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Amid Pandemic, NARFE Resources, Campaigns Educate and Shine Light on Feds

By Barbara Sido, Executive Director

It's hard to believe that summer has unofficially begun. Perhaps social distancing and quarantine protocols have made the season's entrance more subdued this year, but I'm pleased to say that neither have dampened the spirit and work of headquarters staff in continuing to serve federal employees and retirees during these trying times.

In early May, we celebrated – albeit virtually – Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW). Our efforts included the launch of “[This is a Fed](#),” NARFE’s public education campaign to combat the negative narrative cast on civil servants by showcasing profiles of federal employees. If you are or know of an active federal employee that we should feature in “This is a Fed,” I encourage you to participate.

Additionally, NARFE Staff Vice President of Policy and Programs Jessica Klement was featured in a special episode of “[Government Matters](#),” and NARFE National President Ken Thomas penned an [op-ed](#) that was published on Federal News Network’s website. And, nearly 100 members downloaded and submitted NARFE’s letter-to-the-editor (LTE), of which approximately 20 LTEs were published in daily and regional news outlets across the country.

The economic downturn of COVID-19 has been top of mind to the federal community. As employees and retirees have worried about their retirement savings dwindling and the federal government has been hiring in some capacities to address the surge in health care needs, NARFE’s Federal Benefits Institute led two new webinars in April. “Act II—How Federal Reemployment Affects Your Benefits” and “Managing Your Federal Retirement Benefits During the COVID-19 Crisis” drew thousands of participants, including nonmembers. Archives of both webinars are available [here](#).

Coordinating and producing these relevant back-to-back webinars demonstrated NARFE’s responsiveness to fast-changing member needs. It also gave us the ability to expand brand awareness to active federal employees in search of insight and personal connection and to journalists looking for new resources.

In the midst of the pandemic, it is all the more important that we highlight the hardworking professionals of the federal workforce – those who rarely receive public recognition – who have not wavered in providing critical services to the American people. A huge thank you goes out to NARFE members who helped us shed light on the dynamic professions and diverse individuals of the federal workforce during PSRW.

And with things very much still up in the air for large gatherings in upcoming months, we’ve decided the safest course of action is to cancel FEDcon20. We are disappointed, of course; but we’re looking forward to developing new ways of delivering our content to you in lieu of the conference. We’ll be back in Scottsdale for 2022, and of course celebrating NARFE’s centennial next June in Washington, DC, along with the Legislative Training Conference (LEGcon).



While parts of the country begin reopening, NARFE's headquarters building currently remains closed per local and state government orders. We are eager to reconnect with members, and we look forward to resuming normal business operations in accordance with local government authorities and regulations.



ADVOCACY

NARFE Advocates for Federal Community, Provides Answers to Your Questions

By Seth Ickes, Grassroots Assistant

NARFE has been working hard on behalf of federal retirees and employees affected by the coronavirus. NARFE is urging Congress to improve workplace conditions for frontline federal employees, protect federal retirees' income and grant emergency funding to the U.S. Postal Service. Additionally, NARFE created a [COVID-19 frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) webpage](#) that addresses a myriad of coronavirus-related questions; it includes information about economic stimulus payments, guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on COVID-19, the suspension of required minimum distributions (RMDs), and more.

In April, NARFE presented two timely COVID-19-related [webinars](#) that are publicly available for a limited time. The first webinar, coming at a time when agencies like the Department of Veterans Affairs are looking to rehire annuitants to critical positions, addressed how federal reemployment affects the annuity and benefits of retirees. The second webinar looked at how best to manage your federal retirement benefits during the COVID-19 crisis – particularly relevant considering the economic downturn caused by the virus. The webinars will remain online in the Federal Benefits Institute for NARFE members as long as they remain relevant.

In a March [letter](#) to Congress, NARFE President Ken Thomas requested that a provision be included in the COVID-19 stimulus bill to suspend RMDs on retirement accounts, including those in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) for calendar year 2020. For 2020, the RMD calculation is based on the retirement account balance as of December 31, 2019. With stock markets losing substantial value since that time, RMDs would force seniors to withdraw a far greater percentage of their retirement accounts than anticipated. The withdrawals could also force seniors to sell assets at depressed values. As a result of NARFE's advocacy, the provision was included and the bill was passed into law at the end of March.

Thomas sent a [letter](#) to Congress in April, urging action on COVID-19 issues impacting federal and postal employees and retirees, and he signed on to a similar [letter](#) from the Federal-Postal Coalition. The letters asked Congress to amend current law to require the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program to cover telehealth services for all participants. Both letters also called on Congress to expand emergency sick leave and family leave provisions to all federal employees under the "Families First" Act and expand telework programs to slow the spread of the virus. NARFE stressed that hazard premium pay, especially during this outbreak, is one of the most important benefits all frontline and essential federal and postal workers should receive. Furthermore, the letters pushed for increased funding for personal protective equipment like masks and gloves, as well as presumptive workers' compensation in case of infection.



NARFE has also been working to ensure federal annuitants receive timely stimulus payments approved as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Thomas penned a [letter](#) in April asking the U.S. Secretary of Treasury to direct the IRS to work with OPM to send stimulus payments via direct deposit to the bank accounts where federal retirees receive their annuities – an effort to ensure that recipients who do not have direct deposit bank information on file with the IRS receive timely stimulus payments. Doing so also ensures that mailed checks are not sent to outdated addresses, protecting recipients from identity fraud or further payment delays. NARFE’s recommendation has yet to be implemented. You can learn more about CARES Act stimulus payments on NARFE’s COVID-19 FAQs page.

NARFE launched a grassroots campaign in early May to advocate for including provisions of the Protect Our Post Offices Act, H.R. 6425, in future COVID-19 relief packages. Apart from dealing with financial obligations placed on it by Congress, USPS is facing a dramatic decline in revenue as a result of the pandemic. The Protect Our Post Offices Act would distribute \$25 billion in emergency funding to the agency, helping it make up for lost revenue and provide masks and other personal protective equipment for its workers. NARFE encourages you to circulate this [action letter](#) among your members and implore them to contact their lawmakers to support the legislation.

Energizing Members to Advocate: NARFE’s Advocacy Team Is Coming to a Computer Near You

By Marsha Padilla-Goad, Grassroots Program Manager

NARFE’s advocacy team has developed two video presentations to help NARFE chapters and federations stay up-to-date and connected during these unprecedented times of quarantining and canceled federation conferences. While Americans continue to socially distance and avoid crowds to help slow the spread of the virus, NARFE continues to explore alternative approaches to deliver vital services and information to its members.

Each year, NARFE’s advocacy team travels throughout the country to present in-person advocacy updates at federation conferences. These presentations are sometimes delivered live at NARFE headquarters through its virtual meeting platform, GoToMeeting. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has sidelined in-person meetings for the time being. Additionally, local stay-at-home orders have NARFE’s staff working from home with differing technological capabilities.

Nevertheless, these challenges won’t stop the advocacy team from delivering presentations. To support federation and chapter virtual conferences and events during this time, NARFE has developed two advocacy video PowerPoint presentations that can be accessed anytime: “NARFE’s Advocacy Program” and “NARFE’s Advocacy Update.”

The first discusses NARFE’s overall advocacy strategy and how a collaborative effort between NARFE National Headquarters, federations, chapters and the entire membership is vital to achieving our legislative goals. The second presentation is an update of NARFE’s legislative wins in 2019 and its legislative priorities for the remainder of the 116th Congress. The videos are housed on NARFE’s advocacy webpage, www.narfe.org/legislation, under the Advocacy Webinars bucket. You must be logged in as a member to access the presentations.

Please contact the advocacy team at advocacy@narfe.org if you have any questions or need additional information.



NARFE-PAC Quarterly Report and Candidate Questionnaire Available

By Ross Apter, Political Associate

First, I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe. The [fifth quarter PAC reports](#) have been posted to the [NARFE-PAC website](#), and they show an outpouring of support for NARFE-PAC. Thank you to everyone who contributed and to our PAC leaders who engaged with NARFE members about this important program. NARFE-PAC is fighting for you and couldn't do so without your support.

As you know, many aspects of our lives have been disrupted, including traditional events that allow NARFE members, officers and staff to engage with lawmakers. A number of local fundraisers that NARFE members were set to attend have been canceled. Once it is safe to do so, NARFE-PAC looks forward to connecting NARFE members with lawmakers and candidates through in-person local fundraisers. Fortunately, there are still virtual events taking place that allow NARFE's message to spread.

Let's take a look at the numbers. Through the fifth quarter of the 2019-2020 cycle, 25,040 NARFE members contributed \$1,427,546.50 to NARFE-PAC. The average contribution was \$57.01. Compared to the fifth quarter of the 2017-2018 cycle, all of those numbers have increased: the total contribution amount is up \$369,522.21 (from \$1,058,024.29), the number of contributors rose by 4,101 (from 20,939), and the average contribution rose by \$6.48 (from \$50.53).

As far as disbursements, from January 2019 through March 2020, NARFE-PAC disbursed \$916,500 for political purposes: \$454,000 to candidates, \$270,000 to noncandidate committees and \$192,500 to leadership PACs. That's an increase of \$414,500 in disbursements when compared to the fifth quarter of the 2017-2018 cycle, at which time NARFE-PAC disbursed \$502,000.

The screenshot shows the 'NARFE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES' form. It includes sections for 'CANDIDATE INFORMATION' (Name, Title, Party, Biography) and 'BACKGROUND ON THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE' (Federal service details, Honoring Commitments). The form is a PDF document with a header, introductory text, and several sections for candidate information and background details.

NARFE-PAC's Goals and Progress for the 2019-2020 Cycle:

Raise \$1,750,000: **\$1,427,546.50**

Disburse \$1,250,000 for political contributions: **\$916,500**

Send NARFE members to 110 local fundraisers: **71**

Grow monthly giving program (sustainer program) by 20%: **15%**

As you can see, NARFE-PAC is doing well, but there is plenty of work to be done. The interruption of NARFE-PAC month due to the advancing COVID-19 outbreak hindered NARFE-PAC's ability to send members to local fundraisers and sign up new sustainers. However, there is still time left before the end of the election cycle, and it's clear that NARFE members understand the important work of NARFE-PAC.

In addition to the reports, the [NARFE Questionnaire for Congressional Candidates](#) is available and can be sent to **nonincumbent** candidates running for Congress. Be sure to coordinate with your federation NARFE-PAC coordinator and the advocacy department via advocacy@narfe.org so we know

which candidates have been given a questionnaire. We want to make sure campaigns receive just one questionnaire in order to avoid confusion. The questionnaire is meant only for new candidates running for Congress, not incumbents.

Thank you all for your support of NARFE-PAC, and I hope you and your families remain safe and well. NARFE-PAC is hard at work and continues to fight for you. If you have any questions about NARFE-PAC or the questionnaire, email me at rapter@narfe.org.



NON-DUES REVENUE

NARFE Sponsorships Are a Win for All

By Anita Nelson, Director, Business Development

Are you familiar with the business development side of NARFE? This team concentrates on generating non-dues revenue – revenue an association earns from sources other than membership fees. For NARFE, these revenue channels include sponsorships, exhibiting, advertising and affinity partnerships. Collaborating with companies in this manner allows our organization to increase our funding and broaden the value of NARFE memberships. The following are updates about NARFE’s business development programs.

NARFE Annual Circle Sponsors levels are designed to recognize the companies that give the greatest support to NARFE throughout the year. As a special thanks from NARFE, each of these levels – chairman, president and executive – offers a special set of benefits, in addition to those included with the companies’ sponsorship. We’d like to acknowledge our Circle Sponsors and welcome several new companies to the Circle.



Chairman’s Circle Sponsors:

Eargo – New!
GEHA

President’s Circle Sponsors:

Aetna – New!
HearUSA
Nationwide
UnitedHealthcare – New!

Executive Circle Sponsors:

Blue Cross Blue Shield
Brookdale Senior Living – New!

Our ongoing efforts to secure sponsorships have proven successful in helping support the bottom line of the organization so that we can continue to provide the information resources and services that members find valuable.

NARFE Perks Gets a New Look

NARFE’s Affinity Partner Program – or Perk Partners as we sometimes like to refer to them – is a low-cost way for companies to build awareness of and showcase their products and services to our members.

We ask that all Perk Partners offer a unique discount to our members, and, in return, NARFE promotes the company’s products and services to our members. Our Perk Partners pay a referral fee or royalty to NARFE on every member purchase. Then NARFE promotes the program in various ways, including a *NARFE Magazine* spread every issue, ads in *NewsLine*, placements on our website, shout outs on social media and quarterly emails to our members.

In May, we debuted a new look for the program, including a new logo and slogan: “When you save with NARFE Perks, your membership pays for itself.” The premise of the marketing campaign



is to raise awareness of the program and encourage members to use their Perks and see value in the savings that could possibly offset their membership fee.

Brookdale Senior Living to Offer Virtual Meetings and Webinars to Chapters

If your local NARFE federation event has been canceled or postponed, Brookdale would like to help. In an effort to encourage social distancing but still keep members connected, Brookdale is offering to host virtual meetings and webinars for local NARFE chapters. Presentations can include such topics as:

- Brain Health
- Medication Safety and Awareness
- Nutrition and Aging Myths
- Preventing the Flu
- The Blues: Doldrums or Depression?
- Understanding Alzheimer's Disease
- Advanced Health Care Directives
- Laughter Is the Best Medicine
- Caring for Someone with Alzheimer's Disease
- Caring for the Caregiver
- Diabetes
- Home Safety

If you would like Brookdale to host a virtual meeting for your chapter, or if you'd like more information on any of these topics, please contact Anita Nelson at anelson@narfe.org.

Growing Membership Despite the Coronavirus

By Dave Bowman, Senior Director, Membership Development

NARFE is rolling out new membership initiatives, and among them is a regular feature about membership development for chapters and federations in *NARFE Insider*. This is part of our new membership development strategy aimed at ensuring that NARFE thrives today and grows in the future.

Did you know that 15 percent of all new NARFE members come to us through chapter recruitment? As NARFE leaders, you are some of our best ambassadors, and we sincerely hope that you are recruiting new members year-round. As we come into the summer season on the heels of the worst pandemic this nation has seen in a century, there aren't many opportunities for face-to-face recruiting right now, but there are other ways to engage. You can represent NARFE virtually by commenting on and sharing our social media posts on Facebook and other digital platforms. You can talk about our magazine and federal benefits expertise to Fed friends on the phone and through online Zoom chats. You can share our advocacy successes through email. These are just a few examples, and if you need help or more information, we're here for you.

In the months ahead, we want to feature recruitment tips and success stories in this column, so we want to hear from you. Tell us about effective recruitment tactics you've used or a successful campaign you ran. Please email dbowman@narfe.org with your ideas, and we may feature them in an upcoming issue. Working together, we can keep NARFE moving forward!

NARFE Leaders—

Tell us about effective recruitment tactics you've used or a successful campaign you ran.

Email dbowman@narfe.org



NARFE in the News

Each issue of *NARFE Insider* features selections of major media and, occasionally, local news coverage generated by chapters and federations. While much of the country has been shuttered inside during the COVID-19 pandemic, NARFE has remained focused on increasing awareness of the important role of federal civil servants and the critical services they provide, not just during a pandemic but throughout the entire year. Enjoy a few clips below capturing our advocacy, communications and media outreach efforts.

[GPO and WEP: The Other Pandemics!](#)

Federal News Network

Your Turn with Mike Causey

*Interview features NARFE Staff Vice President of Policy and Programs Jessica Klement and federal benefits expert Tammy Flanagan

May 13, 2020

[Pandemic or Not, Civil Servants Deserve Our Appreciation Today and Every Day](#)

Federal News Network

*Op-ed by NARFE National President Ken Thomas

May 7, 2020

[Updates for Federal Retirees Returning to Work](#)

Government Matters

*Interview features NARFE Staff Vice President of Policy and Programs Jessica Klement

May 4, 2020

[Join the Fight of Our Lives: Uncle Sam Wants You Back](#)

Federal News Network

Your Turn with Mike Causey

*Interview features NARFE Staff Vice President of Policy and Programs Jessica Klement and federal benefits expert James Marshall

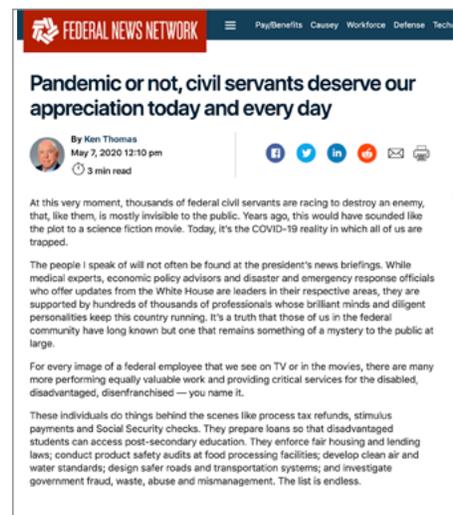
April 8, 2020

[Federal Government, Stressed by Coronavirus, Seeks to Hire and Retain Workers Through Incentives](#)

The Washington Post

*Interview features NARFE Director of Legislative and Political Affairs John Hatton

April 7, 2020



Webinars for the Federal Community



UPCOMING WEBINARS:

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2 P.M. EDT

- ▶ Plan Now–Relax Later: Tips for New and Mid-Career Feds

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2 P.M. EDT

- ▶ Financial Planning for Mid-Career Feds

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2 P.M. EDT

- ▶ Discover Your Best Retirement Date



Always FREE for NARFE members.
To register, go to [NARFE.org/Institute](https://www.narfe.org/institute).



NARFE FEDERAL BENEFITS INSTITUTE

More questions? Call or email NARFE's federal benefits specialists for one-on-one help. **All FREE for members. Not a member?** Join NARFE today at [NARFE.org/Join](https://www.narfe.org/join)

NARFE Insider is posted on the website at [www.NARFE.org](https://www.narfe.org)

The following members receive *NARFE Insider* for NARFE Leaders: Officer codes 1-Chapter President, 2-Chapter Vice President, 3-Chapter Secretary, 4-Chapter Treasurer, 5-Chapter Secretary/Treasurer, 6-Chapter Legislative Officer/National, 7-Chapter Membership Chair, 8-Chapter Public Relations, 9-Chapter Service Officer, 11-Chapter Editor, 12-Chapter Alzheimer's Chair, 13-Chapter NARFE-PAC Officer, 14-Chapter Financial Secretary, 15-Chapter Other, 16-Chapter Net Coordinator, 17-Chapter Legislative Officer/State, 20-Federation President, 21-Federation Executive Vice President, 22-Federation Vice President, 23-Federation Secretary, 24-Federation Treasurer, 25-Federation Secretary/Treasurer, 26-Federation Legislative Chair/National, 28-Federation Legislative Chair/State, 29-Federation PR, 31-Federation Service Officer, 33-Federation Membership Chair, 34-Federation Editor, 35-Federation Alzheimer's Chair, 36-Federation NARFE-PAC Coordinator, 37-Federation Immediate Past President, 38-Federation Other, 39-Federation Executive Committee, 40-Pre-Retirement Speaker, 41-Federation Net Coordinator, 42-FEEA Coordinator, 43-Federation Area Officer, 44-Regional Alzheimer's Coordinator, 45-Regional FEEA Coordinator, 49-Regional Vice President, 50-Immediate Past Regional Vice President, 51-National Officer, 52-Past National Officer