

Opportunities to get involved—Part 2

In many union workplaces, non-career employees are not eligible to join the union, vote, hold office, or otherwise participate in the governance of the union. NALC is different. City carrier assistant (CCA) letter carriers play a prominent role in NALC and, just like career letter carriers, they have the right to join the union, vote in union elections, attend union meetings and hold any union position.

Since the establishment of the CCA category of letter carrier in 2013, many CCAs throughout the country have become actively involved in NALC and have volunteered for, or have been elected to, a wide-ranging list of leadership roles within the union. CCAs are the future career letter carriers of the Postal Service, and their involvement in NALC is vital to maintaining the long-standing strength and solidarity of the union.

Last month's article discussed various ways outside of traditional representational duties that new members can get involved with NALC to assist in

achieving our common goals of decent wages, benefits and working conditions. This month's article will focus on the more traditional ways members can get involved. NALC offers opportunities to participate with your local branch in and outside the workplace. Some members choose to support their local branch by running for an elected position such as branch officer or convention delegate. Members also can get involved by serving in various workplace union-related positions; many dedicated, hardworking city carriers have stepped up to serve as safety captains, on-the-job instructors (OJIs), Carrier Academy facilitators or shop stewards.

For some members, NALC's primary mission—contract enforcement—is the best way to get involved. If you're tired of the way you and other carriers are treated on the workroom floor, maybe you're ready to start gaining the knowledge and skills to serve as a shop steward. There's no better way to know what is going on in the union and play a role in how the union operates than

by becoming a steward. Shop stewards are the foot soldiers in NALC's effort to enforce the National Agreement, and a strong steward system is the bedrock of a strong union.

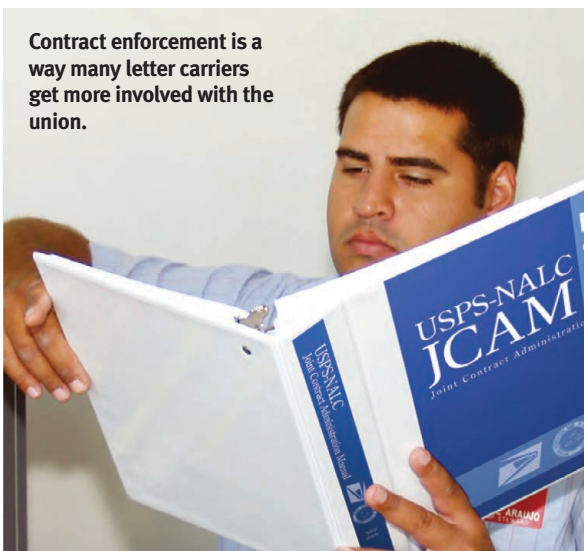
You also can assist in representing city carriers by serving in a leadership position within your branch. Branches are run entirely by letter carriers. Elected officer positions include president, vice president, recording/financial secretary,

treasurer or trustee. Members elect their own branch officers in free and fair elections, and any regular member in good standing may run for office.

Pursuant to branch bylaws, members also can be elected as delegates to represent the branch at national and state conventions. NALC's national convention is the union's supreme governing body. The convention meets every two years and elected delegates from every branch across the country are eligible to attend. At the convention, delegates elected by their local branch consider constitutional amendments, discuss key issues in standing committees, and set national policy for NALC. Delegates also have the opportunity to attend various educational breakfast meetings, workshops and seminars that are run every day before and after the daily general business sessions. In addition, delegates to every other convention nominate national officers for election. Every NALC member has a right to have his or her voice heard as part of the NALC democratic convention process, and convention delegates are their voice.

Our state associations are a key piece of our legislative and political success. The primary focus of state associations is to develop relationships with each member of Congress within the states. There is no better way to educate and influence members of Congress to support letter carriers than having them hear our message from letter carriers who live and vote in their states and congressional districts. NALC branches elect delegates to serve at conventions held by our state associations. These conventions usually include training and other activities.

Contract enforcement is a way many letter carriers get more involved with the union.





However, the primary purpose of these conventions is to chart the course for the state association until the next convention, just as the national convention does. Every state officer and delegate to each state convention should view it as an opportunity to better position the state association for success. State associations use the convention to propose, debate and ultimately decide what changes are needed. Letter carriers have a strong voice on Capitol Hill because of the work done over the years in Washington, DC, and at the state and local levels.

Being a letter carrier can be a dangerous job, and safety is a priority for city carriers. Article 14 of the National Agreement provides an obligation to promoting safety in the workplace. NALC members work with the Postal Service on joint safety committees at various levels of the organization. Often, post offices will have NALC safety captains to educate employees about safety issues, help monitor conditions on the workroom floor, and assist management in resolving unsafe conditions or practices. If you are devoted to promoting safety in the workplace, there might be a need for a safety captain in your office or local branch.

If you have a passion for teaching, and want to mentor new letter carriers, NALC offers members the opportunity to work with the Postal Service in the training of new carriers. NALC members can volunteer to educate new city carriers in the classroom, as Carrier Academy facilitators. Also, many locations are looking for enthusiastic OJIs willing to share their knowledge and expertise to acclimate new letter carriers to the job as they get their start in the delivery unit and on the street. If you want to be a part of mentoring new city carriers for the future, ask a branch officer how you can get involved.

NALC takes pride in the excellent level of representation it affords its members. To promote continuity, growth and development, NALC offers many opportunities for you to gain contractual knowledge and develop leadership skills at various levels of the organization. Local branches and regional offices offer a variety of training seminars to educate members on a variety of topics, including contractual rights, workers' compensation, retirement and the grievance process. NALC Headquarters offers additional programs to assist interested letter carriers in developing skills for the future, such as the NALC Leadership

Attending state and national conventions, such as the 2018 national convention in Detroit (above), allows members to have a greater say in the direction of the union and to get valuable information to help carriers at the local level.

Academy, the Advanced Formal A and Beyond training program and arbitration advocacy training, just to name a few. Talk to your branch president or national business agent about these and other opportunities.

The last year and more have certainly been challenging for members and their families. Despite those challenges, NALC was able to negotiate significant improvements for all city carriers in the 2019-2023 National Agreement. These achievements were made possible by the dedication, focus and perseverance of NALC members—like you—at every level. NALC is a diverse organization consisting of letter carriers working together, embracing varied perspectives, with new ideas and a unified motivation to accomplish our common goals. If you are passionate about city carrier concerns, rights and benefits, and about defending the National Agreement, ask your branch officers how you can be a part of NALC's continued success. **PR**