

New innovations



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Out of the ashes rises the phoenix. Well, it may not be that dramatic, but NALC has recently created some new and innovative platforms, partly due to challenges we've collectively endured during the COVID-19 pandemic. These new platforms, we hope, will provide opportunities that may not have otherwise existed.

NALC has for a long time operated a store selling NALC-branded merchandise from the first floor of the NALC Headquarters building. Branches and members alike routinely place orders through the NALC store for every-

thing from apparel and jewelry bearing the NALC logo to member publications. Oftentimes, these orders were placed over the phone or by mail. While those methods remain available, NALC has now expanded to an online store presence.

Branches and members can now order the same NALC apparel, memorabilia and publications through a link on the NALC website to the newly launched NALC virtual store. The site includes pictures of most items and incorporates a shopping cart method to use while making a purchase. On checkout, the shopper can select his or her preferred method of payment to complete the transaction. And, rest assured, all items will be shipped through the U.S. Mail. To visit the online store, go to nalc.org and click the link currently displayed as one of the banners on the NALC homepage. It also can be found under the "Member Benefits" tab.

Another recent development is the launch of the Virtual Meetings application. This platform was pre-viewed during the modified virtual branch officers' training held in late winter of 2020 and in early spring of this year. The Virtual Meetings application is designed for national, regional and state officers to set up virtual events through the Members Only portal on the NALC website. NALC regional offices and state presidents, secretaries and treasurers now have access to create and organize virtual events, set up registration processes for their respective members, and deliver meeting links securely through the Members Only portal.

After creating the event in the Members Only portal,

simply set up a virtual conference using platforms such as Zoom and Webex to generate a unique web address URL and paste it into the "Event URL" field identified in the event setup. Other information, such as the greeting, the maximum number of attendees and any important notes can be entered as well. PDFs can be uploaded for that meeting, in addition to itinerary topics to be discussed and addressed.

After a meeting has been generated, registrants or event organizers can add attendees by searching for the member's last name, adding people up to the maximum allocation per branch, state or event. The organizer of the event also can update or delete the meeting, or it can be copied for future meetings.

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Members assigned as attendees can access the meeting through the Members Only section of the NALC website on the scheduled date of the event, and also can view the associated documents and topics. Registrants can join the meeting by clicking the "Meetings" button in the Members Only portal, then selecting the specific meeting scheduled. A "Join" button will then appear, providing access to the Zoom or Webex platform from which they will attend and participate in the meeting. An instructional tutorial on the portal will provide a step-by-step explanation of the process.

Also available: National assigned assistants (NAAs) who are assigned to work on behalf of NALC are now able to view their NALC earnings statements by logging into the Members Only section of the NALC website. From the portal, you can link into the NALC Human Resources/payroll management platform.

As we reflect on some of the many hurdles presented during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, I urge everyone to take time to reflect on the historic event marked by the date of June 6, 1944—D-Day—and the tremendous sacrifices made on behalf of all humanity on the day that became the turning point of World War II.