

# Organize, organize, organize



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**A**t every level of our organization, the key to our overall success is to have a strong membership. As a union, we need to do everything in our power to organize every letter carrier. Our current percentage of the active career membership is 93.1 percent organized, which is very good. The organized percentage for city carrier assistants (CCAs) is currently at 78 percent—this is a number we would like to improve on. Our overall percentage is 90.7 percent.

From the Headquarters level down, every officer has been asked to assist with working to organize every non-member. How can you help us with getting other letter carriers who are not currently members

to join? You will find that there are many reasons why someone will not belong. Every one of our members can play an important role in increasing our overall membership.

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**“A strong union is important to protect what we have and help guide where our future will take us.”**

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You are a precious asset to us for organizing. Being a member, you are best suited to talk with a non-member and approach them to explain why you belong to the union. You can deal with any fears that a non-member may have about joining. Listen to what they say and reassure them. Show respect if they have a different opinion. Talk about things that you have experienced or seen over the years and explain what occurred. Be positive in your approach. I'm sure you recall when you first started and someone helped guide you. Try to include a CCA who is a member in the conversation.

**Arbitrator Das outlined several things involving CCAs** in his arbitration decision. He decided that there would be the new category of CCA, a position that would have a career path to becoming a full-time career letter carrier. Explain some of the history about the transitional employee (TE) position, which was to end in 2011, and that there was no career path for TEs.

One of the issues that we hear as a reason for not joining the union is the lower hourly wage. The lower hourly wage isn't something that the union wanted either. Arbitrator

Das set the wages in the arbitration decision. He also gave CCAs six contract raises during the term of the National Agreement, totaling 7 percent. This is not something that is normally done. Many CCAs across the country have already achieved becoming full-time. With that come all the benefits and the salary of being a full-time career letter carrier.

Another thing that should be noted is how hard the union has been working for the CCAs. There is an NALC booklet that defines the CCAs' rights and benefits, and it can be found on the NALC website. In addition, the NALC has signed numerous memos, all in the effort of assisting CCAs in becoming career letter carriers.

**Our history is something that every new letter carrier** should hear about. By no means did the salary and benefits that we have today come as gifts from the USPS. It was through hard-fought battles in arbitration and/or agreements between the parties. Without a strong union, we would not have what we have. The Great Postal Strike in 1970 set the path for the improvements that we have today.

Other reasons you may hear as to why someone may not belong is that the dues are too high, or that we support the wrong candidates for elected offices, or they don't like a specific union person. The dues are determined by the membership. Our dues are fair compared to other unions. In regard to what candidates we support for elected offices, the NALC supports candidates who support letter carrier issues and who are looking to preserve the United States Postal Service. You have to take care of what protects the membership. Electing the right people to office is critical.

In regard to a carrier being uncomfortable with someone as a union leader, inform them that there are different levels within our union. It starts with the shop steward on the workroom floor. Then there is the branch leadership, state leadership, national business agents, and finally NALC Headquarters. There is always someone they can talk with about issues. Reassure the non-member that he or she can talk with someone.

If non-members still say they are not interested, keep your line of communication open with them for future conversations. Don't get frustrated. There may be a day when they recognize that the union is in their best interest and they decide to join.

**Naturally, our ultimate goal is to be 100 percent organized.** With both the union leadership and our membership helping, we can achieve great things. A strong union is important to protect what we have and help guide where our future will take us.

Having a strong membership base aids in our struggles to preserve the Postal Service and six-day delivery, which is challenging, but with a strong membership, we can overcome any obstacle. Thanks for your help.