is defined by physician judgement. If needed, a doctor's note will be sent directly to the app mailbox for your convenience. You'll pay just a \$10 copayment after insurance processing through the NALC Health Benefit Plan. To access this service, download the mobile app in the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store by searching for NALCHBP telehealth, visit www.nalchbptelehealth.org or call 888-541-7706.



NALC Disaster Relief Foundation Member's Guide available

The *NALC Disaster Relief Foundation Member's Guide* is available to all NALC members. Get all the information on how to donate, how to apply for a relief grant, how to prepare for an emergency and dealing with the aftermath, and how to become a volunteer on a disaster relief team.

The DRF aims to alleviate the suffering of members affected by **natural disasters** such as devastating storms, earthquakes and wildfires. The guide is available at nalc.org/disaster.

House passes worker-friendly PRO Act

On Feb. 6, the House passed the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 2474), legislation that would increase protections for workers' rights to organize and bargain for higher wages, better benefits, safer working conditions and more. The 224 to 194 vote saw 219 Democrats and five Republicans vote for the PRO Act, while seven Democrats, 186 Republicans and Justin Amash (I-MI) opposed it.

"House passage of the PRO Act is a powerful statement of support for workers, and we are thankful to the members of Congress who stood up for the American people by supporting this legislation," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "All Americans deserve the right, not simply to stand together and negotiate a fair return on our work, but to have that right protected and enforceable through the court of law. For too long, corporations and the wealthiest few have been prioritized to the detriment of our nation's labor force."

Senate consideration or passage of the companion bill (S. 1306) is uncertain at this time, due to likely opposition from Republican leadership in the Senate.

PRC publishes revised notice of proposed rulemaking

In early December, the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) issued a revised proposed rulemaking for the system that regulates the rates and classes of the Postal Service's Market Dominant products. This follows an initial proposed rulemaking in December 2017 that was not implemented. The new proposal is based partly on comments received following the initial rulemaking. NALC's comments figure prominently in the new filing.

The Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 required the PRC to review the existing rate and classification system of Market Dominant products after 10 years. The review's mandate is to determine whether the legislated rate-setting system is achieving the objectives set forth in PAEA: to create a "flexible, stable, predictable and streamlined ratemaking system that ensures the Postal Service's financial health...and maintains high quality service standards and performance."

According to the PRC's initial proposed rulemaking in December 2017, the system was not meeting these goals. The first proposed rule, which would have liberalized the price cap to allow rates to rise by up to two percentage points more per year than the increase in the Consumer Price Index, was not finalized, in part because of vacancies on the PRC. The last of those vacancies was recently filled.

NALC is pleased to see the PRC return to this important review, and we are participating fully in this process. NALC's goal is to strengthen our nation's universal postal service. After reviewing the proposed rulemaking's impact, NALC submitted its comments on Jan. 30; they can be found at nalc.org.





Coronavirus precautions

The Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) is a disease that was first identified in Wuhan China but has since spread to locations throughout the world. Make sure you do your part to limit the spread of COVID-19 by understanding precautions you can take. This information is based on guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

If any of the below is not being provided or completed, please contact your branch officer or national business agent.

Mandatory stand-up talks and posters

The Postal Service has issued mandatory stand-up talks based on information from the CDC. These stand-up talks help disseminate vital information for employees to prevent and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Posters from the CDC should also be posted around the facility. These posters cover different topics, such as stopping the spread of germs, symptoms of the coronavirus, and what to do if you are sick with the coronavirus.

What can I do to prevent the spread?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Cleaning on a daily basis

The Postal Service should be following MMO-031-20, Influenza and Coronavirus Cleaning Contingency on a daily basis due to flu season.

- Surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned at least daily during disease outbreaks.
- Postal Service procedures for cleaning common areas will be upgraded to include use of an approved (registered) antimicrobial product.
- Employee and custodial procedures for cleaning their workspaces and surfaces will be updated to include use of a registered antimicrobial product.

Social distancing

To reduce exposure you should practice social distancing. The following are recommendations by the CDC and the Postal Service:

- Maintaining a 3-foot to 6-foot separation between employees and between employees and customers, to the extent feasible.
- Maintaining a 3-foot distance between carriers and customers, to the extent feasible. Remain courteous; remember that accepting mail or parcels does not pose a substantial risk of transmission.
- Reducing face-to-face encounters for employees; try to avoid holding meetings in rooms where social distancing is not feasible.
- Consider avoiding travel and large gatherings where social distancing is not feasible.
- Avoiding hand shaking with business partners or among friends. If you do handshake or interact by touching, then do not touch your mouth, nose or eyes until you wash your hands as soon as possible afterwards.

Personal protective equipment

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well should wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who are showing symptoms of COVID-19. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected. The use of facemasks also is crucial for health workers and other people who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

Notwithstanding the CDC recommendation, the Postal Service has committed to providing surgical masks and nitrile gloves upon request to employees in accordance with Management Instruction EL-810-2009-4.

The risk from handling mail

The CDC states that there is very low risk of transmission of coronaviruses on imported goods or mail due to its poor survivability on such surfaces. The CDC has further stated that, currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods, and there have not been any reported cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods.

Exposure during delivery

If there is a delivery location that you feel exposes you to an increased risk, immediately report the delivery point to your supervisor, shop steward and/or branch officer.

The Postal Service has stated they are committed to making temporary alternative delivery arrangements for delivery points that may reasonably pose an increased risk.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and/or shortness of breath.

If you are sick

Stay home if you are sick, even if you do not have COVID-19 symptoms. Stay home if you are sick and have COVID-19 symptoms. Either way, get plenty of rest and consult your health care provider. Follow normal procedures to report you are sick. COVID-19 symptoms include the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The CDC states that you should not go to work if you are sick. This has been reinforced by Postal Service Pandemic Influenza Plan as well as Mandatory Stand-Up Talk February 11, 2020 Health Tips: *Flu and respiratory diseases including novel (new) coronavirus*.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider immediately. The CDC recommends you call ahead of a medical appointment to let the healthcare provider know that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Staying updated

There is still a lot of unknown about the coronavirus. As the situation is constantly evolving it is important to stay updated. Follow the CDC website at cdc.gov and at nalc.org under Safety and Health for more updates.

If any of the above is not being provided or completed, please contact your branch officer or national business agent.

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Temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing

NALC and the Postal Service agreed to implement temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing among city letter carriers (M-01915). The agreement commits the parties to limiting individuals to working only in their employing facilities to the extent possible. The MOU also directs the local parties to immediately discuss potential scheduling and office setup changes such as staggered start times; scheduling letter carriers to begin tours in groups of 10 or less; the manner in which stand-up talks are given, as well as break locations and times; and other initiatives to maximize social distancing.

“Things that we took for granted in the past suddenly require adaptation,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement.

The agreement expires on May 27, 2020; however, the parties will revisit this issue immediately prior to that date to determine if an extension is appropriate.

Two new types of leave and two new MOUs to help with COVID-19 related absences

Effective April 1, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides employees with two additional types of leave. First, employees with a qualifying circumstance as defined by the act will be eligible for up to 80 hours of paid emergency sick leave, in addition to their sick leave balances. Second, employees who have a minor child whose school or place of care is closed will be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the majority of which is additional paid leave. These provisions will apply from April 1 through Dec. 31, and are in addition to any personal annual and/or sick leave balances that you have.

An employee is entitled to use the additional 80 hours of paid emergency sick leave for absences related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

1. Is subject to a federal, state or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19
2. Has been advised to self-quarantine by a health care provider
3. Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis
4. Is caring for an individual subject to a federal, state or local quarantine or self-quarantine
5. Is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed, or the childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 related reasons
6. Is experiencing any other substantially similar conditions specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

With regard to qualifying reason 1, in many cities and states, government authorities have issued a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. Some local and state governments have also identified groups of people that should self-quarantine, such as individuals over a certain age. While the Postal Service is considered mission critical and not subject to state and local directives, employees that choose to self-quarantine in these circumstances may be eligible to use up to 80 hours of emergency sick leave to cover their absence.

All career and non-career employees, regardless of tenure, are immediately eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid emergency sick leave. Full-time career employees can receive up to 80 hours of paid emergency sick leave. Part-time career employees can receive emergency sick leave up to the number of hours equal to their average work hours during a two-week period or the hours they would have worked. Non-career employees can receive emergency sick leave for up to 80 hours based on their average work hours during a two-week period or the hours they would have worked.

For qualifying reasons 1, 2 and 3, the emergency sick leave is 100 percent of the letter carrier’s pay, but capped at \$511 per day and \$5,110 total. For qualifying reasons 4, 5 and 6, the emergency sick leave will be no less than two-thirds of the letter carrier’s pay, but capped at \$200 per day and \$2,000 total.

With regard to the other type of additional leave, the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion, an employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including telework, because the employee is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed or the childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 related reasons. This qualifying reason is the same as qualifying reason number 5 for emergency sick leave.

All employees who have been employed for 30 days or longer are eligible for this benefit if they meet the qualifying reason. This new qualifying reason does not add to the 12 weeks of FMLA already provided for in the law. When using this new qualifying reason, the first 10 days of the 12-week FMLA coverage will be unpaid. To receive pay for the first 10 days, an employee can choose to use their own earned leave or may use the 80 hours emergency sick leave explained above. The remaining 10 weeks of FMLA leave for this qualifying reason will be paid leave. This leave is required to be paid out at no less than two-thirds of the letter carriers’ pay, but capped at \$200 per day and \$10,000 total.

Again, the two new types of leave identified above are in addition to the contractual benefits to which USPS employees are otherwise entitled, such as their normal earned leave or temporary benefits recently agreed upon in two memorandums of understanding (MOUs). In those MOUs, NALC and the Postal Service agreed to address obvious concerns such as childcare needs caused by the large number of schools and daycares that have closed, and the need for city carrier assistants to have additional paid leave to use during this unprecedented crisis. M-01910 allows career letter carriers to use sick leave for dependent care to care for a child as the result of a closed daycare, school or the unavailability of the child’s primary caregiver. M-01911 gives city carrier assistants an additional 80 hours of paid leave to use for specific reasons in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, since CCAs do not earn sick leave. Both of these MOUs expire on May 27, 2020, however, the national parties will revisit these issues immediately prior to that date to determine if an extension is appropriate.

Make sure you have the safety supplies you need

NALC asks that letter carriers communicate with their NALC branch officers or national business agent if they see problems in their office with lack of cleaning, shortage of sanitizing supplies, standup talks not being conducted, social distancing not being practiced, quarantine protocols not being followed or any instruction that conflicts with the guidance being provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The union has been successful getting many of these issues resolved, but needs to know where the problems are so it can get them fixed.

“We communicate daily with USPS officials regarding these issues,” President Fredric Rolando said, “and we are committed to doing our part to correct each issue as it arises.”

USPS has committed to provide daily supplies necessary for postal employees to clean frequently-touched items in the office, as well as provide necessary supplies for letter carriers to use to clean steering wheels and other frequently-touched surfaces in postal vehicles. They have also committed to provide supplies for use while on the street, such as hand sanitizer, as well as cleaning supplies to maintain cleanliness on surfaces in the vehicle and on other surfaces we encounter on the street. Letter carriers should have sufficient hand sanitizer to keep your hands clean all day as you touch the many surfaces on your route. They have also committed to provide masks and nitrile gloves for any employee that requests them.

“It is my understanding that the USPS has received a large shipment of supplies at its central distribution warehouse in Topeka, KS, that are now being received in delivery units throughout the country,” Rolando said. “If your manager or supervisor tells you that supplies are backordered, please ask them if they ordered directly from the USPS facility in Topeka. USPS has informed us that they now have a significant amount of supplies on hand at this facility and are distributing them. If orders are placed through vendors rather than directly from Topeka, they will likely be backordered.”

In a March 25 statement found on the COVID-19 page on the NALC website, Rolando discussed what letter carriers should do locally regarding such unsafe conditions. Please refer to that statement for an in-depth explanation of how to report such conditions, as well as management’s responsibility to correct them. If you are told by your supervisor to work in an unsafe environment, either in the office, in the vehicle or on the street, please inform your local union representative, branch president or NBA immediately.

Get the answers to USPS-related COVID-19 questions

In addition to contacting your shop steward, branch officer or national business agent (NBA), NALC has a new resource for members to ask any questions about the COVID-19 pandemic: COVID19@nalc.org. Many NALC members have already used this new resource.

If you do not have the supplies you need to keep yourself safe, please contact a branch officer or your NBA to let them know, but you can also use this new email address to voice your concerns. In addition to using this new resource to ask questions, please use it to report COVID-19 related issues in your facility when you do not have immediate access to a steward or branch officer and you are unable to contact your NBA office. Please be sure to include your name and NALC branch number in your email. Having this information upfront allows NALC headquarters to quickly connect members with the information they need.

What happens if you may have been exposed to COVID-19?

Recently, the Postal Service released a document directing its supervisors and managers how to make decisions regarding steps to take and what type of leave should be afforded to employees who have had certain forms of exposure (or potential exposure) to COVID-19 or who have travelled to certain countries or by way of a cruise ship. The guidance is offered for employees who fall into one of the following six categories:

1. An employee who tests positive for COVID-19
2. An employee who develops a fever and symptoms such as a cough or difficulty breathing
3. An employee who has visited certain countries or traveled on a cruise ship in the past 14 days
4. An employee who shares a household with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19
5. An employee who has been exposed, outside of work, to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19
6. An employee who has been exposed to an individual who was exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19

When an employee tests positive for COVID-19, they should be placed on the emergency sick leave provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). This leave is above and beyond the leave letter carriers normally earn, and it is afforded to all employees, whether career or non-career, and without regard to length of employment. When an employee develops a fever and symptoms such as a cough or difficulty breathing, they should also be sent home and placed on the emergency sick leave provided by the FFCRA. After an employee returns from travel on a cruise ship or from certain high-risk countries, they should stay home for 14 days and be also paid emergency sick leave as provided by the Act. If that employee later shows symptoms of COVID-19, and has exhausted the emergency sick leave, they must remain at home on normal sick leave or annual leave until they are cleared to return to work.

If an employee shares a household with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, they should stay home and be afforded emergency sick leave as provided by the Act. Employees in this situation should stay at home until the household member has had no fever for at least 72 hours (at least three full days of no fever without the use of any fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath has improved) and at least seven days have passed since COVID-19 symptoms first appeared.

If an employee has been exposed, outside of work, to an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, then the District or Area Occupational Health Nurse Administrator (OHNA) should contact the local Health Department for advice. If the local Health Department reviews the circumstances and orders the employee to quarantine, then he or she should be afforded up to 80 hours of emergency sick leave in accordance with the Act. If the local Health Department reviews the circumstances and does not order the employee to quarantine, then he or she can return to work. If the local Health Department does not perform the review as requested, then the OHNA will make the determination whether to quarantine the employee or not.

If an employee has been exposed to an individual who was exposed to an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, then he or she will be cleared to work. USPS states that according to CDC guidelines, people in this situation are not considered exposed.

The guidelines issued by the Postal Service have been given to supervisors and managers, so they know what to do in those certain situations. If you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19, and such exposure does not necessarily “fit” into one of the above categories to be quarantined, you may self-quarantine. Or if you are concerned that you may be exposed to someone at work who you think should be quarantined, you may self-quarantine. If you call and share your concerns with your doctor, and your doctor advises you to self-quarantine, you can use the 80 hours of emergency sick leave provided by the Act. Or, if there is a state or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 in effect where you live, you may also be eligible to use the 80 hours of emergency sick leave to self-quarantine. And in any case, you can always use your own leave to self-quarantine. In the event you are contacted by a local public health official and identified as someone who may have had contact with an individual who has tested positive for coronavirus, please immediately inform your supervisor and local NALC branch officer as a means to protect your coworkers and community.

The NALC Health Benefit Plan extends coverage to support members during pandemic

As a result of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic, the NALC Health Benefit Plan has made it a priority to help members get the care they need by removing any barriers that would prevent our members from getting necessary testing.

Diagnostic testing for COVID-19

We will now cover physician ordered diagnostic testing at 100 percent for patients that meet the CDC guidelines for COVID-19. We will also cover the associated office visit at 100 percent.

Office visits for COVID-19

High Option members: If you use a PPO provider, your office visit copayment will be waived. If you use a non-PPO provider, we will pay 100 percent of the Plan’s allowance for the office visit.

CDHP/VO members: If you use a PPO provider, your office visit coinsurance of 20 percent will be waived. If you use a non-PPO provider, we will pay 100 percent of the Plan’s allowance for the office visit.

Telehealth Programs

In addition to the virtual doctor visits available through NALCHBP Telehealth Programs (provided by American Well when enrolled in the High Option Plan or MDLive when enrolled in the CDHP or Value Option Program), the Plan will now cover medically necessary online telehealth office visits with other providers. This will be effective March 1 until further notice.

| Benefits | High Option | CDHP/Value Option |
|--|---|--|
| Virtual office visit with provider of choice | PPO: \$20 copayment Non-PPO: 30% coinsurance* | PPO: 20% coinsurance** Non-PPO: 50%** |
| Plan’s current telehealth programs | \$10 copayment when visit is through American Well www.nalchbptelehealth.org 888-541-7706 | 10% coinsurance** when visit is through MDLive www.MDLiveforCigna.com |
| *Deductible applies **You must exhaust your PCA and satisfy your deductible | | |

Prescription Benefits

CVS Pharmacy is now offering the option of home delivery, where available, of all prescription medications at no charge. We are also waiving early refill limits on 30-day prescriptions for maintenance medication prescriptions ahead of their normal fill schedule. Please take advantage of our 90-day prescription benefit for maintenance medications and be sure to refill any eligible 90-day maintenance medications so that you stay adherent during this pandemic.

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COVID-19 page on the NALC website: A depository of information

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have far-reaching consequences for letter carriers and the Postal Service. With new information coming quickly and changing rapidly, NALC has created the “COVID-19” page under “News & Research” at nalc.org. The page contains:

- Statements by NALC President Fredric Rolando
- Links to NALC’s “You Are the Current Resident” podcast in which Executive Vice President Brian Renfro delivers regular updates on COVID-19
- New memorandums of understanding in effect during the pandemic
- All of the mandatory stand-up talks that should be given in every office
- Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- COVID-19 information from USPS
- Link to the COVID19@nalc.org email address

The NALC website allows the union to disseminate information quickly. NALC constantly updates the COVID-19 page to ensure that letter carriers have easy access to immediate information as they work and live in the midst of the pandemic.

Keep communicating any issues to your NALC representatives

The national officers, staff and NALC representatives throughout the country are in constant communication and negotiation with management officials at every level of the organization regarding supplies, equipment, policies, protocols and work procedures necessary to keep letter carriers safe. Please continue communicating with them regarding any questions or issues that you may have in your office. Letter carriers should always let their union representatives know when:

- Their offices are not being sanitized on a regular basis.
- They do not have sufficient supplies (hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, masks, gloves, etc.).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protocols for employees to be quarantined are not being followed.
- Proper social distancing practices have not been implemented in their office.
- Stand-up talks are not being conducted.
- Proper safety precautions are not being followed.
- Employees are expected to work without protection or in an unsanitary environment.
- There are any other issues that put employees at increased risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

If you have questions or issues in your facility related to COVID-19 and you don’t have immediate access to a steward or branch officer, or are unable to contact your NBA office, please contact NALC Headquarters at COVID19@nalc.org. Headquarters staff and national officers answer every question sent to this email address. When using this resource, please be sure to include your name and NALC branch number in your email. Having this information upfront allows NALC Headquarters to quickly address your concerns.

Two additional types of leave spark many questions

NALC has received many questions through COVID19@nalc.org regarding the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which became effective on April 1. The Act provides employees with two additional types of leave. First, employees with a qualifying circumstance as defined by the Act are eligible for up to 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave, in addition to their normal sick leave balances. Second, employees who have a child whose school or place of care is closed may be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the majority of which is additional paid leave. These provisions apply from April 1, 2020, through Dec. 31, 2020, and are in addition to any personal annual and/or sick leave balances that carriers have.

An employee is entitled to use Emergency Paid Sick Leave for absences related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

1. Is subject to a federal, state or local quarantine, or isolation order related to COVID-19.
2. Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19.
3. Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis.
4. Is caring for an individual subject to a federal, state or local quarantine, or self-quarantine.
5. Is caring for their child whose school or place of care is closed or the childcare provider is unavailable due to COVID-19-related reasons.
6. Is experiencing any other substantially similar conditions specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In regard to qualifying reason 1, in many cities and states, government authorities have issued a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. Some local and state governments have also identified groups of people who should self-quarantine, such as individuals over a certain age. While the Postal Service is considered mission critical and not subject to state and local directives, employees who choose to self-quarantine in these circumstances may be eligible to use the 80 hours of Emergency Paid Sick Leave to cover their absence. Prior to passage of the Act, the Postal Service liberally granted personal leave for this purpose, and now states that “We will continue to handle application of this qualifying factor as we had prior to the passage of the FFCRA and liberally grant Emergency Paid Sick Leave to employees who believe they have an individual circumstance for which taking this leave is appropriate.”

In President Rolando’s April 3 statement found on the COVID-19 page on the NALC website, he discusses in great detail the benefits of Emergency Paid Sick Leave, as well as the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion, for employees who have a child whose school or place of care is closed. He also explains what steps should be taken and what type of leave should be afforded to employees who have had certain forms of exposure (or potential exposure) to COVID-19. Please refer to that statement for an in-depth explanation of these subjects.

Updated USPS policy regarding face coverings and masks

Recently, the Postal Service released a mandatory stand-up talk regarding the wearing of face coverings and masks while employees are at work. As a result of many state or local authorities mandating that face coverings are now required in public settings, USPS has modified its policy to require that all employees wear face coverings in the following situations, until the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer an issue:

- When there is a local or state face-covering order or directive in place; or
- When an employee who does not deal directly with the public cannot achieve or maintain social distancing in the workplace.

Cloth face coverings or masks are mandatory consistent with local or state face-covering directives or orders. In addition, face coverings and masks are mandatory for employees who do not deal directly with the public in all facilities where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Employees may request a face covering or surgical mask from their supervisor. They may also bring their own personal cloth face coverings to work for use while on duty. Any employee who cannot wear a face covering for health reasons should immediately contact their supervisor.

Mandatory stand-up talk to be given when a co-worker tests positive for COVID-19

Last month, the Postal Service developed and distributed a mandatory stand-up talk that must be given in every facility when an employee in that facility has tested positive for COVID-19. The purpose of the stand-up talk is to make other employees aware that one of their co-workers tested positive for the virus. Under the Rehabilitation Act and the Privacy Act, specific employee medical information must be kept confidential and may only be shared in very limited circumstances. Therefore, the Postal Service cannot share the name of the employee who tested positive for COVID-19 or their medical condition.

Consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the infected employee cannot return to work until cleared. The Postal Service should reach out to the local public health office for guidance, including protocols for contact tracing of other employees who may need to be quarantined. Additionally, once it has been determined that an employee tested positive for the coronavirus, the facility in which they work must be thoroughly cleaned in accordance with CDC guidelines specific to COVID-19.

Workers’ compensation for letter carriers who contract coronavirus at work

Letter carriers who develop COVID-19 while in the performance of their duties are entitled to workers’ compensation coverage pursuant to the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA). Exposure to COVID-19 alone does not constitute a work-related injury entitling an employee to medical treatment under the FECA. The employee must actually be diagnosed with COVID-19 to potentially be afforded coverage.

However, in addition to letter carriers who have tested positive for COVID-19, letter carriers who have been working and are symptomatic for COVID-19 but have no history of exposure outside of work should register and then file a CA-1 claim in the Department of Labor’s Employees’ Compensation Operations & Management Portal (ECOMP). Carriers should also contact their installation and request a CA-16, Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment, which will pay for the first 60 days of medical bills. Letter carriers who are asymptomatic do not need to file a claim.

Given how quickly the coronavirus can develop, the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) recommends registering in ECOMP as a good pre-emptive move for all letter carriers. Employees can register in ECOMP without filing a claim at ecomp.dol.gov. Instructions on how to register in ECOMP can be found on the NALC website at the “Injured on the Job” tab under “Workplace Issues.”

OWCP will pay for the COVID-19 test upfront (prior to accepting a claim) only if a claimant was exposed to a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 in the performance of duty. Otherwise, OWCP will pay for the test, if the claim is accepted, through reimbursement.

If you have any questions or need assistance with a claim, please contact your NBA office as soon as possible. NALC has full-time regional workers’ compensation assistants ready to assist members with OWCP claims related to COVID-19.

USPS launches COVID-19 command center for assistance with cleaning supplies and protective equipment

The Postal Service has established a COVID-19 Supplies Command Center to support USPS facilities with ordering and tracking necessary supplies to keep employees safe and facilities clean during the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to facilities continuing to order supplies following standard procedures and using local buying where available, the command center is working closely with supply management and district supply coordinators to centrally fulfill orders for masks, gloves, air and hand sanitizers, cleaning products and other items directly from the USPS Material Distribution Center in Topeka, KS.

Facilities and employees can contact the center for help tracking orders and for when they need assistance in locating and ordering supplies. Additionally, the center will monitor field inventories daily to assist districts in identifying facilities that are low on items needed to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Employees can call the COVID-19 Supplies Command Center at 844-773-3594, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

Keeping the U.S. Postal Service afloat through the financial effects of COVID-19

In addition to our priority commitment to protecting the safety and health of letter carriers, NALC is working to ensure that the Postal Service has the resources necessary to continue operations. We remain very involved with our congressional representatives with regard to proposed provisions for stimulus packages related to the COVID-19 virus. As plans for the next stimulus package are being developed, we are again pursuing appropriations to maintain the Postal Service’s revenue stream through the crisis. The Postal Service is projecting the impact on its revenues related to the pandemic and the shutdown of the U.S. economy to be both devastating and immediate. Although package volumes are up as we deliver goods for families forced to stay home by the crisis, other mail volume has declined. By the end of the year, the Postal Service expects total volume to fall by more than 50 percent, greatly affecting its \$70 billion in annual revenues.

“Congress must step in to provide financial appropriations to the Postal Service, the way it did in March for private companies damaged by the pandemic-induced recession with a \$2.2 trillion relief package that did not include any appropriations to the Postal Service,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said in a statement. “Although the Postal Service has not needed taxpayer support for nearly 40 years, it needs it now.”

NALC took the lead in drafting a white paper on how to provide financial relief to the Postal Service from the pandemic; it is posted on our website in the “Government Affairs” section under “News & Updates.” In it, NALC lays out the necessary provisions that must be included in the next stimulus bill. These provisions include:

1. Making a direct “public service” appropriation of at least \$25 billion to the Postal Service to help it weather the pandemic and the deep recession it is causing. Although the Postal Service has not received taxpayer appropriations (other than for military/overseas voting and free mail for the blind) since the early 1980s, the present crisis warrants such appropriations now.
2. Authorizing an emergency “public service” appropriation for the duration of the crisis, distributed quarterly, starting in Fiscal Year 2021 (which begins in just six months) to cover the difference between postage revenues and total USPS expenses. This would signal to the American people and the business community that the Postal Service will be there to battle the pandemic (with the delivery of tests and public health information, etc.); deliver online purchases and prescription drugs; support the economic recovery; and facilitate absentee voting as well as other vital civic functions.
3. Providing a mechanism to reimburse the Postal Service for the cost of the COVID-19-related leave (both sick leave and family medical leave) provided by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
4. Ensuring equal treatment for postal employees in any legislation that authorizes and funds hazard pay for front-line workers exposed to health risks related to the COVID-19 virus. Such legislation should cover postal workers, who face heightened exposure risks to the virus on a daily basis.
5. Removing the Federal Finance Bank’s discretion to impose operational changes and policy conditions on any of the Postal Service’s existing borrowing authorities—changes and policies that should properly be set by the Postal Service Board of Governors and Congress, not the Treasury Department—and eliminate any annual limit on these authorities.

NALC is building a lobbying plan and a grassroots campaign to advance these legislative goals. A recent bipartisan poll, spanning all socioeconomic demographics and political affiliations, shows that the American public overwhelmingly supports Congress appropriating funds for the Postal Service to maintain operations through the coronavirus crisis in the next round of financial relief legislation.

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Bulletin

Bipartisan poll demonstrates overwhelming support for direct funding of USPS

On May 1, North Star Opinion Research and Hart Research Associates, leading Republican and Democratic public opinion firms, released the findings of a national poll commissioned by NALC regarding the continued operation and funding of the U.S. Postal Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the poll show overwhelming bipartisan support for the Postal Service, with 94 percent of all registered voters polled saying mail and package service is important to them. In addition, 95 percent of registered voters polled said that receiving official government recommendations, supplies, medications and test kits related to COVID-19 via the mail is important to them during this crisis.

When respondents were asked whether they would favor or oppose appropriating funds for the Postal Service to maintain operations through the coronavirus crisis in the next round of financial relief legislation, 92 percent of voters said that they would favor this move. Additionally, 78 percent of voters prefer federal funding over increasing parcel rates, and 70 percent prefer direct funding over government loans.

The poll results clearly show that the American public overwhelmingly supports the direct appropriation of funds for the Postal Service during the pandemic. NALC will continue to work with Congress and the White House to stabilize the agency in the next stimulus package so that the Postal Service can continue to serve the needs of 160 million homes and businesses every day. To view the results of the bipartisan poll, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website.

New coronavirus federal aid package includes funding for USPS and hazard pay for carriers

A new coronavirus aid package was recently released by House Democrats that includes \$25 billion in direct funding to the Postal Service. The bill would also repeal restrictions on a \$10 billion line of credit that was authorized in a previous stimulus package. There is also a hazard pay provision that would include postal employees. Certain members of the Senate and the administration will likely resist many of the provisions of the package once the negotiations for a final bill begin.

"Letter carriers should continue contacting their senators to urge support for funding in the next stimulus package," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Let your senators know how important the Postal Service is to the American public, and that funding is necessary to replace lost revenue from declining letter volume related to the pandemic, and for COVID-19-related expenses." For more information about how to take action, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website.

New postmaster general named

On May 6, the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors announced the selection of Louis DeJoy to serve as the next postmaster general, succeeding current PMG Megan Brennan. PMG Brennan announced her intent to resign in October 2019 but remained in her role while the search for a new PMG continued.

DeJoy is expected to begin serving in his new role effective June 15. He is the first PMG in more than 20 years not to rise through the ranks of the Postal Service. DeJoy is currently president of LDJ Global Strategies, a real estate development, private equity and consulting company based in Greensboro, NC. He also currently serves as the lead fundraiser for the Republican National Convention. Prior to that, he spent more than 30 years as a very successful CEO in the logistics field.

In a statement released on May 7, NALC President Fredric Rolando congratulated Louis DeJoy on his appointment as the 75th postmaster general. "The National Association of Letter Carriers is committed to working in good faith with him to build a relationship based on mutual trust and a shared vision for the future of the Postal Service," Rolando said. "NALC believes that this shared vision should embrace a strategy to grow as a public institution that values its employees and that works with its unions to promote high-quality service, safety, efficiency and a workplace culture of mutual respect."



Louis DeJoy

USPS Board of Governors loses two members

Board of Governors Vice Chairman David Williams unexpectedly resigned from his position on April 30. It is reported that Governor Williams resigned in protest over the Treasury Department's inappropriate meddling in the management of the Postal Service. NALC had recently written to the Board members urging them to resist such meddling, noting that "It is the role of a democratically elected Congress to set postal policy in this country, and it is the role of the Board and the PRC to implement that policy with the managerial and regulatory discretion provided by law. The Treasury Department has no authority to re-write the law or to impose its policy preferences on the Postal Service—or on the country."

On May 7, Deputy Postmaster General Ronald Stroman, the Postal Service's second-in-command, notified the chairman of the USPS Board of Governors of his decision to resign from the agency on June 1. Following Stroman's departure, the USPS board will no longer have enough members to reach a quorum. The four remaining Senate-confirmed governors are expected to select a new deputy postmaster general in the near future.

Interest arbitration dates scheduled

The interest arbitration hearing dates for a new collective-bargaining agreement scheduled for May, June and July were previously postponed due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. New hearing dates scheduled for September through November have now been confirmed. Neutral arbitrator Dennis Nolan provided the parties sufficient hearing dates for this time period. There continue to be major issues at stake, as the parties still have many unresolved differences regarding economic, operational and workplace issues. NALC's collective-bargaining goals have not changed. While discussions between NALC and the Postal Service continue, the union proceeds to prepare for arbitration to achieve those goals. The current collective-bargaining agreement remains in full force pending final resolution of the parties' dispute.

Pandemic forces cancellation of the NALC National Convention

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of the NALC's 72nd National Convention. At the direction of the NALC Executive Council, Headquarters has notified the convention center, convention hotels and various convention vendors of its decision to cancel the convention, which was to be held Aug. 17-21 in Honolulu, HI.

The Council made the unprecedented decision after it became clear that the state government of Hawaii could not provide any assurance that gatherings with the number of delegates attending would be allowed in August. Nor could it be assured that travel to Honolulu would be permitted under the state's strict quarantine law, which currently requires all travelers to self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in the islands.

President Rolando thanked the leadership of Honolulu Branch 860 for all their hard work in preparing for the convention and expressed the NALC's hope that it would be possible to convene in Hawaii in the future. Please see the NALC website for information regarding cancellation of hotels and travel reservations.

No route inspections until at least September

In March, as a result of the inability to social distance during route counts and inspections, USPS agreed with NALC to instruct its field representatives to temporarily halt route inspections until further notice. After continued negotiations with NALC, later in April USPS further notified the area offices that all route inspections scheduled for the rest of the spring would be canceled. This includes refraining from conducting any PS Forms 3999, PS Forms 1838C and special route inspections. Additionally, the Postal Service has now also agreed that any pending implementation of previous route adjustments would not take place until at least June 6.

Since *Handbook M-39* also states that June, July, August and December are to be excluded from any route counts and inspections, there should be no route inspections until September at soonest. Letter carriers who are subjected to counts and inspections in contradiction to these policies should immediately inform their local union representatives, who in turn without delay should inform their national business agent.

USPS begins testing different types and styles of face coverings

The Postal Service has begun testing the use of various types of materials and styles to be used as face coverings during the hotter months. The testing is being conducted in Fort Lauderdale and Tampa, FL; Dallas, TX; and Greenwood, SC. The styles of coverings being tested include various bandanna-type masks, neck gaiters and even cooling masks. While NALC does not yet have the final data from these tests, initial results indicate that letter carriers liked three of the five styles tested, two of which were the neck gaiter style, and the other being a bandanna style. The Postal Service will be ordering the selected styles.

USPS being used to deliver COVID-19 sample test kits

Recently, in certain New York City, New Jersey, Maryland and Michigan ZIP codes, COVID-19 sample test kits began being mailed through the Postal Service. A mandatory stand-up talk regarding the tests should have been given in the offices where these mailings are taking place.

In New York City and New Jersey, the mailings are part of a limited research study being conducted by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, working in conjunction with Rutgers University. Such test kits are being supplied to 4,000 targeted recipients to be tested for COVID-19.

The kits are mailed daily to 100 to 200 select volunteer recipients from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. The volunteers then self-administer the test and return the sample through the mail to either the Icahn School of Medicine or Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ, for testing.

The test kits in Maryland and Michigan are also part of limited research studies for targeted recipients only, and in conjunction with higher education, research and diagnostic companies in those areas. Each test kit contains explicit mailing instructions for the test recipients to follow to ensure the safety of individuals handling the return samples.

Letter carriers can get more information or clarification about these mailings from their supervisors. If you are unable to obtain information or clarification from your supervisor, please contact your local union representative, your national business agent or email NALC Headquarters at COVID19@nalc.org.

Voluntary temperature-taking being tested in select USPS sites

As the pandemic persists, NALC and the Postal Service continue to discuss potential new temporary policies and procedures to protect letter carriers, other postal employees and customers. One such policy being discussed involves taking the temperature of employees when they are reporting to work.

Beginning May 18, the Postal Service began proof-of-concept testing at a few sites. The testing is solely designed to see whether the equipment works correctly, so the parties can then discuss the feasibility of how and where such a system would be used. NALC and USPS are in the process of discussing the relevant policies and procedures that would be followed should the system be implemented in selected sites. The test involves taking the temperatures of employees as they enter the workplace each day using either a camera, from as far as 10 feet away, or by using a handheld scanner.

There are four proof-of-concept test sites. On May 18, testing began at the Merrifield, VA P&DC; Falls Church, VA Carrier Annex; and the Fairfax, VA main office. Testing will begin at the Oklahoma City, OK P&DC on May 25. The tests will run for two weeks.

It is voluntary for employees to have their temperature taken and no health data will be collected or maintained. During the two-week test, if an employee has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, they will be informed in private and then sent home and paid either emergency paid sick leave or administrative leave until the fever subsides.

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Update on the HEROES Act

On May 15, a new COVID-19 aid package, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions, or “HEROES” Act, was passed by the House of Representatives. The HEROES Act includes \$25 billion in direct funding to the Postal Service, and the bill would repeal restrictions on a \$10 billion line of credit that was authorized in previous stimulus legislation. There is also a hazard pay provision that would include postal employees.

Negotiations between congressional leaders and the White House administration are ongoing, with the next pandemic aid package not expected to pass Congress until late July. Letter carriers should continue contacting their senators to urge support for funding in the next stimulus package. Let your senators know how important the Postal Service is to the American public, and that funding is necessary to replace lost revenue from declining letter volume related to the pandemic, as well as COVID-19-related expenses. For more information on how to take action, please visit the “Government Affairs” page on the NALC website.

HeroesDelivering.com gives public a voice on postal stimulus

NALC has recently launched heroesdelivering.com to provide information and resources to the general public on the importance of the Postal Service and the need to keep it strong and well funded during this pandemic. It gives readers an easy means to contact their legislators and call on them to support funding for the Postal Service in the next legislative package.

At heroesdelivering.com, you can also see the new ads being broadcast on television and appearing on major websites in targeted areas of the country. Please ask your friends and family members to visit heroesdelivering.com to learn more about the crisis facing USPS and how Americans from all walks of life can encourage politicians in Washington to step up to support the Postal Service and its letter carriers.

Deputy postmaster general resigns

In addition to the retirement of Postmaster General Megan Brennan and the resignation of Vice Chairman of the USPS Board of Governors David Williams, the wave of leadership changes at the United States Postal Service continued with the resignation of Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman. Stroman resigned effective June 1 after 42 years of public service in USPS and the legislative branch of government.

“NALC worked closely with Deputy PMG Stroman over the years on legislative and policy matters,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “We especially welcomed his legislative experience, as well as his expertise on promoting election mail, international shipments and environmental stability.”

Two new members to be added to USPS Board of Governors

Two new governors have recently been nominated by the White House to serve on the USPS Board of Governors and are in the process of being confirmed by the Senate. The nominees are Donald Lee Moak, a former Delta Airlines pilot and former president of the Air Line Pilots Association, and Bill Zollars, the former chairman of the logistics company YRC Worldwide. If confirmed, they will join the remaining four governors and new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, who took over on June 15. A confirmation vote on the two newly nominated governors is expected this week. The Board will be charged with selecting a new deputy postmaster general to replace Ron Stroman.

COVID-19-related MOUs and USPS’s liberal leave policy extended

Due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19, and the challenges letter carriers face while living and working through the pandemic, several previously negotiated memorandums of understanding (MOUs) have been extended through the middle of July. On May 19, President Fredric Rolando signed an MOU extending the temporary use of the 7:01 rule, the temporary additional paid leave for CCAs, the temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care, the temporary use of TCAs, and the temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing. These MOUs are now extended through July 17.

Also on May 19, NALC Executive Vice President Brian Renfroe signed two MOUs agreeing to another temporary time limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals, and agreeing to give local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime desired list or work assignment list. These two MOUs will expire on July 15.

A USPS directive sent to all of the area vice presidents in March has been extended through July 17 as well. This letter instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with child care issues related to the pandemic. Managers and supervisors should also allow liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick, and liberal annual and leave without pay (LWOP) usage to the extent operationally feasible during this time period. If an employee requests leave for reasons related to COVID-19, such leave should be treated as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave. Leave taken for COVID-19-related reasons during this time may also not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

Each of the MOUs and the USPS directive can be found in NALC’s Materials Reference System on the NALC website.

USPS tasked with delivering virus and vaccine test kits

The Postal Service has partnered with several manufacturers, vendors and laboratories to ship COVID-19 virus and vaccine test kits to a variety of health care providers and citizens across the country. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized a national biosample collection laboratory to distribute COVID-19 test kits nationally, and these test kits are currently being shipped through the mail.

“Every day, the Postal Service plays an important role in processing and delivering critical mail and packages such as medicines and biological substances throughout the United States,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “These sample test kits are another way letter carriers and the Postal Service are assisting the American public to navigate through this pandemic.”

USPS releases social-distancing guidelines for route inspectors

Recently, the Postal Service issued guidelines to its supervisors and managers regarding proper social-distancing protocols that must be followed while conducting a PS Form 3999, when performing a street inspection of a letter carrier’s route, while conducting a PS Form 1838-C, or when counting a letter carrier’s mail volume and office time. Some of these procedures include:

- Examiners always remaining at least 6 feet away from letter carriers at all times.
- Examiners and carriers wearing face coverings in accordance with local ordinances and when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Using disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment.
- Examiners avoiding direct hand-to-hand contact of the mail or inspection-related documents with the letter carrier.
- Mail being counted by examiners prior to the letter carrier reporting for work.
- If a vehicle is needed, examiner must always use a separate vehicle.

NALC has provided the national business agent offices with copies of the complete guidelines that managers and supervisors must follow if they conduct a PS Form 3999 or PS Form 1838-C on letter carriers. Additionally, these guidelines have been posted on the COVID-19 page on the NALC website. If you are being inspected in the office or on the street, you should insist on examiners practicing proper social-distancing rules.

Approximately 700 Sunday parcel delivery hubs being decoupled

From the beginning of this pandemic, the NALC national officers, staff and representatives throughout the country have been in constant communication and negotiation with management officials at every level of the organization regarding supplies, equipment, policies, protocols and work procedures necessary to keep letter carriers safe while working through this pandemic. Many of the issues that NALC has been discussing with USPS involve the need for social distancing and minimizing carriers being loaned to other offices.

One issue is the gathering of letter carriers from several different offices at a central hub to perform Sunday parcel delivery. As a result of our discussions and the increased volume of parcels, the Postal Service recently informed us that beginning Sunday, June 7, it was planning to decouple approximately 700 Sunday hub delivery locations. While this is not all of the hub locations throughout the country, it does include a large number of offices. A list of the locations being decoupled has been provided to the national business agent offices.

Dispensation requests for branch nominations and elections

On March 18, President Fredric Rolando sent a letter to all NALC branches issuing blanket dispensation for branches to postpone scheduled nominations and elections. The letter also noted that postponed nominations and elections should be rescheduled as expeditiously as possible.

For the foreseeable future, the pandemic will likely prevent some branches from conducting normal elections of officers and delegates using the procedures in their bylaws. For example, branches that normally nominate candidates and vote at scheduled branch meetings will not be able to do so if in-person meetings are postponed indefinitely.

To address this situation, branches should consider alternative procedures for conducting nominations and elections. For example, nominations could be submitted by mail or through video teleconferencing using resources such as Zoom or Webex. Elections could be conducted by mail ballot or at designated polling places.

Branches can send President Rolando requests for dispensation to implement alternative election procedures. Such procedures must be consistent with the NALC Constitution and the NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures. For example, branches must ensure that an election committee is appointed and capable of supervising all aspects of the election, that all active and retired members have a reasonable opportunity to nominate candidates for any office, and that all active and retired members can vote by secret ballot. Branches must also have processes in place sufficient to accommodate observers.

A timely notice of nominations and election must be mailed to all members that accurately describes the alternative procedures. The notice must be mailed at least 10 days before nominations and at least 45 days before the election. If any branch needs advice or assistance in developing alternative nomination and elections procedures, a branch officer may contact Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner.

Alternative ways to conduct meetings

Many branches, state associations and regional offices have used various non-traditional ways to conduct meetings and communicate with members during the pandemic. Some are having meetings online while others are holding conference calls.

“It’s great that so many branches have been able to continue their monthly membership meetings in this manner,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “It has been reported that the meetings are well attended and have been conducted efficiently and effectively.”

NALC encourages branches to use this web-based technology, where possible, to conduct their monthly membership meetings through the pandemic.

Wearing face coverings during the heat of summer

Recently, it was reported that the Postal Service was testing the use of various materials and styles of face coverings that would be more comfortable during the summer months. The Postal Service is now in the process of ordering sufficient supplies of the face coverings preferred by the carriers from the test sites. Additionally, NALC is discussing the use of fans in the workplace as it relates to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations during the pandemic.

Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive to help feed communities

For the last 27 years, NALC has been proud to hold the Stamp Out Hunger food drive, the nation’s largest one-day food drive, on the second Saturday in May. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NALC wasn’t able to safely collect and distribute food in May this year. However, the union will schedule the 28th annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive when it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, “the need for food assistance is more urgent than ever and we want to give everyone the opportunity to continue to help meet that need,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

NALC is asking people to visit nalc.org/food to donate to a food bank in their community. On the site, they can find their state and click on a link to donate directly. All collections stay in the local community.



Complete Heat Injury Prevention Program

If you have not been given the opportunity to complete the 2020 Heat Injury Prevention Program (HIPP) at work, you are encouraged to talk to your NALC representative to make an inquiry as to when this training will be conducted at work and, if necessary, request that a grievance be filed.

The objective of this course is for participants to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat stress, first-aid treatments of heat-related illnesses, and preventive measures for minimizing heat stress. Employees working in hot environments will be required to take this training.

To complete the training, sign in to LiteBlue at your first opportunity and click on the integrated HR system—HERO—icon. From there, click on “My Learning” (top left of screen). At this point, it shows what is in the active queue. Change the selection criteria to “Completed” and it will list all of the courses that you have completed.

The training should take between 15 and 30 minutes, and is broken down into the following three sections: 1) Identifying risk factors, 2) Recognizing and treating heat-related illnesses, and 3) Taking preventive measures.

The employer is required to provide the training on the clock; however, if you have not received the training and wish to do so on your time, you can do so through LiteBlue.

“Do not risk a heat injury based on pressure to perform,” NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. said. “And if you’re injured, report the injury to the employer and fill out the injury report for your NALC team to follow up.”

Settlement reached in national-level Consolidated Casing grievance

On June 3, NALC and USPS settled a national-level grievance regarding the Postal Service’s unilateral testing of Consolidated Casing. This settlement, M-01923 in NALC’s Materials Reference System, requires that half of the 62 test sites must be returned to their original route structure by July 31. The remaining 31 test sites will continue through Nov. 27.

The joint task force established by the Memorandum of Understanding, Re: City Delivery Task Force will begin analyzing data from the test sites by July 20 to determine its application to future testing. Absent joint agreement by the parties to either continue the test or to jointly conduct alternative testing in these sites, the test sites will be returned to their original route structure by Jan. 22, 2021. Additionally, it is agreed there will be no further expansion of this Case Consolidation test.

The local parties will jointly work through the transition of returning routes in the test sites to their original structure. Assistance and guidance will be provided by the appropriate NALC national business agent and USPS area manager, labor relations or their designees.

Consolidated Casing sites to be restored to original route structure by July 31, 2020 pursuant to M-01923.

| AREA | DISTRICT | OFFICE |
|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| CAPITAL METRO | ATLANTA | OLD NATIONAL |
| CAPITAL METRO | GREATERS CAROLINA | ANDERSON |
| CAPITAL METRO | NORTHERN VIRGINIA | NORTH ARLINGTON |
| CAPITAL METRO | RICHMOND | SEAPINES |
| EASTERN | APPALACHIAN | PARKERSBURG |
| EASTERN | CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA | WILLIAMSPORT |
| EASTERN | KENTUCKIANA | MARTIN LUTHER KING JR |
| EASTERN | TENNESSEE | KINGSPORT |
| EASTERN | WESTERN NEW YORK | WEBSTER |
| GREAT LAKES | DETROIT | STRATHMOOR |
| GREAT LAKES | GR INDIANA | TERRE HAUTE |
| GREAT LAKES | LAKELAND | HAMPTON |
| NORTHEAST | ALBANY | NISKAYUNA |
| NORTHEAST | GREATERS BOSTON | TAUNTON |
| NORTHEAST | LONG ISLAND | PATCHOGUE |
| NORTHEAST | NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND | INDUSTRIAL PARK |
| NORTHEAST | NORTHERN NEW JERSEY | KILMER |
| PACIFIC | BAY-VALLEY | CAMPBELL |
| PACIFIC | LOS ANGELES | SUNSET |
| PACIFIC | SACRAMENTO | ROSEVILLE |
| PACIFIC | SAN DIEGO | RIVERSIDE |
| PACIFIC | SIERRA COASTAL | SHERMAN OAKS |
| SOUTHERN | ALABAMA | GADSDEN |
| SOUTHERN | ARKANSAS | ASHER |
| SOUTHERN | DALLAS | BEVERLY HILLS |
| SOUTHERN | FT WORTH | AMARILLO MPO |
| WESTERN | CENTRAL PLAINS | CHISOLM |
| WESTERN | COLORADO/WYOMING | WESTWOOD |
| WESTERN | HAWKEYE | BURLINGTON |
| WESTERN | PORTLAND | KENTON |
| WESTERN | SEATTLE | COLUMBIA |



USPS announces new ESAS delivery initiative test

In a letter dated July 16, the Postal Service informed NALC of a new delivery initiative test titled Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS). Rather than discuss this concept with NALC in the Joint City Delivery Task Force, USPS chose to test it unilaterally without NALC participation. USPS states that the purpose of this test is to determine if the Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) program can be enhanced to assist in reducing the morning office time for city letter carriers by enabling them to get on the street earlier. EPM is a longtime program established in Handbook M-39 and Handbook M-41 that involves casing non-preferential mail in the afternoon after completing street duties. USPS believes that its new version of this program will enhance customer service by providing more consistent delivery times. The test is scheduled to begin on July 25, 2020, and anticipated to continue for approximately 30 to 60 days in 384 selected sites. The list of test sites can be found on the NALC website.

This unilateral test of ESAS should not be confused with the EPM program outlined in the handbooks. EPM is a long-established program in which letter carriers normally case only preferential and time-value mail in the morning. The casing of non-preferential mail and markup work is done in the afternoon when the carrier returns from the route. This is designed to move the majority of carrier casing time to the afternoon. In an EPM office, city carriers would clock in, withdraw and case only preferential mail, obtain and process accountable items and small parcels and rolls (SPRs), pull-down, obtain parcels, load their vehicles, and leave for normal street delivery. After completion of street duties, city carriers would perform normal return-to-office functions and then begin casing all non-preferential mail. After all non-preferential mail has been cased, the mail will be left in the case until the next morning.

Several guidelines related to the EPM program are contained in Handbook M-39, Management of Delivery Services and Handbook M-41, City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities. These and other USPS handbooks can be found on the NALC website.

The ESAS initiative, as described, does not appear to conform to the handbook provisions contained in the M-39 and M-41 relating to EPM and other office activities. The ESAS test requires carriers to clock in, attend any service or safety talk, perform vehicle inspections, obtain accountable items, set up their scanner, retrieve the parcel hamper, line up the SPRs, and retrieve the mail cased and pulled down the previous afternoon. Instead of casing their SPRs, carriers will line them up in delivery order prior to pulling their hot case mail and then immediately clock to the street to load their vehicle and begin delivery. Under the test, there is to be no casing of mail in the morning. Letter carriers will withdraw hot case preferential flats and are expected to route them in order of delivery on the street. Upon returning to the office in the afternoon, carriers will complete the normal return-to-office duties. After completion of these duties, carriers will then case and pull down all mail distributed to the route in preparation for the next day's delivery.

As previously stated, this test, as communicated to NALC, is not fully compliant with Article 19 of the National Agreement related to the applicable handbook provisions. NALC representatives are discussing the issues we have with this initiative with USPS representatives at the headquarters level. Shop stewards and branch officers should monitor the test process, review applicable contractual and handbook provisions, and file appropriate grievances where contract violations occur. Please contact your national business agent's office for guidance, assistance and communication regarding the test.

New stimulus package expected to be introduced soon

There is rising support from Senate Republicans to pass another stimulus package, but it remains to be seen exactly how it will go. NALC is hopeful that the bipartisan and bicameral calls for immediate financial relief for USPS will be part of the conversation between House and Senate leadership, as well as the White House, when negotiations over the next relief package resume later this month.

NALC continues to lobby aggressively for direct financial relief, favorable loan terms and hazard pay for letter carriers. Letter carriers should continue contacting their senators to urge support for such funding in the next stimulus package. For more information on how to take action, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website. Letter carriers should also continue to encourage their family, friends and neighbors to do the same by visiting HeroesDelivering.com.

COVID-19-related MOUs extended until late September

By joint agreement (M-01924), several COVID-19-related memorandums of understanding have been further extended through Sept. 25. These memorandums include temporary expanded sick leave for dependent care (M-01910), temporary additional paid leave for city carrier assistants (CCAs) (M-01911), temporary use of the 7:01 rule (M-01913), temporary workplace changes to promote social distancing (M-01915) and temporary use of TCAs (M-01916).

NALC and the Postal Service also agreed to another temporary time-limit extension on Step B and arbitration appeals (M-01925), and an agreement giving local parties the ability to develop a sign-up process for full-time employees who previously did not, or could not, place their names on either the overtime-desired list or work-assignment list (M-01926). Both of these agreements will expire on Sept. 25 as well.

Also extended through Sept. 25 is a USPS memorandum (M-01914) that instructs managers and supervisors to allow liberal changes of schedule to accommodate employees who are dealing with child care issues related to the pandemic. The memorandum also provides for liberal sick leave usage for employees who are sick, as well as liberal annual leave and leave without pay to the extent operationally feasible, treats COVID-19-related leave as scheduled (as opposed to unscheduled) leave, and directs that leave taken for COVID-19-related reasons during this time not be cited in discipline for failing to maintain an assigned schedule.

Each of the MOUs and the USPS directive can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System at nalc.org/mrs.

Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive launched



To help fulfill the nutritional needs of the one in eight Americans who face food insecurity, including millions of children, older people and military veterans, NALC has launched a virtual food drive, the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive, to raise funds for food banks nationwide.

"As letter carriers in every neighborhood in the country six and seven days a week, we see the need and we cannot wait while food banks struggle, demand grows and people remain hungry," NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

"Each May, NALC's food drive has filled a gap between holiday food donations and the end of free meals in school during summer break," Rolando said. "This year, the economic crisis and the disruption in food donations have made our support even more important. With the right effort, letter carriers could extend this online food drive to help fulfill the needs of local food banks for many months to come."

By visiting nalc.org/food, donors can find a food bank in their area to support with an online donation. The site links directly to donation pages on each food bank's website.

As with the traditional Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, donations will stay in the communities of the donors.

Interest arbitration update

Absent reaching a tentative settlement on our collective-bargaining agreement, NALC is prepared to begin interest arbitration in late September. In the meantime, negotiations continue with the Postal Service in an attempt to reach a tentative agreement for the members to consider for ratification. In the event that these continued talks fail to result in a negotiated agreement, NALC is more than ready for the interest arbitration hearings.

USPS leadership changes

The Postal Service is in the midst of a massive change in leadership, consisting of a new postmaster general (PMG), a yet-to-be-appointed new deputy PMG, four relatively new governors and two brand-new governors who have yet to attend their first meeting of the postal Board of Governors. Initially, at a minimum, NALC expects there will be thorough reviews of postal finances, operations, human resources and marketing, as well as legislative, regulatory and legal matters.

On the operational front, NALC is aware that supervisors are conducting stand-up talks to all employees on initial transportation phases of an operational pivot plan based on some internal documents regarding cost reduction. None of these changes or plans were discussed with or explained to NALC. If history is any indication, management's implementation of any cost-savings plan will likely result in a high number of grievances addressing various contractual violations.

Face coverings

As previously reported, the Postal Service conducted a test regarding the use of various types of materials and styles to be used as face coverings during the hotter months. The styles tested were various bandanna-type masks, neck gaiters and even cooling masks. As a result of the input from carriers who participated in the tests, the Postal Service ordered three types of masks to be made available for purchase by local managers for letter carriers to use.

The three types of masks are all washable and reusable. There is a black cross-strap style, a blue neck-gaiter style and a grey adjustable-ear-loop style. The Postal Service has advised that the masks are available in every district, and that local managers should consult with their respective district office to order. Please contact your national business agent's office if there are problems with such orders.

USPS testing of temperature-measuring equipment

The Postal Service has completed its testing of temperature-measuring equipment and has identified a company that will provide technicians to conduct what they describe as highly accurate COVID-19 testing in postal facilities. As USPS decides if, when and where it would like to proceed with any such virus-related testing of employees, the national parties are discussing the necessary policies, procedures and protocols that would need to be agreed upon before any such testing and contact tracing could be implemented.

NALC Branch Challenge for MDA now underway

With the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult for branches to hold MDA fundraisers, in support of programs such as summer camps as well as medical research, NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson issued a branch Deliver the Cure challenge in July. She asked branches to create a virtual donation page to support NALC's 2020 campaign for MDA, and called on every letter carrier to give at least \$10 to MDA through his or her branch's donation page.

It's easy to create a fundraising page by going to mda.donordrive.com/event/nalc2020 and clicking "create a page." It's that simple. Donations are tracked by branch, with all fundraisers listed on the page.

"Canceling MDA events and camps is disappointing," Davidson said, "but letter carriers are creative, and they don't give up. I look forward to seeing the different ways, including online donor campaigns, that our branches devise to keep resources flowing to MDA in 2020 and to support its vital efforts."

With 25 branches registered, NALC has already raised \$139,500 toward the \$250,000 goal. The top branches for Week One are:

- New Jersey Merged Branch 38—\$3,150
- Pawtucket, RI Branch 55—\$1,475
- Grand Rapids, MI Branch 56—\$285
- Western Wayne Co. Merged, MI Branch 2184—\$280
- South Bend, IN Branch 330—\$210
- Newport, RI Branch 57—\$200
- Rochester, NY Branch 210—\$150
- Royal Oak, MI Branch 3126—\$145
- Cape Girardeau, MO Branch 1015—\$125
- Apopka, FL Branch 5192—\$100

Checks and offline gifts received in July can count toward the NALC Branch Challenge for MDA. Send in donations using the NALC Donation Allocation Form (below) to MDA, 161 N. Clark St., Suite 3550, Chicago, IL 60601.



NALC MDA Donation Allocation Form

- NALC Branch Number _____
- State Association _____
- Auxiliary _____

MDA District/City _____

MDA Contact/Staff _____

MDA Event Name/Event Type _____

MDA Event Date _____ Donation Amount _____

Donor Name _____

Please fill out and mail along with your MDA donation check to:

MDA
161 N. Clark Suite 3550
Chicago, IL 60601

National Association of Letter Carriers

100 Indiana Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001-2144
202-393-4695 | www.nalc.org

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NALC

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NALC addresses mail service issues

Letter carriers are angry, frustrated and embarrassed by the widespread reports of mail service delays. "We take great pride in serving our customers," NALC President Fredric Rolando said, "but a combination of ill-conceived USPS initiatives and misguided communications, combined with COVID-related staffing shortages, have resulted in delayed mail and non-delivery of routes throughout the country."

The Postal Service also has initiated other operational changes that have made the job of letter carriers more difficult and less efficient. To make matters worse, all of this has happened while letter carriers are dealing with the fear and anxiety of serving on the front lines during a deadly pandemic.

NALC receives daily reports from the field regarding delayed mail and undelivered routes. NALC provides this data to USPS headquarters, holding it accountable for identifying and correcting the source of the directives.

If and when letter carriers have instances of delayed mail and/or undelivered routes, they should inform an NALC branch representative or an NALC national business agent. NALC will continue communicating these service issues to USPS headquarters until they are resolved.

Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS) initiative terminated

In early August, NALC initiated a national-level grievance that has since been settled regarding the Postal Service's unilateral implementation of the delivery initiative test called Expedited Street/Afternoon Sortation (ESAS).

The ESAS initiative substantially alters the Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) process and other delivery practices and procedures outlined in *Handbook M-39* and *M-41*. These changes directly affect terms and conditions of employment of city letter carriers in violation of Article 19 of the National Agreement.

The implementation of this headquarters initiative, as well as many locally induced variations of this initiative, has been responsible for many of the instances of delayed preferential mail and non-delivery of routes, or portions of routes.

As a result of the grievance settlement, the parties agree that the ESAS pilot test is concluded and terminated as of Aug. 19. Additionally, any future modifications or alternate applications to the Expedited Preferential Mail (EPM) Delivery Program, as outlined in Section 144 of *Handbook M-39*, *Management of Delivery Services* and Sections 223, 450, and 924 of *Handbook M-41*, *City Delivery Carriers Duties and Responsibilities*, will be subject to discussion through the City Delivery Task Force. Furthermore, any grievance pending as of the date of this agreement at any step of the Dispute Resolution Process asserting the ESAS delivery initiative violated the collective-bargaining agreement will be closed.

The settlement (M-01927) can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System on the NALC website.

Sorting Equipment Rationalization (SER) halted

Another unilateral initiative is the Postal Service's implementation of what it calls Post Office Sortation Equipment Reconciliation (SER).

On July 31, USPS notified NALC of the SER initiative and characterized it as a "review," which would solicit "feedback" from employees. However, subsequent documentation showed that the Postal Service has instructed local management to reduce casing equipment and cell sizes, causing widespread violations of the handbooks and manuals while making casing more difficult and less efficient.

A national-level grievance has been filed on the SER initiative, and it was recently halted pending NALC's discussions with the Postal Service on the program.

Misguided park points directives should be reported

NALC has received reports in some parts of the country of management dictating that park-and-loop routes must be reconfigured so that there are no more than four park points on such routes. These appear to be misguided local directives, so if this is happening in your office, **please immediately notify your branch representative or your national business agent so that NALC can get it corrected.**

USPS institutes management restructure

The Postal Service is currently in the process of transitioning to a new organizational structure consisting of three separate operating sectors: Retail & Delivery, Logistics and Processing, and Commerce. The current field structure for processing and delivering the mail consists of 67 districts within seven areas that report to a headquarters chief operating officer (COO). Under the new structure, the delivery and retail sector will consist of 67 districts (for now) within four areas reporting to one headquarters COO, and the processing and logistics sector will consist of 12 divisions within two regions reporting to another headquarters COO.

"Regardless of the operational structure of the Postal Service, NALC will continue to prioritize safe and efficient work methods, good service to our customers, dignity and respect in the workplace, and contractual compliance," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "Regarding delivery operations, we hope we've seen the last of unilateral implementation of reckless initiatives, and we look forward to working with the new operations team in our joint task forces to accomplish our common goals."

Article 34 study

Pursuant to Article 34 notification to NALC, an outside company hired by the Postal Service recently began conducting a study of city carriers' office activities in about 36 sites. Its stated objective is to observe letter carrier office duties and to collect data to potentially develop new work methods or standards.

NALC sent a local or regional representative into each site prior to the study beginning to explain the study to the letter carriers and answer any questions. Once the data collection is complete, those representatives will return and obtain feedback from the carriers involved in the study.

NALC Headquarters will continue to monitor this test closely and exercise its rights as necessary in accordance with Article 34 of the National Agreement. Letter carriers are reminded to continue performing their duties as they normally do, and in accordance with *Handbook M-41* provisions.

This was one of several initiatives implemented by the former postal operations team, which chose to proceed unilaterally, rather than working with NALC through the joint City Delivery Task Force incorporated in the National Agreement. NALC is discussing with the Postal Service whether this unilateral study will be continued, and if so, how the data will be used.

Consolidated Casing Initiative (CCI) update

On June 3, NALC settled a national-level grievance regarding the Postal Service's unilateral testing of Consolidated Casing. This settlement, M-01923 in NALC's Materials Reference System, required that half of the 62 test sites be returned to their original route structure by July 31. The remaining 31 test sites will continue through Nov. 27.

While the consolidated casing has been terminated in the first 31 sites, about half of these sites were not returned to their original route structures and schedules, resulting in non-compliance grievances. Some of the non-compliant sites have been corrected, and NALC will continue to work with the new operations team to correct the rest.

For leave year 2021, maximum annual leave carryover amount increased

NALC and the Postal Service have agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that increases the maximum allowable annual leave carryover amounts outlined in the *Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM)*. For leave year 2021, regular work force career employees covered by the USPS-NALC National Agreement may carry over 520 hours of accumulated annual leave from leave year 2020 to leave year 2021. Normally, as defined in *ELM* 512.321(a.), bargaining unit employees have a maximum leave carryover of 440 hours.

This agreement does not modify any other provisions outlined in the *ELM*, including provisions for payment of accumulated leave. The MOU (M-01928) can be found in NALC's Materials Reference System on the NALC website.

Collective bargaining and interest arbitration update

NALC is prepared to begin the interest arbitration hearings for a new National Agreement. As the union has prepared for the proceedings, it also has continued the negotiations with the Postal Service in an effort to reach a tentative settlement. In just a few short weeks, NALC either will have a tentative agreement, or the union will begin the hearings, which are scheduled to start on Sept. 23.

COVID-19 testing

In NALC President Fredric Rolando's July 15 statement, he reported that the Postal Service had completed its testing of temperature-measuring equipment and identified a company that will provide technicians to conduct what it describes as highly accurate COVID-19 testing in postal facilities.

Since then, the parties have exchanged drafts regarding procedures and protocols for further proof-of-concept tests in a few USPS locations that would include both mandatory temperature measurements and voluntary on-site testing to help curb the spread of the virus.

Once an agreement has been made to do so, it is anticipated that testing of the concept will last for about 30 days.

Families First Coronavirus Response Act affects retirement and Thrift Savings Plan

NALC has received notification from the Postal Service that leave taken under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA) is not eligible for retirement and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) deductions. This is in accordance with guidance issued by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which oversees both benefits.

Those who have taken leave under the FFRCA will be issued refunds by the Postal Service for any retirement and TSP contributions, which will be reflected in the Oct. 2 paycheck.

Leave used under the FFRCA, known as Emergency Paid Sick Leave and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act Expansion, will not affect creditable service time toward retirement eligibility. This leave does not affect the high-3 average salary calculation used for an annuity computation. The annuity calculation for full-time career employees will not be affected.

However, use of FFRCA leave for part-time career employees will have an effect on annuity calculations. Annuities with a part-time career component are prorated based on the hours worked when compared to a full-time position. Leave taken under the FFRCA is not considered basic pay and will be treated similarly to periods of leave without pay (LWOP), which does not increase the total hours worked for the part-time component calculation. **NALC members may contact the NALC Retirement Department with questions regarding part-time career service.**

Carriers may change their election of FFRCA leave to a different type of leave (such as sick or annual) to keep their retirement and TSP contributions. To avoid a refund, all requests must be entered in AdjustPay before Sept. 11. All TSP-eligible employees may change their TSP election at any time during the year.

The FFRCA will expire Dec. 31, and any unused leave will be forfeited.

Election mail task force formed

On Aug. 18, NALC President Fredric Rolando announced that NALC will begin working with the Postal Service in a joint labor-management task force to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus with regard to handling of election mail.

Formation of the task force comes as a result of President Rolando's initial meeting with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, where he suggested the creation of a joint labor-management task force to meet these specific challenges and work together in response to the public health crisis that is expected to dramatically expand the role of mail voting during the upcoming national election.

Meetings of the joint task force on election mail will begin the week of Sept. 7. The task force will work to establish messaging and protocols ahead of the election to ensure the expedited handling of all political and election mail, particularly for mailed-out ballots, and to assure the public and our election board partners that they can rely on the Postal Service to deliver exceptional service.

Vote-by-mail fact sheet available

NALC has created a new fact sheet called "The 2020 General Election: America Can Count on the U.S. Postal Service." In the fact sheet, the union explains such things as USPS's history and its role in voting by mail, the capacity to deliver the anticipated high volume of ballots, the well-established protocols in place regarding election mail, as well as why the public can feel confident that their ballots will be handled in a safe and secure manner.

The fact sheet can be found on the "Legislative Activities" page of the "Government Affairs" section of the NALC website.

Legislative update

There has been no meaningful progress in negotiations between House and Senate leadership and the White House regarding financial relief for the Postal Service in a new stimulus package. Last month, the House of Representatives passed the Delivering for America Act, a stand-alone postal bill that would provide \$25 billion in direct financial relief to the Postal Service and ensure that no changes in service can be made that would result in delays during the pandemic.

The previously passed Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act from the House and the Senate's Postal Service Emergency Assistance Act were both explained in the previous edition of the *NALC Bulletin*.

Whether the negotiations materialize into a stand-alone postal bill or a broad stimulus bill, NALC will continue to lobby aggressively for direct financial relief, favorable loan terms and hazard pay.

For more information on how to take action, please visit the "Government Affairs" page on the NALC website, and continue to encourage your family, friends and neighbors to do the same by visiting HeroesDelivering.com.

To support its lobbying efforts, NALC commissioned a poll in May on the importance of and funding of the Postal Service during the pandemic. The results of that poll clearly showed that a broad sample of Americans overwhelmingly support both the Postal Service and its direct funding through an appropriation.

In July, NALC again commissioned North Star Opinion Research and Hart Research Associates to survey 1,200 registered voters aged 60 or above across the nation, with 25 percent being veterans. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed support federal financial assistance for the Postal Service in the next stimulus; the figure is 90 percent among veterans.

Both groups, furthermore, overwhelmingly say that their votes in the fall election will be strongly influenced by whether their elected representatives help provide the Postal Service with the same support provided to other sectors of the economy. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed said they would be less likely to vote for lawmakers who oppose federal support for USPS, a figure that rises to 70 percent among veterans.

Ninety-six percent of the voters polled, including 99 percent of the veterans, 97 percent of those in rural communities, and 94 percent of those registered as Republicans, indicated that the Postal Service is important to their lives and well-being.

USPS in a media storm

The Postal Service finds itself at the center of the media universe, and at the crossroads of politics, election planning and legislative maneuvering. The current state and future of the Postal Service have the attention of the entire nation, as public support for protecting the level of service they rely on and securing its financial health continues to grow.

"The bottom line is that the country highly values our services in normal times, yet with the upcoming election and the new world pandemic, the American people need their Postal Service more than ever," NALC President Fredric Rolando said. "The recent lapses in service have placed legitimate fears in the minds of the public regarding the Postal Service's ability to deliver what they need, when they need it."

So amidst the media storm, NALC will continue to directly focus on what it is doing internally and externally to keep letter carriers as safe as possible through the pandemic, to restore service disrupted by misguided directives and initiatives that have caused delays and non-delivery, to prioritize our commitment to successfully handle the increased volume of mail ballots and restore the public's confidence in USPS's ability to do so, and to secure the pandemic-related appropriations from Congress.

"At this point in time, using the media to effect change would be a last resort," Rolando said.

Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive continues

NALC launched a virtual food drive, the Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive, to raise funds for food banks nationwide until it is safe to conduct the food drive.

By visiting nalc.org/food, donors can find a food bank in their area to support with an online donation. The site links directly to donation pages on each food bank's website.

As with the traditional Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, donations will stay in the communities of the donors.

NALC September Branch Challenge for MDA now underway

With the COVID-19 pandemic making it difficult for branches to hold MDA fundraisers, in support of programs such as summer camps as well as medical research, NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson issued a branch Deliver the Cure challenge in September. She asked branches to create a virtual donation page to support NALC's 2020 campaign for MDA, and called on every letter carrier to give at least \$10 to MDA through the branch's donation page.

It's easy to create a fundraising page by going to mda.donordrive.com/event/nalc2020 and clicking "Create a page." Donations are tracked by branch, with all fundraisers listed on the page.

"Canceling MDA events and camps is disappointing," Davidson said, "but letter carriers are creative, and they don't give up. I look forward to seeing the different ways, including online donor campaigns, that our branches devise to keep resources flowing to MDA in 2020 and to support its vital efforts."

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NALC

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Bulletin

NALC, USPS reach tentative National Agreement

Nolan interest arbitration proceeding suspended pending ratification vote

The National Association of Letter Carriers and the U.S. Postal Service have reached tentative agreement on a new 44-month national labor agreement, covering approximately 205,000 active city letter carriers across the United States. The agreement emerged after several months of continuous bargaining sessions, even as the parties pursued a resolution through an interest arbitration conducted via video link with a three-member panel chaired by Arbitrator Dennis Nolan. The Nolan proceeding has been suspended pending the results of a membership ratification vote.

The tentative agreement provides four annual general wage increases and seven cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). In addition, effective Nov. 19, 2022, a new top step (Step P) will be added to the career letter carrier pay scales, which will be \$444 annually greater than Step O. The agreement also provides for the automatic conversion of city carrier assistants (CCAs) to career status no later than after 24 months of relative standing, providing full fringe benefits and peace of mind to non-career carriers. It also maintains existing protections against subcontracting and layoffs.

NALC President Fredric Rolando issued the following statement after the NALC Executive Council unanimously recommended approval of the tentative settlement:

"I'd like to thank all the officers and staff—as well as our counterparts in postal management—who worked so hard to reach this tentative National Agreement. As I have reported repeatedly over the past several months, NALC followed a dual-track approach to achieve a new contract with both ongoing negotiations and the presentation of the best possible case for our proposals in interest arbitration. That we have done. I am proud of the case and the evidence we amassed in the interest arbitration proceeding up to this point, but I am even more pleased that letter carriers will get to decide whether or not to accept this tentative agreement in a ratification vote, following the procedure outlined in the *NALC Constitution*. The Executive Council unanimously recommends ratification of this contract."

The major features of the contract are summarized below. Full details about the tentative agreement, along with projected pay charts, other contractual changes, and information about new and amended memorandums of understanding (MOUs), will be presented in the December issue of *The Postal Record*. They will also be distributed through the union's electronic platforms in the days to come.

In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we are still discussing how to conduct a virtual rap session on the new contract and the mechanics for safely convening a ballot committee to oversee a contract ratification vote in compliance with the *NALC Constitution*. We will use all of our communication channels in the days and weeks ahead to inform the membership as we work out the details.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS HIGHLIGHTS OF TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

2019-2023 NATIONAL AGREEMENT

Contract term

The 2019 National Agreement will last 44 months, covering the period Sept. 20, 2019, to May 20, 2023.

General wage increases

All letter carriers, career and non-career alike, will receive four wage increases under Article 9 as follows:

- 1.1 percent effective Nov. 23, 2019, paid retroactively.
- 1.1 percent effective Nov. 21, 2020, paid retroactively.
- 1.3 percent effective Nov. 20, 2021.
- 1.3 percent effective Nov. 19, 2022.

CCAs will receive additional wage increases of 1 percent on these four dates for a total of: 2.1 percent on Nov. 23, 2019 (paid retroactively); 2.1 percent on Nov. 21, 2020 (paid retroactively); 2.3 percent on Nov. 20, 2021; and 2.3 percent on Nov. 19, 2022. These additional 1 percent increases will be paid in lieu of COLAs for CCAs.

Cost-of-living adjustments for career letter carriers

All career letter carriers will receive seven COLAs based on changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) using the existing COLA formula and the July 2019 CPI-W as the base month. The first two will be paid retroactively:

- The first COLA will be \$166 annually effective Feb. 29, 2020, paid retroactively.
- The second COLA will be \$188 annually effective Aug. 29, 2020, paid retroactively.

The remaining five will be paid in the future as follows:

- The third COLA will be effective March 2021.
- The fourth COLA will be effective September 2021.
- The fifth COLA will be effective March 2022.
- The sixth COLA will be effective September 2022.
- The seventh COLA will be effective March 2023.

The COLAs will be applied to the two pay tables for career city carriers in the same manner used in the 2016 National Agreement.

Wage schedule changes

The contract provides for the addition of a new top step to Tables One and Two on Nov. 19, 2022. The new career Step P will be \$444 annually greater than Step O. Carriers with at least 46 weeks in Step O on Nov. 19, 2022, will advance to Step P. Those with fewer than 46 weeks will advance to Step P upon reaching 46 weeks in Step O.

Effective June 19, 2021, the CCA Step CC hourly pay rate (currently \$17.29) will be eliminated, and CCA Step BB and its higher pay rate (currently \$17.79) will become the new entry step for newly hired CCAs.

A new PTF Step AA, with a waiting period of 46 weeks to PTF Step A, has been created as the starting wage for CCAs converted to career under the new 24-month automatic conversion. The hourly pay of PTF Step AA will equal the hourly pay of Full-time Regular Step A.

New 24-month automatic conversion of CCAs to career status

While the Postal Service will maintain additional CCAs afforded to it under the Sunday package formula mutually agreed to during the previous contract, all CCAs in every size office who would have otherwise continued as non-career employees after 24 months of relative standing will now be automatically converted to career status. Those CCAs who have reached 24 months of relative standing without being converted to career will be converted to part-time flexibles and placed in a new PTF Step AA in Table Two. The Step AA hourly rate will equal the Full-time Step A hourly rate, and the waiting period in PTF Step AA to PTF Step A will be 46 weeks. Upon conversion to full time, regardless of the PTF step they are currently in, PTFs will be placed in the full-time step commensurate with their number of weeks as a PTF, and retain their time credit toward the next step.

Recently retired letter carriers

Letter carriers who have retired over the last several months will receive applicable retroactive general wage increases and COLAs. The Office of Personnel Management will also make any annuity adjustments made necessary by the retroactive increases.

Health insurance

In 2020 and 2021, there is no reduction in the Postal Service's share of premium costs for career letter carriers' health insurance (73 percent of the weighted average Federal Employees Health Benefits [FEHB] Program plan premium, capped at 76 percent of any given plan's premium). The Postal Service's share will decline by 1 percentage point to 72 percent in 2022 and 2023, and will be capped at 75 percent of any given plan's premium. The biweekly impact of this Article 21 change will depend on which plans carriers enroll in, but will, in any case, represent a small fraction of the biweekly pay increases provided by Article 9 of the tentative agreement.

On health insurance for CCAs, the tentative contract maintains the Postal Service's biweekly contribution of \$125 toward self-only coverage in the USPS Non-career Health Plan for Plan Years 2020 and 2021. For CCAs who wish to select self-plus-one or self-and-family coverage under the USPS plan, the first-year contribution by USPS will be 65 percent in Plan Years 2020 and 2021, rising to 75 percent in their second year of service. However, effective in Plan Year 2022, the Postal Service will contribute 75 percent of the premiums for self only, self plus one or self plus family, regardless of the year of employment.

Uniform allowance

Increase in uniform allowance on May 21, 2021, to \$487 (5 percent increase from current rate) and on May 21, 2022, to \$499 (another 2.5 percent increase). Additional allowance credits for newly eligible employees have been increased by the same percentages.

Job security protections for letter carriers

The no-layoff clause that protects letter carriers after six years of service as career employees is retained in the tentative agreement, as well as the prohibitions against contracting out city carrier work.

Another option for full-time letter carriers who work their holiday

Article 11, Sections 3 and 4 have been modified to now allow full-time employees who work their holiday to elect to have their annual leave balance credited with up to eight hours of annual leave in lieu of receiving holiday pay.

Other notable MOUs

The new contract updated, revised and combined several MOUs, continued dozens of others, and added several new MOUs on a variety of topics. Among the most notable new MOUs are:

MOU Re: Qualifying period—exception for City Carrier Assistants—CCAs with a minimum of 90 days of service prior to conversion to career status without a break in service are exempt from the Ninety-Day Qualifying Period in *ELM* 512.313. Previously, all newly converted employees, regardless of time in service, were required to complete 90 days of employment as a career employee prior to being allowed to take annual leave.

MOU Re: Managed Service Point Scans—No later than 60 days from the ratification date of the 2019 collective-bargaining agreement, Managed Service Points (MSPs) will be removed from the street delivery portions of city letter carrier routes.

MOU Re: City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force—This renamed MOU modifies the MOU Re: City Delivery Task Force and expands the role of the task force for the purposes of jointly seeking methods to improve the cultural and operational environment in city delivery offices.

MOU Re: City Carrier Uniform Task Force—Establishes a national-level task force to improve the efficiency and accessibility of the uniform program and to improving the overall quality of available uniform items in a cost-effective manner. The task force will also explore ways to incorporate improved materials and uniform designs into the uniform program while continuing to supply city carriers with sufficient uniform items.

Finally, of special interest to NALC branch leaders, the contract set the dates for local MOU negotiations:

MOU RE: Local Implementation—The local implementation period will be April 29, 2021, to May 28, 2021.

Look for updates on the NALC Member App and visit nalc.org for further information on the new contract and the ratification process. A more detailed summary of the contract will be provided in the December issue of *The Postal Record*.

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