

NALC, USPS head to mediation on new collective-bargaining agreement



After three months of intense negotiations, NALC and the Postal Service did not reach tentative agreement on the terms of a new collective-bargaining agreement that rewards America's city letter carriers for the hard work they do day in and day out before the expiration of the current agreement. That agreement, which expired at midnight on Friday, May 22, 2026, will remain in full force and effect until a new negotiated or arbitrated agreement takes effect.

Beginning May 17, the entire NALC Executive Council, along with Headquarters letter carrier staff, legal counsel and professional staff, came together with the Postal Service's bargaining team at a Washington, DC, hotel for the entire final week of the contract in an attempt to reach a deal with USPS. A mandatory 60-day mediation period will follow, as required by statute. During that period, NALC will continue to work toward reaching a negotiated agreement with the Postal Service. After the mediation period, unresolved issues would be addressed through an interest arbitration process, which would result in a final and binding decision on the contents of a new *National Agreement*. The parties will select a neutral arbitrator to chair an arbitration board that would also include one management and one union arbitrator.

NALC officers and staff have been working since August 2025 on preparation for these negotiations. At the same time, the union has been preparing to present our case in interest arbitration if necessary. All of the proposed contract changes or additions were created by subcommittees of NALC Executive Council members and Headquarters staff after months of intensive preparation. The subcommittees developed our concepts and proposals

after consideration of NALC's official bargaining positions adopted at national conventions, feedback from Rank-and-File Bargaining Committees and the national rap session workshop participants in Cleveland, OH, last fall, the participation of members across the country in surveys, and more.

"I'm appreciative of the arduous work of our Executive Council members, staff and professionals during the last several months of preparations and negotiations for a new collective-bargaining agreement. I am also appreciative of the input from branch leadership and all the members of NALC who have taken part in various aspects of our preparation for this round of bargaining," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said.

"While good-faith bargaining with our counterparts from the Postal Service has brought progress in some areas, we have not yet reached agreement on terms that we believe properly reward NALC members for their hard work and value to the Postal Service. We are confident that both sides of the table will continue to productively engage throughout the 60-day mediation period mandated by law. We will do everything we can to reach agreement but are fully prepared to use the interest arbitration process if necessary to resolve any remaining differences after the 60-day mediation period.

"We look forward to the opportunity to have in-depth discussion with our branch and state leaders on where we are and next steps in the process at our Collective-Bargaining Conference in Washington, DC, in just over a week."

The Collective-Bargaining Conference was to be held June 1-3, after this issue had gone to press. Further updates will be provided as the process moves forward. **PR**