

Evaluating our goals and priorities for 2024



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Top of mind for all our members is collective bargaining and a new contract. While we have made progress at the bargaining table, there still are important aspects of an agreement that haven't been resolved. We anticipate that the interest arbitration process will begin in the coming

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months. We have been preparing for interest arbitration in earnest for more than a year. We believe we have an extremely strong case. Even as we proceed with the interest arbitration process, we will not stop negotiating with the Postal Service in good faith. Both parties still believe

A new year means a fresh start. It's a time to evaluate goals and priorities and decide what is needed to achieve them—and that's exactly what we're doing at NALC.

I anticipate the coming year to be a busy and successful one for our union. While we will continue to focus and work toward some of our long-standing priorities, we also will stay vigilant in responding to changes as they arise, and adjust our efforts as needed. I will use this month's column to outline some of NALC's expectations and priorities for the year ahead.

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In the coming year, we also will continue to work with Postal Service management to represent the interests of our members during implementation of its Delivering for America plan. Our voice and perspective are a key component of any success that may result as the Postal Service moves forward with its strategic plan.

The safety of our members always comes first and the wave of assaults and robberies targeting our members is unacceptable. In recent months, we have been holding rallies around the country to emphasize that “Enough is enough,” and that the attacks on letter carriers must end. Since we started these rallies late last summer, more of these crimes have been prosecuted at the federal level—exactly what we asked for. However, we will not stop until every single crime against a letter carrier is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

We will continue working on a comprehensive legislative solution. As this issue was going to print, bipartisan legislation in the House of Representatives was making its way to introduction, legislation that would better secure how we access mail, would assign a prosecutor in each U.S. attorney's office dedicated to prosecuting all crimes against letter carriers on the federal level, would increase the Postal Inspection Service's capacity to protect us, and would impose stronger penalties on those who attack our members while they are doing their jobs. This bill will be a top legislative priority, though not our only one.

Last year was one of the hottest years on record, yet heat safety has not been prioritized or addressed in an acceptable manner. We will continue our work with the Postal Service and through every available avenue to ensure that all letter carriers are educated about the risks and signs of heat illness and given the best opportunity to work safely in dangerous heat around the country. Additionally, we will work alongside the Department of Labor to finally get an established heat work rule, which would benefit letter carriers and countless other workers nationwide.

Regarding retirement priorities, we will continue to build support and work toward passage of the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82/S. 597), which would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. Likewise, we will educate members of Congress on the importance of the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995), a bill that would allow federal employees, including letter carriers, to buy back their time served in non-career positions—such as a city car-

rier assistant, transitional employee or casual—making it creditable toward their service under the Federal Employees Retirement System. If you haven't yet, I encourage you to visit our legislative action center at nalc.org/action and ask your members of Congress to co-sponsor these bills.

The long-term financial viability of our employer remains a priority. A sustainable USPS is key to our long-term job security and the service we provide. We will continue working on a bipartisan solution that includes an updated investment strategy for the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund. Currently, these funds are invested in low-yield Treasury bonds, and NALC is proposing to diversify the investment portfolio with stocks and bonds by purchasing Thrift Savings Plan-style index funds, yielding potentially hundreds of millions additional dollars annually.

Our work with the White House and the administration will continue to be critical this year. With two seats vacant on the USPS Board of Governors (BOG), previously held by Capt. Lee Moak and William Zollars, we will fight to ensure that pro-letter carrier candidates are nominated to leadership positions at the BOG and the Postal Regulatory Commission. Similarly, we will continue to encourage the administration to direct the Office of Personnel Management to implement the recommendations of the 2010 Segal Report, which would accurately value the Postal Service's pension assets and liabilities. This action is essential to ensuring the long-term financial stability of USPS and our jobs.

Lastly, as we enter 2024, we also enter a presidential election year. NALC will support and endorse candidates based solely on their records and stances on issues that affect letter carriers and our jobs. We will not engage in wedge issues that aim to divide us; rather we will direct our political efforts toward those who will stand with us and support our priorities. We will focus our efforts on battleground states to build and maintain pro-letter carrier representation in Congress and the White House.

To succeed in these battleground states and ultimately end up with an administration and a Congress that support letter carriers, we need to grow the Letter Carrier Political Fund (LCPF), NALC's political action committee. Next month's annual LCPF issue of *The Postal Record* will be dedicated to growing our power. Currently, 12 percent of

the NALC membership contributes to LCPF—which leaves a lot of room for growth and activism in 2024. I know that letter carriers are up to the challenge, and if you're not already an LCPF contributor, I hope you will join the fight with us and sign up today.

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As you can see, we have a full agenda ahead of us and many priorities to tackle this year. I believe that our best tool to achieve results for letter carriers is unity. I am confident that if we all come together to fight for the needs and priorities of letter carriers, NALC will come out on top in 2024.



By making a contribution to the Letter Carrier Political Fund, you are doing so voluntarily with the understanding that your contribution is not a condition of membership in the National Association of Letter Carriers or of employment by the Postal Service, nor is it part of union dues. You have a right to refuse to contribute without any reprisal. Any guideline amounts are merely suggestions, and you may contribute more or less than the guidelines suggest and the union will not favor or disadvantage you by reason of the amount of your contribution or your decision not to contribute. The Letter Carrier Political Fund will use the money it receives to contribute to candidates for federal office and undertake other political spending as permitted by law. Your selection shall remain in full force and effect until canceled. Contributions to the Letter Carrier Political Fund are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Federal law prohibits the Letter Carrier Political Fund from soliciting contributions from individuals who are not NALC members, executive and administrative staff or their families. Any contribution received from such an individual will be refunded to that contributor. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, name of employer and occupation of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year.