

Important updates



**Timothy C.
O'Malley**

Our carrier participation level in Customer Connect is actually down from the same period last year, which was 23,979. Currently, the number of carriers participating in the program is 18,338. That's a 30.76 percent reduction. Our target for 2014 is to boost that number to 58,812.

To reach our goal, I would like to ask everyone to get involved. Remember, our participation helps all letter carriers. The Customer Connect program helps replace lost revenue from the diversion of first-class mail with priority mail and parcels. The fact that our members are the most trusted government workers gives us the edge when dealing with our customers. Your relationships with the customers can surely work in our favor when discussing the advantages of using USPS for all their mailing needs. Regardless of whether it is a business or someone who works from home, you can have a conversation with him or her about using our services.

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Leadership Academy

We are now accepting applications for the 2015 classes of the Leadership Academy. Applications must be received by Aug. 31. NALC President Fredric Rolando encourages any interested NALC member to submit an application. Those selected will be notified by mail in October. You can download an application from the NALC website.

The application form has two main parts, one for the applicant and one for the mentor. A good mentor is someone who displays leadership skills and is willing and able to spend a significant amount of time interacting regularly with the student while providing guidance and encouragement.

The mentor also should be in a position to provide time and venues for the student to practice the skills he or she has been building at the Academy. The mentor should be available to observe a mentee's work and to provide appropriate feedback and critique. Branch presidents or other branch officers are often good choices for mentors.

Each leadership class consists of three separate weeks of instruction on a variety of subjects. Class 19 is set for Jan. 11-16, March 22-27 and May 31-June 5. Class 20 is scheduled for July 26-31, Sept. 27-Oct. 2 and Dec. 6-11.

Upon selection, students will be advised of the exact dates they will need to be available for each class. Classes will be held at the Conference Center at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, MD, near BWI-Marshall Airport outside Baltimore.

Students are required to complete outside learning projects upon returning home following Weeks 1 and 2, and after graduation the students will spend a fourth week working in their national business agent's office. Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other costs involved with attending the Academy and working in the business agent's office are paid by the NALC.

Below are excerpts from letters to the future Class 18 by some of the recent graduates of Class 17:

Welcome! I hope you're ready, because you are about to go on the wildest ride of your professional life. This academy will be a rollercoaster of highs, lows and everywhere in between. You will be pushed to the limits of your abilities, then asked to go further. If you're feeling a little uneasy about the whole thing, good...you should be. This whole experience is about getting outside of your comfort zone, and changing the way you approach situations as it pertains to the good work you do for our union (don't capitalize 'union,' writing tips...you'll learn).

—Michael J. Masters, Rochester, NY Branch 210

In this class you will meet many people that will push you. These people will not only be the instructors and national officers, but your peers in class and at home. Remember that they sent you here to come back and be the best you can be, so don't waste their time, trust and money. Also, remember that the person who has to push the hardest will be you, and don't give yourself a break because you will regret it.

—Jonathan Brackett, Sanford, ME Branch 1448

The most worthwhile experience that I have had at the Leadership Academy was the relationship that I have fostered with all of my classmates. The people that you will be with for these three weeks will be invaluable. They form a very supportive bond around the class unlike any that you find in the post office. They represent some of the most motivated and determined leaders of this union. It has been a pleasure to get to know each and every one of these classmates. I hope that you can relish the talent that you will be enveloped in from the first week. This relationship will shelter you in the hard times and lift you higher in the better times.

—Lisa Childs, Colorado Springs, CO Branch 204

As you can see from this sampling of graduates of Class 17, they really loved attending the Leadership Academy. These same statements from other classmates are echoed by each class. Sign up today!