

In 2025, MDA is thinking local

The partnership between the National Association of Letter Carriers and the Muscular Dystrophy Association is one of the longest-running, most deeply rooted alliances in the nonprofit world. For more than 70 years, letter carriers have raised funds, built awareness and stood up for the families of those living with neuromuscular disease. And as the world has changed, this partnership has adapted, always with a shared goal—making life better for the people we serve.

That spirit of adaptability is behind an important shift in MDA's 2025 fundraising incentives for NALC branches. In 2024, the top fundraising NALC branches in each of the 10 MDA Honor Roll categories earned an incentive trip for one branch representative to attend an MDA Summer Camp session. All 10 representatives came to the same camp at the same time to see the joy, freedom and friendships that camp offers children living with neuromuscular disease.

Beginning in 2025, MDA will change the incentive trip to travel gift cards that winning branches can use toward visiting their closest MDA Summer Camp for a session. Changing the incentive trip means more money for MDA Summer Camp, more money for research for medical innovations, and more money to ensure that the federal government continues to prioritize policy that empowers and protects the families of those living with neuromuscular disease. Rising costs and shifting donor engagement trends have led MDA to refine its approach to make a bigger difference for the families who count on it.

MDA is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of families affected by neuromuscular disease. Over the past year, MDA has sharpened its focus from generalized programs to more personalized tools and services, from one-size-fits-all experiences to support that reflects regional realities and logistical constraints. MDA is not stepping back from our shared mission. Instead, it's stepping up with more purpose, more flexibility and more local connection.

For example, the introduction of MDA's new Durable Medical Equipment Grants is one of the earliest—and most important—of its new offerings to the community. Affected families need more individual financial support from MDA to fill in the gaps from federal cuts, and MDA is responding. The new grants program also includes expanding camp to ensure that more kids can attend, that more families feel supported and that more communities get involved.

By offering travel gift cards instead of a fixed national trip, MDA and NALC are creating a more equitable, flexible opportunity for branch leaders to engage with camps in their nearby communities, while also using donor dol-

lars more efficiently. The updated incentive model makes it easier for top branches to experience camp without cross-country travel. Visiting your closest camp not only saves resources, it also opens the door to a deeper connection with your own region's neuromuscular disease community.

The winning branches will still meet the campers, talk to the families and see the power of our work in action. That's the kind of experience that sticks with you, and the kind that fuels branches' commitment to fundraising year after year.

NALC has been an anchor for MDA for decades, not just because of the money we raise, but because of what letter carriers represent: reliability, resolve and relationships that last. Since the beginning, NALC's support has helped fuel breakthroughs in research, expand clinical care, and deliver life-changing services such as insurance advocacy and equipment access.

Together, NALC and MDA are not just raising money—we're raising expectations, raising our game and raising each other, because MDA families are counting on us.

How federal cuts are affecting MDA

MDA is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization. As strategic partners with the federal government, MDA works with public officials and administrations regardless of political party to advance policies that protect the rights, inclusion, dignity and agency of people with neuromuscular disease. And that means engaging with the federal government to support the MDA community.

Here are some of the ongoing engagement campaigns:

- MDA is prioritizing its campaign to protect Medicaid.
- MDA condemns the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education, citing risk of harms to students with disabilities.
- In response to substantial reductions and restructuring announced by the Department of Health and Human Services, MDA released a statement on how the sweeping reforms affect offices, programs and services that play a critical role in research, drug and therapy development, and access to care and services for the neuromuscular disease community.
- MDA condemns National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding cuts on indirect costs, which will be capped at 15 percent in all grants. This arbitrary decision will prove catastrophic to neuromuscular disease research, and MDA called for NIH to immediately reverse this decision.

For more details about MDA's view on these important issues, go to mda.org.