

COVID-19 branch and state association administration



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During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges for state associations and branches in how business is transacted from convening meetings to conducting elections. NALC President Fredric V. Rolando, on behalf of the NALC Executive Council, offered a series of measures to state associations and branches in response to the coronavirus outbreak. These letters from President Rolando address several scenarios pertaining to overall administration. At the time these letters were being drafted, the continuation of the presence of the coronavirus was unknown, and I doubt anyone could have forecasted that the pandemic would not only survive 2020 but continue into 2021. As such, the letters

addressed events and provided relief extending only through calendar year 2020.

In my August 2020 *Postal Record* article, titled “Planning for upcoming elections,” I referenced the March 2020 letters, as well as a June 1 update specific to branch elections.

The first such letter dated March 11, 2020 – Re: Dispensation for branch and state events schedule changes due to coronavirus provided the following:

For any branch or state association that decides to postpone or cancel an event scheduled in calendar year 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak, and dictated by its by-laws, this letter will serve as dispensation to do so.

In a follow-up letter dated March 18, 2020 – Re: Extension of dispensation for all branch and state gatherings due to coronavirus, President Rolando, consistent with guidance provided by the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, provided in pertinent part the following as it pertains to nominations and elections:

Consistent with this guidance, Branches may postpone scheduled nominations and elections without requesting dispensation from the President to do so. Postponed nominations and elections should be rescheduled as expeditiously as possible...

State Associations may postpone scheduled nominations and elections until their next convention. Alternatively, State Associations, at their option, may permit delegates to nominate and elect officers by mail.

The full text of the referenced letters can be found in the “Latest news & updates” section under the News and Research tab on the NALC website.

Since the onset of the pandemic, many NALC branches and

state associations have adapted by utilizing alternative methods for conducting meetings and carrying out normal business. Branches have proven that, with a little ingenuity, business can be conducted in a manner reflective of the will of the membership and the NALC Constitution.

Realizing that the impact of the pandemic will continue well into calendar 2021, NALC President Fredric V. Rolando, on behalf of the NALC Executive Council, has offered a series of measures to state associations and branches in response to the coronavirus outbreak going forward for calendar year 2021.

In a letter dated Dec. 10, 2020 – Re: Dispensation for branch and state event schedule changes due to coronavirus, President Rolando provided the following regarding branch meetings for calendar year 2021:

In order to adhere to the requirement to hold monthly meetings, this letter constitutes dispensation for all branches to utilize alternative electronic meeting methods through calendar year 2021, such as video conferencing. Alternative electronic meeting methods may be used for approval of branch expenditures, deciding appeals, addressing merger proposals, amending By-laws, and conducting other routine branch business that doesn’t require secret voting. Alternative electronic meeting methods should include call in features to ensure all members are able to participate. In all instances, appropriate notification should be provided to the members.

The letter goes on to address nominations and elections:

Branches and state associations that have postponed nominations and elections that normally are conducted at in-person meetings should implement alternative procedures for conducting nominations and elections expeditiously. This letter constitutes dispensation to all branches and state associations to conduct nominations and balloting by mail. Branches must send appropriate and timely notice of the procedures to be followed in nominating and electing officers and delegates by mail to all active and retired members.

Branches and state associations may request dispensation from me to implement different procedures. Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner may be contacted for advice on using alternative methods of conducting nominations and elections.

The NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures provides a compliance roadmap to conducting elections. Branches should become familiar with election regulations well in advance of the election date. Members appointed to serve on election committees should review the procedures manual to ensure that they are properly fulfilling their role. Proper advance preparation and thorough review of the NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures will help ensure compliance with our democratic process.

The guide can be downloaded from the NALC website at nalc.org. Go to Union Administration, click on the Secretary-Treasurer’s page and select “Election information.”