

UMOJA

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NBCFAE



TRAVEL & HISTORY
CHICAGO

FALL BOOK
READING LIST

2.8% PAY RAISE
DENIED. WHAT
DOES THAT MEAN?



Fall is here. Midterm
elections are coming
up. Time to transition.

OCTOBER 2026
ISSUE NO.11

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SHORT APPROACH

FALL READING LIST SUGGESTIONS



**2.8% PAY RAISE IN THE HOLDING
PATTERN**

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?





WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN NBCFAE?

1

WHO ARE WE?

We are an employee association that serves the needs of the under represented aviation employees of the federal government.

2

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

We offer support, training, mentorship and networking through our national conferences and regional/chapter meetups.

3

AVIATION OUTREACH . . .

We provide a career pipeline and engage over 40,000 youth annually to aviation based careers all over the world.

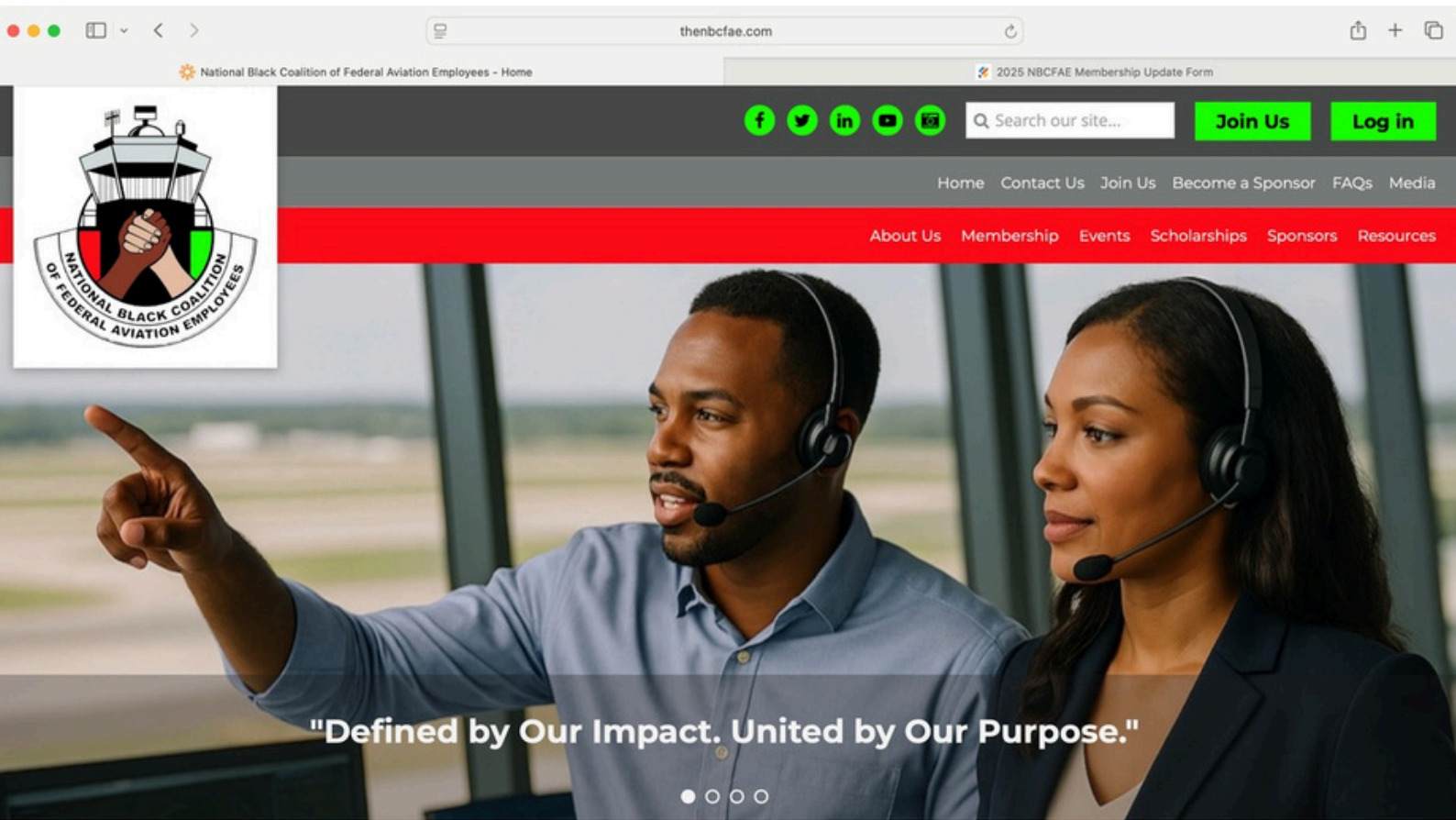
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OVER 300+ MEMBERS AND GROWING!

We are the largest federal aviation association with over 300+ members across the country.

FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO JOIN CONTACT

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We'd love for you to check out **www.thenbcfae.com**, the official home of the newly revitalized National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE)! As our organization evolves, so does our digital presence—this beautifully redesigned website is more than just a facelift; it's a central hub built to keep our members informed, engaged, and connected.

Whether you're looking for the latest updates, upcoming events, or ways to get involved, our site is your go-to destination. As NBCFAE continues to grow and break new ground, our website will grow with us—offering new features, resources, and opportunities. Visit us today, explore what's new, and become part of a powerful community that's soaring to new heights. Join us, and let's shape the future together!

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From the Editor

As the leaves begin to change and the air takes on a familiar crispness, fall reminds us that change is not only inevitable—it is necessary. Fall is a season of transition. It stands between the warmth of summer and the stillness of winter, gradually preparing us for what comes next. Nature does not resist this process. The trees release what they can no longer carry, the days slowly become shorter, and the landscape transforms before our eyes. What may appear to be an ending is actually part of a larger cycle of renewal. There is a lesson in that for all of us. Transition requires us to trust the process.

Within the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE), we have experienced our own seasons of change. As we celebrate 50 years of history, service, advocacy, fellowship, and community, we are also reminded that an organization cannot remain relevant by standing still. Our ability to grow depends upon our willingness to examine where we are, recognize where we need to go, and embrace the changes necessary to move forward.

Change can be uncomfortable. It can require us to release familiar ways of doing things, adjust our expectations, and make room for new ideas and new leadership. But transition does not mean that we are abandoning our history. It means we are building upon it.

Our founders could not have known everything NBCFAE would become five decades later. They simply understood that there was a need for community, access, advocacy, professional development, mentorship, and a place where people could come together to help one another navigate the aviation profession. Their vision created a foundation upon which generations have continued to build. Now, it is our responsibility to continue that work.

As the NBCFAE moves through this season of transition, we should allow ourselves to experience the changes—not simply endure them. There is value in the process of listening, learning, adjusting, and growing together. Every transition provides an opportunity to ask important questions: What should we carry forward? What should we release? What new possibilities are waiting for us? And how can we ensure that the next generation is better positioned because of the work we do today?

Our recent evolution reminds us that sometimes bringing people and resources together can make us stronger. When we streamline, collaborate, share ideas, and create opportunities for members to connect across regions and generations, we strengthen the organization as a whole. The goal is not change for the sake of change. The goal is progress with purpose.

As we look toward the future, let us remember that every season has a role. Summer gives us growth and abundance. Fall teaches us release and preparation. Winter gives us rest and reflection. And eventually, spring brings new growth.

NBCFAE is in a season where we are being called to prepare for what comes next.

Let us honor the lessons of our 50-year journey while remaining open to the possibilities ahead. Let us embrace new ideas without forgetting the wisdom that brought us here. Let us create space for emerging leaders while continuing to honor those who paved the way. And above all, let us trust that the changes we experience today can be part of a much larger plan for the future of our organization.

The leaves do not question whether they should change. They simply respond to the season. Perhaps that is our invitation as well: to recognize the season we are in, embrace the transition, and trust that something new is taking shape.

Fifty years behind us is a remarkable legacy.

What we do with the next fifty is our opportunity.

Let us transition with purpose.

Let us grow with intention.

Let us move forward together.

With appreciation for the past, confidence in the present, and hope for the future

Kanika

Editor-in-Chief



President's Message

Dear NBCFAE Family,

As we welcome October, I want to begin with two simple words: thank you. The past several weeks have demonstrated exactly what is possible when NBCFAE comes together with purpose. From our 48th Annual National Training Conference, to our participation in the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) Conference, the NATCA Communicating For Safety (CFS) Conference, and the Federal Aviation Administration Managers Association (FAAMA) Conference, NBCFAE has continued to maintain a strong and visible presence throughout the aviation community.

At each of these conferences, our members had opportunities to network, build relationships, engage with industry and labor partners, share the NBCFAE mission, recruit new members, and ensure that our organization remains part of the important conversations shaping the future of aviation.

Our presence matters.

Every conference, meeting, panel, training session, and conversation gives us another opportunity to represent our members, strengthen partnerships, and remind the aviation community why NBCFAE has remained relevant for five decades. We also carried that same mission beyond the conference floor through our activities during Congressional Black Caucus Week, our legislative engagement on Capitol Hill, professional development opportunities, community partnerships, and continued advocacy for our members. But our work does not end when the conference concludes or the pictures are posted.

The work continues.

As we enter the final quarter of 2026, October represents an opportunity to refocus, realign, and prepare for what comes next.

Our organization was built on a powerful legacy of service, representation, education, and advocacy within aviation. It is our responsibility not only to honor that legacy, but to continue building an NBCFAE that is prepared for the future.

That means strengthening our regions and chapters. It means developing the next generation of leaders. It means creating meaningful educational and professional opportunities for our members. It means continuing to advocate for equitable access, recruitment, retention, advancement, and representation throughout the aviation workforce.

Most importantly, it means remembering that NBCFAE belongs to its members.

This month, we will continue the conversations necessary to move our organization forward. Our National Membership Meeting will continue on October 29, providing another opportunity for members to hear updates, engage with leadership, and participate in the business and future direction of our organization. As your 15th National President, I remain committed to leading with transparency, accountability, collaboration, and purpose. Every decision may not be easy, and every season will not be comfortable, but our responsibility is to make decisions that position NBCFAE to remain strong for the generations that will follow us.

We have accomplished a great deal this year—and we are not finished.

Let October be the beginning of a strong final chapter to 2026.

Stay engaged. Stay connected. Support your chapters and regions. Mentor someone coming behind you. Share your expertise. Invite someone into this organization. And continue carrying the NBCFAE mission wherever your aviation journey takes you.

Our history opened the doors. Our responsibility is to keep them open—and create new ones.

Together, we will continue to Educate. Advocate. Elevate.

In Service & Leadership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ejide D. Fashina".

Ejide D. Fashina
National President

National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE)





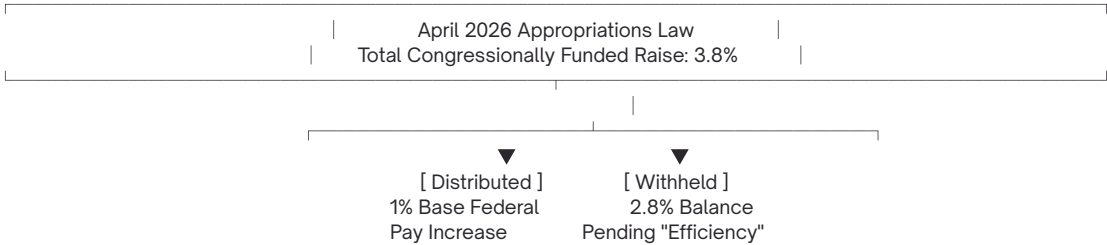
Bargaining Safety? The 2.8 Debate

The ongoing dispute over federal air traffic controller compensation reached a boiling point following congressional oversight hearings. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Bryan Bedford confirmed he is withholding a 2.8% pay increase from the nation's roughly 11,000 air traffic controllers, a decision that has sparked fierce pushback from lawmakers and labor unions alike. The funding stems from the Homeland Security and Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act, signed into law on April 30, 2026. The legislation set aside \$140 million intended to provide controllers with a 3.8% salary increase. While the workforce immediately received the baseline 1% increase given to all federal employees, the remaining 2.8% bump remains entirely blocked by the agency's leadership.

The Statutory Loophole: "Sole Discretion"

The core justification for Administrator Bedford's refusal lies in the precise text of the appropriations bill passed by Congress. The language of the statute grants the FAA Administrator "sole discretion" to implement the remaining 2.8% increase. Crucially, this power is conditional, subject to the administrator determining that measurable improvements have been achieved in workforce scheduling, staffing utilization, and operational efficiencies.

Bedford, a former regional airline executive, has utilized this legal authority to demand a series of aggressive workforce reforms before releasing the funds. According to the FAA, internal data reveals structural inefficiencies within air traffic control facilities that must be addressed first.



The Call for Greater "Time-on-Position"

At the heart of the agency's rationale is a push to overhaul scheduling and daily workforce metrics. Bedford testified before a House Appropriations panel that he wants to increase the amount of time controllers spend actively managing live radar and flight traffic—known as "time-on-position"—from a current average of four hours a day to five hours a day. Furthermore, the FAA is leveraging the withheld raise to force negotiations with the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) regarding structural scheduling shifts. The agency is seeking to curb the informal practice of "early shoves," where controllers leave work before their official shift end times if traffic slows. The administration is also demanding stricter oversight of leave availability during known peak travel periods to minimize localized shortages. From Bedford's perspective, the raise is a tool to extract greater productivity out of existing staff.

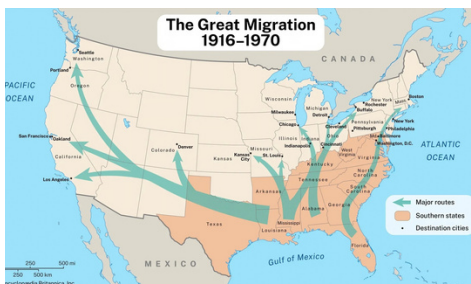
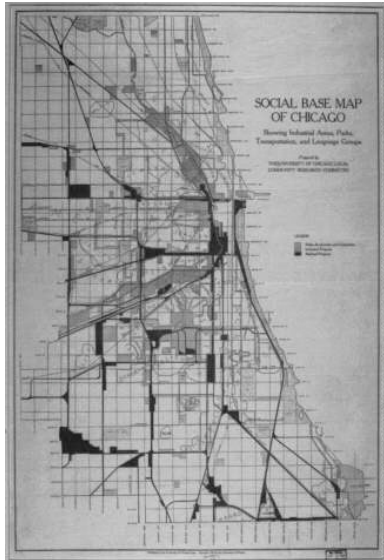
Backlash Over an "Overstretched" Workforce

The decision has ignited intense bipartisan fury on Capitol Hill and deep demoralization across control towers. Lawmakers argue that holding the money hostage ignores the realities of a system facing an acute staffing shortage. The U.S. air traffic control system is understaffed by roughly 3,000 personnel, forcing many controllers to work exhausting six-day workweeks and mandatory overtime. Illinois Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, who spearheaded demands for the raise's immediate rollout, warned that squeezing more utilization out of a burned-out workforce poses immediate risks to national aviation safety. In congressional hearings, Representative Mike Quigley and others argued that the congressional intent was to put these highly stressed workers on financial par with federal law enforcement, not to tie their baseline compensation to corporate-style performance metrics. Opponents warn that withholding earned pay will ultimately damage retention and tank recruiting efforts at a time when the agency needs them most.

The U.S. federal air traffic control system faces a national deficit of roughly 1,777 Certified Professional Controllers (CPCs), with overall active staffing hovering at 85.9% of recommended target levels across 313 federal facilities.



Travel & History



The Great Migration stands as one of the most significant demographic shifts in American history, radically reshaping the cultural, political, and social landscape of northern urban centers. Between 1916 and 1970, more than six million African Americans relocated from the rural South to the North and West. Among the primary destinations, Chicago served as a beacon of industrial opportunity and a promised land of relative freedom. Over half a million migrants arrived in the city during this era, permanently altering its identity. While the migration offered an escape from the systemic oppression of Jim Crow, it also brought new urban challenges, gave rise to legendary cultural movements, and ignited fierce racial tensions.

Upon arriving in Chicago, the vast majority of Black migrants were confined to a narrow strip of land on the city's South Side due to discriminatory housing practices, restrictive covenants, and redlining. This neighborhood, initially called the "Black Belt," evolved into a vibrant, self-sustaining community known as Bronzeville, or the "Black Metropolis." In Bronzeville, residents established a thriving society independent of the white-dominated institutions that excluded them. The neighborhood became a powerhouse of Black capitalism and intellectual life, boasting its own banks, insurance companies, churches, and newspapers, most notably the Chicago Defender. This influential publication not only documented life in the community but actively championed the migration, distributing train schedules and job advertisements to southern readers. Bronzeville was a place where working-class laborers and a growing Black middle class lived side-by-side, creating a unique urban ecosystem that nurtured community pride and political power.

This dense, energetic environment catalyzed a profound transformation in American music and culture. Migrants brought southern musical traditions with them, which adapted to the electrified, fast-paced nature of city life. The acoustic delta blues of the Mississippi region transformed into the Chicago Blues, characterized by electric guitars, amplification, and a hard-driving beat. Legends like Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Willie Dixon revolutionized the genre, paving the dangerous creative pathways that would later birth rock and roll. Concurrently, jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong migrated to Chicago in the 1920s, finding a massive audience in Bronzeville's crowded clubs and theaters. The city also became the birthplace of modern gospel music through the work of Thomas A. Dorsey at the Pilgrim Baptist Church. This cultural explosion redefined popular music globally, cementing Chicago as an epicenter of artistic innovation.

However, the rapid growth of the Black population sparked intense resentment among white residents, particularly working-class European immigrants who viewed the newcomers as competition for jobs and housing. These boiling tensions erupted in the summer of 1919 during a period known nationally as the Red Summer. On July 27, 1919, a Black teenager named Eugene Williams drowned after being stoned by a white man when his raft drifted across an invisible racial boundary at a Lake Michigan beach. When police refused to arrest the perpetrator, protests broke out, triggering the 1919 Chicago Race Riot. For thirteen days, racial violence consumed the city, resulting in 38 deaths, over 500 injuries, and leaving more than a thousand Black families homeless after their neighborhoods were targeted.

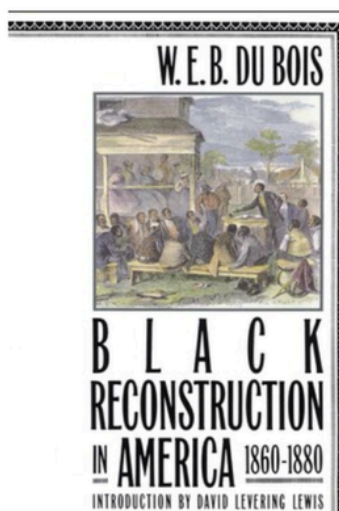
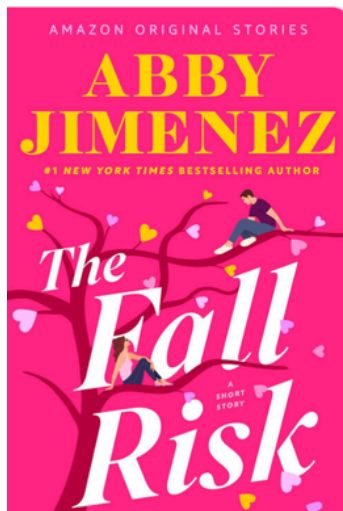
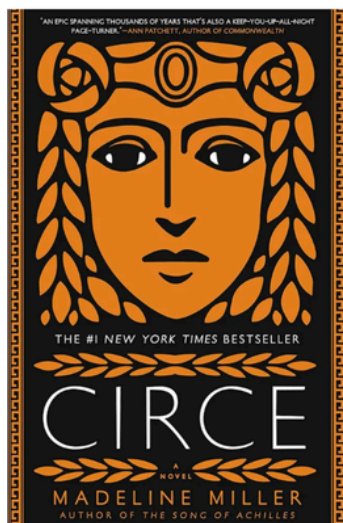
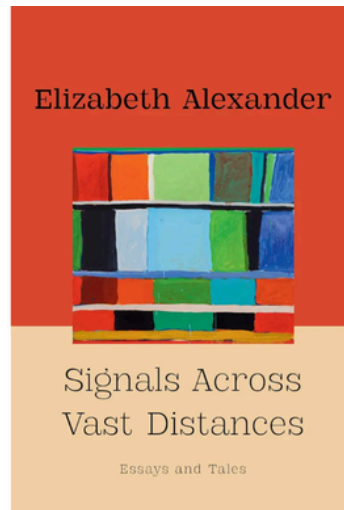
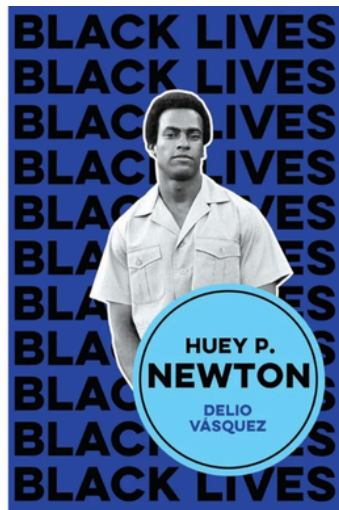
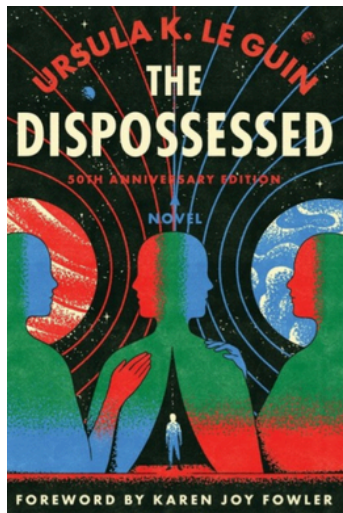
The aftermath of the 1919 riot did not deter the momentum of the Great Migration, but it solidified the racial boundaries of the city for decades to come, entrenching lines of segregation that persist today. Despite facing systemic hostility and violence, the African Americans who moved to Chicago during the Great Migration successfully forged a vibrant cultural capital in Bronzeville. Their resilience laid the groundwork for the modern civil rights movement and permanently altered the fabric of global music and American urban life.

**CHICAGO'S
CONTRIBUTIONS
CAN NEVER BE
FORGOTTEN**

**The journey to the promised land
created a Black Metropolis of
economic autonomy, music,
literature, arts and political
transformation.**

Short approach - Our Fall Reading Corner

FALL BOOK READING LIST



Fall is the great time to reset, recharge, and discover new ideas through reading. Whether you're relaxing by the fireplace, enjoying a quiet evening on the porch, or snuggled on the couch, a good book can inspire, educate, and entertain. Consider creating a fall reading list that includes a mix of history, personal development, fiction, and community-focused stories. Reading broadens our perspectives, strengthens our minds, and connects us to experiences beyond our own. This fall, challenge yourself to explore a new topic, learn something unexpected, and share your favorite reads with friends, family, and colleagues. Happy reading!

WHAT BOOKS ARE ON YOUR FALL READING LIST? LET US KNOW!

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NBCFAE Events



9/30/26, We had a virtual celebration for the retirement of Jacki Pilot!



CBC X NBCFAE Meet up on the Wharf in DC with Lee Merit and his wife, along with our National President Ejide Fashina and Northeast Regional President Tim Brooks



A farewell celebration of 5 Executive Service Leaders in the FAA. Pictured from Left to Right; Talethia Thomas, Angela McCullough, Natasha “Tash” Durkins, Katrina Hall and Alyce Hood Fleming



Our 48th Annual National Training Conference President's Reception. Pictured from Left to Right; National Presidents Clifford Armstrong, Freddie Green, Ejide Fashina, Paquita Bradley, Mamie Mallory and Shaun Sanders



NBCFAE GOES TO CAPITOL HILL
Members of the NBCFAE visited Capitol Hill to speak about our organization to bring awareness, make connections and build the civic engagement momentum!
All the members who attended are not pictured.

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