

## **DISTRICT PRESIDENTS GUIDE**

Up-Dated and Printed  
2021

### **HONOR**

Welcome to being a District President for the largest Congressionally Chartered Veterans Organization The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The term of District President can be the most rewarding and satisfying experience of your Auxiliary career. It is an honor to be a District President and the rewards are many.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

In many ways the District President is the most important person in the American Legion Auxiliary. Department Officers learn very quickly that when a District President has organized her District, is meeting her responsibilities, and is keeping a constant awareness of happenings in her District, the District is motivated and excelling. The work of the Units can be more effective if it is joined by a tight link to the Department and the National Organization. You as a District President are that link and, like any chain, the over-all strength is going to depend upon your strength.

### **ORGANIZE TEAM**

As District President, your first order of business is your “team”, the people with whom you can work and those who can best perform the tasks necessary for a successful year during your term of office.

1. Move those projects that are most important, following a definite timetable.
2. Determine both long-range and immediate objectives.
3. Organize fully and communicate exactly your ideas and your enthusiasm.
4. Make sure that the lines of communication are tightly drawn so the flow of information will be easily available to the public, Unit, District, and Department.

The first two (2) months following the election of the District President can and often determine the success or failure of her entire administration. This is the time she completes the selection of the key persons who will assist her, establishes a timetable of future events, and makes certain that her units are getting organized.

### **WHAT AM I AND WHAT DO I DO**

The District President is the elected representative of the Units in a given District, but an obligation to provide guidance and supervision is also implied. Units are responsible to carry out the objectives and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary and to fully comply with the obligations assumed under the Unit, Department, and National

Constitutions. When a Unit is inactive, begins to falter or fails, it is then that the District President **MUST** be prepared to give direction and help **WITHOUT** becoming emotionally involved or legally involved in inner Unit situations.

Supervision means organization. Responsibilities must be assigned to the District Vice President in our case she is responsible for the Membership Program. Other District Officers must clearly understand the duties of their office. The most effective way to organize is to use an early meeting to bring together your team that will make the District function. Fully go over each Officer's responsibilities as is stated in the Auxiliary handbook. Before this meeting, the District President should learn all that is possible to learn about her District, and should have a clearly defined objectives and assignments to present. The Department Secretary will have information or aids available from Department, National Headquarters, and from outside sources. The major source of assistance is within your own District. Don't be too proud to consult with Past District Presidents, and Department Officers. The experience of this group, when properly sought and utilized, will avoid many pitfalls and errors for you.

**REMEMBER, YOU ARE THE KEY BETWEEN THE UNITS  
THAT CONNECT TO DEPARTMENT, THAT CONNECTS TO OUR  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.**

## DISTRICT MEETING

### THE HOW TO HELPFUL HINTS

The District Meeting is the largest Auxiliary meeting that the average Auxiliary member ever attends. Many members do not attend the Annual Conference and Convention meetings, and even a smaller percent will attend a National Convention. Therefore, the District meeting becomes primarily the one opportunity to impress the average Auxiliary member and to instill her with the knowledge and idealism of our accomplishments and aims.

Certain procedures are pretty standard but are nevertheless important. District Presidents should get together with the District Commanders, checking dates of their District meetings and the place, also checking to see if a coordinated program can be worked out—The Auxiliary District meetings will be held separate from the Legion District meetings, but will be held at the same place and time if possible. The District President should get together with the Auxiliary of the Hostess Unit to work out details of the meeting, possible entertainment for afterwards, lunch or dinner, etc.. **REMEMBER, ON THE DISTRICT LEVEL, ONLY THE HOSTESS UNIT MAY HAVE A RAFFLE OR MONEY MAKER. NO ONE ELSE MAY SOLICITE OR SELL ITEMS WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT AND THE HOSTESS UNIT.** In the event that two (2) separate rooms are not available, it should be the responsibility of the Hostess Unit to find a suitable meeting place for the District Auxiliary Meeting. The District President should work with the Unit President and members to work out the details of the meeting.

All Units in the district should be sent notices of the meeting as far in advance as possible. The notices should state the date, time of meeting, where it will be held, whether or not there will be a luncheon, or dinner, or social hour, and the cost of such and any other miscellaneous information that would make for a better informed District membership. Be sure to include if Units are to make a report of activities as a reminder or that they bring a written report to give to the District Secretary to file. Remember to announce in your communication if you are having a guest speaker and who they are and what they will be speaking on. Make sure that your Units get this information in time to read at their Unit meeting prior to the District meeting. Notice of your meeting should definitely be sent to all District chairmen and those who are expected to report should receive an additional follow-up, probably a email or telephone call, to be certain they will be present and ready to report.

At the District meeting, there may be dignitaries of the American Legion and or the American Legion Auxiliary present. Be certain that you are familiar with the proper method of presenting these people and the proper time for receiving any message they might have. For courtesy to them, yourself, and those attending the meeting, there should never be competing activities that will distract from the meeting.

## **HOW TO INVITE A GUEST**

When inviting a guest to speak at the District meeting, please be sure you keep several things in mind.

1. Is this a speaker that will benefit the Auxiliary programs
2. Is this a speaker that the membership has asked for
3. Is this a speaker that we may want to invite the Legion to hear
4. How far does this Speaker have to travel
5. Is the weather and road conditions appropriate for travel

ALWAYS send a written invitation to your guest at least one (1) month before you would like them at the District meeting and sooner if possible. This gives them an opportunity to accept, prepare or let you know they will be unable to attend and then they may either send a committee member or a written program that you as District President may ask someone else to present. The information on the invitation should be: Date, Place, Time, Directions to location, Subject you want them to speak on, Amount of Time you have allotted them to speak, will a lunch, dinner or social hour be held and if you do not comp this for them, how much it will cost them, and if there are any other speakers scheduled. If it is a program that may benefit the Legion and you have invited them to attend, let your speaker know this. **DO NOT LEAVE ANY SURPRISES FOR YOUR GUEST SPEAKER TO DEAL WITH ONCE THEY ARE THERE.**

## **THAT OFFICIAL VISIT, INVITING THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT**

You **MUST** invite the Department President for her official visit to your District **IN WRITING** as soon after the annual Department Convention as you can. Her schedule fills quickly and she **MUST** visit each District at least once during her term of office. Remember, many Districts meet on the same day, so she has a tough time getting to all Districts when there is only 4 meetings held per year. When inviting the Department President, your District is responsible for **HER MILEAGE, ROUND TRIP FROM HER HOME POST LOCATION, ONE (1) NIGHT LODGING IF NEEDED, AND HER MEALS.** Any other gifts are optional. We do ask that the Units, if they are going to present her gifts, do so during this meeting instead of during Department Convention as time is always a major factor at our Conventions. When inviting the Department President, there should be **NO OTHER SPEAKER ON THE AGENDA UNLESS PRIOR APPROVAL HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT.** Finally, remember the proper way of introduction is to introduce from the highest office down, with the highest office to be the final speaker. In other words, during introduction, if the Department Vice President and the Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President are at the meeting, you would first introduce the Department Vice President, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. If these ladies were scheduled to speak to the assembly on their programs, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President would speak first, then the Vice President with **NO ONE TO SPEAK AFTER HER OR ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONDUCTED.**

## **THE MEETING IS ABOUT TO BEGIN**

### **INTENT**

The intent and meaning of the business part of a District meeting is to improve the performance of the Units and make more effective the American Legion Auxiliary in the local communities.

### **HOW THE DISTRICT IS RUN**

The District President can use the “Manual of Ceremonies, or the Auxiliary Handbook” as her guide for conducting a District meeting in the same way that a Unit President follows the same material in conducting a Unit meeting.

### **THE HELPFUL CHECK LIST THAT NO DISTRICT PRESIDENT SHOULD BE WITHOUT WHEN PLANNING THEIR MEETING..**

***TIME AND PLACE:*** The timing of your meeting is important so as not to conflict with events in the District that would retard attendance. The site or place of the meeting should be where the greatest number can reach by traveling the shortest distance.

***ATTENDANCE:*** The success of a meeting is based on the greatest number of Units being represented rather than the greatest number of people present, since the District meeting should place its emphasis on getting the job done at the Unit level. The first thing naturally, should be the official notice to each Unit, President and Secretary. The important thing is to make sure that, each Unit in the District is represented by a President and a Secretary, they then must take the information back to their Units.

***ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING:*** As soon as you have worked out the place of the meeting with the District Commander, you should then personally contact the Unit President to make all the necessary arrangements for the conduct of the District meeting. Should a room for the Legion and a room for the Auxiliary not be available, a suitable meeting site will have to be arranged for. Remember, you will need a head table for the District Officers and guest and a podium or speakers stand equipped with a microphone. Water with glasses at the head table is always appreciated. Don't overlook such details as colors and color guard, seating and registration procedures. Details as to any refreshments or social functions should be carefully worked out, not only with the hostess Unit but with the District Commander.

***AGENDA:*** Not only is the preparation of an agenda important to the success of the meeting but the execution of the agenda is equally important. Please provide a copy of your agenda to your Secretary prior to the meeting to make things a little easier on her for note taking.

## **HERE WE GO WHAT NOW???????????**

Step one to any good starting, take a deep breath and realize that what you are about to do is no different then speaking to your family or friends while trying to get your point across. If speaking in front of others bothers you, find a point in the rear of the room, focus, they will think you are speaking right to them and speak to that spot. Do Not imagine everyone in the audience is in the nude, this has ruined more good speakers with laughter. It's O.K. to relax and have fun, get the audience involved, but stay within the proper bounds of conducting your meeting and at all cost Do No Loose Control.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The District President should promptly call her meeting to order at the time set for the same but before doing so, make sure that all the officers, guest, and color guards are in proper position.

**ADVANCEMENT OF THE COLORS:** Give call for advancement with firmness.

**PRAYER:** At a District meeting, where the Chaplain is possibly not known to all, it is suggested that the District President say (for example) "Mary Jones, our District Chaplain, will offer prayer." If the prayer is being offered as table grace, the audience **IS TO REMAIN SEATED**, all other prayers, they may stand.

**PREAMBLE:** If the Preamble is not on display in the room, give those present an opportunity to get their membership cards out so they may join with you, or better yet, always have enough extra printed to pass out at each District meeting so all in attendance may participate.

**MINUTES:** Some Districts read the minutes from the previous meeting others do not. Those who do not must have a copy available to all members in good standing that are present so they may read and approve any action that had been taken as fact. A copy of these minutes **MUST** be forwarded to the Department Secretary within 10 days of your meeting. This is the way Department will be sure the District hold it's mandatory four (4) meetings per year, and also provides the Department a heads up if for any reason there is something needing attention that has happened in the District. If your District reads the minutes aloud, the District President would (for example) say, "Susie Brown, District Secretary, will read the minutes of the last District meeting." There must then be a motion made to accept the minutes either as read, written or corrected after asking, "are there any corrections"? "Hearing none or if there are corrections, repeat them, all in favor "Yes", all opposed "No". Motion carried or failed.

**INTRODUCTION OF OFFICERS AND GUEST:** This is most important and often leaves people with a bad taste if the Presiding Officer fails to give the name correctly, fails to introduce in importance of position, or assigns improper titles. Failure to introduce someone that should be introduced should not happen if you are prepared. Do not rely on your memory, write names down as they come in, or assign someone as a greeter that may supply you with names prior to the opening of the meeting. If this person is a member of your Unit and District, if they are a Department, National Officer or Chairman, or if they have been a past Department or National Officer, they should be introduced at every meeting. When writing the names down for introduction, it is most helpful if they are in proper order of introduction. Later, it may be in order to hear from certain distinguished guest. In the essence of time, if you have many Past District, Department, or National Officers attending your meeting, you may ask all to rise and have them introduce themselves, giving their name, title, and year served, with one round of applause following all introductions.

**ROLL CALL:** When calling roll call of District Officers and Units, it is proper that the District President state, "Mary Bean, our District Secretary will now call the roll of District--- please rise and answer present when your name is called". It is also proper that the Unit representatives be instructed when answering roll call, they rise, answer with their name, their office and the number of members present from their unit.

**REPORTS:** Prior to the meeting, the District President should inform everyone who is going to be called upon for a report of that fact and should go over with them what she wants and expects the report to cover. Persons making reports, should be called upon, by name, Unit number, and title of the Office for which they are reporting. Then they should be requested to come to the front and address the meeting. If the District President knows an Officer or Chairman has no report, then it is better she not be called upon. District Presidents should by all means have a personal report to make, and time should be spent on its preparation. It should be done in such a manner as to recognize any Unit or Officer doing an outstanding job, as encouragement to them and as stimulation to others. Please do not fill your report with nothing but what "I" did since the last District meeting. Include the visits you have made or functions you have attended, but remember to thank all those involved in making your visit a success, **YOU DID NOT DO IT ALONE.**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Each meeting should conclude, allowing your members to make any announcements they may have to inform the rest of the District membership of upcoming events. You as President should be announcing all Department and National activities they may be approaching so all members are better informed and have the opportunity to become involved in a given activity if they choose. Reminders of membership deadlines and the active program of the month should be a part of your announcements.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION:** Never overlook the opportunity to give or report on Units or individuals that have won special awards, or have participated in a program and given an outstanding performance. You might want to place in your agenda a general sincere

thank you to all the members of your District for volunteering and doing the job that you as District President would be unable to do if it weren't for them. The membership of your District made you and they can break you...

**FINAL THOUGHT:** You are the link, the source, the idea of what a member first sees when they look at the next level past their Unit. It is your duty to familiarize yourself with the National, Department and District Constitutions. Do not be afraid to tell someone you do not know the answer to a question but will seek out the answer and get back with them. No information is better than the **WRONG** information. You are now a major role player in the success of this Department, thank you for taking the challenge, and may you have a most successful year as a District President for the Department of Arizona.