

Virtual conference for deaf and hard-of-hearing members to be held

NALC Director of Safety and Health Manuel L. Peralta Jr. and Director of Retired Members Dan Toth have announced a virtual conference for deaf and hard-of-hearing members to be held Sunday, Aug. 8, at 2 p.m. Eastern time.

This conference will consist of a training on Management Instruction EL-670-2021-x, Providing Communication Accommodations to Employees and Applicants Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, as well as a brief overview of other relevant contractual provisions regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing accommodations.

Accommodations

The conference will use certified American Sign Language interpreters as well as closed captioning. The conference will run approximately two hours.

Branch officers and shop stewards

In addition to any deaf or hard-of-hearing members who wish to attend, branch officers and shop stewards who represent deaf or hard-of-hearing members are encouraged to join. To register, follow the instructions below.

Registration

Registration opened on July 12 and will close the day of the conference, Aug. 8. To register, go to nalc.org and click on the Members Only portal button in the upper right-hand corner. Once logged on to the Members Only portal, click the “Meetings Registration” button, which will display a list of upcoming meetings. From there, select the “Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference” and submit your registration information. Branch and state presidents also can register their members by logging on to the Members Only portal and then clicking the “Meetings Registration” button, which will display a list of upcoming meetings. From there, presidents can register members by entering their last names in the “Search” box and selecting the correct members from the drop-down list. A member also can be removed from the “Registry” list by checking the box under the delete column next to the corresponding member.

Training materials

Training materials and other pertinent information will be supplied in the form of PDFs. Access to these documents is available during the registration process. These PDFs also will be available to registrants on their Members Only page. The documents can be printed, copied or saved.

Accessing meeting information and joining the meeting

When a registered member wants to access training materials or join the conference, he or she can go to nalc.org and log on to the Members Only portal. Once logged in, the member will press the “Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference” button. For each meeting, there will be three buttons: The “Documents” button, which will give the member access to the training materials; the “Topics” button, which will give the member access to a list of topics (if any); and the “Join” button. The “Join” button will appear 30 minutes prior to the start time on the day of the meeting.

If you log on to the Members Only portal more than 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting, you will need to exit to the home page and re-enter to access the “Join” button.

Once you select the “Join” button, you will be taken to a Webex portal titled “Starting your meeting...” Scroll down to select “Join from your browser.” When joining, the member will be prompted to enter his or her name and email address to attend the meeting. Proceed by selecting the “Next” button followed by the “Join Meeting” button.

Self-identification

Those who identify as deaf or hard of hearing can self-identify by going to the NALC website at nalc.org, clicking on the Members Only portal in the upper right-hand corner, and logging in. From there, you can simply check the appropriate box if you would like to be identified as deaf or hard of hearing. Doing so will let NALC know who you are and which branch you belong to, for the purpose of providing services and help when needed.

NALC Health Benefit Plan Seminar update

Despite our efforts to host an in-person event, as a Health Benefit Plan, our primary concern must be to ensure all necessary steps are taken to protect the health and wellbeing of our members. So, we are excited to announce:

The NALC Health Benefit Plan is going virtual for the 35th National Health Benefit Plan Seminar.

Save the date for Oct. 17-18.

Although the details have not been finalized, the staff at the Plan is diligently working on preparations for this two-day event to include innovative classes, exciting Plan updates, keynote speakers, vendor presentations and much more.

This will be a free event available to all health benefit representatives and other branch officers enrolled in the Plan. Registration information and event details will be announced as soon as they become available.

Although this will be a new experience for everyone, we are confident that this is not an event you will want to miss. Mark your calendars today.

NALC March 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 and medical research, NALC Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson issued a branch Deliver the Cure challenge for July. She asked branches to create a virtual donation page to support NALC’s 2021 campaign for MDA, and called on every letter carrier to give at least \$5 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/nalc2021 and clicking “create a page.” Donations are tracked by branch, with all fundraisers listed on the page.

Here are other parts of the 2021 MDA campaign:

MDA Virtual Walk—Aug. 7

mda.donordrive.com/team/TEAMNALCVIRTUALWALK

Join Team NALC for the 2021 Tough Mudder 5K

mda.donordrive.com/participant/TEAMNALCTough-Mudder

NALC MDA gift bags on sale for \$100 each

mda.donordrive.com/participant/nalcmdagiftbags

NALC-MDA poker chips on sale for \$2 each

mda.donordrive.com/participant/NALC-MDAPokerChips

“I look forward to seeing the different ways, including online donor campaigns, that our branches devise to keep resources flowing to MDA in 2021 and to support its vital efforts,” Vela Davidson said.

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 on nalc.org/mda to MDA, 161 N. Clark St., Suite 3550, Chicago, IL 60601. Also, please send a copy of the allocation form and checks to Headquarters for your records.

NALC Donor Drive

A reminder for NALC branches for 2021: NALC Headquarters is matching every contribution from the branch’s treasury to an approved 501(c)(3) local food bank. Headquarters will match that donation to that same local food bank. Please mail proof of branch donations (copy of branch check and food bank receipt) and information on the food bank to: Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, c/o NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

CCA retention pilot program started

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) find the job tough at first—the long hours, physical work and steep 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 post office in Warren, MI, and in the West Milwaukee station in Milwaukee. The program involves various new and modified practices for all CCAs and PTFs in these offices. It is scheduled to run for about a year.

The pilot program focuses on improving the experience of new carriers from Day One. Designed together by NALC and USPS, it includes a variety of improvements, such as a structured welcome, better training, limits on work hours during the carrier’s first six weeks on the job, more consistent route assignment and availability of necessary supplies and information needed to do the job.

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

Under the program, new carriers receive the attention and materials they need for success, with a welcome checklist for supervisors to use to assure that all bases are covered. On their first day, carriers are handed a welcome package—a satchel with items inside such as a USPS cap, vest, water bottle and dog spray.

Before their Carrier Academy training concludes, new carriers will receive information such as the address of their employing office where they are scheduled to report, and the proper shoes and clothing to wear for their first days on the route. The pilot includes a Day One office tour introducing the new employee to the station, to other employees, and to union representatives. The new carriers will receive essential information such as how to contact supervisors or stewards as well as the location of safety and other employee bulletin boards and emergency exits.

“The goal of the pilot program is to give new carriers what they need to succeed and to feel welcome,” Rolando said.

The program includes additional help for CCAs as they ease into the job. After completion of Carrier Academy and On-the Job Instruction, the pilot program encourages stability in route assignments with gradual increases in workload to help promote confidence in the new employee. The program ensures that once the new carrier is out delivering a route alone, both a steward and a supervisor will check on the CCA on a regular basis. The pilot program also restricts new carriers to working only in their employing office for the first four weeks following completion of Carrier Academy.

A new carrier’s weekly hours will be capped at eight hours a day and 40 hours a week for the first two weeks, and 10 hours a day and 56 hours a week for the next two weeks, followed by a limit of 11.5 hours a day and 60 hours a week.

The pilot program also assures that CCAs receive frequent check-ins to track their success and provide help when they need it, including ensuring that they receive the required evaluations at 30, 60 and 80 days into the job. During these progress reviews, management will identify opportunities for improvement, offer constructive feedback,

and consider whether additional training could benefit the new carrier.

Throughout the pilot program, CCAs will be asked for feedback, including through surveys, to evaluate the program’s effectiveness.

High turnover among CCAs has been an ongoing concern since the CCA position was created in 2013. As part of negotiations for the 2019-2023 National Agreement, NALC and USPS agreed to form a joint City Delivery and Workplace Improvement Task Force, with a renewed commitment to improving the experience and retention of newly hired CCAs as part of its agenda.

A subcommittee of the task force composed of NALC and USPS representatives studied the issue. It relied heavily on input from CCAs about their initial experience joining USPS, gathered through several focus groups.

Using this information, the subcommittee developed the pilot program and agreed in a memorandum of understanding (MOU Re: New Employee Experience and Retention Program) to test it. For a detailed explanation of everything the pilot program entails, see M-01949 in NALC’s Materials Reference System in the “Resources” section of the NALC website or at nalc.org/mrs.

“In the long run, the pilot program is part of an effort to improve the overall culture at USPS,” Rolando said.

“Letter carriers, especially new CCAs, need to know that the Postal Service gives them room for work-life balance and respects them,” he added. “This collaborative effort is a great first step in transforming USPS for the benefit of both the Service and its employees.”

Several provisions in the new National Agreement improve the status of all CCAs, Rolando noted, including removal of the lowest pay step to boost their starting pay, an increase in the employer contribution for health care benefits and a guarantee of conversion to career status within 24 months of their hire date.

“We can all do our part to help our new carriers—who are the future of our union, after all—by supporting them as they join our ranks,” Rolando said. “Let’s welcome newly hired carriers and give them a helping hand.”

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 presidents 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 11 with the first round of classes:

Auditing Branch Records—This session is for trustees and will teach how to perform a complete audit.

Length: 2.0 hours—This session will be offered again on Aug. 8.

Payroll and lost time issues, questions you should be asking – This session covers the ins and outs of payroll.

Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be offered again on Aug. 8.

Cybersecurity—This session explores the exposure branches may have regarding cybersecurity risks. Common cybercrimes 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 offered again on Aug. 8.

Constitution and bylaws—This session covers what is required in branch bylaws and common errors, including covering the process for amending bylaws.

Length: 2.0 hours—This session will be offered July 25 and Aug. 22.

Branch elections—This session covers the *NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures*.

Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be offered July 25 and Aug. 22.

Branch policies, taking minutes, notifications and what am I signing?—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 goes along with signing certain documents.

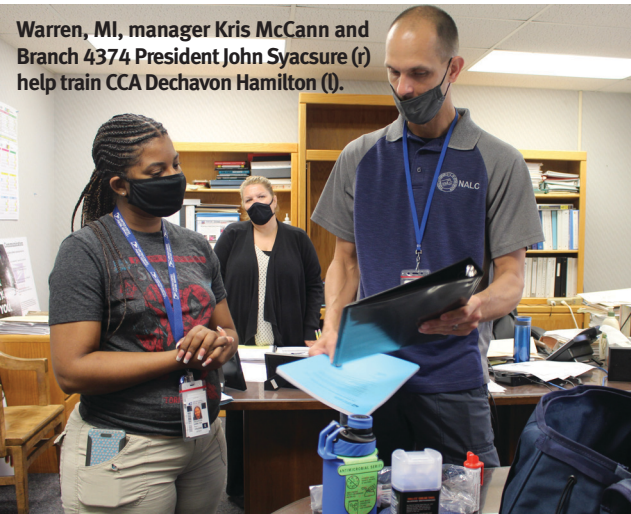
Length: 1.5 hours—This session will be offered July 25 and Aug. 22.

2021 Doherty and Donelon Scholarships selection delayed

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

The Scholarship Committee, composed of Sandy Laemmel, Detroit, MI Branch 1; Kimetra Lewis, Dallas, TX Branch 132; and Lawrence Kania, Buffalo-Western New York Branch 3, has not yet been able to review the applications to prepare them for the judges, as many applicants are having difficulty obtaining the necessary transcripts and recommendation letters from their schools.

NALC Headquarters is working diligently with the applicants to obtain the outstanding documentation so that the Scholarship Committee and judges can perform their work and announce the winners as soon as they are able.



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