

Adaptation



**Brian
Renfro**

A couple of months ago, I wrote about the activism of NALC members during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I remain proud and impressed, though not surprised, at the level of activism our members have sustained through a very difficult situation at work and in life in general. We have seen the highest rates of members taking action on the legislative front that our union has ever seen. This is a credit to you, our members.

Similarly, our union has had to adapt at all levels throughout the pandemic. Things that we took for granted are temporarily not feasible. Something as simple as the opportunity to attend a branch meeting has been taken away.

Many branches, state associations and regions have held meetings online. President Rolando and I, as well as other officers and staff, have had the opportunity to attend many of these meetings. While it is not the same as in-person meetings, we are fortunate to have the technology to continue the important communications needed to operate.

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NALC Headquarters, the NALC Health Benefit Plan and many of our regional and branch offices have been under state or local orders to close for varying periods of time throughout the pandemic. At all levels, alternate work schedules and locations have been forced to be put in place for many of the people charged with representing our members and those responsible for the operations of our union. Everyone has found a way, despite the changes and challenges that have come with them.

We were forced to postpone our annual Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive in May. We still intend to have a normal food drive when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, we have launched a Stamp Out Hunger Donor

Drive to assist food banks during a critical time of need for many people. Simply go to nalc.org/food and select a state to see a list of food banks with links to their websites where donations may be made.

I’d like to thank our national partners (United States Postal Service, AFL-CIO, National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, United Food and Commercial Workers, United Way, Valpak, Valassis, Kellogg’s, CVS) and our local food pantries and other partners for their support. We are also grateful to all of the unions and other organizations that have helped us get the word out. Our digital advertising, combined with the efforts of all those named above, have produced a great response. We are especially thankful to the branches that have promoted this donor drive in their communities, just as we do for our traditional Letter Carriers’ Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive each year.

In addition to the opportunity to contribute directly for each individual, NALC HQ has committed to match any donation that a branch makes out of its treasury to a local food bank. Branches should send proof of donation to the following address: Stamp Out Hunger Donor Drive, 100 Indiana Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

Many branches have had tremendous success raising money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. This is usually accomplished by hosting a variety of events and campaigns such as picnics, golf tournaments, poker nights and other similar activities. Unfortunately, most of these events have had to be postponed or canceled due to the pandemic. NALC has organized two national events as well as the opportunity for some friendly competition among branches. For more information, please go to nalc.org/mda. Assistant to the President for Community Services Christina Vela Davidson can assist any branch that needs more information. Her contact information may be found at nalc.org/mda.

These are just some examples of the adaptation that has happened within our union, just as it has in nearly every walk of life. I’m very proud of the NALC officers, staff, employees and, most of all, our members for their hard work in continuing to accomplish our mission as a union. This work has extended beyond our core mission of representation to our charitable efforts I discussed here. I’m proud to work with all of you.

I’ll end with a simple ask of everyone who reads this: Please wear a mask when you are around others. It is a simple measure to protect everyone and bring what we all look forward to—the end of this pandemic. Stay safe.