

Every member deserves a branch



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The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) currently consists of 1,482 branches representing approximately 194,000 active letter carriers and just over 94,000 retired members. Branches range in size from single-member branches to branches with several thousand members. The members who make up those branches are the heart and soul of NALC. As was the case with our retired members when they were forging their careers on the workroom floor, the active members of NALC should expect quality representation regard-

less of branch size or dynamics.

Branches are where NALC members get information about local and national issues, voice their opinions, meet regularly and coordinate union activities. Each branch is run entirely by letter carriers and relies heavily on volunteer union activists who give their time to help fellow carriers and at times do good work in the community.

Sometimes branches around the country require assistance providing member representation. This could be a branch needing temporary assistance due to some unanticipated event or a branch needing more ongoing relief. There are many factors that may contribute to an ongoing need, and as a result, merging resources with another branch is often the best answer.

The merger of two functioning branches is a voluntary procedure. The requirements for effecting a merger of branches can be found in Article 2, Section 3 of the *NALC Constitution*. Both branches must vote to approve a proposed merger agreement by setting forth the details of the merger. After the vote is approved, an application signed by the president and secretary of each branch must then be submitted to the national president of the NALC for approval.

Apart from the merger process, there are separate procedures that may result in the transfer of active members to another branch. For example: On occasion, reports are received that a branch has ceased to function and is not capable of fully representing its

members. A branch could be declared defunct if it is not presently functioning as an NALC branch and appears incapable of representing the letter carriers in their own home office.

Typically, in such situations, there are no officers or stewards and there have been no meetings for an extended period of time. In such circumstances, the membership of the letter carriers in these non-functioning branches is transferred to another functioning branch nearby. Prior to this determination, the national business agent (NBA) from the respective region will contact potential functioning branches located near the non-functioning branch. The goal is to determine if the branches are able to take over responsibility for representing the letter carriers in need. Before a decision is made, the current views of the branch membership and alternative solutions are researched. Once the NBA has identified a branch that would accept the letter carriers for the branch in need, a meeting to discuss all the issues that have been raised is necessary.

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Branches considered non-functioning are given an opportunity to object to the proposed transfer. The proposed transfer is held for 30 days in order to give each member an opportunity to submit any objections or additional comments.

Many branches do an outstanding job representing their membership and it does not go unnoticed. The work needed to continually run an effective branch is a difficult task and help is not always easy to come by; combining resources is not always a bad idea. Always keep in mind that the union is “U,” and every member counts when building and maintaining a strong house.