

‘Advanced Formal Step A and Beyond’ training program



**Lew
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This follows my article from a few months ago regarding a new training program we will be offering to activists. We named it “Advanced Formal A and Beyond.” This training is for NALC activists who have some experience at Formal Step A. The focus of this program will be to teach each participant to look at every Formal Step A case file from an arbitration advocate’s point of view. This training will also sharpen your skills for enforcing the National Agreement at Formal Step A and give you the experience of what it is like to serve as a Step B representative.

There will be a lot of emphasis placed on handling situations where management fails to follow the grievance procedure as required by the National Agreement.

The following is a list of most of the topics that will be covered and the practice exercises that will be set up for the participants.

Grievance processing topics:

- Completing PS Form 8190
- Time limits
- Information/interview requests
- Conducting interviews
- Investigative interviews (pre-discipline)
- Documentation
- Organizing files
- Issue statements
- Undisputed facts
- Disputed facts and contentions
- Remedies
- Additions and corrections
- Appealing cases to Step B

Other topics:

- Effective writing
- Burden of proof
- Negotiating
- Writing settlements
- Article 16 (just cause)
- Article 8

Hands-on practice exercises:

- Presenting grievances at Formal Step A
- Writing Formal Step A grievances
- Using grievance starters
- Computer training—search, cut and paste, etc.

- Researching arbitration decisions
- Meeting at Step B
- Writing Step B decisions

We were hoping to offer this training beginning in the fall, but we had to delay scheduling the class based on the availability of the facility we are using.

The first class is scheduled for Jan. 10-15, 2016. There will be 80 participants selected to attend the first class. This class will begin on Sunday, Jan. 10, at 3:30 p.m. and end on Friday, Jan. 15, at noon. It will be held at the Maritime Institute just outside of Baltimore. This is a union facility that is located just minutes from the Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) airport. A free shuttle to and from the airport is available.

As previously reported, the expenses associated with attending this training will be absorbed either by the branches that decide to send a participant or by an individual participant. Room rates will be \$201 plus tax per night based on a five-night stay. This price includes all meals and refreshments during breaks each day. I can report that participants will find the food there to be good and plentiful.

Participants will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Application forms can be found on our website on the Contract Administration Unit page under “Workplace Issues.” Simply print the application form, fill it out and mail it back to me at NALC Headquarters if you are interested in attending the Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program. Once selected, participants will be notified by mail of their selection and provided further logistics details and payment deadline information.

The criteria needed for participants to attend this training are as follows:

1. Applicants must have some experience presenting grievances at the Formal Step A level of the grievance procedure.
2. Applicants must be able to bring a laptop computer that is *not* an Apple product.

We will be using computers a lot during this week of training and some of the applications we will be using are not compatible with Apple products, hence the restriction on Apple computers for this training program.

The number of additional classes that will be offered will be determined and scheduled based on the number of activists who send in an application to attend the Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program. Therefore, if you would like to attend this training but the dates of the first class will not work for you, go ahead and apply anyway.

In closing, it was great to see all of you who attended the rap session in Houston last month! Special thanks to those of you who attended and participated in my workshop.