

New Member Kit



American Legion Auxiliary

Thank you for becoming part of the exciting and rewarding American Legion Auxiliary, the largest civilian patriotic service organization of women in the world. Included in this kit is information about being a member of the Auxiliary. Much of this guide, along with additional information, can be found in the Auxiliary Unit handbook or on the National American Legion Auxiliary website: www.alaforveterans.org.

WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER?

A volunteer is someone who gives time, energy and talents to others, expecting nothing in return. Volunteers must have an open mind, be willing to embrace wisdom learned from others and also let the experience of volunteering lead to personal inner growth. Volunteers realize the importance of time and kindness.

- A volunteer is someone who gives time, energy and talents
- A volunteer is someone who is willing to learn
- A volunteer is someone who has the freedom to choose
- A volunteer is someone who makes a difference

WHAT WE DO!

MISSION STATEMENT

In the spirit of service, not self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

Veterans and Military Families Served

- Actual: **3,245,448**
- Projected if all units reported: **6,010,089**

Dollars Raised or Spent on Veterans and Military Families

- Actual: **\$19,426,156**
- Projected if all units reported: **\$35,974,363**

Volunteer Hours Served

- Actual: **4,525,118**
- Projected if all units reported: **8,379,847**

Value of ALA Members' Volunteer Service = \$1.85 BILLION*

* According to Independent Sector, the 2012 estimated value of one volunteer hour of service is \$22.14

PREAMBLE TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY CONSTITUTION

“For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America...”

“To maintain law and order...”

“To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism...”

“To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations during the Great Wars...”

“To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation...”

“To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses...”

“To make right the master of might...”

“To promote peace and goodwill on earth...”

“To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy...”

“To participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion...”

“To consecrate and sanctify our association by devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

WHO CAN JOIN?

Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is limited to the grandmothers, mothers, sisters, wives, and direct and adopted female descendants of American Legion members or deceased veterans (uncles do not qualify) who served in the Armed Forces during World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, and/or Lebanon conflicts, and the Persian Gulf War and to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

A qualified veteran is a service member, who served at least one day of active duty during the dates listed on the application on the next page, was discharged honorably AND, if living, is a current American Legion member. If the veteran is deceased, provide a copy of his/her DD-214 to show proof of veteran status during the dates listed on the application. If you need to obtain a DD-214, go to <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records> and follow the instructions to request the DD-214. If you are a qualified female veteran, you can join the Auxiliary without being an American Legion member. If you are under age 18, you can join as an Auxiliary Junior member.

Descendants of veterans (great-granddaughters, etc.) often are presented with Junior memberships at birth or during childhood through the generosity of an older relative and Auxiliary member. Many of these young women continue their membership as Senior members once they reach age 18. Our voting strength at Department Conferences and Conventions is determined by our membership.

THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

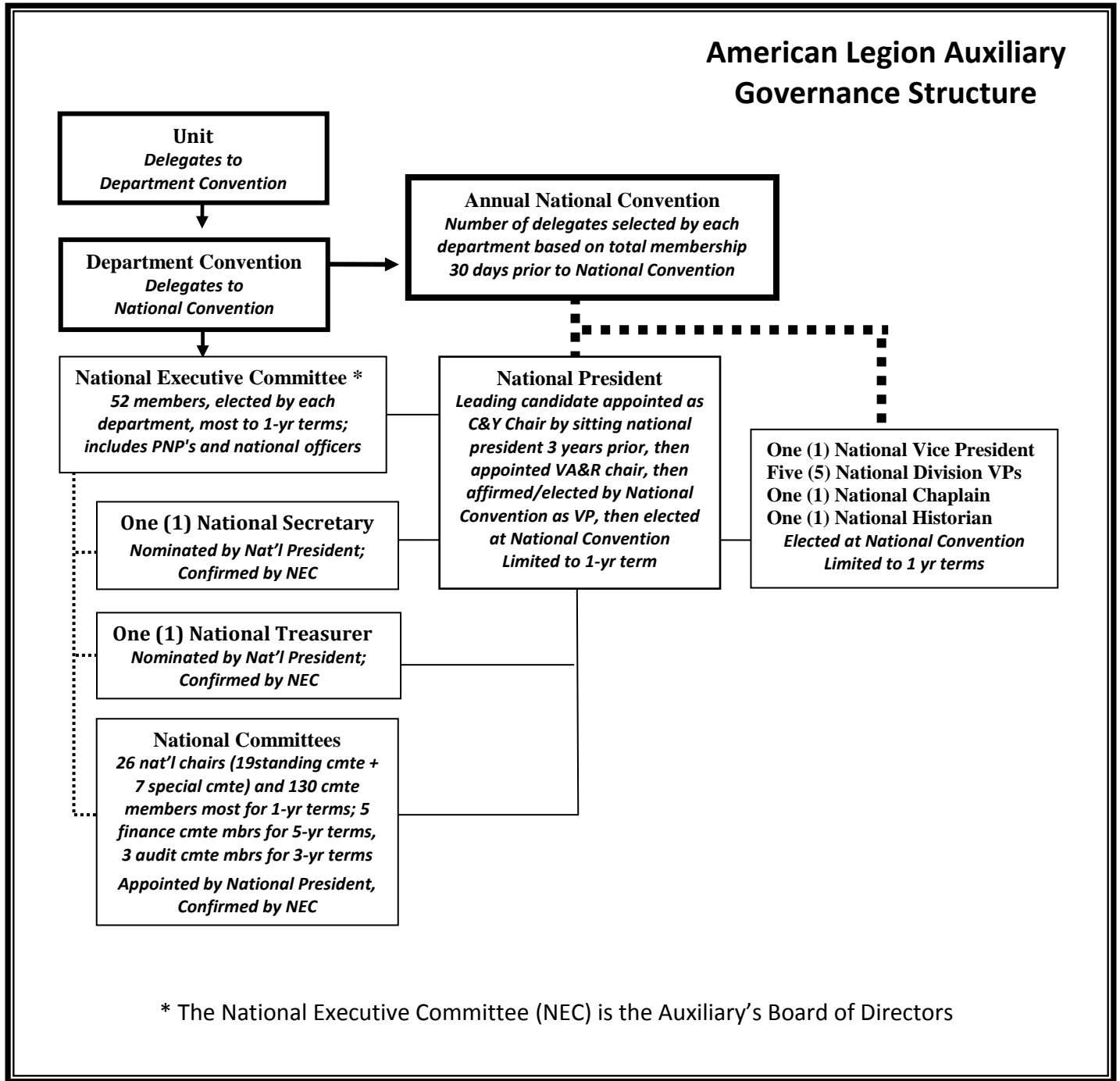
Auxiliary – Females are eligible for membership as described above.

Sons of the Legion (SAL) - SAL members include males of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership.

American Legion Riders (ALR) -To become a member, you must be a current member in good standing of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion, be the owner of a motorcycle of at least 350cc engine and possess a valid driver's license in your state of residence ~or~ you must be a current member in good standing of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion and must be the legal spouse of an ALR member in good standing within the Chapter of application.

NOTE: Once you are accepted as an Auxiliary member the veteran under whom you are eligible does not need to maintain his/her Legion membership for you to remain in the Auxiliary as long as there is no lapse in your dues payments.

STRUCTURE OF THE AUXILIARY



National (*more than 750,000 members nationwide*)

The name “American Legion Auxiliary” and the emblem are nationally owned, registered trademarks. The national organization, the highest level of the American Legion Auxiliary, provides Federal Group Tax Exemption for departments and units, and provides leadership for Auxiliary long-range planning, strategy and mission delivery. At the annual National Convention, new National Officers are elected by delegates from each State. Each State has a certain number of delegates/votes based on the number of members in that state. The national leaders of the American Legion Auxiliary consist of the National President, National Vice President, Five (5) National Division Vice Presidents, National Secretary, National Treasurer, National Chaplain and National Historian.

Department

The Department (state) level is our leadership for all the Auxiliary units in each State. Each year there is a State Convention where the new Department (state) Officers are elected by the units. Each unit has a certain number of votes based upon their membership strength (the reason why membership in a unit is so very important – to have a voice in State elections).

Unit

The unit is where the grassroots work of the Auxiliary takes place. There are nearly 9000 units nationwide. At the local level, The Legion is called a post and our Auxiliary is called a unit. A unit is attached to a Legion Post, taking its name, location and number, but we don't have to meet at the Legion Post. If the Post is no longer active, a unit may continue to function as a “widow” unit.

A note about membership dues

A member's dues are made up of three portions, the national, department and unit portion. The national dues amount is \$9.00 for seniors and \$1.25 for juniors. Each department and unit determines their own senior and junior rates. The amount shown on a members' dues renewal notice is the total amount the member owes for the year. Dues are paid to the unit, who collect their portion and submit the department and national portion to their department. The department is responsible for paying the member online through the national database, ALAMIS.

UNIT OFFICER DUTIES

Duties of the Unit President

The Unit President must be an able and qualified leader for she represents the Auxiliary in her community and her Unit's success or failure depends largely upon her. She should act in a leadership capacity, be familiar with the duties of all officers and committee chairmen, and encourage and inspire them in their work. It is the responsibility of the President to see that all officers are supplied with all available information and material from Department and National Headquarters for efficient promotion of their various activities. The Unit President has many duties. She presides at all Unit meetings and those of the Unit Executive Committee; adheres to the Constitution and Bylaws, and rules and regulations established by the Unit, National and Department Conventions, and National and Department Executive Committees; appoints members of standing committees; and may appoint members to other committees she deems advisable to further the mission of the Auxiliary; appoints non-elected officers and officials; and performs other duties as are usually incident to the office.

Duties of the Unit Vice President

The Unit Vice President is to preside at meetings in the absence of the President and assume such other duties as assigned to her by the Unit President. In our unit, the Vice President has responsibility for assisting the President in developing the Unit's annual program.

Duties of the Unit Secretary

The Unit Secretary occupies a pivotal position around which all activities of the Unit revolve. She should be efficient and well informed on all Unit, Department and National activities and requirements, and be capable of giving authentic information on organization matters. Duties of the Unit Secretary include:

- Makes a record of all business transacted at each meeting, including executive board meetings, and presents her minutes for approval at the next meeting.
- Counts a standing vote when requested by the President.
- Prepares a statement of unfinished business for the presiding officer's use at the next meeting.
- Has for reference at each meeting a list of all standing committee members, a copy of the Unit Bylaws, and correspondence sorted for reading.
- Forwards all name and address changes to Department Headquarters. Receipt of the national magazine by Unit members is dependent upon her efficiency in keeping membership contact information current.

Duties of the Unit Treasurer

An efficient Unit Treasurer is essential to the smooth functioning of the Unit and to ensure that proper accounting practices and internal controls are maintained. The Unit Treasurer is responsible for handling all Unit funds, including the collection of dues from members and donations to special funds. Department and National dues, as well as special fund donations, should be remitted to Department Headquarters at least monthly. The Unit's Constitution and Bylaws should specify that the Treasurer is responsible for providing a monthly financial report to the Unit executive board and others as required. The Treasurer should work with the Finance Committee to engage a professional to conduct an annual financial review or audit. Upon completion of the annual audit, the Finance Committee and/or Treasurer should submit the audited financials to the Unit executive board for acceptance. The Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate tax forms are completed and filed in a timely manner.

Duties of the Unit Chaplain

The Unit Chaplain will express, by word and action, our founding principal of service to God and Country. She will encourage the Unit to celebrate the diversity among its members and their faiths. She will respectfully and confidentially provide spiritual and emotional guidance to members and their families as needed or requested. The Unit Chaplain is responsible for the invocation and benediction at Auxiliary meetings, and such other acts as would fall within the realm of spiritual leader for the Unit including, but not limited to: installation of officers and initiation of new members; dedication of halls, monuments or colors; Chaplain Services; POW/MIA recognition programs; and the memorial service of a member, always lending dignity and respect to the occasion. The Chaplain should stay in close contact with the President and other Unit officers and should attend all meetings of the Unit and Unit Executive Committee.

Duties of the Unit Historian

The Unit Historian is charged with recording the activities and accomplishments of her Unit during her term of office. Writing a Unit or Department history is a very important assignment. Through the years the recorded experiences of women who served before us have guided the footsteps of those who followed. Unit Historians are encouraged to present the factual running story of the accomplishments in each program. The description should be simple and concise. The quality and artistic value of the work depends upon the enthusiasm of the individual historian. Upon the Unit records, the history of a Department is written; Department records contribute to the history of the National organization.

Duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for keeping order at Unit meetings, for the advancement and retirement of the Unit colors and their proper care, and for such other duties as may be assigned to her by the Unit President.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY COMMITTEES / PROGRAMS

The National Organization has the following core standing committees: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; Children and Youth; Americanism; National Security; Membership; Constitution and Bylaws; Finance; and Audit.

Additional national committees are: Auxiliary Emergency Fund; Cavalcade of Memories; Community Service; Education; Girls State; Junior Activities; Leadership; Legislative; Liaison with Child Welfare Foundation; Past Presidents Parley; Poppy; and Public Relations.

Most Departments follow this plan of committee organization. Units are encouraged to follow this plan to facilitate the coordination of Unit programs with Department and National programs. However, some units may find it difficult to fully implement each program well and choose to undertake only the core committees, or the core committees along with one or two of the committees associated with the core committees. For example, a unit may not have the resources to carry out the mission of the Education Committee, but can be successful with Children & Youth and Junior Activities. The key is to conduct mission outreach suitable to the interests, skills and experience of Unit members.

Each year the National Chairman of each standing committee publishes a Plan of Action outlining the mission, goals and “best practices” of each program. The National Plan of Action, along with the Department Plan, should be used as a guideline for the Unit. The national Plan of Action is available for download on the national Auxiliary website at www.ALAforVeterans.org or you can obtain a copy from your Department Headquarters.

Duties of Unit Committees

The Unit President should appoint a chairman and 1-4 members for each committee, recognizing that varying conditions and circumstances will determine which committees best suit the Unit’s plan of action. It is the duty of all committee members to become familiar with their respective program/committee and to encourage Unit members to participate in program related activities.

PURPOSE AND MISSION OF COMMITTEES

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: The purpose of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee is to promote programs and services that assist and enhance the lives of veterans and their families, ensuring restoration and/or transition to normally functioning lives.

Legislative: The mission of the Legislative Committee is to advocate open communication with local, state, and nationally elected officials, to ensure our members are aware of and informed on issues central to the support and well-being of our veterans and their families and to promote grass-roots levels of advocacy and action.

Poppy: The mission of the Poppy Committee is to educate our membership and the public concerning the Poppy’s significance and the financial benefit realized by our nation’s veterans as a result of its distribution.

Past Presidents Parley: The mission of the Past Presidents Parley Committee is to recognize and honor female veterans and to utilize the experience and knowledge of past Auxiliary leaders for the training and encouragement of future Auxiliary leaders. Through the Past Presidents Parley Committee, the women who have served as Unit, Department, and National President can continue in active service in the Auxiliary.

Children & Youth: The purpose of the Children & Youth Committee is to work collaboratively with The American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.

Community Service: The mission of the Community Service Committee is to mobilize and work in cooperation with The American Legion family, the veteran and military community, and the general population to provide service to benefit veterans, servicemembers and their families.

Junior Activities: The mission of the Junior Activities Committee is to promote volunteerism through community based programs and services that involve veterans and to teach the principals of loyalty to God and country, justice, freedom and democracy to our young members.

Education: The mission of the Education Committee is to promote quality education for children and adults through classroom activities, literacy programs, scholarship promotion and support of education beyond high school.

Americanism: The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship.

Girls State: The mission of the Girls State Committee is to provide an outstanding, unique and coveted educational opportunity to the young women of our nation that instills the basic ideals and principles of American government through the Girls State and Girls Nation citizenship training programs.

National Security: The mission of the National Security Committee is to maintain and promote a strong national defense by providing the necessary means to strengthen our military families and prepare our citizenry for response to natural and man-made disasters.

Membership: The purpose of the Membership Committee is to promote the benefits of membership and to promote retaining and recruiting a diverse, active membership to carry out the American Legion Auxiliary mission and programs.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund: The mission of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee is to raise funds for and awareness of the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, to promote knowledge about the program, to disseminate information to members about the application process, and to assist members in need.

Cavalcade of Memories: The mission of the Cavalcade of Memories Committee is to collect, chronicle and preserve the history of the American Legion Auxiliary through photographs, documents, personal mementos and other artifacts.

Leadership: The mission of the Leadership Committee is to develop and prepare knowledgeable and capable leaders to carry on the growth and success of the Auxiliary by promoting activities and resources that educate, motivate and mentor members of all ages on all levels and phases of our programs.

Public Relations: The mission of the Public Relations Committee is to work collaboratively with all levels of the organization to create, implement and support a proactive communication network that advances the objectives and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary and positively projects our image and programs to the general public.

Constitution & Bylaws: The purpose of the Constitution & Bylaws is to inform members about having proper governing documents at all levels.

Finance: The mission of the Finance Committee is to oversee the general financial policy of the organization and to prepare and monitor the annual budget and its expenditures.

Audit: The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide oversight assistance to the National Executive Committee in fulfilling its responsibilities regarding accounting and reporting practices, reliable systems of internal control, the corporate responsibility program, and the quality and integrity of the Auxiliary's financial reporting. Audit Committee members shall be financially literate, and the chairman shall have the necessary background to be considered an "audit committee financial expert" in matters of accounting and auditing.

For more information about Unit Committees/Programs of the American Legion Auxiliary, please consult the American Legion Auxiliary Unit Handbook. A copy may be downloaded from the American Legion Auxiliary for free at: <https://www.alaforveterans.org/resources/>. Bound copies of the Unit Handbook can be ordered from The American Legion Emblem Sales at <http://emblem.legion.org/>

American Legion Auxiliary Glossary of Terms

A

- AEF:** Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Created in 1969, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund assists eligible members with food, shelter and utilities. Grants are also disbursed for emergency needs due to weather-related catastrophes and educational training. *See the AEF brochure for further information.*
- ALA:** American Legion Auxiliary, the largest women’s patriotic service organization in the world, with nearly 800,000 members. Founded in 1919 as an Auxiliary to The American Legion.
- ALA Girls Nation:** *See Girls State*
- ALA Girls State:** The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Program has provided High School Juniors all across the country the opportunity to participate in a hands-on citizenship training program for over 60 years. These young women learn about local, state and federal government by actually creating their own policy through the election of public officials on local, county, and state levels and then by carrying out the duties of these respective offices. A continuation of Girls State is Girls Nation where two “senators” from each state are selected to participate in a simulated National government program in Washington, D.C.
- ALAMIS:** American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System. It is currently in use by ALA Departments and many units.
- Auxiliary** American Legion Auxiliary’s quarterly magazine that is distributed to every current senior member.

B

- Boys Nation:** *See Girls Nation*
- Boys State:** American Legion Boys State is a participatory program where each participant becomes a part of the operation of his local, county and state government. At American Legion Boys State, participants are exposed to the rights and privileges, the duties and the responsibilities of a franchised citizen. This program coincides with the American Legion Auxiliary’s Girls State program.

C

- C&Y:** Children and Youth Committee
- C&B:** Constitution and Bylaws Committee
- Century Club:** The Century Club is an annual giving program in which Auxiliary members and friends of the national organization donate \$100 or more to become members of the Century Club. Contributions are used to support the operations and programs of the Auxiliary such as Girls Nation, scholarships, Auxiliary Emergency Fund and much more.

Chairman: Members may be selected to serve as a committee chairman on the unit, department or national level. The incoming National President prior to the start of the next administrative year selects national chairmen.

Charter: A Charter is, essentially, an application to start a new unit within a department. It also serves as a piece of history. Charters may be cancelled and revoked. *See Unit Handbook for more information.*

Consolidated Report Form Implemented in the 2010-2011 year, this report captures the mission-related outcomes from unit activity so that the Auxiliary and Legion family can demonstrate our impact on the veteran community. The information reported is sent to The American Legion National Headquarters to include in their annual report to Congress.

D

DEC Department Executive Committee. The Board of Directors for the department.

Department: Within the Auxiliary, each state (as well as Puerto Rico and District of Columbia) is known as a "Department." Each department has their own constitution and is governed by a department executive committee. Department presidents typically change annually; however, each department has a department secretary who typically handles day-to-day business and is usually the first point of contact for the department. There are currently 52 Departments in the ALA.

PDP Past Department President. Once a department president completes her annual term, she becomes a past department president. Most continue serving, particularly as mentors to future leaders at the unit, district/county and department levels. Many go on to serve on national committees and other national leadership positions.

E

Emblem: The Auxiliary's symbol is referred to as an emblem, not a logo. Permission to use it must be given by the National Secretary.

Emblem Sales: The Emblem Sales Division of The American Legion National Headquarters not only sells Legion merchandise, they also stock many Auxiliary items. Some of these items include pins, jewelry and clothing. Additionally, supply items such as the Unit Handbook are available for purchase. Each fall, Emblem Sales produces a new catalog.

G

Girls Nation: *See ALA Girls State*

Girls State: *See ALA Girls State*

Gold Star Mothers: This is an organization of mothers whose sons or daughters served and died that this world might be a better place in which to live. The biological mothers of sons or daughters who died while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America or its Allies, or died as a result of injuries sustained in such service, are eligible for membership in the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. An adoptive mother or stepmother who parented the child, whose biological mother is deceased, from the age of five years is also eligible under the above conditions.

J

Junior Auxiliary members who have not yet reached the age of 18.

Junior Handbook: A resource for Junior members and Senior members who work with Juniors. It is available for free on the American Legion Auxiliary national website; hard copies may be purchased through Emblem Sales.

L

Legion Family Members of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and Legion Riders comprise the Legion family, which has a combined membership of nearly 4 million.

N

NEC: The National Executive Committee is the governing body for the national organization. The NEC meets preceding National Convention, immediately following National Convention and also at mid-year, typically prior to the Washington D.C. Conference.

NPAE: National President's Award for Excellence -- the Best of the Best. One Department and Five Units are awarded the National President's Award for Excellence each year at National Convention.

NVCAF: National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Held annually, the Auxiliary is a national co-sponsor of this event (along with the Department of Veterans Affairs). This program is specifically for veterans in the VA healthcare system who use art as a form of rehabilitative therapy. Departments and Units raise funds to support this annual program at the local and national levels.

P

Page: There are three different types of pages: Local Page, Department Page and President's Page. All three play a role in the national convention. A local page serves in conjunction with the local convention committee and assists with directions, locations, etc. A department page assists their delegation and may present department's colors. A president's page accompanies the National President and serves as an aide (i.e. running errands, delivering messages, etc.) When serving at events, they generally wear white and blue.

Poppy: The poppy became a symbol of the sacrifice of lives in war and represented the hope that none had died in vain. The American Legion Auxiliary poppy has continued to bloom for the casualties of four wars, its petals of paper bound together for veterans, reminding America each year that the men and women who have served and died for their country deserve to be remembered. (*see Poppy Story on last page*)

Poppy Poster Contest: Units in their local schools sponsor the Poppy Poster Contest. Specific requirements and rules guide winner selection. Local winners are judged by national division chairmen and divisional winners are featured in the national *Auxiliary* magazine.

Post: The American Legion's equivalent to an Auxiliary unit. Auxiliary members belong to a unit, not a post.

PNP: Past National President. Once a national president’s annual term ends, she is referred to as a past national president. A PNP will typically continue to remain active in the Auxiliary, serving on committees and as a member to future leaders at all levels.

PUFL: Paid Up For Life membership. Members who are current on dues may complete a PUFL application and pay a one-time fee, based upon the member’s age and total dues at the time of application, to become a member for life. The one-time payment is placed in a trust to pay the member’s dues each year.

Public Spirit Award: Established in 1983, this award recognizes outstanding individuals or organizations for contributions that positively impact our communities, particularly efforts that benefit our military, veterans and their families. It is awarded at the annual Auxiliary Washington, D.C. Conference. The recipient is selected by the American Legion Auxiliary national president and must be present to accept the award.

R

Reps/Depts Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) representatives and deputy representatives

Roster: A list of members in a specific department or unit, available via ALAMIS.

S

SAL: Sons of The American Legion. Founded in 1932, SAL members include males of all ages who are dependents of those who served in the U.S. military and eligible for American Legion membership.

Senior: A member age 18 or older.

SOY: Spirit of Youth. Established in 1983, the Spirit of Youth Fund provides scholarships to Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary; said member to have held Junior membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the past three years and must hold a membership card for the current year.

Stand Down: In times of war, exhausted combat warriors are removed from the battlefields to a place of relative security and safety to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy a warm meal, receive medical care, and receive and send letters. Now refers to a grassroots, community-based intervention program to help the nation’s homeless veterans “combat” life on the streets. Homeless veterans are brought to one location for one to three days and are provided access to community resources to begin addressing individual problems. Homeless veterans are provided with necessities including food, clothing, medical, legal and mental health assistance, and job counseling.

T

TAL: The American Legion, also call The Legion. Members often referred to as Legionnaires.

U

Unit: A unit is the grass roots level of membership. Each unit has their own constitution, bylaws and officers. The ALA has more than 8,000 units.

V

VA&R: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee

VAVS: VA Voluntary Services

W

Washington D.C.

Conference: Formerly known as Awareness Assembly. Annual meeting conducted in February/March in Washington D.C., in conjunction with The American Legion, focusing primarily on legislative issues.

MEETINGS

At the beginning of each meeting, the President calls the meeting to order. The Chaplain leads us in prayer; the Pledge of Allegiance is recited; then the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary is recited. The Preamble can be found on page 3 of this document and on the back of your membership card.

INFORMATION TO REMEMBER

1. By attending Unit meetings you have a voice in how our Unit operates and how you can help deliver our mission. The Executive Board, which consists of unit officers, past unit presidents and 3 Executive board members at large, typically meets prior to the Unit meeting.
2. If you have a question during a Unit meeting, raise your hand and wait to be recognized. Address our Unit President as Madam President. Please refrain from speaking until others are finished talking and you are recognized by the President. Sarcastic or personal remarks are prohibited in our meetings.
3. When you have a question about the Auxiliary and **we are not** in a meeting format, we prefer you discuss outside of the lounge area. You can always contact the officers by phone or email to ask your question. A listing of home numbers and/or emails for our officers is included in this handout.
4. Keep cell phones turned off or in silent mode during meetings.
5. Proudly wear your Auxiliary pin at meetings or have it in your possession. (The unit provides an Auxiliary pin to members when they join.)
6. Try to attend conferences and district meetings to learn more about Auxiliary programs and activities and how you can contribute.
7. Don't fret -- attendance at meetings is not mandatory but you could miss out on important information, volunteer opportunities and a good time.
8. The Auxiliary Unit Handbook is available online to download at www.alaforveterans.org under Member Resources. A hard copy of the Unit Handbook, along with other Auxiliary merchandise, is available for purchase from Emblem Sales of The American Legion at www.legion.org
9. The Auxiliary's membership year is from January 1 to December 31. Dues are paid in advance, starting in September; you are considered delinquent if your dues are not paid by December 31 of the year preceding the membership year.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE AUXILIARY

What is the primary purpose of the Auxiliary organization?

The American Legion Auxiliary was formed to aid The American Legion in carrying out the great program of peacetime service to America to which The American Legion is dedicated. All of the Auxiliary's activities are designed to promote the work of The American Legion and to help The American Legion reach its objectives. The first words of the Auxiliary preamble are "For God and Country." Members believe in the ideals and principles of America's founding fathers and pledge to foster patriotism, preserve and defend the Constitution, promote allegiance to God and Country, and uphold the basic principles of freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. Auxiliary programs were created to provide assistance, education and financial support for veterans and their families; in the community, the organization focuses on helping to create a better society, particularly for the nation's future citizens -- our children and young people.

What is the relationship between The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary?

The Auxiliary is a part of The Legion family of service affiliates which also includes the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Riders. Local Auxiliary Units are affiliated with an American Legion Post and support Legion-sponsored activities through volunteer service and fundraising activities. While the Auxiliary has sometimes expanded its programs to meet the special needs of women and families, particularly military families, most programs augment or complement Legion programs.

What is the difference between the Auxiliary and other veterans' service organizations?

The American Legion Auxiliary, although not the first such organization, is the largest patriotic women's service organization in the world. Formed by The American Legion in 1919, the Auxiliary is a veterans' service organization with volunteer representation in all 173 VA Medical Centers. Nearly 800,000 Auxiliary members in 9,000 American communities provide a rich and varied resource pool of ability, talent and leadership experience.

What do Auxiliary members have in common?

Auxiliary members are women of all ages and from all walks of life. They are service-oriented with a variety of outside interests, activities and lifestyles. They are typically active in their communities and in other fraternal and/or religious organizations. They share a deep and abiding concern for their fellowman, great compassion for those in need and a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to God, country and community. Auxiliary members are patriots in every sense of the word. Their patriotism comes from the heart. It is not mandated through legislation or instilled by force. Their primary goals are to serve our veterans, to safeguard and nurture our nation's children and to educate all citizens, young and old, about the benefits, privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship.

What are the advantages of Auxiliary membership?

The Auxiliary is a remarkable organization with nearly 95 proud years of service to veterans and the nation's communities. In addition to the personal gratification and rewards gained in voluntary service, there are many tangible benefits for members of the Auxiliary. Members receive a complimentary subscription to the Auxiliary's national magazine and have exclusive access to a wide variety of discount services, insurance products, and professional financial services. Low-cost insurance products include life, health, dental, vision, Medicare supplement, and pet insurance. Members can also receive discounts for things such as eye-glasses, prescriptions, computers, cell phones, restaurants, department stores, and Disney World tickets. Auxiliary members who find themselves without other resources can obtain temporary, emergency financial assistance or money for schooling to re-enter the job market through the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

What types of membership are available?

Membership applications can be obtained from units, department offices or National Headquarters. Members can renew their membership each year or purchase a lifetime membership called "PUFL" (Paid Up For Life)). Some units present "Honorary Life Memberships" to outstanding members, which means the unit will pay the member's dues for as long as she is a member of that unit. Many female veterans are members of both The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Poppy and Poppy Story

From the battlefields of World War I, weary soldiers brought home the memory of a barren landscape transformed by wild poppies, red as the blood that had soaked the soil. By that miracle of nature, the spirit of their lost comrades lived on.

The poppy became a symbol of the sacrifice of lives in war, and represented the hope that none had died in vain. The American Legion Auxiliary Poppy has continued to bloom for the casualties of four wars, its petals of paper bound together for veterans, reminding America each year that the men and women who have served and died for their country deserve to be remembered.

Poppy Day has become a familiar tradition in almost every American community. This distribution of the bright red memorial flower to the public is one of the oldest and most widely recognized programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.

This poppy, as a memorial flower to the war dead, can be traced to a single individual, Miss Moina Michael. She was so moved by Col. McCrae's poem that she wrote a response:

...the blood of heroes never dies
But lends a luster to the red
Of the flower that blooms above the dead
In Flanders' Fields.

On impulse, she bought a bouquet of poppies – all that New York City's Wanamaker's Department Store had – and handed them to businessmen meeting at the New York YMCA where she worked. She asked them to wear the poppy as a tribute to the fallen. That was November 1918. World War I was over, but America's sons would rest forever 'in Flanders' Fields.' Later, she would spearhead a campaign that would result in the adoption of the poppy as the national symbol of sacrifice.



*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*