

A guide to submitting bylaw changes



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Article 15 of the NALC Constitution sets forth rules that branches and state associations must follow to approve a change in their bylaws. After the proposed bylaws have been approved by the branch or state association, the changes must be submitted to the Committee of Laws for approval.

Recently, NALC developed an electronic bylaw submission method accessed through the Members Only portal on the NALC website. This database will also begin the process of creating an electronic library of bylaw submissions and the resulting rulings by the Committee of Laws.

To access the bylaws database, branch and state association presidents can go to the NALC website and log on to the Members Only portal.

Click the “Bylaws” button, which will access the “Maintain Bylaws” page of the database. From there, bylaws can be created or amended and then submitted to the Committee of Laws for action. After the file has been successfully uploaded, a “File Uploaded Complete” verification will appear. Before submitting requests, please ensure that article and section identifiers are entered for the corresponding bylaw provision or proposed change, and the latest version of the bylaws is uploaded into the portal. A detailed PDF tutorial is available for download.

Once the Committee of Laws renders its decision, the portal will be updated. A hard copy of the committee’s decision also will be mailed to the address of record of the submitting branch or state association.

The new electronic bylaws submission database is intended to offer an alternative for submitting bylaw proposals for review by the Committee of Laws. Branches and state associations may continue to submit bylaw proposals by mail, by their choice. Regardless of the submission method, the historical library of bylaw submissions and corresponding decisions from the Committee of Laws will be available for view. Branches and state associations will not be able to view other branch or state association bylaw proposals, or those corresponding decisions from the Committee of Laws.

In addition to the electronic format, NALC will continue to make a form version available. The forms and instructions can be found on the NALC website. Once on the homepage, click “Union Administration,” and then click on the assistant secretary-treasurer page. There will be a link for branch bylaw changes. Click this link to find links for the bylaw form that NALC has made available. The PDF form is executable, allowing it to be completed online and printed out. A non-fillable version of the form also can be accessed by clicking the second form link. This version of the form can be printed and completed manu-

ally. Both forms can be used on any operating system (PC, Mac, Linux, etc.). To assist, there also is an instruction page.

If a very small font size is required to accommodate the required wording, please attach a separate sheet in a larger font to the form so it can be more easily read, or use multiple forms for the same section.

All parts of the form must be completed. Please make sure to include a contact phone number in case the Committee of Laws needs more information.

The exact wording of the prior language must be included, along with exact wording of the new language. A general description of the intended change is not adequate. If the prior language has been deleted, write “Deleted” in the new language box. If the proposed language is new, write “New” in the current language box. Submit the form along with two copies of your current bylaws. Then mail the forms and two copies of the current bylaws to: Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, NALC, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001-2144.

Once received, the bylaws are uploaded into the database, and previous correspondence from the Committee of Laws to the branch/state association is attached for review by the assistant secretary-treasurer, who makes a recommendation to the Committee of Laws. The current members of the Committee of Laws are Manuel L. Peralta Jr., Jim Yates and myself.

The Committee of Laws has three possible decisions that can be rendered when reviewing proposed changes. They are: “approved,” “approved with exception” and “in conflict with the *National Constitution*.”

“Approved with exception” means that the item listed as an exception is in conflict and not yet approved. In order to remedy the exception and amend the bylaws, the entire process must be completed again (submission, notification, voting and mailed to the Committee of Laws).

The Committee needs exact language for both the old and new language. Each section where there is a word change needs to be listed. If, for example, you are changing every reference from vice president to executive vice president, you must list each reference with the old and new language. (It is helpful if you bold only the new language changes.)

Provisions in bylaws may not be implemented without the approval of the Committee of Laws, pursuant to Article 15. Exceptions are bylaws fixing the amount of initiation fees, dues and reinstatement fees, or the time and place of meetings. They become effective at the time determined by the branch or state association. However, it is recommended that you send a copy to the committee so that we have a record of the change and so we can notify you of any problems that exist with the language. We hope that this information will assist branches and state associations when they are altering or rescinding bylaws.

On a final note, I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas and joyous holiday season!