

Training opportunities in 2017



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Many of you will assume new roles after your branch's installation of officers ceremony takes place. As a result, some of you will take on a more active role in processing grievances. I'm going to use my space this month to report about some training opportunities we plan to offer in this area for 2017.

Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program

We held three sessions last year. According to the 238 participants who attended, this training is a really good product. Every participant who attended said they would recommend it to others. Therefore, we will offer three more

classes this year.

The dates for the 2017 Advanced Formal A and Beyond training sessions will be April 2-7, Sept. 17-22 and Oct. 22-27. The sessions will be held at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum Heights, MD, which is five minutes from Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) airport.

The total cost of food and lodging to attend one of NALC's Advanced Formal A and Beyond training sessions in 2017 will be \$1,124.40 (single occupancy) or, \$1,683.80 (double occupancy). This is for five nights at \$224.88 (single occupancy) or \$336.76 (double occupancy) per day. This rate includes your room and tax for five nights, all meals and refreshments during breaks each day. We will supply all the education materials you will need.

Based on our own observations and suggestions from previous participants, we made a few adjustments to this training program after each session. One suggestion we will implement, which came from several participants in our last session, is to offer an optional additional day of hands-on computer training for those who need/want to take advantage of it. The extra day of computer training will take place on Saturday afternoon/evening and Sunday morning. This is a good opportunity for those of you who want/need to learn more than you know now about using a computer. It will incur an additional night's stay, but I believe it will be worth it for many of you.

Each Advanced Formal A and Beyond training session class has 80 participants, so that gives us room for 240 participants again this year. Participants are selected from the applications we receive on a first-come, first-served basis. As of this writing, we have received a little more than 100 applications, so there are plenty of spots open if you

are interested in attending. I anticipate we will quickly fill up all three of our scheduled classes again this year. If you have an interest in attending, I would advise you to get your application in as soon as possible.

Applications are available at the NALC website. Simply go to nalc.org and click the tab called "Workplace Issues," then select "Contract Administration Unit" and click on "Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program." There are two versions of the application that can be printed. One is fillable electronically and the other can be filled out by hand. Either way, please complete the application and mail it back to me.

Once we receive your application, we will send you a preference sheet where you can choose which class you would like to attend. This process will continue until each class is full.

Branches that send participants to this training will receive an excellent return on their investment. Our goal with this training program is to help branches provide the best representation possible in the grievance procedure to our members. I do not think there is anything we do that is more important than that.

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Arbitration Advocate Training

We have trained 80 new arbitration advocates over the past two years. In fact, we just completed our fifth class last November. This is another intense training program that prepares new advocates for every facet of presenting grievances in arbitration.

Arbitration advocacy is not for everyone. It takes a lot of time and effort to be a successful advocate, but it is very rewarding. An arbitration advocate's reward cannot be seen or spent, but there is something about attaining justice for letter carriers from an arbitrator that makes all the time and effort you spend on a case well worth it.

We will be offering another arbitration advocate training class Nov. 12-18. One of the requirements you will need to be selected for this training opportunity is to have some experience serving as a witness and/or a technical assistant (TA) in at least a few arbitration hearings. That is why we are announcing the dates for this training so far in advance.

If you are interested in becoming an arbitration advocate, you should apply through your national business agent's office.