

Leadership Academy 2016— apply now!



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We are now accepting applications for the 2016 NALC Leadership Academy, which is open to all active NALC members, including CCAs. Application forms are available on the NALC website at nalc.org. Click on the “Member Benefits” tab and select “Education” from the dropdown menu. Click on the “written application form available here” in the text. The form is fillable online and can be saved or printed. Those who have applied previously but were not selected must reapply to be considered.

The application form has two main parts, one for the applicant to complete and one for the mentor. The applicant’s portion requests

contact information, union positions held and any other experience, skills or knowledge the applicant may want to list. Applicants must complete a 300- to 500-word essay explaining their interest in the Leadership Academy and qualifications to participate in it. The second part is to be completed by a mentor chosen by the applicant.

The mentor must provide a written recommendation explaining how long they have known the applicant, why they believe the applicant should be accepted to the Leadership Academy and their sense of the applicant’s leadership potential. The form also has a statement of mutual commitment, which the mentor and applicant must sign.

Working with a good mentor is one of the most important components for a student to have a successful Leadership Academy experience. For this reason, applicants are encouraged to choose their mentors carefully. Generally, a good mentor would be someone with exceptional leadership skills who is willing to spend a significant amount of time interacting with the student while providing guidance and encouragement. A mentor should also be in a position to provide the opportunities and venues for the student to practice the skills they have learned at the Academy and be available to observe the student’s work and provide appropriate feedback.

The Leadership Academy consists of three week-long sessions held over a five-month period at the Maritime Institute near Baltimore. After graduation, the students will spend a fourth week working in their respective national business agent’s office. In between the three weeks of classroom sessions at the Academy, students are required to complete outside learning projects and submit a written report about it. Each project report is edited and critiqued by Headquarters staff writers.

The Academy curriculum is designed to both develop

and enhance the knowledge and skills that are essential for NALC leaders. In addition to the Leadership Academy staff, each of the resident national officers, as well as dozens of headquarters staff, help teach at the Academy, providing students with the NALC’s top experts in each field. Although adjustments are sometimes necessary due to the demanding schedules of the resident officers, the subjects are generally presented as follows:

Week 1: Building effective unions, leadership approaches, leadership self-assessment, labor and NALC history, NALC bargaining history, how adults learn, learning styles, teaching techniques, preparing a teaching outline, *NALC Constitution* and bylaws, running effective meetings and committees, and ethical decision-making. Students also are required to prepare and teach a 15-minute class.

Week 2: The legislative process, community services, grammar and writing skills, writing tools, clear and effective writing, computer resources, creating newsletters, communication and active listening, workers’ compensation, Mutual Benefit Association, retirement programs, NALC Health Benefit Plan, public speaking for union leaders, and contract administration. Students also are required to give three speeches.

Week 3: NALC demographics and diversity, strategic planning, one-on-one campaigns, the Postal Service and the economy, negotiating techniques, LMRDA and reporting requirements, fiduciary duties of branch officers, branch record-keeping, NALC dues and membership, basic tax rules for local unions, city delivery programs, safety and health, recruiting union activists, developing and mentoring new leaders. Student groups also are required to develop a strategic plan to deal with specific problems in a branch and make a presentation of their plan.

This wide variety of subjects, along with the expertise of the instructors and the dedication of the students, has a synergistic effect where the total Leadership Academy experience is far greater than the sum of its parts. Academy graduates have already made a considerable impact on the NALC, as many have gone on to leadership positions at their branches as well as at the state, regional and national levels.

Upon selection, students will be advised of the exact dates they will need to be available for each class. Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other associated costs while attending the Academy and working in the business agent’s office are paid by the NALC.

Any active member who is interested in attending the Academy is encouraged to select a mentor and apply. Completed applications must be received at NALC Headquarters by Aug. 31. Confirmation of receipt of the application form at NALC Headquarters will be sent to the applicant. Two applicants from each of the 15 NALC regions will be chosen for each class. Those selected will be notified sometime in October.