

# Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program update



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**A**s previously reported, the Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program is for NALC activists who have some experience at Formal Step A. The focus of this training 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 a feel for what it is like to serve as a Step B representative.

The first class scheduled for Jan. 10-15, 2016, is full. Letters have gone out to notify the first 80 activists who sent in applications that they were accepted. Upon receipt of

their payment, we will reserve rooms for them. We are going to wait until the participant list for the first class is finalized before sending notification letters to those who will be scheduled for the second and third classes.

We have received a total of 179 applications to attend this training thus far. Based on the interest shown, we have scheduled two more Advanced Formal A and Beyond training sessions next year. The dates are Sept. 18-23 and Oct. 16-21. All of you who have submitted applications thus far will have the opportunity to attend one of the scheduled training sessions. There is still room for more participants. If you are interested in attending but have not applied yet, please keep reading.

**There will be 80 participants in each class. Each class** will begin on Sunday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. and end on Friday at noon at the Maritime Institute just outside of Baltimore, MD. This is a union facility that is located just minutes from Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) airport. A free shuttle to and from the airport is available.

The expenses associated with attending this training will be absorbed by the branches that decide to send a participant (or by an individual participant). The cost for the week is \$1,097.45 for a single room and \$1,646.90 for a double room. This price includes room, tax, 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 this training. Once selected, participants will be

notified by mail of their selection and given further details about the class and payment deadline information.

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

- Applicants must have some experience presenting grievances at the Formal Step A level of the grievance procedure.
- 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 laptop computers for this training program.

There will be a significant amount 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; and appealing cases to Step B.

**Other topics:** effective writing, burden of proof, negotiating, writing settlements, Article 16 (Just Cause), and 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; and writing Step B decisions.

This training will be intense, and you should plan to work long hours, but I believe you will find it will be well worth the effort you put into it.

Once again, if you meet the criteria above and are interested in attending one of the Advanced Formal A and Beyond training sessions next year, there is still room for more participants. However, you should think about getting your application in as soon as possible.

**In closing, I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families a happy Thanksgiving!**