Letter carriers in Phase 1b of COVID-19 vaccinations

The 117th Congress convened on Jan. 3, and while it will be spending much of January configuring operations, leadership, committee assignments and priorities for this Congress, it also will work responsibly for responding to the needs of Americans, as COVID-19 cases spike and relief and recovery needs remain pressing.

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Ratification ballot deadline pushed back until March 1

Beginning on Jan. 11, every active letter carrier eligible to vote in the contract ratification election was mailed a copy of the proposed 2019-2023 National Agreement between NALC and USPS. Mailing of ballots was completed on Jan. 20. Included in the mailing is a letter from NALC President Fredric Rolando, a summary of the contract’s provisions, a ballot and secrecy envelope, a return envelope and instructions for casting a vote.

The original deadline for a ballot to be received and counted was Feb. 16. Due to issues with receiving ballots in several locations, this deadline has been extended to March 1.

NALC encourages all members to mail in ballots as soon as possible after receiving them. If you are eligible to vote on the proposed agreement and have not received a ballot by Feb. 2, call NALC Headquarters at 202-662-2836 (9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Eastern Time) no later than Feb. 5 to request a replacement ballot. A replacement ballot will be mailed after your eligibility is verified.

The general wage increases, in combination with the additional COLAs, will raise starting wage rates for most CCAs from $17.29 per hour to $19.33 per hour annually effective February 29, 2020.

The first full COLA will be paid in November 2020, the second in November 2021, the third in August 2022, the fourth in August 2023, the fifth in March 2022, the sixth in September 2022, and the seventh in August 2023. CCAs will receive increments in the following month for each COLA.

In addition, career city carriers will receive a 2.1% COLA for each of the first three years of the agreement, with a 1.3% COLA for the fourth and fifth years. Career letter carriers will receive seven COLAs.

Retroactive (Back-pay) Provisions

A full back-pay calculation for all letter carriers (career and non-career alike) covering all paid hours since the expiration of the 2016-2019 contract will be made as soon as practicable. These back-pay calculations will include the Nov. 23, 2019 and Nov. 21, 2020 general wage increases (plus the 1 percent additional increase for CCAs on June 29, 2020, and 0.6 percent increase for non-career employees on Oct. 11, 2020), the 2.3% COLAs, and any back-pay due to career status for carriers who are still CCAs after 24 months.

The hourly pay of PTF Step AA will equal the hourly pay of CCA Step CC, which will be effective in November 2022.

The hourly pay of career Step O will equal $188, and the Step P will be $444. Effective Nov. 19, 2022, the Step O will be $220, and the Step P will be $475. Effective Nov. 19, 2022, and retroactive to Nov. 19, 2020, career Step O will be $220, and the Step P will be $475.

All city letter carriers will receive the following general wage increases:

- 2.1% COLA in November 2020
- 2.2% COLA in August 2021
- 2.3% COLA in August 2022
- 2.4% COLA in August 2023

Modifications to the Counter Service Pay Schedule (for Step II, Step III, and Step IV)

On November 21, 2020, and retroactive to November 19, 2020, the Step II, Step III, and Step IV will be increased by 20 cents an hour.

The hourly pay of Carrier Assistants will be increased by 1.3%:

- Step AA will be $13.97
- Step BB will be $16.82
- Step CC will be $16.82

The pay of Step AA, BB, and CC was increased by 0.6% on Oct. 11, 2020.

Election Changes

Elections and the eligibility to vote in elections are a primary benefit of membership. It is the responsibility of each active letter carrier and non-career letter carrier to maintain their eligibility to vote in elections by providing NALC with updated information. This includes providing your name, branch number, and address. Your failure at any time to maintain your eligibility to vote in elections may result in your denial of your vote in an election. Your role in maintaining your eligibility to vote in elections is important for the future of letter carriers and NALC.

Your vote is a powerful tool that can make a real difference in your safety, compensation, and the other benefits you receive as a member of NALC. Thank you for your membership.

In Solidarity,
Fredric V. Rolando, President
Ratification update

On March 9, the National Committee approved the renewal of the ratification deadlines for the proposed 2024-26 National Agreement between NALC and USPS. The original deadline of a 120-day period to ratify or reject the National Agreement expired, and the National Agreement remains in effect until a new agreement is ratified.

On recent NALC initiatives:

• The National Office is developing an app to assist with the processing of letters and the delivery of mail.

• A branch has requested information on how to contact USPS to discuss potential changes to the delivery process.

• NALC is working on a project to improve communication with USPS on service disruptions.

• The National Office is exploring the possibility of providing training materials for branch presidents.

White House announces postal ballot on governors nominations

On Feb. 28, the White House issued a press release announcing plans to nominate Andrew Wheeler, former acting administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, as governor of the United States Postal Service. The announcement comes after President Biden signed an executive order to restructure the Postal Service, which had been under the control of the U.S. Postal Service since its establishment in 1792.

According to the executive order, Wheeler will serve as the temporary head of the Postal Service until the Senate confirms a permanent replacement. The order also calls for a review of the Postal Service's governance structure and operations, including the establishment of a board of directors and the possible creation of a federal task force.

“Andrew Wheeler is a dedicated public servant with extensive experience in federal government and transportation,” said President Biden in a statement. “He understands the critical role that the Postal Service plays in our democracy, and his appointment will ensure that the Postal Service is focused on providing quality service to all Americans.”

The appointment of Wheeler has been met with mixed reactions from industry experts and unions alike. Some have praised the move, citing Wheeler's background in transportation and government leadership, while others have expressed concern over his lack of experience in the postal industry.

The Senate is expected to consider Wheeler's nomination in the coming weeks. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) will be monitoring the process and will provide updates as they become available.

NACL March Branch Challenge for MDA now underway

With the COVID-19 pandemic still lingering, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) have renewed their partnership to help raise funds for the MDA’s mission to find treatments and cures for neuromuscular diseases. The challenge is a five-week relay-style fundraiser that will run from March 15 to April 19, with a new daily challenge every week.

The goal of the challenge is to raise as much money as possible to support the MDA’s research and patient services programs. NALC members are encouraged to participate by setting goals and encouraging others to support them.

The MDA is a nonprofit organization that funds research, care, and community programs for people affected by neuromuscular diseases, including Duchenne muscular dystrophy, myotonic dystrophy, and spinal muscular atrophy. The MDA’s mission is to find a cure and live a life without limits.

VIRTUAL TRAINING: March 15-19

NALC Branch Officers Training

On March 15, NALC will host a virtual training session for branch officers. The training will cover various topics, including the National Agreement, the reporting requirements under the law, and how to balance the budget.

• Tuesday, March 15: Introduction to the National Agreement (Length: 2 hours)
• Wednesday, March 16: Membership & Dues (Length: 2 hours)
• Thursday, March 17: Reporting & Compliance (Length: 2 hours)
• Friday, March 18: Branch Operations (Length: 3 hours)
• Saturday, March 19: Budgeting (Length: 2 hours)

All class schedules are on Eastern Time.

To register for the training, NALC members should contact their Home Office or login to NALCMember.com. Please note that registration is required for all sessions.

For more information on the MDA March Branch Challenge, visit mda.donordrive.com/participant/nalcmdagiftbags. For more information on NALC Branch Officers Training, visit mda.donordrive.com/participant/TEAMNALCToughMudder. For more information on the NGDV contract, visit mda.donordrive.com/event/nalc2021.
The active membership of the National Association of Letter Carriers has overwhelmingly ratified the tentative 2019-2023 National Agreement with the United States Postal Service. NALC has officially notified USPS of the March 8 ratification date. More than 94 percent of participating eligible members voted to accept the tentative agreement that was announced on Nov. 25. The vote to ratify was 60,111 to accept the agreement versus 3,341 to reject it, as reported by NALC Ballot Committee Chairman Delano Wilson of Silver Spring, MD Branch 2611. The 15-member Ballot Committee monitored and observed the dispatch, receipt and tabulation of the ratification ballots conducted by an independent company, MOSAIC of Cheverly, MD.

The breakdown of the vote by NALC’s 15 regions is below.

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,111</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,341</strong></td>
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Information on back pay and the implementation of the new contract will be released as soon as possible.

Establishment of a positive work environment/culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect June 8, 2021

The non-renewal legislation adds two new “workplace” categories.

• The re-employment of workers who were laid off or furloughed because of a lack of business
  for the Postal Service or President Bidens actions to slow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic;
  and

• Workers who were laid off or furloughed due to a pandemic caused by a public health emergency,
  and who were rehired after 10 or more days of non-employment.

While the presidents guidance had a positive effect on furloughed employees, it also had a

positive effect on the Postal Service by reducing its workforce. The Postal Service is now

able to focus on providing essential services to its customers, including mail delivery and
government transactions.

The non-renewal legislation also includes a provision that will allow workers to receive

additional unemployment benefits if they are laid off or furloughed due to a pandemic caused by a

public health emergency. This will help to ensure that workers who are affected by the pandemic are

able to receive the support they need to get through this difficult time.

The legislation is a welcome development, and it is important that Congress continue to

work on issues related to the pandemic, including providing support for workers and essential

services.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the non-renewal legislation is a positive step forward in addressing the

challenges faced by workers and essential services during the pandemic. It is important that Congress

continue to work on issues related to the pandemic, including providing support for workers and essential

services.
NALC Retention Pilot Program Starts

NALC and the Postal Service have launched a joint pilot program designed to improve the experience of newly hired letter carriers and to prompt more new carriers to stick with the job.

Many city carrier assistants (CCAs) and part-time flexibles (PTFs) from 100 offices got at least 75 hours, physical work and stress learning curve take their toll. Unfortunately, too many new hires quit within a few months. The experience is not only an unpleasant way to start the job as a carrier, it’s a waste of time and resources when new hires leave.

The pilot program began in May in the main office pool in Warren, MI, and in the West Side Willie station in Milwaukee. The program involves variations to the new and modified parts of the National Agreement that will be offered in a total of 10 offices. It is scheduled to run for about a year.

This joint program has the potential to ensure that new carriers start their jobs on the right foot and stay long enough to enjoy the rewards of caring for the mail,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “It’s a win-win.”

Under the program, new carriers receive the orientation and materials they need to succeed, with a workbook we have created.

Virtual Branch Officers’ Training offered

NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine has announced that additional modified Branch Officers Training on several topics will be held virtually July 25, Aug. 8 and Aug. 22.

Branch presidents and state officers may register branch officers and state officers for the training through the branch and state presidents’ Members Only page. The registration directions are on nalc.org.

To allow for multiple branches and state associations to participate, registration will be limited to two officers per branch and state association per session.

The following sessions are included in the training, which kicked off July 7 with the first round of classes:

- Auditing Branch Records—This session is for treasurers and will teach how to perform a complete audit.
  Length: 2.0 hours—This session will be offered July 25 and Aug. 22.
- Payroll and lost time issues, questions you should be asking—This session covers the cros and outs of payroll.
  Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be held virtually July 25, Aug. 8 and Aug. 22.
- Cybersecurity—This session explores the exposures branches may have regarding cybersecurity risks. Common cybersecurity will be discussed, as well as what your branch can do to protect itself from becoming a victim.
  Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be held virtually July 25, Aug. 8 and Aug. 22.
- Constitution and bylaws—This session covers what is required in branch bylaws and common errors, including covering the process for amending Procedures.
  Length: 2.0 hours—This session will be offered July 25 and Aug. 22.
- Elections—This session covers election rules and regulations, branch Election Section Procedures.
  Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be offered July 25, Aug. 8 and Aug. 22.
- Branch policies, taking minutes, notification and meeting are “legalese”—This session identifies policies that every branch should have in place, maintaining accurate and complete minutes, required notifications and the proper way to make them, and will cover the responsibility for branch presidents/vice presidents that go along with signing certain documents.
  Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be offered July 25, Aug. 8 and Aug. 22.

2021 Doherty and Donelon Scholarships

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the announcement of the winners for the 2021 Doherty and Donelon scholarships has been delayed.

The Scholarship Committee, comprised of Sonja Luenamer, Director, MI Branch; K. Meline Lucas, Dallas, TX Branch 122; and twisting gimmick, Buffalo, NY Branch 9, will work with a committee to judge the applications, then prepare them for the judges, as many applicants are having difficulty obtaining the necessary transcripts and recommend letters from their schools.

NALC is working directly with the applicants to obtain the outstanding documentation so that the Scholarship Committee judges and candidates can perform their work and announce the winners as soon as they are able.
Back pay and COLA update

Most eligible city letter carriers have received retroactive pay pursuant to the 2020 National Agreement in their Aug. 20 paycheck. Back pay for 244 letter carriers required manual calculations. Those calculations should be completed during the pay period and retroactive pay reimbursed on the next paycheck.

Back pay is calculated as full pay between Nov. 25, 2019 (the date of the first wage increase in the agreement and Section 213.13.1) and the day before new pay rates were implemented, as explained at nalc.org/news/rate-updates/new-pay-rates-replaced. The following pay increases will be included in the retroactive pay from the effective date indicated for each:

For Carrier grades:

- 1.5% general wage increase, effective Nov. 25, 2019
- $166 cost-of-living adjustment, effective Feb. 29, 2020
- 1.0 percent general wage increase, effective Nov. 25, 2019

Note: Colawiners receive the additional 0.1 percent increase referenced above in lieu of cost-of-living adjustments, pursuant to Article 2 of the National Agreement.

For city letter carriers:

- 1.5% general wage increase and additional 1.0 percent increase, effective Nov. 25, 2019
- $166 cost-of-living adjustment, effective Feb. 29, 2020

Note: Colawiners receive the additional 0.1 percent increase referenced above in lieu of cost-of-living adjustments, pursuant to Article 2 of the National Agreement.

Fourth COLA is $1,934

The fourth regular cost-of-living adjustment under the 2020 National Agreement will be $1,934, equally for letter carriers in Table 1 and a bit of Table 2. Cost-of-living increases are paid proportionally to city carriers in Table 2, in accordance with Article 5.5 of the National Agreement. This adjustment will be effective Aug. 28 and reflected in paychecks dated Aug. 28.

COLA will receive additional 0.1 percent increase effective Nov. 20, 2020, and Nov. 13, 2021, in lieu of cost-of-living adjustments, pursuant to Article 5.5 of the National Agreement.

The new payrates can be seen in the latest letter carrier pay schedule below.

Congress returns to work on postal reform

With the House of Representatives and the Senate back from August recess, we expect Congress to pick up where it left off on the Postal Service Reform Act (H.R. 7347-1200).

H.R. 7347 advanced to full committee at the end of July, with hearings held in the House Oversight and Reform Committee. In the Senate, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has yet to consider S. 1205, with hearings expected in Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in the coming weeks. These hearings will provide Congress with an opportunity to examine the proposed legislation and receive testimony from relevant stakeholders.

The U.S. Postal Service is facing significant financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to a decrease in mail volume and an increase in operating costs. The situation has raised questions about the financial sustainability of the Postal Service and the need for reform.

The House-passed legislation, known as the Postal Service Reform Act (H.R. 7347), contains provisions that would address some of these challenges, including a consideration of a smaller rate of change in the Rural Carrier Pay Hike (RCPH) and a provision that would allow for the authority to issue corporate bonds to fund needed capital improvements.

The Senate-passed version, known as the Postal Service Reform Act (S. 1205), includes provisions that would provide additional funding to the Postal Service, including a provision that would allow for the authority to issue corporate bonds to fund needed capital improvements.

House passes budget bill, maintains six-day mail delivery


The bill includes a provision that would prohibit the U.S. Postal Service from requiring employees to wear masks or face coverings, a provision that was included in a previous version of the bill but was struck down by the Supreme Court.

The House-passed bill also includes additional provisions that would protect the rights of workers, including a provision that would allow for the authority to issue corporate bonds to fund needed capital improvements.

Senate passes budget resolution, paving way for massive infrastructure investments

In what is being described as a significant victory for infrastructure advocates, the Senate has passed a budget resolution that would set the stage for a massive infrastructure bill. The bill would include investments in transporta

Postal Service revises face covering policy

On Aug. 25, the Postal Service revised its policy on face coverings, reversing the policy that was in place prior to July. The change is the result of an agreement to meet the concerns of those who are eligible for the vaccine to get vaccinated. Under new guidelines, postal employees and contractors must continue to follow state and local guidelines for when to wear a face covering, unless applying the new guidance.

The guidelines do not apply to adherence by independent agencies such as the Postal Service, however, the administration strongly encouraged independent agencies to comply.

Subsequently, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) released its guidance to all vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees to wear face coverings in indoor settings with a substantial or high level of community transmission (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19). As of Aug. 26, 2020, at the time of writing, NALC will not change its guidance to reflect changes made by the Postal Service when applying the new guidance.

We continue to have discussions with Postal Service representatives about incorporating elements of the Senatefloor legislation to build a consensus that incorporates all non-vaccinated and vaccinated employees, including those who are eligible for the vaccine to get vaccinated. Under new guidelines, postal employees and contractors must continue to follow state and local guidelines for when to wear a face covering, unless applying the new guidance.

The guidelines do not apply to adherence by independent agencies such as the Postal Service, however, the administration strongly encouraged independent agencies to comply.

Subsequently, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) released its guidance to all vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees to wear face coverings in indoor settings with a substantial or high level of community transmission (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19). As of Aug. 26, 2020, at the time of writing, NALC will not change its guidance to reflect changes made by the Postal Service when applying the new guidance.
City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force updates

NALC continued its work on the task force established by the NALC Board of Governors on July 29. The task force includes President Michael Kubayanda (S. 1905), Director of Operations Ed Rosenthal, Director of City Delivery and Workplace Efficiency Ed Vickers, and NALC Assistant General Counsel Alina Malewicz. The task force will meet the third Wednesday of every month to discuss ongoing and upcoming projects. The next meeting is scheduled for June 22.

The task force will conduct a series of forums to gather feedback from local NALC locals. Each locale will have a public meeting and a forum specifically for employees. The task force will also conduct visits to many locations. This subcommittee has continued to do deep dives into the staffing issues in a number of installations around the country.

The bill also includes measures to improve election integrity through the protection of election records, infrastructure, and poll worker training. Overall, S. 2747 is a scaled-back, narrower voting rights package than the For the People Act (H.R. 1/S. 1), which calls on Congress to ensure that the United States Postal Service should take appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.

Congress funds government, raises debt limit through Dec. 3; negotiations continue on other priorities

The House of Representatives and the Senate passed legislation to fund the government and increase the country’s debt limit through December 3rd. Both chambers passed a continuing resolution on Oct. 14, to fund the government until December 3, 2021. President Biden signed the legislation on Oct. 14.

The Senate passed a continuing resolution on Oct. 14 as well. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said earlier that the legislation would fund the government until mid-December and increase the debt ceiling.

The Senate legislation included a provision to fund the Postal Service through Dec. 3. House Democrats are planning to pass a supplemental funding bill to provide funds to the Postal Service for fiscal year 2022.

NALC Health Benefits Fund, NALC-Foremost Partnership

It is important to note that certain NALC-Foremost plans will continue to be offered to eligible retirees. The NALC-Foremost partnership provides an opportunity for eligible retirees to continue the coverage they had while employed under the NALC-Foremost plans.

In addition to this, the plan has not changed in terms of its benefits. However, the plan has undergone a change in the way premiums are collected. This change is expected to result in a slight increase in the premium cost for eligible retirees.

Update on NALC priority bills/resolutions

NALC remains focused on working with Congress to pass key bills of legislation that affect letter carriers. A number of key bills were introduced in the 117th Congress and are awaiting action. The Australian Pharmacists’ Association (APA) recently submitted a submission to the Department of Health and Ageing in Australia on the proposed change in the way the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is funded.

The Australian Pharmacists Association represents over 10,000 community pharmacists in Australia. The organization expressed concern about the proposed changes to the PBS funding model.

The drug’s approval is based on the results of a clinical trial that showed a significant improvement in survival rates for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancer who were treated with the new drug compared to those given a standard treatment.

The drug, known as Atezolizumab, is designed to target and deactivate a protein, called PD-L1, which is expressed by cancer cells and helps them to escape the immune system. By blocking this protein, the new drug can help the body’s immune system recognize and attack cancer cells.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the drug in June 2017, and it has since been approved in more than 40 countries around the world.

The drug is given as an infusion, typically at a dose of 1,200 milligrams every three weeks. It is usually well tolerated, but some patients may experience side effects such as fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, and skin rash.

The drug’s approval is a significant milestone in the ongoing battle against cancer. It is estimated that non-small cell lung cancer, the most common type of lung cancer, accounts for about one out of every two lung cancer deaths worldwide.

The approval comes three years after the drug entered clinical trials, and it is expected to help millions of patients around the world.

Other recent approvals include the drug pembrolizumab, which was approved in 2018 for the treatment of melanoma, a type of skin cancer.

The approval of atezolizumab highlights the progress that has been made in recent years in developing targeted therapies for cancer.

While the approval of atezolizumab is a significant step forward, there is still much work to be done to develop safe and effective treatments for all types of cancer. Continued investment in research and development is crucial to ensuring that patients have access to the latest and most promising treatments.