

You're a member of your state association

If you are new to NALC, you may not realize that you automatically belong to your state association.

State associations exist in every state except Alaska, and they play a key role in NALC's legislative activities. State associations work closely with branches, national business agents (NBAs) and NALC Headquarters on legislative and political issues. These efforts are important to our efforts in the halls of Congress to secure both the future of the Postal Service and our jobs.

While state associations have been in existence since 1892, 17 years ago the NALC membership voted that state associations should reprioritize their activities to focus on legislative and political matters that affect letter carriers. In 2006, the delegates to the 65th biennial convention in Las Vegas amended Article 1, Section 2 of the *NALC Constitution for the Government of State Associations* to read as follows:

Sec. 2. The objects of this Association are to assist the National Association of Letter Carriers in maintaining a more perfect organization and improving the Postal Service; to organize all letter carriers within the State; and to guide and direct all activities relating to legislation within the State. This Association shall have the authority to coordinate with the National Business Agent regarding seminars and training schools on State, District, and Branch levels, which shall be financed by the NALC and directed by the National Business Agent. Effective September 1, 2006, State Association financial resources previously expended on seminars and training shall be expended in pursuance of and consistent with the

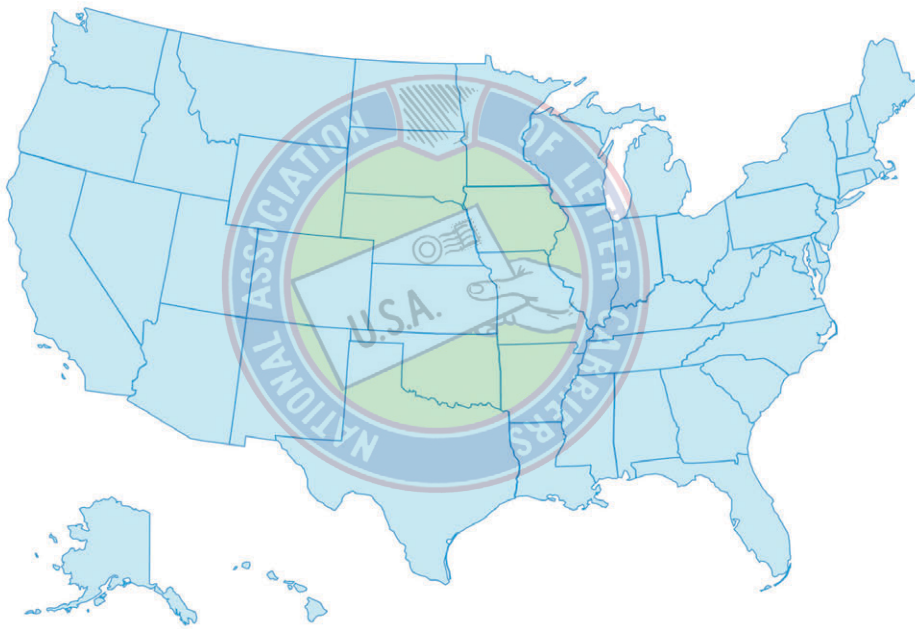
object stated above: 'to guide and direct all activities relating to legislation within the state.'

Prior to this change, training and education were the primary function of the state associations. Of course, a change like this required many states to make internal adjustments to best position each association for its new primary objective. In the years since the 2006 constitutional amendment, many of our state associations have made these necessary changes, and that process continues.

Let's look at how state associations fit into our legislative and political network. Headquarters officers and the Executive Council oversee everything our union does from the national level, including legislation. Branches are involved in legislative activities as well, but typically prioritize other representational responsibilities.

State associations are the entities within NALC whose primary focus is legislation. State associations work on developing valuable, positive 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 lawmakers hear our message from letter carriers who live and vote in their states or congressional districts.

To accomplish this, state associations have letter carrier congressional liaisons (LCCLs) in place. In some states, these positions are elected, and in others they are appointed. Regardless of how these individuals are chosen, the important part is that our legislative and political network, primarily the state association, provides LCCLs and other members with the knowledge and resources needed to



develop and foster relationships with their members of Congress and their staffs at the local level.

The NALC president also appoints legislative and political organizers (LPOs) to assist state associations in promoting and protecting letter carrier interests on Capitol Hill. LPOs help develop and implement plans specifically designed for the legislative challenges within each state. They assist with the education and training of other letter carriers, officers and rank-and-file activists to help carry out the plans.

In 2023, most of our state associations will be holding conventions. These conventions usually include education on pending congressional resolutions or bills, on how letter carriers can participate in legislative activities, and on how the overall political environment affects our jobs, the workplace and the Postal Service. 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 for the national union. All state officers and delegates to each state convention should view it as an opportunity to improve their association. One example is taking a close look at a state association's bylaws. If changes are needed to better position the state association for success, use the process and the convention to propose, debate and ultimately decide what changes are needed.

Over the last two decades, our state associations have worked relentlessly

to educate lawmakers on the urgent need for postal reform to improve the financial stability of the Postal Service. With frequent visits to congressional leaders, phone and text-messaging initiatives, letter writing and social media campaigns, as well as interaction with the media and letters to the editor, state association members have labored to convince representatives in Congress to support legislation to accomplish this goal. As a culmination of those efforts, in April 2022, the Postal Service Reform Act of 2022 (H.R. 3076) was signed into law. This law was a victory for letter carriers and for all Americans who depend on the Postal Service for affordable and high-quality universal service. As you can see, NALC state associations are crucial to our legislative efforts.

NALC members vary widely in our political views. This is a strength of our union and has allowed us to develop relationships with members of Congress in both parties, in the nation's capital and at the local level. Letter carriers have a strong voice on Capitol Hill because of the work done over the years in Washington, DC.

You can be a part of that voice; participation with your state association will provide you with training and information on local and statewide political efforts. New members bring fresh perspectives, renewed energy and unique ideas to these activities. Reach out to your local branch or state association to see how you can get involved. **PR**