

Prepare now for a successful food drive

Each year, NALC branches are encouraged to register for the Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive held on the second Saturday in May. Stamp Out Hunger is the largest single-day food drive in the nation. The food drive's success is due to the dedication of letter carriers and volunteers, and to support from partners and local food agencies.

Here are tips for branches to organize a successful food drive.

Registration

Work on the food drive must start in advance and must be a priority. The process begins with the branch selecting a food drive coordinator.

Once the food drive coordinator has been identified, the branch president should log in to their Members Only portal via the NALC website. Once logged in, the president will select the "Stamp Out Hunger" icon and from here will designate the food drive coordinator.

To designate a local coordinator, branch presidents should select the "Coordinators" tab, click "Add Coordinator" and a dialog box will appear. Click "Member Search," key in the member's last name, double-click the member's name to select, and click "Submit Search." Click the "Submit" button when the dialog box from the previous page appears and auto-populates with the member's information. The local coordinator will then have access to the food drive database via their Members Only portal and will be able to register the branch.

Registration is simple and requires only a few minutes to complete. Please visit nalc.org/food for a step-by-step guide to register.

Groundwork

Once the branch is registered, the food drive coordinator should explore NALC's Stamp Out Hunger webpage at nalc.org/food to find information, such as deadlines (to receive postcards, registration must be completed by **March 21**), the coordinator's manual, a sample press release, and a list of state and regional coordinators with up-to-date contact information.

The food drive coordinator should first review the coordinator's manual and then enlist help, as the branch will need volunteers. Start by asking the branch members to sign up by placing a sign-up sheet at your monthly branch meeting and on your branch web page and/or social media pages. Be mindful that the coordinator can solicit help from other crafts and food drive co-sponsors, such as United Way.

Review the coordinator's manual and then create a timeline of duties and the branch's available budget to share with your volunteers so they'll know what is expected of them. Schedule a meeting with the volunteers to identify skills or useful contacts. Make sure to set realistic expectations, assist with training if needed, provide reassurance, and follow up regularly with the volunteers.

Building partnerships

Take advantage of local opportunities to solicit donations from businesses. Letter carriers have an advantage, because they interact with businesses daily and have a relationship with the point of contact. The coordinator's manual contains tips and talking points on how to secure local support.

Prior to meeting with a potential partner, the food drive coordinator should create a folder and include material that

can be left with the prospective partner, including a letter explaining the cause, what type of donations are requested, and how those donations will be used. The food drive coordinator should create a list of the possible partners and include the date the meeting with those potential partners took place, or the date the packet of information was mailed if no meeting was held, so the coordinator can follow up.

The local United Way might be able to assist with finding local pantries, coordinating distribution of food, and attempting to get sponsors for bags. More information is available at unitedway.org/find-your-united-way.

Other partners who may be able to assist include the AFL-CIO, Kellanova, and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), which can be found by visiting ufcw.org/members/find-your-local. The most common sponsors for bags are local grocery stores. Bag deadlines can be found at nalc.org/food under the heading "Important information for coordinators."

Advertising

There are numerous ways a branch can get the word out. One way is by establishing media contacts and asking them to help publicize the drive. Also, contact elected officials and ask them to declare the second Saturday in May as Food Drive Day. A sample press release for news and radio stations, along with a sample proclamation for elected officials, are in the coordinator's manual.

Other ways include wearing food drive T-shirts; putting out lawn signs; hanging posters and flyers inside apartment complexes, banks, churches and grocery stores; providing stand-up talks



with carriers to get them excited about the food drive; working with apartment complexes to send out community emails and set up a common area drop-off location for food; and sharing information on social media. This will help boost community support and improve the outcome of the food drive.

NALC's social media team and the Department of Communications and Media Relations, both at Headquarters, along with NALC's national partners, will continue spreading the word and raising awareness for the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Remember to follow NALC's social media accounts on Facebook at facebook.com/StampOutHunger and at @StampOutHunger on X (formerly known as Twitter) for more ideas. To find or send messages about the food drive on either platform, use #StampOutHunger.

Next steps

After the food drive, what's next? The food drive coordinator should visit the food drive database via their Members Only portal. The coordinator will select the "Sponsors" tab, click "Add Local Sponsor" and a dialog box will appear, input money collected and/or pounds of food collected, and click "Submit." The money collected will be automatically converted to pounds of food. To verify that the information is accurate, click the "Collected" tab. The total pounds of food with the converted dollars to pounds will be populated under this tab. Once the final results have been submitted, the coordinator should compile the information that has been collected and provide it to the branch president. The information should include lists of volunteers, ven-

dor and partner contacts, food banks in the area with their contact information, and a timeline of events leading up to the food drive, along with notes on what worked and areas to improve.

Finally, a food drive coordinator needs to determine whether it is something they are interested in doing again. If not, help find a replacement. For a branch to succeed, leaders must train the next generation.

"Thank you for helping continue the fight to end hunger within our communities with our annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive," President Brian L. Renfroe said. **PR**

NALC wins four ILCA awards

The Communications and Media Relations Department of the National Association of Letter Carriers collected four awards in the 2024 Labor Media Awards contest of the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA), with three of them for work published in the union's monthly journal, *The Postal Record*.

The awards were announced by ILCA on Oct. 28. Its contest recognized excellence among member publications, websites, film, video and electronic media during 2023.

In announcing its winners, ILCA wrote, "Annually, the organization hosts what is now the largest competition exclusively for labor journalists. Thousands of entries that tell the story of the global labor movement are judged by experts in the field across the industry."

"Communication lies at the heart of what NALC does. It is in our DNA," NALC President Brian L. Renfroe said. "The work our digital and traditional Communications Department does is vital to our efforts, and we're proud that ILCA has recognized that again. Congratulations to the entire communications team."

NALC won two first-place awards.

In the Best Use of Earned Media category, Director of Communications and Media Relations Philip Dine's work engaging the media to cover NALC's "Enough is enough" campaign to draw attention to crimes against letter carriers received first place.

Dine also took home an honorable mention for his January 2023 *Postal Record* letter from the editor, "Flipping the script," which told the story of retired letter carrier **Thomas Barnes** being

rescued by a Teamsters member before a train crashed into Barnes's car.

Managing Editor Mike Shea won first place in the Best Labor History category for "How a fight with President Teddy Roosevelt stripped letter carriers of their right to strike" from the August 2023 issue of *The Postal Record*.

Former Editorial Assistant Joelle Dine was awarded second place in the Best Series category for the ongoing series "Letter carriers and the mail on social media." The series shines a light on online news and social media posts that celebrate the mail and letter carriers.

Dozens of international unions and individual locals enter the ILCA contest annually, including some of the nation's largest unions. NALC rejoined ILCA five years ago and has won multiple awards each year since. **PR**