

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The NALC Education Department continues to provide educational opportunities and training materials for NALC officers, stewards, activists and rank-and-file members. Director of Education Jamie Lumm works closely with national officers and headquarters staff to develop training modules on a wide variety of subjects as well as to present educational programs at training events across the country.

NALC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Founded in 2005 by President Emeritus Bill Young and then-Executive Vice President Jim Williams, the NALC Leadership Academy continues to reflect the national leadership's belief in the importance of developing and preparing current and future NALC leaders for the challenges of today and those that are surely ahead. Since the Detroit convention in 2018, the Academy has graduated Class 23 and Class 24, bringing the total number of graduates to just under 720. Class 25, which began in January of 2020, was interrupted during the March session due to the COVID pandemic and is expected to resume in early 2022.

Interest in the Academy has remained high. Each year, hundreds of NALC activists apply for one of the 30 slots available in each class. Most encouraging to me is how closely the demographics of the applicants reflect those of NALC as a whole. As of our last application period (2019), 35 percent of the applicants were female and 45 percent came into the Service as CCAs. The applicants came from branches of fewer than 20 members to those with more than 7,000, and from members with barely a year in the Postal Service to those with more than 33. More than 45 percent were applying for the first time, while dozens were seeking admission for the sixth, seventh or eighth time. This is promising on many levels. It shows that there's a high interest among newer members in becoming of greater service to the union. It also shows that in spite of not being selected in previous attempts, many continue to reapply each year, showing that they are determined and not easily discouraged, both characteristics of good leaders.

Admission to the Academy begins with the completion of a written application form available on the NALC website during the application acceptance period, which is announced on the website and in the *NALC Bulletin* and *The Postal Record*. Applicants must be endorsed by a union leader who commits to being their mentor throughout the Leadership Academy experience and provides them with additional learning opportunities. It's an extremely difficult job to select only 30 students for each class from among the many qualified applicants.

The rivers of NALC talent and dedication continue to run deep, as evidenced by the high quality of each new Leadership Academy class. At last count, 19 state presidents, 22 regional administrative assistants, eight headquarters staff members, four regional workers' compensation assistants, three legislative political officers, three national business agents and one resident national officer are graduates of the Academy. Additionally, Academy graduates have been elected to leadership positions in their local branches, small and large, many becoming full-time union officers. Just as important, hundreds of graduates have gone on to serve NALC in various other capacities. These include as arbitration advocates, Dispute Resolution Team members, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs representatives, shop stewards, route adjustment team members and Carrier Academy instructors, as well as food drive, MDA and community service coordinators, just to name a few.

I am constantly encouraged by the commitment to work hard and help others seen in each successive leadership class. If this is any indication of the future of NALC, and I believe that it is, we have a bright future ahead of us.

BRANCH OFFICERS TRAINING

NALC was on the road again the past two years, offering its expanded branch officers training in various locations around the country. Director Lumm worked with NALC Secretary-Treasurer Nicole Rhine and Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Paul Barner to develop this popular enhanced program. The work-

shops cover a variety of topics related to the administrative and fiduciary duties and responsibilities of state and branch officers and trustees. Sessions were held in Minneapolis in the fall of 2018 and in Orlando, Cleveland and New Orleans in 2019. The last session held before the pandemic halted travel was in Washington, DC, in early 2020.

STEP B TRAINING

NALC continues to work with USPS Headquarters to prepare and conduct joint training for Step B candidates as part of the Dispute Resolution Process. There are currently 58 teams actively employed to cover the USPS districts around the country. This means that providing Dispute Resolution Team replacement and backup training is an ongoing process. Since the Detroit convention, week-long Step B training sessions were held at the Bolger Training Center in August and October 2018, February and October 2019, and February 2020. Director Jamie Lumm, along with his counterpart from USPS, lead a training team consisting of USPS and NALC Headquarters staff, area labor representatives and experienced Step B Team members. NALC instructors since 2018 has included include Marvin Booker, Doyle Callihan, Jeffry Fox, Mats Julin, Karrie Kimbrell, Dave Lozano, Monique Mate, Gina Mendoza-Telk, Steve Perry, Jim Ruetze and Sue Wellhausen.

Step B candidates receive training on various sections of the contract, the *Joint Contract Administration Manual* and postal manuals, as well as in contract application, computer research and decision writing. To become certified to serve on a Step B team, candidates must satisfactorily complete all work assignments, demonstrate accuracy and proficiency in decision-making and writing, and pass a comprehensive written examination on the contract. NALC continues to work with Postal Service staff to improve and update this training.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

At the 2018 national convention in Detroit, NALC presented numerous educational seminars and workshops on a

variety of subjects prior to and following each convention. These classes are designed to inform and involve NALC delegates on issues that directly con-

cern them and their families, such as contract administration, legislation, organizing, fiduciary responsibilities, retirement, injured workers' rights,

safety and health, community services and many others. Director Lumm will be working with other NALC staff to assist with and present these classes.