The new Branch Officers' Training

Nicole Rhine

For many years, the NALC has been conducting educational training sessions tailored to assist branch secretary-treasurers and other branch (and state) officers who are chiefly responsible for financial administration. The Secretary-Treasurer Seminar was intended primarily for officers who deal directly with branch finances.

The training covered the basics for financial officers: taxes; accounting systems and maintenance of proper controls; reporting to the Department of Labor; fiduciary duties under the Landrum-Griffin Act; bonding of branch officers; NALC dues; legal limits on certain types of union spending; and IRS reporting requirements.

Extremely important training, no doubt. But then we got to thinking—why not expand on this? From those thoughts came the creation of the new Branch Officers' Training.

The Branch Officers' Training is an expansion of the Secretary-Treasurer Seminars. The above-mentioned fiduciary training will still be included. What's been added are specialized sessions for branch presidents/vice presidents, recording secretaries, financial secretaries and trustees. Because of the expansion, the training will now be three and a half days long (previously it was two and a half days).

A preview of the new Branch Officers' Training was given by myself and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Judy Willoughby at the national rap session in Houston. The feedback from the attendees was great and we appreciated all of the comments we received.

While the first Branch Officers' Training will be held this month and the deadline for registration has already passed, we will be holding more trainings in the future—so stayed tuned.

Here's a preview of what sessions the new training includes:

- **Constitution and Bylaws—**This session will cover what is required in branch bylaws and common errors.
- **Ethics—**This session will assist branches in drafting and adopting a code of ethical practices and a conflict-of-interest policy.
- **DOL Reporting—**This session reviews the history of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act and how it impacts the activities of unions and union officers. Participants will learn about each title of the LMRDA and the reporting requirements under the law.
- **Preparing LM Forms and 990s—**Participants will get into the nitty-gritty about completing these required filings.
- **What Am I Signing?—**This session is for branch presidents/vice presidents and will cover the responsibility and legal exposure that goes along with signing certain documents.
- **Managing Branch Finances and Creating Transparency—**This session is designed to provide guidance on the day-to-day aspects of running the financial affairs of a branch.
- **Fiduciary Issues and Practices—**This session is designed to give participants practice applying what they learned in the "DOL Reporting" and "Constitution and Bylaws" segments.
- **Payroll and Wage Issues—**This session will cover the ins and outs of payroll.
- **Travel, Reimbursements and Per Diem—**This session is designed to help branches comply with the tricky IRS and DOL rules involved in travel payments.
- **Handling MDA Funds and PAC Funds—**This session will cover the rules for collecting and remitting these funds.
- **Internal Controls—**This session will cover the checks and balances called "internal controls."
- **Fraud Prevention and Detection—**This session is designed to identify the biggest risks of fraud and how branches can establish procedures to help prevent it.
- **Auditing Branch Records—**This session is for trustees and will teach how to ensure a complete audit.
- **What Policies Should Your Branch Have—**This session is designed to identify policies that every branch should have in place.
- **Questions You Should Be Asking as an Officer—**This session is focused on helping officers learn more about branch operations.
- **Running a Branch Meeting—**This session will focus on what makes a good meeting.
- **Why Minutes Matter—**This session will assist recording secretaries in maintaining accurate and complete minutes.
- **Member Notification Requirements—**This session will cover required notifications and the proper way to make them.
- **Electronic Recordkeeping—**This session will teach the proper way to keep electronic records consistent with DOL guidelines.
- **Branch Elections—**This session will cover best practices.
- **Membership Issus—**Participants will learn about dues and how to read a dues roster.
- **Planning and Budgeting—**What every branch should do to be fiscally responsible.