

Carrier Academy roundtable discussion



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NALC is committed to making sure that new hires receive the proper training that provides essential tools necessary to have a lasting career as a city letter carrier. Proper training for new hires better prepares them for the unique career of being a letter carrier.

Unlike many other jobs, there is nowhere else a person can get experience carrying mail. Carriers must be prepared to identify different classes of mail, to properly case and pull down mail, to carefully handle and deliver packages, to identify hazardous items, and to safely deliver in tough weather conditions.

A properly trained carrier provides better service for our customers. Providing a service that we can all be proud of is what has always won us the trust of the public and kept us in good standing with communities across the country. In this month's column, I will touch on efforts being made in City Delivery to update training materials for newly hired city letter carriers.

Currently, all newly hired city carriers must complete the Postal Service's Standard Training Program for City Letter Carriers and the Carrier Academy as they begin their careers. The complete training program consists of five phases: orientation, driver training, shadow day, Carrier Academy and on-the-job training.

Recently, my staff and I met with the Postal Service to discuss updating the training materials for the Carrier Academy. During the meeting, I was able to share my thoughts on the importance of bringing the program up to speed from its latest update in 2020. Postal Service representatives welcomed the opportunity to update the materials and agreed to continue joint discussions.

Getting input from active Carrier Academy facilitators has always been important when developing the training materials, but this time NALC did an in-person roundtable discussion. In August, I requested that each national business agent (NBA) across the 15 NALC regions select a local facilitator to join me and my staff in the roundtable discussion regarding the program. Each participant was asked to communicate with other Academy facilitators in their region to bring as much insight to the discussion as possible.

In early October, my staff and I met with the 15 facilitators in the conference center at the Region 9 NBA office in Marietta, GA, for the weeklong meeting. Each facilitator was able to share their experiences with the program and identify issues they have had within their areas. The facilitators raised issues such as receiving late notices of participant scheduling, lack of communication with their USPS counterparts, insufficient training equipment, a lack of training materials, failure to consistently abide by the 1-to-6 ratio of facilitators to new hires, and staffing shortages. As a group, we discussed the best ways to address these issues, and the facilitators were able to hear from others who have been in their shoes. Many of the facilitators appreciated the opportunity to discuss these issues in this setting.

The group reviewed training guides, the current Carrier Academy PowerPoint presentation, and the latest updates to the Mobile Delivery Device-Technical Refresh (MDD-TR). Relying on their experience and knowledge, we were able to identify out-of-date sections on topics such as Flat Sequencing System, Managed Service Point barcodes, the Electronic Badge Reader and others. Since many daily carrier responsibilities, such as timekeeping, parcel loading, vehicle inspections, and hazard notifications, are affected by the MDD-TR, creating a new section focused solely on the functionality of the device was proposed by the group.

I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to each of the facilitators who took the time to participate in this weeklong discussion: Darryl Johnson of Region 1, Deidre Milhorn of Region 2, Candy Hummel of Region 3, Andrew Chapa of Region 4, Frank Enlow of Region 5, Ron Karus of Region 6, Jon Raven of Region 7, Renee Maxey of Region 8, Patricia Coney of Region 9, Darren Collins of Region 10, Angela Talom of Region 11, Leslie Greene of Region 12, Mark Adkins of Region 13, Louie Poste of Region 14, and Isaac Harper of Region 15. The input from this group will significantly improve the training experience for new city carriers across the country.

