

The revival of the *NALC Activist* and other resources for representatives



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One key to being a successful leader in any organization is having the knowledge and resources needed to effectively lead. As a union, NALC takes great pride in providing and creating resources and publications intended to do just that.

Much of the information to educate, assist and inform our members and their union representatives is found in the “Resources” section of the NALC website under the “Workplace Issues” tab. There

you can find the National Agreement, the *Joint Contract Administration Manual (JCAM)* and a multitude of Postal Service handbooks and manuals.

The National Agreement sets our work rules, pay and benefits and establishes a grievance procedure for filing complaints when those rules are not followed. The NALC and the Postal Service have agreed at the national level that the *JCAM* is the definitive interpretation of the National Agreement and should be used to help resolve disputes at each step of the grievance procedure.

Other resources, developed solely by the NALC, such as the *Letter Carrier Resource Guide*, the Materials Reference System (MRS), *Defenses to Discipline* and the *NALC Shop Steward’s Guide*, to name just a few, also can be found in the Resources section.

The *Letter Carrier Resource Guide* includes information on rights and benefits, and relevant changes to these rights and benefits, as letter carriers progress from city carrier assistant to career status. The guide includes chapters on NALC structure, health benefits, pay, uniforms, workroom floor issues, community service, legislation and much more.

The MRS is a collection of contract administration materials assembled by NALC Headquarters’ Contract Administration Unit (CAU), and can assist all NALC representatives who enforce and administer the National Agreement. The MRS contains summaries and, in some cases, the full text of many important national-level materials, including settlements of Step 4 grievances, national-level pre-arbitration agreements, memorandums, USPS policy statements, NALC publications and more. The MRS also contains cross-references to significant national-level arbitration awards.

Defenses to Discipline has in-depth information related to challenging discipline issued to city letter carriers. It summarizes decades of experience and explains the key principles, contract language, national

settlements and arbitration decisions specific to just cause and job security.

The *NALC Shop Steward’s Guide* discusses the many roles carriers play as a shop steward. When the contract is violated, shop stewards must investigate the facts and research the contract before constructing an effective grievance. Then the steward needs to articulate the correct arguments at the earliest steps of the grievance procedure. This is a complete guide to assist shop stewards with fulfilling these duties.

Also found in the Resources section is a library of previous Contract Talk articles and *NALC Activist* publications to reference and study. Contract Talk is a regular column in *The Postal Record*. Written by members of the CAU, Contract Talk provides advice on select issues of interest to NALC contract enforcers.

The *NALC Activist* is a newsletter intended for shop stewards, branch officers and all local NALC leaders. This publication has been around since 1986—and with a couple of pauses along the way—and has been revived this month to continue providing an additional resource to assist in educating and informing local NALC representatives.

The *NALC Activist* is designed with the needs of NALC representatives in mind, addressing issues and problems that arise in our everyday work lives. The publication has proven to be a good training tool and NALC is proud to bring it back to life. With the goal of giving practical advice and skills on such topics as how to effectively run a branch meeting, a training or a branch publication, branch representatives should find the articles useful.

Moving forward, the *NALC Activist* will be published quarterly and will, it is hoped, provide representatives with the tools and knowledge needed to build and maintain strong and effective branches. Each issue will feature articles that will improve your knowledge of the contract and help you better understand the grievance procedure. You will see articles suggesting new ways in which NALC representatives can approach the problems they face while performing their duties. We will cover workplace issues, contract questions and the latest information for local leaders.

The resources described here are just a sampling of what NALC offers. I encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about representing city letter carriers to check out what is available in the Resources section, as well as the individual web pages for each of NALC’s 10 resident national officers, on the NALC website.

To read the newest edition of the *NALC Activist*, go to nalc.org/activist.