

Legislative and political activism emphasized at network training



Letter carriers and Headquarters staff led full classes and breakout sessions over the course of three days.

In late October, NALC held a first-of-its-kind Letter Carrier Network Activist training, which brought together both seasoned activists and those new to the process. For the nearly 200 NALC members from every state in the nation attending the three days of intensive work, it was a chance for the union to provide training to those letter carriers who are doing critical legislative and political work in the field.

“NALC is committed to training and providing the resources necessary to be successful as NALC activists, whether that is as a steward, officer, advocate, etc., or in this case, part of our legislative and political network in the field,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said.

The training was held at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum Heights, MD, near Baltimore. It began with an ice-breaker mixer for attendees on the evening of Oct. 27 and ended on Oct. 30 with a chance for attendees to give feedback to help NALC fine-tune this training for potential future use. The activists,

who were assigned pre-training work to prepare, were divided into six groups, each containing a mix of knowledgeable veterans and energetic rookies, with the attendees often adding as much to the training as the headquarters staff. Breakout classes were taught by Legislative and Political Affairs staff as well as letter carriers who hold various positions within the union.

The training consisted of classes designed to boost individual skills and knowledge in an effort to make better use of available resources. Most attendees began their training learning about effective communications and one-on-one campaigns, helping activists communicate with other members and make individualized pitches for becoming involved, whether through contributing to the Letter Carrier Political Fund or taking part in other types of campaigns.

On the legislative front, all attendees received a modern civics review on how Congress is supposed to work compared with the reality.

This course explored why it's important to become involved and how to find and energize other carriers to get engaged. In the “Lobbying: Building and Maintaining Relationships” class, best practices on how to approach legislators and their staff members, and how to make sure we keep up those relationships even when there isn't an immediate need, were discussed. From there, attendees learned about internal mobilization—how to engage other letter carriers within the NALC to further our common goals.

Reaching beyond NALC's ranks was emphasized on





the second full day of training, with courses on external mobilization (finding, joining and influencing potential coalition groups, including the elderly, veterans, organized labor and more); on digital advocacy (using social media to persuade others); and on media engagement (how to get letter carriers' message out through mainstream media outlets such as newspapers, radio and television). Participants also took a course that

covered NALC's political clout and how to convince other carriers to contribute to the Letter Carrier Political Fund.

On the final day, attendees were tasked with planning their next courses of action, taking into account what they've learned and using it to formulate a plan for applying it in the field when they return home.

NALC has high hopes for these activists and for what they will do next.

"You are the backbone of our grassroots efforts," Rolando told them.

"As long as the future of the Postal Service, as well as the many benefits of active and retired letter carriers, are in the hands of Congress, we must maintain an effective and efficient network of legislative and political activists in every congressional district in the country," he said. **PR**

Rolando announces first-ever national CCA conference

NALC President Fredric Rolando has announced that the NALC will hold its first-ever national city carrier assistant (CCA) conference next month in St. Louis.

"Branch presidents around the country have expressed an interest in having branch activists attend more training," Rolando said, "and this conference provides an opportunity for branches to invest in our newest generation of NALC members."

The conference, which will take place Jan. 17-19, will include an abundance of information about the letter carrier job, CCA rights and benefits, and the transition involved in becoming a career letter carrier.

Additionally, Rolando said that the conference will provide a unique opportunity to solicit valuable input from our current and former CCAs on our objectives in the next round of bargaining for a new national agreement with the Postal Service.

There also will be discussions of the history of NALC and the non-ca-

reer workforce, as well as training on the many ways CCAs can get involved in the union.

"There is a role for everybody, whatever their interests," the president said. "In the years ahead, we will need new organizers, shop stewards, branch officers, legislative activists, MDA and food drive volunteers, and countless other activists."

Only letter carriers who have served as CCAs under the current National Agreement are eligible to attend, including current CCAs and those who have since been converted to full-time career status.

"Branches should consider sending members who have demonstrated a desire to be involved in branch activities," Rolando said.

A letter was mailed to branch presidents in November, asking them to submit the names of members they would like to send to the conference. **PR**



Top: NALC President Fredric Rolando welcomed the activists to the training on the first day.

Above: Attendees had the opportunity to practice what they learned through breakout sessions.

Below: Information on the Letter Carrier Political Fund was distributed at the training, and activists were encouraged to make the pitch when they returned to their branches.

