

# COVID-19: Branch and state association administration



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**S**ince the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, branches and state associations have faced unique challenges 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 during the 2020 calendar year. These letters from President Rolando addressed several scenarios pertaining to overall administration. This series of letters were followed by a letter dated Dec. 10, 2020, addressing challenges for 2021. At the time these letters were being draft-

ed, the continuation of the presence of the coronavirus was unknown, and who would have thought we would still be dealing with the pandemic into calendar year 2022?

Since the onset of the pandemic, many NALC branches and state associations have adapted by using 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 the effects of the pandemic will continue** into calendar 2022, President 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 2022.

In a letter dated Dec. 6, 2021 – Re: Extension of dispensation for branch and state meetings and elections due to coronavirus, President Rolando provided the following regarding branch meetings for calendar year 2022:

Although there has been some improvement in the overall situation, the pandemic continues to pose significant risks to safety and health. Accordingly, in order to adhere to the requirement to hold monthly meetings, this letter extends the previous dispensation for all branches to utilize alternative electronic meeting methods through calendar year 2022. Branches may also consider other options, which would be consistent with this dispensation. For example, Branches can conduct in-person meetings for those who show proof of vaccination, while allowing all other mem-

bers to participate by video conference. Alternatively, the Branch may conduct an in-person meeting for everyone, while enforcing COVID protocols such as distancing and masks and may also allow exemptions from masking requirements for members who provide proof of vaccination.

As stated in my previous letter, 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 extends my previous grant of 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 letter concludes by advising of the continued monitoring of the overall situation that may result in modification to this letter.

**The NALC Regulations Governing Branch Election Procedures** guide 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](http://nalc.org). Go to "Union Administration," click on the secretary-treasurer's page and select "Election Information."