



**NATIONAL
PROGRAMS ACTION PLAN
2017-2022**



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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.

PURPOSES

In fulfillment of our mission, the American Legion Auxiliary adheres to the following purposes:

- To support and advocate for veterans, military and their families
- To support the initiatives and programs of The American Legion
- To foster patriotism and responsible citizenship
- To award scholarships and promote quality education and literacy
- To provide educational and leadership opportunities that uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and patriotism in government
- To increase our capacity to deliver our mission by providing meaningful volunteer opportunities within our communities
- To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through Service Not Self

VALUES

Our statement of values is predicated on the founding purposes:

- Commitment to the four founding principles: Justice, Freedom, Democracy, Loyalty
- Service to God, our country, its veterans and their families
- Tradition of patriotism and citizenship
- Personal integrity and family values
- Respect for the uniqueness of individual members
- Truthful open communication in dealing with the public and our members
- Adherence to the adopted policies and rules

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SECTION 1

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

- ALA FOUNDATION
- UNIT FUNDRAISING IDEAS

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

American Legion Auxiliary Foundation

Established in 2007, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation (ALAF) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 subsidiary organization of the American Legion Auxiliary. It is comprised of elected, designated, and appointed directors, and founded to assist in carrying out the educational, charitable, and other exempt purposes of the American Legion Auxiliary by raising funds for, assisting in conduct of, and providing support to the Auxiliary's programs.

ALA Foundation Contact Information

www.ALAFoundation.org; ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org

Why support the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation?

The ALA Foundation positively impacts the lives of our veterans, military, and their families by funding programs of the American Legion Auxiliary today and for future generations.

The ALA Foundation supports our veterans, military, and their families through three funds:

- **Mission Endowment Fund:** The ALA Foundation provides a way to secure our legacy and heritage of Service Not Self, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for future generations of veterans, military, and their families. As an endowed fund, the monies are permanently restricted so that future generations may benefit from Auxiliary programs that support all of our veterans and promote education, good citizenship, and outreach to veterans facing tough challenges. Your donation today will help ensure we're here to help veterans tomorrow.
- **Veteran Projects Fund:** Make a direct impact on veterans, military, and their families in your community through the Veteran Projects Fund. Each unit, district/county, and department is eligible to apply for a grant to support new, one-time needs of their local veterans. Donations collected for this fund directly benefit our nation's heroes in need.
- **Veterans Creative Arts Festival (local and national):** The arts can be powerful therapy, and the American Legion Auxiliary recognizes that. Both locally and nationally, the Auxiliary co-presents amazing events that assist veterans in healing from both their physical and psychological wounds through the creative arts. Each year, the artistic achievements of veterans being treated at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities across the country are displayed for all to see. With your gift, the show can go on.

How to support the ALA Foundation

- **Checks** can be made payable to ALA Foundation and mailed to:
American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters
Attention: Development Division
8945 N Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46260

Note: Make sure to designate which fund you wish to have your donation credited to if you have a preference.

- **Online Contributions** can be made at www.ALAFoundation.org/donate
- **Planned Giving** is the process of thoughtfully including a charitable gift in your estate plans. It is a method of establishing your legacy of support for the organization you love while providing for your current financial needs. You can help ensure that the American Legion Auxiliary has a lasting impact for the generations that follow by providing for the continuation of our many programs and services that enhance the lives of those we serve. A brochure on Planned Giving can be downloaded at www.ALAFoundation.org.
- **Matching Gifts** could double your donation as many companies and foundations offer matching gift programs — doubling the funds donated by employees, members, or trustees. Your \$25 donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation could become a \$50 contribution. Or \$50, matched by your company, would turn into \$100. So, as you donate to help our veterans, military, and their families, find out if a matching gift program is available where you work.
- **Tributes and Memorials** in honor or memory of a loved one is a lasting way to celebrate how much a person's life means to the donor. Donating in lieu of flowers celebrates a loved one's life by supporting the outreach of the American Legion Auxiliary's mission and patriotic values. When you make a memorial donation to the ALA Foundation, the person or family you are honoring will receive an acknowledgment from National Headquarters informing them of your gift without disclosing the amount.

How to receive grant funding from the ALA Foundation

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation provides financial assistance to ALA entities (unit, department, district/counties) from three different grants:

- **Veteran Projects Fund Grants:** Specific, emergent needs that support the ALA mission may qualify for this type of grant.

- **Sub Grants:** If your ALA entity has funding that requires the recipient to be a 501(c)3, this grant can help.
- **Veterans Creative Arts Festival Grants:** Veterans Creative Arts Festival mini grants can aid in the therapeutic wellbeing of veterans by introducing them to art therapy.

See grant application details at www.ALAFoundation.org. Questions? Contact us at ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org.

American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Awards

A. Department Award: Department Contribution Recognition

- Award: Citation and recognition at National Convention
- Presented to: National Executive Committee member from two departments (2)
- Criteria: Award (s) will be presented to two departments contributing the largest donation per total department membership

B. Department Award: Fundraising Special Event Recognition

- Award: Citation and recognition at National Convention
- Presented to: National Executive Committee member from two departments (2)
- Criteria: Award (s) will be presented to two departments contributing the largest donation based on a one-time fundraising special event for the ALA Foundation. Departments must send a one-paragraph description of the fundraising event and the total amount raised to ALAFoundation@ALAforVeterans.org

C. Division Award: Division Contribution Recognition

- Award: Citation and recognition at National Convention
- Presented to: Division vice president
- Criteria: Award will be presented to the division who contributed the most funds to the ALA Foundation in the current administrative year



American Legion Auxiliary

DONATION FORM

Please complete the following information so that we may send you a tax receipt.

Amount of Gift:

- \$100.00
- \$75.00
- \$50.00
- Other: \$ _____

Payment Type:

- Check # _____
- Credit Card (VISA or MasterCard)

- Expiration _____ / _____ CVV# _____

Select One Fund for Your Destination:

- Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund
- Auxiliary Greatest Need
- Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship Fund
- Auxiliary Scholarship Fund with Greatest Need

Name _____ (First) _____ (M.I.) _____ (Last)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Auxiliary Membership ID # (if known) _____ Gift in Honor/Memory (optional) _____
/ /

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make check payable to **American Legion Auxiliary, National**. For credit cards, please provide billing address.
Mail to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, Attention: Development Division, 8945 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46260. Learn more about your donation options by visiting www.ALforVeterans.org.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION

DONATION FORM

Please complete the following information so that we may send you a tax receipt.

Amount of Gift:

- \$100.00
- \$75.00
- \$50.00
- Other: \$ _____

Payment Type:

- Check # _____
- Credit Card (VISA or MasterCard)

- Expiration _____ / _____ CVV# _____

Select One Fund for Your Destination:

- Veteran/Military Family Projects and Auxiliary Plan of Action Mission Outreach Projects
- National/Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival(s)
- Auxiliary Mission Endowment Fund
- ALA Foundation Greatest Need

Name _____ (First) _____ (M.I.) _____ (Last)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Auxiliary Membership ID # (if known) _____ Gift in Honor/Memory (optional) _____
/ /

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make check payable to **American Legion Auxiliary Foundation**. For credit cards, please provide billing address.
Mail to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, Attention: Development Division,
8945 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46260.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity that supports the American Legion Auxiliary. All gifts to the foundation are tax-deductible as allowed by the United States Tax Code and U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
Learn more about your donation options by visiting www.ALforVeterans.org.



UNIT FUNDRAISING IDEAS

The following ideas are examples from other nonprofit organizations.

Some tips on selecting and planning a fundraiser:

- Take into account who might be potential participants and volunteers – will you have enough of both?
- Set a date that does not conflict with other local events and far enough ahead to be able to plan and execute well.
- What is the fundraising event raising money for? Determine this so that it appeals to potential participants. Since it will be an ALA event, the focus should be on one of our programs such as: veterans and their families, ALA Girls State, ALA Foundation... choose something non-members can relate to.
- Marketing of the event needs to be well planned through local media (radio, TV, newspapers) and public announcements like flyers, newsletters, and websites.
- During the event, make sure participants can identify ALA volunteers by their clothing attire and signage – be bold. Don't forget to have ALA brochures available for distribution.
- Check local permit/license requirements for your events.

Adult Spelling Bee: Money can be raised through local businesses and individuals sponsoring an adult 21 years of age or older to be a contestant in the adult spelling bee held at a local establishment. The entry fee was \$50 and the sponsor of the entry was advertised at the event on a name board and also thanked in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. Other area sponsors were participants in the giving of prizes for both the winning sponsor and winning speller. We used words found on spelling word websites and also terminology from all areas of expertise represented by the sponsors that gained entry into the competition. Between the 40 spelling teams, silent auction, raffle, private donations and refreshment sales, the spelling bee raised approximately \$15,000.

Animal Pictures: Kids of all ages love to have their photos taken with animals, and parents have a hard time resisting because they are so very cute. You can borrow animals from a local pet shop or animal shelter. Get a local photographer to donate professional photo services, and set up at a mall or other event. Be sure to keep a true animal lover around to handle anything that gets unruly. The usual agreement would be that the photographer has his/her film costs reimbursed, and of course his/her name is on the photos as free advertising and he/she would be the source of reprints. The photographer will usually have printed forms for completion. You should arrange for your members to handle the registration and collection to keep costs down. Payments should be collected in advance. Sample photos with the available animals at their cutest could help spur fundraising sales.

Alternatively, you could use a Polaroid or digital camera set up on a tripod with lighting and distance worked out ahead of time. If using a digital camera, have a separate pickup booth set up with a computer and printer to produce the prints. Don't forget to arrange for folders or



other packaging for your photos. If using a digital camera, you could even include a contact number for reprints within a certain time limit. In that case, make sure to store the original files safely for the allotted time limit. Possible sources of animal subjects could be your local humane society or shelter as well as members of your group. (It could result in some adoptions for the society/shelter.) You may want to arrange for several animals (parrots or toucans make a great choice if docile) to attract more attention and assure the animals don't get too flustered, particularly if you extend your hours. This could be a great compliment to an outdoor fair. Hay bales make a great backdrop and temporary corral as well as help with any 'accidents.' Be sure to plan for food, water and shade for the animals, and shovels to clean up after them. A garbage can with a tight cover can help keep the odor down.

Basket Raffle: Basket contents can be tailored to whatever holiday or event you choose. Have each member donate a food item to fill the basket. Example: If you are doing a Thanksgiving Basket someone can donate a can of corn, a packet of gravy mix, a bag of marshmallows, cider mix, etc. Try and have the turkey donated by your local grocer. Make flyers, announcements in your newsletter, memos, sell to people at work, school, church, neighbors, etc. Sell tickets for a dollar each, which is an easy sell to most people. Make sure to have the name and phone number on your tickets so you know whom to call when the winner is announced. Set a date to announce the winner and the delivery date. Put the name of your winner in your newsletter and on the website if you have one.

Benefit Singing: Hold a benefit singing fundraising event at a church or community center. Get local singers to volunteer. You can ask for a "love offering" or set an admission price. You might want to have a snack booth with beverages and treats. Around the holidays or Veterans Day these could be great themed events.

Box City: Box City is a fundraiser where participants raised pledges to become a citizen of Box City and then sleep in a box overnight to raise money and awareness for homelessness in their own county. Funds raised stay in the county to help homeless families and also those that are at risk for becoming homeless.

Box City can be more than a fundraiser. There can be food, games and entertainment and an outdoor movie. Participants love building and decorating their own cardboard homes. Boxes can be available by calling ahead to local retailers who can be requested to hold large appliance boxes for the event.

Cake Walk: Unit members donate cakes. You put numbers around tables (depending on the number of cakes and participants). You tape the top of the number close to edge of the table and far apart enough for people to stand by their numbers or on the floor. You charge a fee per number. Participants stand by their numbers. Second copies of the numbers that are on the tables are in a bag. Once the numbers on the tables have all been sold then you draw the number and the person who bought that number is the person who wins a cake. Also have numbers put on each cake and a separate bag with these numbers in as well. Then you also draw a cake number. That is the cake they win. The number of cakes you have is the number of rounds you have. People line up to buy their numbers again after each cake is won.

Cemetery Walk: If you have a local cemetery that has some interesting residents and stories you can stage a cemetery walk and offer a soup-n-salad with bread supper, followed by a tour



of the local cemetery with a few short and dramatic (living-history type) “vignettes” based upon events in the lives of the more historically significant residents and then an after-tour dessert and coffee held in the cemetery administrative building or other convenient location.

Cheap Little Tarts: The name is the draw at this event with multiple vendors. Purchase small tart shells (not the crumb crust type) and fill with various puddings and pie fillings made up from grocery store mixes. The chocolate is most popular and the cherry filling the least. Set your price (\$1 is good) and add a lemonade or iced tea and picnic tables.

Decorative Bowling Pins: Ever wonder what bowling alleys do with the old worn bowling pins? They usually sell them or give them away. Crafters have figured out a variety of ways to decorate bowling pins and repurpose them for additional uses such as for table legs. Bowling alleys, charities, schools, and other organizations have bowling pin decoration contest fundraisers. Contestants are given the bowling pin to decorate and must follow the contest rules, such as decorating for a holiday or specific theme.

Helpful hints:

1. Sand old wooden bowling pins to diminish scratches and nicks from the wear and tear they received. Once they are smooth to the touch, apply a sealant.
2. Coat the bowling pin with a solid color of paint. White and tan are easy to work with and can be the background for a variety of items such as a person, penguin, ghost, or an angel.
3. Paint facial features and clothing on the pin. For example, paint a girl's face wearing a bikini or a comical man wearing a tight t-shirt with his belly button on display. Other ideas include painting city skylines, beaches, mountains, or animals onto the pin. For the non-artistic, you can use decoupage to attach pictures, decals, or stickers.
4. Sign and date the bottom of the bowling pin with a permanent marker. This may make your piece of art more valuable in the future or be a treasured keepsake for your descendants.
5. Apply a sealant over the project and allow to completely dry.
6. Cut pieces of material to create wings, eyebrows, beaks, or buttons and hot glue onto the pin.
7. Decorate the finished piece by adding a bow tie, pom-poms, hats, or tying a scarf or cape around the neck. Other options include adding real buttons, beads, fur, hair, or ribbon.

One Night Stand: Get talented artists to volunteer to create whimsical and beautiful night stands to donate for your fundraising event. Unusual pieces are the biggest draw. This can be held at a local boutique or wherever there might be lots of people. Participants bid on the chance to take home a one-of-a-kind night stand and support a good cause!

Donut Eating Contest

This is a fun event to partner with local law enforcement and hold at a local donut shop or at another venue that holds more people. Whoever eats six doughnuts the fastest wins the contest. A donation jar can be placed at the shop entrance with a unit volunteer handing out thank-you's and ALA brochures. T-shirts that advertised the event can also be sold.



Flag Subscription Service: This is a perfect fundraiser for the ALA! Your unit (and post) places flags on subscribers' yards for a specific number of days per year. Set your fees based on how many days the flag will be placed. The subscription cost for 1 year is \$50-\$100. The first year, expect to clear about half of the proceeds after paying for the flags and accessories. Renew subscribers annually. Subsequent years are mostly profit - allowing for the replacement of damaged or worn flags and receptacles. Advertise in local neighborhood papers, "sell" door-to-door, or set up a booth outside the local grocery or at sporting events. Confine your sales to a geographic area that's doable for your group. Split the coverage area and assign 2-4 person teams to each. That way you can get finished quicker and provide back-up coverage when a team member is out of town. Be sure to leave contact information with your subscribers so they can refer friends and neighbors who want to participate. This fundraising project can raise funds and make your participants and supporters feel good.

After subscriptions are sold, purchase the flags, aluminum conduit (for poles) and PVC pipe. That way you only buy what materials you actually need, although you may wish to allow some extra for last minute subscribers. The PVC is cut to about 14 inches and put into the ground as a receptacle for the flag pole, which is about 5 feet long. The PVC should be "planted" ahead of time. Be sure to keep a record of specifically where it is located on each property. Make sure the pole and PVC are a reasonably close fit to keep your flag upright. You can add a threaded end on top and cap the PVC when not in use to keep out dirt and rocks. But be sure the top is below lawn mower height to avoid damage. Use a hack saw to cut the poles and PVC to the desired lengths. Drill holes in the pipe to attach the flag with picture hanging wire or other sturdy wire for long wear.

Gas Station Attendant: Ask a local gas station to let you pump customers' gas and wash their windshields. You can either ask for an unspecified fundraising donation or a set amount (you will do better without a set amount). Since most stations are now self-serve, you will be offering the customers a welcome option. It's a win-win situation. It doesn't cost the station a cent and their customers get premium service. You have no upfront cost. The gas stations already have the windshield cleaner, squeegees, and paper towels. You just provide warm bodies and elbow grease.

Gift-Wrapping Service: Get in touch with a store or mall in your area and ask about setting up a gift-wrapping fundraising booth for their customers for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and/or Christmas. Just like regular gift-wrapping stations, you can charge different amounts for different levels of wrapping. You will need to invest in boxes, tape, wrapping paper, and bows. You can either accept donations or charge a fee per gift (depending on size, etc.). Usually the store will let you make announcements advertising your booth over their intercom while you are there gift-wrapping. Make sure you have enough people on hand to staff the booth during times advertised.

Remember that your "Wrap Staff" are representing the American Legion Auxiliary and the cooperating merchant and should act and dress appropriately. Do not waste gift-wrap material by creating "works of art" during down time. Even if you are using scraps, it gives the appearance that you are wasting supplies. Do not tape directly on the box you are wrapping. Some boxes contain collector's items that lose their value if you damage the outside packaging. Be safe, and don't use tape on the box.



Grocery Bagger: A few days per year volunteers could work with a local grocery store to bag and carry groceries for their customers, for tips. Have a coffee can sitting at the end of the checkout and give the volunteers some basic bagging lessons beforehand...no bread on the bottom, eggs on top, etc. It's a great time and the donations are pretty generous. Hand out a flyer to shoppers at the door when they walk in explaining your organization is there to bag and carry groceries free of charge, and if they choose to make a donation, please feel free to drop money in the decorated coffee cans provided at each register.

House Number: For this fundraising idea, paint street numbers on curbs in front of houses. Using a cardboard cutout, paint a dark rectangular background on the curb. After it dries, paint the house number in reflective paint.

Before you start, contact the Licensing and Permit section of your local municipality to see if a permit is required. Ask the local police and/or fire departments if they have any special advice/guidelines regarding the project. Pick a neighborhood with good curbs and canvas the neighborhood one or more weeks ahead, taking orders and collecting payment. Advertise your services by going door-to-door and talking to homeowners. Leave printed flyers on doors of homeowners who are not home.

Specify an initial and rain date when the work will be done. You may wish to give a ten-day period (two weekends) to allow for possible delays. You will need several sets of stencils, masking tape, and black background and reflective spray paint. Work in teams of three – one to sweep the curb, one to paint the background and one to paint the house number. Since you will need to let the background paint dry before applying the house number, you may be able to get by with teams of two, depending on the size of the neighborhood. Have additional order-takers available on “paint day” for the homes you missed previously. Your worker's activity will create additional sales.

“It’s A Girl Thing!”: Sell raffle tickets where the winner will receive a ‘Pamper Me’ packet for a day of relaxation and pampering, with all items being donated by local merchants. Tickets are sold for \$1 each, all of which is profit and with minimal effort! The packet included a body massage, haircut and style, manicure, store gift certificate, dinner for two, and movie passes. Be creative and tailor your fundraising packet to fit your organization and supporters! Prepare a certificate or letter for the winner. Make sure you publicize the donations from the local merchants AND be sure to send them a personal thank you!

Coat Check: Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, work with your local mall management company for an area to have a coat check. Stores in the mall may donate the temporary use of racks to hang coats on and a secured area to leave packages, etc. Hand out a coat check ticket and shoppers can leave their coats, mittens, etc. while they shop. Set a minimum donation for the service. You can raise thousands of dollars with very little upfront cost. The only things to pay for are rolls of tickets that you can buy at any office supply store.

Miniature Golf Tournament: Reserve a miniature golf course for your fundraising event. Have participants ask people to sponsor them per hole they play. Then, run the tournament just like an Iron Man competition except you play on the miniature golf course. Play 100 holes in two hours or as many as you can do in two hours.

**Potato Bar:**

Bake potatoes and set up like a salad bar with all the fixings. Set price or ask for donations. You can also add salads and desserts donated by unit members. Add some fun by having someone dressed in a Mr. Potato Head costume walking around making sure everyone has everything they need. His parts are Velcro so the little kids can have a blast taking him apart and putting him back together.

Squeegee Day: What we do is ask people at a local drive thru to donate money to have their windshields washed. Have one person at the beginning of the drive thru asking the person if they would like their windshield washed as a donation to your cause. If they say yes, our volunteer places a pamphlet under their windshield wiper. Once they get to the front of the drive thru and they have a pamphlet under their wiper, your team of two washes their windshield and thanks them for their donation. Get the squeegees donated as well as the windshield washer fluid, and mix it 50/50 with water. There's very little setup (your pail and pamphlets) and it takes a very small number of people to pull it off.



SECTION 2.1 MISSION OUTREACH PROGRAMS

- ALA GIRLS NATION
- AMERICANISM
- CHILDREN & YOUTH
- COMMUNITY SERVICE
- EDUCATION
- JUNIOR ACTIVITIES
- LEGISLATIVE
- NATIONAL SECURITY
- POPPY
- VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

ALA Girls Nation

American Legion Auxiliary units in all 50 states proudly host ALA Girls State, an amazing week of learning focused on responsible citizenship, leadership, and love for God and Country. Participants are assigned to mock cities and to either the “Federalist Party” or “Nationalist Party.” They are immersed in learning about the political process by electing officials for all levels of state government and actively running a mock government. Assistance from dedicated ALA volunteers ensures the program’s nonpartisan governmental, patriotic, and civic objectives are carried out through interactive learning. Though the week is filled with many learning opportunities, there is always time for fun and the formation of long-term friendships.

Two girls are selected from each ALA Girls State program to attend ALA Girls Nation. ALA Girls Nation “senators” meet for a week in Washington, D.C. where they run for political office, campaign, debate for the passage of legislation, and meet with U.S. Congressmen and Senators from their states. Capping off the week of ALA Girls Nation is a possible meeting with the President of the United States at the White House.

Committee Contact Information

ALAGirlsNation@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Instill an awareness of the American Legion Auxiliary’s mission in all ALA Girls State citizens.

Ideas:

Member

- Encourage eligible young ladies to become involved with volunteer projects in their communities that involve veterans, active military, or the American Legion Auxiliary.

Unit

- Invite your ALA Girls State delegates, both past and present, to participate in service projects with your unit, even if they are not ALA members.
- Use the invitation to donate/participate as an opportunity to raise awareness of your local ALA unit in your community.
- Encourage unit members to solicit sponsorship/fundraising or donations from other organizations or businesses to sponsor ALA Girls State participants.
- Increase networking with schools (including charters, private, and home schools) that have no active units in their communities.

Department

- Educate ALA Girls State citizens about the programs and mission of the American Legion Auxiliary by including “Auxiliary Facts” into the ALA Girls State program agenda.
- Incorporate a veterans’ program to bring more emphasis to the American Legion Auxiliary’s mission:
 - POW/MIA ceremony with table and accessories; include citizens in the program.
 - Present Blue Star Banners to staff and citizens who have a loved one in the military.
 - Invite veterans and/or active military to be guest speakers during your session (possibly someone who has benefited from the ALA’s mission).
- Stress the importance of volunteering and giving back to the community.
 - Incorporate a mission-based service project during your ALA Girls State session in which all citizens participate.
- Invite alumnae to join the ALA or participate in the organization’s service projects.
- Refer to resources on the National website during ALA Girls State.

2. Actively encourage all eligible ALA Girls State citizens (past and present) to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

Ideas:

Member

- Ask ALA Girls State citizens who have become members to pass on the benefits of membership to other eligible family members.
- Prepare talking points about the ALA and use them when you are speaking with ALA Girls State participants and their families.
- Coordinate your efforts with other ALA members so recruitment doesn’t become a nuisance to participants.
- Promote opportunities and benefits of membership as a source for volunteerism.

Unit

- Invite eligible ALA Girls State participants you sponsor to join your unit.
- Actively engage ALA Girls State citizens (past and present) to pass on the importance of membership to other eligible family members.
- Develop a very brief, mission-focused presentation to showcase the ALA mission, history, and relevance to current issues affecting the military and their families.
- Promote opportunities and benefits of membership as a source for volunteerism.

Department

- Have membership applications, eUnit information, and information on the American Legion Auxiliary available during your ALA Girls State session.
- Encourage ALA Girls State volunteers that joined the ALA after attending ALA Girls State as a citizen to discuss their reasons for joining and what opportunities and

benefits they have gained as members. (I.e.: Have your members share at a program fair or in local city council meetings.)

3. Increase participation by highlighting college scholarship/funding possibilities for ALA Girls State program participants.

A. State participation scholarships

Ideas:

Member

- Make a donation to your local ALA Girls State program.
- Ask other organizations you volunteer with to donate to ALA Girls State.

Unit

- Solicit donations from other veteran, civic, or booster organizations to sponsor ALA Girls State participants.
- Network with schools (charter, private, home schools) that have no active units in their communities.
- Ask parents of past ALA Girls State citizens to contribute to the ALA Girls State program.
- Invite members to set up a memorial scholarship in memory of a loved one. Contact your department ALA Girls State chairman or director for information.

Department

- Ask your housing institution (ALA Girls State host location) to contribute a scholarship for ALA Girls State delegates.
- Have fundraisers to increase scholarship funds available to participants.
- Encourage ALA Girls State alumnae to consider providing scholarships to support the program.
- Apply for private grants to increase scholarship funds available to participants.

Note: Use caution when it comes to state funding.

B. College/Samsung scholarships

Every year, a participant of each ALA Girls State program, who is a direct descendant of a veteran, is eligible to apply for the Samsung scholarship at the state level. One ALA Girls State citizen from each state is named as a department finalist. Ten national winners and 10 national runners-up are then chosen from the pool of department finalists, each receiving a \$10,000 and \$5,000 scholarship, respectively. The remaining department finalists are guaranteed to receive a scholarship of \$1,250.

Ideas:

Member

- Write an article for your media with Samsung scholarship information.
- Take a photo of past/present Samsung scholarship winners for the inclusion in department publications.

Unit

- Include a flyer promoting the Samsung scholarship in your ALA Girls State packets to the schools.
- Identify eligible Samsung scholarship recipients during the interview process.

Department

- Include a flyer promoting the Samsung scholarship in your bulk mailing to units.
- Acknowledge the recipient of a previous Samsung scholarship during your ALA Girls State program.
- Share a photo of the recipient along with a short article in department publications and the recipient's local newspaper.

4. Utilize the Internet, social networking sites, and written media to increase awareness and visibility of ALA Girls State.

Ideas:

Member

- Link personal social media accounts to ALA Girls State program accounts, as well as ALA Girls Nation sites. Since this program involves minors, please be sure to familiarize yourself with safety precautions found in the ALA's social media policy.
 - Twitter and Instagram handle is @ALAforVeterans.
 - Facebook page is "American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation."
 - ALA Girls Nation blog at www.ALAGirlsNation.blogspot.com.

Unit

- Review candidate selection process and marketing efforts to ensure attraction of quality candidates.
- Establish various social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or use current sites and include how to maintain them.)
 - Include social media etiquette.
 - Include safety when using social media sites.
- Create a Facebook page and/or Twitter account for your unit and "like" your ALA Girls State program page and the ALA Girls Nation page.
- Engage with possible participants as to the best ways they may be reached.
- Prepare an article about your ALA Girls State participants and submit it to your local news media. If it is published, share the link on your social media sites.

Department

- Link your ALA Girls State website with other relevant programs in your state and the ALA Girls Nation website.
- Invite previous participants to join any social media sites your ALA Girls State program manages.
- Create and use hashtags on social media.
- Encourage the chartering of an eUnit within your department for ALA Girls State alumnae.

5. Stay up to date on the latest ALA Girls State program news and best practices.

Ideas:

Member

- Sign up to receive *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* from ALA National Headquarters at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Unit

- Maintain regular contact with your ALA Girls State department leaders.

Department

- Send at least one member to the ALA Girls State Leadership Conference held in Indianapolis, Ind. in the fall. Please refer to the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan for this year's dates.
- Read and implement the *ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide*. This guide is intended for educational and informational purposes and provides general, non-specific legal information. It includes information about planning and conducting an ALA Girls State program and is intended as a guide to make program volunteers and staff aware of pertinent issues. You can download a copy from the ALA Girls State and Girls Nation program committee page in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Maintain regular contact with the units in your department.

ALA Girls Nation Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department ALA Girls State chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division ALA Girls Nation chairman, plus copy the national ALA Girls Nation chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department ALA Girls State chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division ALA Girls Nation chairman, plus copy the national ALA Girls Nation chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the ALA Girls Nation Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- What have you done within your ALA Girls State program to encourage membership?
- What methods do units utilize to recruit ALA Girls State delegates for membership? Are they effective?
- Does your ALA Girls State program initiate a mission-based activity during your session? If so, please detail the success of this activity.
- Discuss the success of your ALA Girls State alumnae Facebook page or other social media.
- Discuss units' successful solicitation of funding outside of the Legion Family.
- How have you improved the unit involvement and understanding of all aspects of the program? Has the program participation increased because of this?

Additional Resources:

- www.alaforveterans.org
 - *ALA Girls State Program and Operations Guide*
 - Sign up for the *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin*
- Your national ALA Girls Nation committee members (see ALA Girls Nation program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).
- Facebook:
 - @AmericanLegionAuxiliaryGirlsState
 - @ALAGirlsNation

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Americanism

Americanism promotes patriotism and responsible citizenship.

Committee Contact Information

Americanism@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information.

Ideas:

Member

- Publish flag etiquette tips in your newspaper and on social media.
- Model respect for our flag at public events, such as sporting events.
- Visit schools at the beginning of the school year to give some basic facts about our flag, our national anthem, and when we stand and put our hands over our hearts at parades and ball games.
- Volunteer for a local patriotic event.
- Sign up at www.legion.org to receive notifications on when to display your flag at half-staff.
- Contact and ask state and federal representatives to support the flag amendment.
- Vote! Take your children/grandchildren with you when you vote – many places have kid-related voting. Encourage others to vote.
- Recruit others to support the flag amendment by explaining what it is and why it is important. Sign up for The American Legion's Legislative action alerts and follow flag issues.
- Work with local schools to further education of the Constitution, either whole or in part such as the Bill of Rights or the Preamble.

Unit

- Work with your Legion Post to increase respect for the flag in your community; invite the public to participate in a flag disposal ceremony.
- Teach proper handling, displaying, and respect for the American flag, as well as our National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Organize a patriotic holiday event or participate in local patriotic holiday events (i.e. march in a parade).
- Volunteer to keep up the area around the flag pole at your community's civic government area by planting seasonal flowers and collecting trash.
- Encourage local businesses to fly the American flag, especially on patriotic holidays.
- Encourage Legion Family members to fly an American flag at their home.
- Provide American flags to your local schools for classrooms.
- Order pocket flag kits and distribute to members.
- Identify and distribute assembled pocket flags to active-duty military overseas.

- Encourage Auxiliary members to contact state and federal representatives and ask them to support the flag amendment.
- Encourage members to participate in Get Out the Vote and Kids Voting USA campaigns. For more information, refer to www.legion.org/vote and www.kidsvotingusa.org.
- Work with local schools to further education of the U.S. Constitution, either whole or in part such as the Bill of Rights or the Preamble.

Department

- Share information from The American Legion’s publication *Let’s Be Right On Flag Etiquette* in your department newsletter each month.
- Conduct a flag disposal ceremony.
- Host flag etiquette awareness events and communicate information in schools, at your post home, and/or at public functions.
- Compile a list of patriotic holidays and events and share with your units.
- Acquire flags flown over your state capitol building to present to honored guests that visit your unit.
- Encourage members to contact state and federal representatives and ask them to support the flag amendment.
- Encourage members to participate in Get Out the Vote and Kids Voting USA campaigns. For more information, please refer to www.legion.org/vote and www.kidsvotingusa.org.

2. Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest. The theme for the current year can be found in the Americanism Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Student Award: Americanism Essay Contest

Type of award: Citation, \$50 prize and additional \$50 donation added to the Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship Fund.

Presented to: 30 students total, six from each division, one student for every class in each division

Materials and Guidelines:

- The contest shall include six classes.

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs	Word count should correspond with student’s grade level.

- Students with special needs are defined as:
 - Those in special education classes.
 - A student recommended for special education classes, but who has not been admitted due to a waiting list or various other factors.

- A child identified as having a disability, but not in a special education class due to lack of facilities; identification contingent upon discretion of school officials.
- Entries must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet found in the Americanism Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.
- Unit winners are sent to the department Americanism chairman, following department guidelines.
- For deadline and division Americanism chairman contact information, please refer to the Americanism Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.
- National winners will be informed of their award via communication from National Headquarters. The award check will be mailed directly to the student and the citation will be forwarded to the department for presentation.
- While ALA representatives will do their best to return all essays, it is not guaranteed. We recommend participants retain a copy of their submission for their own records.

Ideas:

Member

- Encourage your children/grandchildren to participate in the essay contests.
- Offer to contact schools or other organizations.
- Help judge the essays.

Unit

- Contact schools and other organizations such as the Young Marines, Girl and Boy Scouts, and 4-H about the essay contest.
- Encourage Junior members to participate in the essay contest.
- Create information packets explaining contest rules, deadline dates, theme, and award opportunities.
- Contact the essay winner and their parents. Invite the parents to bring their child to your next Auxiliary meeting to read his/her winning essay. Provide refreshments.
- Work with school administration to identify guidance counselors, history teachers, etc. whose students would be interested in participating.
 - Arrange for a day with the schools (preferably during a student assembly) to present the essay winners with their prizes. Provide cash award and/or savings bond.
- Be sure to include this information on your unit report to your district, department, and national chairman.

Department

- Remind members about the essay contest, provide information, and encourage members to promote it.

3. Participate in the promotion of The American Legion Americanism programs.

Ideas:

Member

- Support American Legion Baseball.
 - Help with statistics.
 - Work the concession booth.
 - Donate to a team.
 - Contact local sports shops and ask if they would be willing to make donations

toward a fundraiser or offer a discounted price to purchase needed items.

- Support the Oratorical Contest.
 - Help prepare post home to sponsor local or district contest.
 - Offer to be a judge or timekeeper.
 - Offer to help out with refreshments.
 - Provide transportation for candidates.
 - Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
 - Contact history teachers or debate coaches.
- Support the Junior Shooting Sports, which promotes gun safety and marksmanship training for youth.
 - Volunteer to help out with scoring, supervision, or transportation.
 - Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
 - Contact JROTC at local schools.

Unit

- Work with the post and/or district Americanism chairman.
- Support American Legion Baseball.
 - Sponsor a team.
 - Help with statistics.
 - Man the concession booth.
 - Hold a fundraiser.
 - Drive the team to games.
- Support the Oratorical Contest either at your post level or district level.
 - Offer to provide volunteers as timekeepers or judges.
 - Offer to help out with refreshments.
 - Offer to host a contest.
 - Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
- Support Junior Shooting Sports, which promotes gun safety and marksmanship training for youth.
 - Offer to provide refreshments on event day.
 - Arrange transportation and/or supervision on event day.
 - Host an event at your post/unit home, if you have the space.

Department

- Work with The American Legion Americanism chairman in your department.
- Support American Legion Baseball.
 - Sponsor a team.
 - Sponsor a tournament.
- Encourage units to support the Oratorical Contest in conjunction with their respective posts or districts.
- Encourage units to support Junior Shooting Sports, which promotes gun safety and marksmanship training for youth.

Americanism Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Americanism chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Americanism chairman, plus copy the national Americanism chairman.

Annual Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Americanism chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Americanism chairman, plus copy the national Americanism chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Americanism Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did you promote the Americanism essays contest?
- How did units promote the flag program?
- How did you promote patriotic holidays?
- How did units encourage support of the flag amendment?
- Did units support The American Legion Americanism programs? How?
- How did units promote Americanism in their community?

Americanism Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Americanism committee contact information may be found on the Americanism committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

A. Unit Award: Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Unit Americanism Program

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
 - The entry may include no more than five pictures and five news articles.

B. Department Award: Best Department Americanism Program

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
 - Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. American Legion Flag and Emblem Sales: www.emblem.legion.org
 - Flag education DVD: explains the history, significance, meaning, proper display, and treatment of the U.S. flag.
 - *Let's Be Right On Flag Etiquette* - a question and answer booklet on proper flag etiquette.
2. The American Legion Flag Advocacy: www.legion.org/flag
3. The American Legion's Action Programs of Americanism brochure: www.legion.org/publications
4. Capitol Building flags: To order flags flown over the Capitol, contact your congressional representative(s) or senator or visit his/her website. Flags are available for a nominal fee; four to six weeks should be allowed for delivery.
5. Pocket Flag Project: www.pocketflagproject.com.
6. Your national Americanism committee members (see Americanism program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Children & Youth

The Children & Youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for and supporting children and youth, particularly those of veterans' and military families.

Committee Contact Information

children&youth@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Support Children and Youth in your community.

- **“Star Spangled Kids”**: This is an ALA program to educate children and youth on the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism and the U.S. Constitution.
- **Youth Hero Awards/Good Deed Awards**: This is a way the ALA can recognize youth in our communities who demonstrate good citizenship, either through a brave physical act or a good deed.
- **Josh dogs**: An American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children.
- **April is The American Legion’s Children and Youth Month**

Ideas:

Member

- Offer to make a “Star Spangled” presentation to your local schools. Invite post members to help students learn how their military service was meaningful in defending the U.S. Constitution.
 - Refer to the Star Spangled Kids how to sheet at the end of this program plan for more information.
- Contact local high schools to invite them to encourage their students to use their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution by participating in The American Legion Oratorical Contest.
 - Refer to www.legion.org for information on the Oratorical Contest.
- Monitor newspapers, TV and neighborhoods for children and youth who have performed a heroic act of physical valor, such as performing CPR, helping evacuate in the event of a fire, calling 911 for an emergency, etc. Work with your unit to nominate them for a Youth Hero/Good Deed Award.
- Contact local schools, churches and youth groups to make them aware of the Youth Hero/Good Deed Awards. Make sure to leave unit contact information.
- Identify children in your community who may be or are facing hospitalization for the first time and who may benefit from a Josh and friends dog and book.

Unit

- Create a Unit Citizenship Award for children and youth who have learned the ideals of the U.S. Constitution.
- Share a constitutional fact each month in the unit newsletter, the newspaper editorial and/or on social media.
- September 17 is Constitution Day (Citizenship Day). Host a party that revolves

- around the U.S. Constitution for children.
- Print and distribute pocket constitutions to schoolchildren.
 - Refer to the Star Spangled Kids how to sheet at the end of this program Plan for more information.
- Once a child has been identified as a Youth Hero/Good Deed applicant, complete the nomination form. See the Youth Hero/Good Deed nomination form at the end of this program Plan to submit the name of the child. Have the form signed by two unit members, and then submit the form to your department secretary.
- When a Youth Hero/Good Deed award has been processed by national headquarters, contact local media, community school leaders and the child’s parents, and plan for a public presentation of the award.
- Plan a special celebration of children during the month of April in honor of Children and Youth Month.

Department

- Share a constitutional fact each month in the department bulletin.
- Offer incentives to units for starting a “Star Spangled Kids” activity.
 - Refer to the Star Spangled Kids how to sheet at the end of this program Plan for more information.
- Support the Children and Youth programs of The American Legion by providing information to units and distributing TAL pamphlets, coloring books, comic books and other information found on www.Legion.org and through Emblem Sales.

2. Support military children and youth

- Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2): This is a recognition program for military children who experience extended separation from their military parent or parents.
- GI Josh: An American Legion Family alliance, GI Josh is a plush dog and accompanying storybook used to help ease separation fears for the military children.
- April is the Month of the Military Child

Ideas:

Member

- Volunteer at a Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) camp program.
- Volunteer at a Family Readiness Group event where KDH2 “I’m a Hero 2” buttons/stickers can be distributed.
- Give a GI Josh to the child of a deployed servicemember.
- Wear purple on April 15 in honor of Purple Up! for Military Kids day.

Unit

- Host a dinner, game night, community fair, etc. that will bring military and non-military families together.
- Host a KDH2 celebration with recognition buttons/stickers to let military kids know we appreciate their sacrifices.
 - Refer to the how to sheet at the end of this program Plan for more information.
- Support G.I. Josh – Identify military children who may have a parent or sibling deploying.
- Plan a special celebration of military children during April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
- Encourage members to wear purple on Purple Up! for Military Kids day (April 15).

Department

- Promote the KDH2 program
- Collaborate with ALA Girls State by recognizing citizens who are the daughters of servicemembers with “I’m a Hero 2” buttons or stickers.
- Team up with other community groups that are also concerned with the special needs of military children (i.e. Give an Hour, Military Parents, Guard/Reserve Family Readiness Group representatives, etc.).
- Plan a special celebration of military children during April in honor of the Month of the Military Child.
- Encourage members to wear purple on April 15 in honor of Purple Up! for Military Kids day.

3. Support veterans’ children and youth.

- Some of our homeless veterans also have children living on the streets with them.
- *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope* – Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is affiliated with the American Legion Family

Ideas:

Member

- Contact your local churches, homeless shelters and food pantries to identify homeless veterans’ children. Ask what their specific needs are, and offer them your services as an ALA member.
- Contact your local news sources (newspaper, community television, community websites and social media accounts) and town council. Offer to give a presentation about you and your unit’s work for homeless veterans and their children.
- Contact your voluntary services representatives at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Offer to work with them to help meet the needs of children of homeless veterans who come to the VAMC.
- Contact local schools to access their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Volunteer at a TAPS camp program.

Unit

- Train members to be a resource for front-line agencies who receive requests for help.
- Contact local schools to assess their need for supplies and extra clothes for homeless children. Offer to supply items as needed.
- Contact your post service officer to offer help with the needs of children of veterans who need financial help. (The American Legion - Temporary Financial Assistance)
- Help raise awareness for the needs of homeless children in your community by sharing unit activities on the unit website, social media pages and newsletters.
- Purchase the book, *Klinger, a Story of Honor and Hope*, from TAPS with the companion plush horse for children who are grieving the loss of a military parent or loved one.

Department

- Team up with other community groups that are also concerned with the special needs of veteran’s children. (i.e. TAPS)
- Share information and ideas, including activities units are providing, on the department’s website, social media pages and newsletters to help children of veterans.

Children & Youth Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Children & Youth chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Children & Youth chairman, plus copy the national Children & Youth chairman.

Annual Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Children & Youth chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Children & Youth chairman, plus copy the national Children & Youth chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Children & Youth Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

1. How did your units and department promote "Star Spangled Kids," educating children and youth about the U.S. Constitution from the aspect of patriotism and Americanism?
2. How did your units and department promote the Youth Hero/Good Deed Award?
3. What success stories do you have regarding support for military or homeless veterans' children?

Children & Youth Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Children & Youth committee contact information may be found on the Children & Youth committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

A. Award: Youth Hero

- Award: Youth Hero Medal and Citation
- Presented to: Youth under 18 years of age who have performed heroic acts of physical valor; membership in The American Legion Family is not required

- Materials and guidelines:
 - Complete the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form and mail to your department secretary, who certifies, then mails the application to National Headquarters. (Please, **do not** mail applications directly to National Headquarters.)
 - The award certificate, signed by the national president and national Children & Youth chairman, and Youth Hero Award medal will be returned to the unit or department to be presented on behalf of the National organization.
 - The department Children & Youth chairman should be notified of the award.

B. Award: Good Deed

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: Youth under 18 years of age who have performed specific good deeds and are great examples of community service in action; membership in The American Legion Family is not required
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Complete the Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form and mail to your department secretary, who certifies, then mails the application to National Headquarters. (Please, **do not** mail applications directly to National Headquarters.)
 - The award certificate, signed by the national president and national Children & Youth chairman, will be returned to the unit or department to be presented on behalf of the National organization.
 - The department Children & Youth chairman should be notified of the award.

C. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Children & Youth Program

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your unit worked the Children & Youth program, including supporting military children and the Star Spangled Kids program.
 - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

D. Department Award: Best Department Children & Youth Program

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your department worked the Children & Youth program, including supporting military children and the Star Spangled Kids program.
 - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

How To Sheets

- How to Promote “Star Spangled Kids”
- How to Conduct a “Kids of Deployed Are Heroes 2” Program
- How to Reach Out to Military Children and Youth

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. “I’m a Hero 2” stickers template and instructions can be found on the Children & Youth program page at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
2. Your national Children & Youth committee members (see Children & Youth program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information.)
3. The national Children & Youth Committee Facebook group, search “ALA Children and Youth”
4. The American Legion Children & Youth programs: www.legion.org/programs
5. The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation: www.legion.org/cwf
6. Josh and Friends (American Legion Family alliance): www.joshandfriends.com
7. Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grant recipient for *Klinger*): www.taps.org



HOW TO PROMOTE "STAR SPANGLED KIDS"

Committee:

Children & Youth

Contact Information for Questions:

Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org

Star Spangled Kids: Educate children and youth on the history of the United States from the aspect of patriotism, Americanism and the U.S. Constitution.

- In conjunction with local schools, create a Unit Citizenship Award for children and youth who have demonstrated the ideals of the U.S. Constitution.
- Team with the Education chairman to bring veterans or servicemembers into the classroom to talk about what their service means to defending the ideals of the Constitution.
- Share "Fascinating Facts about the U.S. Constitution" each month in the department or unit bulletin, in tweets, or in a newspaper editorial.
- List important constitutional dates by chronological order or by month.
- Encourage students to test their knowledge of the Constitution.
- Distribute patriotic coloring book pages for children in primary grades.
- Celebrate Constitution Day (also known as Citizenship Day) on September 17, the day set aside each year to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution.
 - Celebrate at September's Junior meeting with a cake or cupcakes.
 - Let Juniors report on different sections of the Bill of Rights
- Print and distribute pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution for school children and/or Juniors.
- Put on a skit or musical about the Constitution and the signers.
- Hold a scavenger hunt in the post where children find information relating to the Constitution.
- Have members dress up as signers of the Constitution and describe the role of their character in the writing and signing of the Constitution.
- Encourage high school-aged students to use their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution by participating in The American Legion Oratorical Contest.

Resources:

- www.constitutionfacts.com
- Constitution Day Resources:
<http://ca3rsproject.org/pages/ConstitutionDayResources.html>



HOW TO CONDUCT A “KIDS OF DEPLOYED ARE HEROES 2” PROGRAM

Committee:

Children & Youth

Contact Information for Questions:

Children&Youth@ALAforVeterans.org

Kids of Deployed are Heroes 2 (KDH2): honoring military children who may experience a separation from one or both parents, whether deploying to a war zone, having a short tour or extended TDY (temporary duty assignment).

1. Make preparations for a supply of “recognition buttons” for distribution. Visit the Children & Youth page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org for more information. Buttons may be ordered through a commercial vendor or made locally with the following content:
 - I’m a Hero 2.
 - Proud Parent of a Military Child with a picture.
 - Proud Grandparent of a Military Child with a picture.
2. Call a planning meeting: include the Legion Family, especially Junior members. Consider the following ideas to recognize military kids:
 - Make or purchase and distribute ‘I’m a Hero 2’ buttons.
 - Make or purchase and distribute ‘Proud Parent/Grandparent of a Military Child’ with picture button.
 - Can’t afford buttons? Make or purchase and distribute stickers.
3. Decide the best location for recognition of military kids:
 - Coordinate with Family Readiness Groups for button distribution during family days.
 - Coordinate with Legion Family members for local community days/fairs etc.
 - Consider having an activity day/dinner for military families at your post home.
 - If your unit is in close vicinity to a military installation, contact Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) for a listing of activities in which you might have a concession or table.
 - Make buttons available for ALA Girls State and The American Legion Boys State programs and Junior members.
 - Consider suggestions from Junior members for school activities and locations.

No matter what you decide to do, plan a public relations campaign around your event. Consider having Auxiliary membership applications available. Community events provide the best opportunity to sign up new members.



HOW TO REACH OUT TO MILITARY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Committee:

Children & Youth

Contact Information for Questions:

children&youth@ALAforVeterans.org

Some ideas for reaching out to military children and youth:

1. Sponsor a "You're My Hero" event, similar to the Youth Hero Award, but for military children.
 - Present them with certificates and medals.
 - Be creative.
 - Ask your Junior members to participate.
 - Use your public relations tools to inform the community. Refer to the Public Relations Toolkit at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
2. Host a movie and popcorn night for teens or a board game night.
3. Many military kids can't afford new prom dresses. Get the community involved in collecting and distributing gently used prom dresses.
 - Ask local radio stations and newspapers to donate time and space to help advertise your initiative.
 - Get local bridal shops involved.
 - Involve your high school counselors.
 - Your unit may also want to help with transportation expenses, flowers, etc.
4. Contact your local homeless shelter. Ask if there are any veterans there with children.
 - Since one in five homeless are veterans, there is a good chance they will be living in local shelters. Find out what your unit can do to help the children.
 - VA hospitals have homeless coordinators and/or directors of voluntary services. Meet with them to establish a method in which the coordinator/director will coordinate with your unit whenever a homeless veteran with children is identified. Offer to provide school supplies for the child, through the homeless coordinator or director of voluntary services.
5. Maybe the best thing you can do is get your Legion Family together and brainstorm ideas that might work in your community. Sometimes, school-aged children might be your best link to finding military children in your community. Be creative.

No matter what you decide to do, plan a public relations campaign around your event. Consider having Auxiliary membership applications available. Community events provide the best opportunity to sign up new members.



American Legion Auxiliary

Youth Hero and Good Deed Award Nomination Form

NAME OF YOUTH _____

First

Middle Initial

Last

Youth's date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ Age _____ Male Female

Date _____ Submitted by Unit # _____ Dept. of _____

Description of bravery and/or deed performed by youth (to be completed by unit)

- **Good Deed Award** – Youth should demonstrate leadership role in community service, specific deed should be present
- **Youth Hero Award** - Youth should demonstrate a physical act of valor

Please attach news clippings or include website to verify the deed being recognized.

UNIT CERTIFICATION (MUST BE CERTIFIED BY TWO UNIT MEMBERS)

Unit Member _____ Date _____

Unit Member _____ Date _____

Units should send completed applications to their department secretary.

DEPARTMENT SECRETARY CERTIFICATION

Name _____ Date: _____

Department secretary mails nomination to National Headquarters, 8945 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46260. Awards will be shipped at no cost to unit or department.

Please ship to:

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please use this form for all Youth Hero and Good Deed Award nominations. For more information, contact National Headquarters at children&youth@ALAforVeterans.org or (317) 569-4500.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS USE ONLY

Date received _____

Date shipped _____

Youth Hero Award Good Deed Award

By _____

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Community Service

The Community Service program promotes the American Legion Auxiliary's visibility within our localities through our commitment to community, state and nation.

Committee Contact Information

communityservice@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

- 1. Become visible within your community as a link to the veteran community. Get involved in community service projects to bring awareness of our mission to support veterans, servicemembers, their families and the community.**

Ideas:

Member

- Always wear your American Legion Auxiliary apparel or pin while volunteering in the community; it reinforces our brand promise by telling people who we are, what we do, and why we matter.
 - *Note:* If you are ordering anything with the ALA name or emblem from a source other than Emblem Sales, remember that a request first must be submitted through your department headquarters to National Headquarters for approval by the national secretary. Contact your unit for more information on this process.
- Reach out to local ministers and first responders to indicate your willingness to be a designated responder for veteran families in need. Be sure to keep a list of veteran resources handy so you will be ready.
- Get involved with your neighbors and those outside our Legion family by volunteering at your local library, food pantry, domestic violence shelter, senior citizen centers, assisted living centers, nursing homes.
- Represent the Auxiliary as a member of local community boards and committees.
- Volunteer with your local Meals on Wheels to deliver meals on days when they are typically closed (i.e. Christmas and Thanksgiving).

Unit

- Volunteer to organize or assist with your community's Veterans Day observance.
- Organize and participate in service projects for veterans, servicemembers, their families and local community programs on ALA suggested days of service.
- Register service projects on websites, community forums and social media to attract other community members to participate in your service projects.
- Volunteer for local service projects and causes (walks, special events, etc.). Work with your post home to offer space and their participation in local service projects and causes.
- Sponsor and participate in activities at local libraries, senior citizen centers, assisted living centers, nursing homes, service projects and causes (walks, special events, etc.).

- Attend and represent the Auxiliary at special celebration events in the community such as holiday parades, grand openings of community facilities and community leader recognition ceremonies.

Department

- Assist units and members with specific idea plans outlined above.
- Encourage members of your department to be leaders in their communities by including photos and stories from unit events in your department newsletter.

Community Service Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Community Service chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Community Service chairman, plus copy the national Community Service chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Community Service chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Community Service chairman, plus copy the national Community Service chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Community Service Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- Did members volunteer for or organize service projects for any of the ALA suggested days of service? If so, which days were most successful for offering service projects? Did you have any challenges?
- What types of community service activities and/or projects were done in your department?

Community Service Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Community Service committee contact information may be found on the Community Service committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- A. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Community Service Program**
- Award: Citation Plaque
 - Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
 - Materials and Guidelines:
 - Include pictures and newspaper articles.
- B. Department Award: Best Department Community Service Program**
- Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department in each division (5)
 - Materials and Guidelines:
 - Each entry must be typewritten in narrative form.
 - Include pictures and newspaper articles.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. See your national Community Service Committee page of the national website:
 - *ALA Service Not Self Volunteer Toolbox*
 - How to Partner with Organizations for Community Outreach
 - How to Mobilize Community Support for Those Who Serve
 - How to Serve on National Days of Service
2. ALA suggested days of service:
 - 9-11 National Day of Service and Remembrance (observed annually on Sept. 11)
 - Make a Difference Day (observed on the fourth Saturday of Oct.)
 - Veterans Day (observed annually on Nov. 11)
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service (observed on the third Monday of Jan.)
 - National Volunteer Week (usually the third week in April)
3. Your national Community Service committee members (see Community Service program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)
4. The national Community Service Committee Facebook group, search “ALA Community Service”

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Education

The Education Program promotes the American Legion Auxiliary's role in providing quality education for children and adults through classroom activities, literacy programs, scholarship promotion and support of education beyond high school, with a special emphasis on children of veterans and servicemembers.

Committee Contact Information

education@ALAforVeterans.org

What Can You Do?

- 1. Enhance respect for the sacrifices of our military heroes among schoolchildren by scheduling Veterans in Community Schools programs at local schools. See enclosed how to sheet.**

Ideas:

Member

- Locate a veteran willing to share his/her experience with school children. Attend a post meeting or ask around the clubroom for a volunteer.
- Contact your local schoolteachers or principals to see if they would be interested in hosting a Veterans in Community Schools event.
- Volunteer to provide transportation to and from the school for the veteran speaking in community schools.
- Wear your American Legion Auxiliary apparel when you visit schools.

Unit

- Collaborate with your local American Legion post to present Veterans in Community Schools within your local schools.
- Promote your Veterans in Community Schools event through local media and on your own social media accounts.

Department

- Encourage units to collaborate with their American Legion post to present Veterans in Community Schools programs in their communities.

- 2. Promote American Legion Auxiliary scholarships, and award local scholarships at the department and unit levels.**

Ideas:

Member

- Contact the person at your local high school who handles scholarship opportunities. It will typically be a guidance or career counselor. Ask if you can send them information about national, department and unit American Legion Auxiliary scholarship opportunities.

- Make copies of any scholarship applications (found at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships), and provide them to schools that request them.
- Volunteer to be on the scholarship selection committee.
- Make a donation to American Legion Auxiliary education national scholarship funds:
 - Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship Fund
 - Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund
 - ALA Foundation at www.ALAFoundation.org
 - Department, district or unit scholarships

Unit

- Assign a member to communicate with schools regarding scholarship applications.
- Create a Unit Scholarship Fund to award scholarships to local students.
 - Refer to “How to Create a Unit Scholarship Fund” following this program Plan.
- Prepare a news release with scholarship information for local media and your post/unit newsletter.
- Form a committee to select scholarship winners.
- Publicize the winners of ALA scholarships at a school presentation and in the media.
- Please keep track of the total number of applications received for any national scholarship, and pass that information on to your department Education chairman.

Department

- Promote scholarship information. National scholarship applications are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships.
 - Post these applications to your department website (linking them back to the national website) along with your department scholarships.
- Please keep track of the total number of applications received for any national scholarship, and pass that information on to your division Education chairman.

3. Support Give 10 to Education, American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Ideas:

Member

- Participate in the Give 10 to Education program by purchasing items to distribute to schools.
 - Place a poster with a collection box at local sites (i.e., grocery stores, banks, senior centers, post office), and invite local residents to donate.
 - Save Box Tops for Education and send them to local schools. Most schools participate in this program.
 - A downloadable certificate may be found on the Education page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Promote Teacher Appreciation Week, the first full week in May.
 - Send cards to your local school's teachers.
 - Donate resources that teachers or needy children may need.
- Promote American Education Week, celebrated the week prior to Thanksgiving.
 - Send a card to all local school staff thanking them for the work they do. Include all school personnel with whom children interact (i.e., bus drivers, custodians, etc.).

- A sample card may be found on the Education page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Unit

- Participate in the Give 10 to Education program by soliciting items from members to distribute to the schools in your district. Contribute supplies to local classrooms.
 - Recognition certificates are available to download and print at www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Education Committee page.
- Promote Teacher Appreciation Week (first full week of May) by reaching out to teachers, and ask how your unit can enhance their school curriculum.
 - Find out if there are any needy children, and figure out what resources your unit can provide to the student.
- Participate in American Education Week (week prior to Thanksgiving). Remember to recognize all school personnel, not just teachers.
- Educate school administrators on how the American Legion Auxiliary can have a positive impact on students.

Department

- Endorse the Give 10 to Education program, an Auxiliary program that promotes the collection of school supplies for local schools in increments of 10.
- Promote Teacher Appreciation Week (first full week of May).
 - Encourage units to plan teacher recognition events at local schools.
- Encourage participation in American Education Week (week prior to Thanksgiving).

4. Assist and support veterans pursuing higher education and vocational education.

Ideas:

Member

- Contact a campus student veterans group at colleges and universities in your community to see what kind of help they might need. The VA counselor at the college can assist you in locating the veterans groups.
- Sign up to receive The American Legion's Legislative Action Alerts, and support the alerts regarding the GI Bill.

Unit

- Collaborate with a campus student veterans group at colleges and universities in your community.
 - Arrange for your post home to be available for off-campus events/chapter meetings.
- Provide information/handouts to members on organizing and delivering presentations on career and life skills topics to student veterans.
- Promote events through local media and your own social media accounts.
- Encourage members to sign up to receive The American Legion's Legislative Action Alerts, and support the alerts regarding the GI Bill.

Department

- Give suggestions on how a unit can collaborate with a campus student veterans group at colleges and universities in your department.

- Provide information/handouts to units on organizing and delivering presentations on career and life skills topics to student veterans.
- Promote the American Legion Auxiliary Non-Traditional Student Scholarship, available for students who are returning to the classroom after some period of time.
- Share and support The American Legion’s Legislative Action Alerts, particularly the alerts regarding the GI Bill.

5. Assist and support military children with educational opportunities.

Ideas:

Member/Unit

- Provide your local school with a copy of the Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefront.pdf
- Encourage junior members to contact their school guidance counselor and volunteer to be a mentor to new military children at their school.
- Use some of your Give 10 to Education supplies to make backpacks welcoming military children at school.
- Inform schools of a free tutoring website for military children: www.tutor.com/military
- Provide information on the ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship

Department

- Provide units with resource tools/guidelines to assist schools in working with military children at their local level. Resources are available at www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/resources.

Education Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Education chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Education chairman, plus copy the national Education chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Education chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Education chairman, plus copy the national Education chairman. Members and units should follow their department’s protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Education Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your Narrative Report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How was Give 10 participation recognized in your department?
- Describe how Veterans in Community Schools programs were presented.
- If units actively support veterans associations on campus, describe their activities.

Scholarships

All ALA scholarships should be submitted by March 1 to a local American Legion Auxiliary unit. Scholarship applications are available for download on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships.

A. **Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship**

- Awarded to children of veterans who served in the armed forces during the eligibility dates for The American Legion.
- Three \$5,000 scholarships will be awarded in each division.
- Fifteen outstanding students will be awarded a total of \$75,000 to further their higher education.
- The applicant must complete 50 hours of community service during his/her high school years to be eligible for one of these scholarships.

B. **The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship**

- One scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 will be awarded in each American Legion Auxiliary division.
- Applicant must be a member of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion and shall have paid dues for the two preceding years and for the calendar year in which the application is made.

C. **Spirit of Youth Scholarship**

- One Junior member in each division will receive a \$5,000 scholarship.
- Applicant must have held membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the immediate past three years, hold a current membership card and continue her membership in the American Legion Auxiliary during the four-year scholarship period.

Education Awards

Education Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Education committee contact information may be found on the Education committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- D. **Member Award: Give 10 to Education**
 - Award: Printable citation
 - Presented to: Participants of Give 10 to Education
 - Materials and Guidelines:
 - Recognition certificates are available to download and print at www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Education Committee page.

- E. **Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Education Program**
 - Award: Citation plaque
 - Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Awarded to the unit in each division with the most outstanding Education program.
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your unit worked the Education program, including Veterans in Community Schools.
 - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

- F. **Department Award: Best Department Education Program**
 - Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department in each division (5)
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Awarded to the department in each division that conducted the best overall Education program.
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your department worked the Education program, including Veterans in Community Schools.
 - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

How To Sheets

- How to Organize a Veterans in Community Schools Event
- How to Create a Unit Scholarship Fund

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. American Legion Auxiliary scholarship applications: www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships
2. Educational resources through the Americanism and Children & Youth Commission of The American Legion: www.legion.org/education
3. Free online tutoring for military children: www.tutor.com/military
4. Student Veterans of America: www.studentveterans.org
5. Your national Education committee members (see Education program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).
6. The national Education Committee Facebook group, search ALA Education



HOW TO ORGANIZE A VETERANS IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS EVENT

Committee:

Education

Contact Information for Questions: education@ALAforVeterans.org

Background Information on *Veterans in Community Schools*:

Veterans in Community Schools is an activity endorsed by The American Legion that brings history to life by connecting military veterans with students in classrooms or at school assemblies in conjunction with history lessons about World War II, The Korean War, The Vietnam War or Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. The ever-decreasing numbers of healthy veterans from World War II points to the fleeting nature of the opportunity to pass on these important lessons.

Veterans are important pieces of American history. The American Legion Family believes accounts of their experiences while in uniform and as a result of their military service should be preserved and shared with others. Veterans have witnessed monumental events in history. They can help students learn from and appreciate the sacrifices individuals and their families have made.

In addition to sharing their experiences, veterans may also discuss a wide range of topics including how to help a family who has a deployed military service member, how to show support for the troops, proper respect for the flag, or why The American Legion Family was formed and what it stands for. Also, veterans' sharing of their military experience with an appreciative audience can help them heal psychological wounds from combat, deployment or family separation. Veterans who have spoken to students generally describe the experience as a rewarding and personally satisfying experience.

Steps for Organizing a Veterans in Community Schools Activity:

Participation in The American Legion's Veterans in Community Schools program is a suggested activity in the American Legion Auxiliary's Education Programs Action Plan. It can be reported for either the Education or VA&R program. Please only report each program one time.

Follow these steps to organize a Veterans in Community Schools event at a school(s) in your community.

1) Identify and Contact School(s)

- a. Contact a school or schools in your local community and offer to organize a Veterans in Community Schools event for a classroom, grade level, or student-body assembly. Reach out to the school principal first, either by an in-person visit,



telephone or email. You may choose to select an elementary, middle or high school; you can alter your activities to accommodate a wide range of age groups. The most effective way is to have someone connected to the school (a parent or friend of a teacher,) make the approach.

2) Propose an Activity Plan

- a. The school official may refer you to a classroom teacher or to a department chair. If so, work with the teacher or chair to develop the activity into an educational program for students. Discuss with them how veterans can contribute to the students' understanding of military service and/or U.S. history. Provide additional resources (found below) for teachers, as they may want to introduce key concepts to students in their lesson plans in preparation for the activity.
- b. Work with the school to identify the most suitable time, venue, and format of the activity. You could host the event in a classroom, cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium. The size of the venue will depend on the number of veterans and the size of the audience.
- c. Propose to hold the Veterans in Community Schools activity on or around Veterans Day (November 11 each year) or Memorial Day, but do not limit yourself to those time periods if that time frame does not suit the school calendar.
- d. Depending on the average age of the audience, you may want to develop a set of guidelines for the event. In addition to hearing about veteran experiences, different age groups may be interested in other information as well. Elementary/middle school students may be interested in flag education and citizenship; high school students may be interested in the role of the military in today's society, a more in-depth exploration of the veteran's experience, the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress, and volunteer service opportunities that are offered by the Legion Family.
- e. Offer to create handouts or supplemental materials about veterans for students to take home for themselves and their family members. Note that the school official will likely need to review and approve the materials being proposed for distribution to students or family members. Materials can contain information about the Legion Family (such as a web address), but should not overtly promote membership since that is not the purpose of this activity.
- f. Identify and assign roles to participants, such as greeter, ALA or Legion representative and moderator. While servicemembers don't necessarily expect civilians to address them by their military title, it is a nice courtesy to know the proper address.

3) Identify Veterans for Speaking Roles

- a. Once the possible dates have been selected with the school, identify one veteran or group of veterans from the appropriate war era who would be willing to speak about their experiences, or other topics suggested by the school. Note that some veterans may prefer to speak to older or younger audiences depending on how the activity is structured.
-



- b. There are many ways to find veterans who may be willing to participate. First, ask the family member(s) of those who belong to the American Legion Auxiliary. Second, contact the commander or a commission chairman of the Legion post. Third, ask the school if a staff member is a veteran and wishes to speak, or if they are aware of a parent or family member with military experience.
- c. Try to connect specific historical incidents with those veterans who may have served in that theater or at that time in history.
- d. Try to invite veterans from more than one branch of the armed forces and different periods of conflict. A wide array of speakers will give students an opportunity to hear many kinds of experiences.

4) Prepare the Veteran(s) and Audience

- a. Ask each veteran if there are topics they wish to discuss or not discuss. Work with the teachers to develop guidelines for students to respect the veterans' wishes.
- b. It is common for young people to want to ask a military service member if they have killed anyone. Teachers should discuss this in advance, requesting that students refrain from asking this question out of respect for the servicemember.
- c. Below is a list of potential questions and talking points to review with your veteran(s) in advance. It may even be helpful to assign questions to students at the event.
 - When and where did you serve?
 - Why did you join the service? What branch?
 - Why did you pick the branch that you were in?
 - What did it feel like to be in the service?
 - Would you demonstrate a proper salute?
 - What was boot camp like?
 - What were your job assignments?
 - What are some of your memorable experiences?
 - What did you do for entertainment?
 - Where did you travel during service?
 - Any humorous or unusual events?
 - What did you do in the days and weeks after you returned?
 - Did you form any close friendships, and do you still stay in touch?
 - Are you a part of any veterans' organizations?
 - Did your military experience influence your views on today's military and war?
 - How did the service affect your life?
 - What values did you learn from your experience?

5) Implement the Activity Plan

- a. Follow the agenda you have laid out through careful planning and consultation with the school official and staff.
-



- b. If time, space and resources allow, consider hosting a small reception for the veterans, school officials, key faculty, and a representative or a few of the student body to continue their conversations and exchange information.

Sample Agenda

1. Assemble the students and veterans.
 2. Welcome students and veterans to the activity. Give a brief overview of the project's purpose and introduce the veterans.
 3. Say the Pledge of Allegiance and/or have a local ROTC display the U.S. flag.
 4. Allow for a few remarks from any distinguished or notable guests you may have invited (e.g. Mayor, member of Congress, etc.)
 5. Allow the veterans to introduce themselves. After they have given brief introductory remarks, begin the Q&A session.
 6. Thank each veteran for participating and allow for individual remarks if they have any. If you wish to present each veteran with a gift, now would be the best time to do so.
 7. Consider saying the Pledge of Allegiance again to see if you hear the words differently in light of the presentation.
 8. Close out the project or event with a culminating 'Thank You' to all participants.
- 6) Follow-up with Veteran(s) and School(s)**
- a. Send thank-you notes to the school leader and faculty. Ask if they would like to continue with the program in the future.
 - b. Provide the school leader with information about the Legion Family and Legion Family programs and resources for veterans, veteran and military families, and the general community, so that he/she may make referrals of students and their families to Legion Family programs and services.
 - c. Send thank-you notes to veteran speakers. Ask the veterans if they would be willing to be added to a list of willing speakers for future Veterans in Community Schools activities.

Promote ALA and Report Your Impact:

The ALA encourages members to identify themselves as such. When interacting with teachers, parents and veterans, however, it is important that members not push ALA membership aggressively, as that is not the primary purpose of this activity. Please, do feel free to wear ALA apparel and mention why you value association with The American Legion Family. Please also be sure to report your volunteer activities and hours to your unit's Education or VA&R committee chairman.

**Additional Ideas:**

Assign a unit member to take pictures or video during the activity, provided the school and the veterans consent to this documentation.

- Assign a unit member to prepare an article or blog post of the event for the unit and post publications.
- Gather publicity generated by students and schools themselves, such as news articles in the school newspaper or online postings, student essays written for class assignments, or thank you notes from students. Re-publicize this material, with the authors' permissions, in your unit or department communications.
- Be sure to report your Veterans in Community Schools activities in your individual or unit impact report to the unit's Education or VA&R Committee chairman.

Resources:

- **America's Veterans Teacher Guide**, *The American Legion*
<http://www.legion.org/documents/pdf/veterans.pdf>
- **Promoting Historic Preservation in Community Schools**, *The History Channel*
http://www.history.com/images/media/interactives/promote_historic_preservation.pdf
- **Our Veterans: Sharing Their Stories**, *The History Channel*
<http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/OurVeteransOurStories.pdf>
- **Veterans History Project**, *U.S. Library of Congress*
<http://www.loc.gov/vets/>



HOW TO CREATE A UNIT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Committee:
Education

Contact Information for Questions: education@ALAforVeterans.org

Promote American Legion Auxiliary scholarships, and award local scholarships at the department and unit levels.

Though examples of criteria are provided, the units must formulate criteria that work for them.

Provide a designated fund for scholarship monies.

- **Set dollar amount for scholarship**
 - Determine a funding source for the scholarship

- **Set criteria for applicants:**
 - Relationship to a veteran and/or Auxiliary member (child, spouse, widow/widower, grandchild, great-grandchild, etc.)
 - Membership in American Legion Auxiliary, The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion
 - Residency (applicant must reside in state and/or be a state resident; applicant must be a member of the department American Legion Family)
 - Is financial need a criterion (applicant must show financial need to continue higher education), or not?
 - Is there a GPA requirement?
 - Does the applicant need to be a senior in high school, or can they be a returning student?
 - What institution of higher learning does the applicant intend to attend (the school selected needs to be/does not need to be in state; it is an accredited school)?
 - Due date for application

- **Determine the information needed/wanted on the scholarship application:**
 - Completed application (name, address, city, state, zip, telephone number, date of birth, membership number, name of veteran through which eligibility is gained, relationship to veteran)
 - Essay and criteria/topic/word length, typed and double-spaced
 - Signature of the sponsoring American Legion Auxiliary unit president
 - Is community service a requirement (receive verification of service)?
 - If so, determine the number of hours needed and when they can be performed (during high school career, during last 12 months)
 - Verification of the relative's or applicant's military service

- **Information from a high school applicant:**



- Letters of recommendation (from school faculty, administrators, guidance counselor, pastor, community members, not from relatives)
- Education information (cumulative GPA, rank in class, transcript, scores from SAT/PSAT/ACT)

- **Information from a college applicant:**
 - Letters of recommendation (from school faculty, administrators, guidance counselor, pastor, community members, not from relatives)
 - Education information (cumulative GPA, transcript of all classes taken to date)

- **Judging:**
 - The judges' decision is final
 - The judges determine the scholarship to be awarded
 - Determine judging criteria and rubric prior to judging applications

- **How many scholarships may the applicant receive in a year and over a lifetime?**
 - Scholarships are made on a one-time-only basis (one scholarship in the applicant's lifetime)
 - Scholarships are nonrenewable

- **Awarded scholarship:**
 - How/when will applicant be notified of scholarship decisions?
 - Will scholarship be awarded to student or to the school's financial aid office?
 - Will the scholarship be awarded prior to the first college semester, after the first semester, or split between the two semesters?
 - Does the scholarship need to be used within a certain period of time?

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Junior Activities

The Junior Activities program inspires active participation in members age 17 and under so that they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood.

Committee Contact Information

junioractivities@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. **Build your Junior Activities program one member at a time by giving Junior members a voice and an opportunity to participate.**

Ideas:

Members

- Ask to speak at your post's monthly meeting. Bring Junior members and membership applications with you. Personally invite Legion members to sign up their daughter, granddaughters and great-granddaughters. Older Junior members could speak about the value of their membership to the post.
- Sign up your own eligible daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters.
- "Like" the national Junior Activities Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/alajuniors/>). Share the posts to your friends and encourage them to sign up their eligible Juniors.
- Teach your Juniors about The American Legion Family's eligibility requirements.
- Encourage your Juniors to invite their friends to attend ALA functions and volunteering opportunities, even if they are not eligible to join.
- If you don't have Junior members of your own, be sure to support them anyway. Offer to help the Junior Activities chairman and participate in their fundraisers.
- If you are a unit officer or chairman, offer to mentor one of your unit's Juniors. Teach her about your role with the ALA.

Unit or Department

- Organize an active Juniors group. Give the Junior Activities chairman a budget to work with and space to hold meetings and fundraisers.
- Continually ask members to sign up their eligible daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters.
- Even if you only have one junior member, encourage her to organize a service project that your unit will participate in; it may attract other juniors to join.
- Include information on Junior membership and activities in monthly newsletters.
- Include information on Junior membership in renewal notices.

2. Engage Juniors in programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Ideas:

Members

- Bring your Junior(s) to a meeting with you. Ask your unit president if the Junior(s) can lead the Pledge.
- Mentor a Junior in your unit. Teach them about your role as an officer and chairman. Help them understand what we do and why it matters.
- Present any patches your Junior(s) earn at a unit meeting. They will be proud of their achievement and your fellow members will see what great work their Juniors are doing.
- Bring your Junior(s) to all appropriate ALA activities in which you participate. They can help distribute poppies, clean tables after dinners, etc.
- Older Junior members can mentor younger members by encouraging them to participate in Junior meetings, teaching them what they have learned about the ALA and our mission, and helping them earn their patches.

Unit or Department

- Support and assist your Junior Activities chairman. Give her a budget to work with, space for meetings and fundraisers and be flexible with your activities so that Juniors can be involved. Provide her with an updated copy of the Junior Activities Handbook, which can be purchased from Emblem Sales or downloaded from the Junior Member Activities page in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Post Junior activities on your unit or department Facebook page with approval from parents and Junior member.
- Encourage older Juniors to become mentors to younger Juniors.

3. Make Junior meetings fun and informative.

Ideas:

Members

- Junior members can help plan and lead the meeting to make it more fun and informative to their age group.
- Be flexible during your meetings. *Robert's Rules* can be intimidating and boring for Juniors; there will be plenty of time for them to learn. Keep an orderly meeting, but don't put too much emphasis on protocol.
- Plan activities that are fun, yet teach about the mission of the ALA. Remember, they are kids with short attention spans. Activities that involve light exercise are helpful to burn off their youthful energy. If you need ideas, ask a teacher; it might end up being a great win/win as you share ideas.
- Crafts are another good activity for Juniors. They can make poppy crafts for a fundraiser, patriotic decorations for your post or local veterans home, handmade cards to send to veterans at your local VA, etc.
- Have snacks and drinks on hand. Juniors could even make poppy cookies to snack on.

Unit or Department

- Give your Juniors a place to display their crafts or artwork.
- Help your Junior Activities Chairman find places to distribute the cards and crafts made by Juniors.
- Offer to help during Junior meetings.

4. Promote and encourage Junior participation in the Patch Program.

Ideas:

Members

- Mentor Juniors and help them to acquire patches. The Patch Program activities can be found on the Junior Member Activities page in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Hold a special meeting to help Juniors earn patches.
- Older Juniors can help the younger Juniors earn patches.

Unit

- Encourage Juniors to participate in the Patch Program.
- Encourage use of electronic patches on Juniors' social media sites.
- Give Junior members the opportunity to work on requirements for patches at unit functions.

Department

- Include information on the patch program in each department chairman's pack.
- Give Juniors opportunities to work on patch requirements at department functions.
- Host a Juniors meeting to encourage and increase interest in the Patch Program.
- Host a special meeting to present earned patches to Juniors with senior members in attendance.
 - Mentor Juniors and help them acquire patches.
 - Set up and attend a special meeting to help Juniors earn patches.

Junior Activities Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Junior Activities chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Junior Activities chairman, plus copy the national Junior Activities chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Junior Activities chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Junior Activities chairman, plus copy the national Junior Activities chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Junior Activities Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How has participation in the Patch Program increased enthusiasm among the Juniors?
- What are the various service projects in which Juniors were involved? Has participation in the service projects increased as the year has progressed?
- What type of volunteer hours did Junior members perform?
- What ways did your senior members mentor the Junior members?

- How does your unit plan to increase Junior member participation in meetings and activities?
- Please include pictures and news articles showing Juniors involved in their activities.

Junior Activities Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Junior Activities committee contact information may be found on the Junior Activities committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

A. Member Award: Junior Member of the Year

- Award: Engraved Plaque, invitation to National Convention
- Presented to: One Junior member, in recognition of her dedicated service, efforts, and talents
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Entries must be typed and include the following information:
 - Consideration of only Junior members in good standing for the current year.
 - Outstanding contribution the Junior has made through an ALA program or project.
 - Length of membership is not a criterion.
 - Name, email address, and complete mailing address of nominee must accompany nomination.
 - A narrative, typed essay not to exceed 500 words summarizing the nominee's accomplishments during the current administrative year.
 - Please include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc., either electronically or via postal mail. Nomination must be signed by the candidate's unit Junior Activities advisor.
 - On the National Report and Award Cover Sheet, include the name and contact information of the department Junior Activities chairman.

B. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Junior Activities Program

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your Juniors worked the ALA mission.
 - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

C. Department Award: Best Department Junior Activities Program

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Awarded to the department in each division that conducted the best overall Junior Activities program.
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your department Juniors worked the ALA mission.
 - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

D. National Award: Best Media Coverage of Activity or Project

- Award: Engraved Plaque
- Presented to: One Junior group (department, district or unit)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Awarded to the Junior group with the best media coverage of their activities or a project.
 - Narrative not to exceed 500 words. Include specific examples of media coverage, including news articles, news releases, newsletters, pictures of displays, ALA events, speeches, website address, social media activity, etc.

Programs and Activities:

- Requirements, instructions, and patch forms for the Junior Patch Program are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- National Junior meetings will be held at the same time as Mission Training. Dates and meeting sites can be found at www.ALAforVeterans.org/meetings.
- Juniors who attend one of the national Junior meetings will be eligible to vote and run for Honorary National Junior Division Vice President (HNJDVP). Each of the elected HNJDVPs will help conduct the national Junior meetings and will receive a \$2,000 scholarship.
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior members: Five scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 each are awarded; one scholarship in each division. Requirements and applications are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Junior Projects:
 - Veterans History Project: www.loc.gov/vets
 - VA Student Volunteer Program: www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp ; www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. *ALA Junior Activities Handbook* – available for free at www.ALAforVeterans.org, printed copies can be purchased through Emblem Sales at www.emblem.legion.org
2. The national American Legion Auxiliary Junior Activities Facebook page: www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors
3. Junior Patch Program - information by level at www.ALAforVeterans.org
4. *ALA Unit Handbook* – available for free at www.ALAforVeterans.org, printed copies can be purchased through Emblem Sales at www.emblem.legion.org
5. Junior Leadership Course on www.ALAforVeterans.org
6. *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers* on www.ALAforVeterans.org

7. Protect Youth Sports – recommended by The American Legion to provide background screenings on adult volunteers who work with youth, www.protectyouthsports.com.
8. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs information on student volunteers: www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp
9. Your national Junior Activities Committee members (see Junior Activities program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Legislative

The Legislative program provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion.

Committee Contact Information

legislative@ALAforVeterans.org

What Can You Do?

1. Encourage and empower members to be more knowledgeable to take action on The American Legion's legislative priorities.

Ideas:

Member

- Subscribe to the Legion's *Legislative Action Alerts* to receive notification when they call on all Legion Family members to take immediate action on a topic. Visit www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup to subscribe. Report to your unit chairman when you have done so.
- Subscribe to the Legion's *Legislative Update* to stay informed on veteran and military legislative issues. Report to your unit chairman when you have subscribed.
- Order a copy of the *ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide* through your unit or your department headquarters and follow the suggestions it contains to help build legislative awareness in your community. The guide can also be downloaded from www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Visit the Legion's legislative website, www.legion.org/legislative, to keep current on legislative priorities. The site also contains the Legion's legislative priority sheets and point papers, available for download.
 - The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion's priorities and you can "drop" these in your elected official's office.
 - The point papers provide more information on the issue and the Legion's position.
- Actively post The American Legion's legislative priorities on social media.
- Identify your U.S. representative and two U.S. senators and build a relationship and rapport with these individuals and/or members of their staff.
- Subscribe to e-newsletters of your elected officials to monitor what they consider to be their priorities and to make sure that veteran/military and national security issues are among them. Follow them on social media as well. (See each elected official's website for details how to sign-up and social media links).
- Connect with other civic organizations to communicate The American Legion's legislative priorities for potential support and membership opportunities.
- Attend local informational town hall meetings to become better informed and to network with other community and civic organizations.
- Attend department and/or legislative meetings and activities.

- Meet with state- and national-level public officials to discuss issues facing veterans, servicemembers and their families. If possible, attend meetings with other Legion Family members.
 - Remember, we're putting a face on legislative topics. We can share the human reality on how issues affect veterans and their families.
- Complete the Legion's *Congressional Meeting Report Form* following any meeting with your U.S. representative, U.S. senator and/or their legislative staff members. Visit www.legion.org/legislative/aar to complete the form.
- Let your department Legislative chairman or department president know if you have a personal or professional relationship with a U.S. representative and/or U.S. senator who serves on the Veterans Affairs committees or a member of his/her legislative staff and that you'd be willing to participate in the ALA Veterans Affairs Legislative Mini-Council. Each of these members should be willing to contact the representative, senator or staff member when called to action by the Legion on an issue.

Unit

- Hold a unit meeting to go over the steps outlined by the *ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide* and discuss the legislative priorities.
- Invite a staff member of your U.S. representative and/or senator to a unit meeting so he/she can explain the best way to contact the official.
- Include legislative priorities in unit communications (social media, newsletters).
- Work with your Legion counterpart to make arrangements for Legion Family members to meet with respective Congressional delegation while on recess and in home districts.
- Choose a different legislative priority each month and allow time at each unit meeting for members to draft letters and communicate the importance of legislation related to veterans and their families. Watch for *Legislative Action Alerts* for any pressing priority.
- Invite your department chairman to a unit meeting to explain how the department initiates legislative advocacy and how each unit can play a role.
- Work with your Legion Family to host a "Meet the Candidate" night. Make veterans/military issues the primary topic for discussion. (See the How To Sheet for details).

Department

- Order the *ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide* and distribute to each unit. Provide information on how members can order their own copies of the guide through their department. The guide can also be downloaded from the Legislative page on www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Encourage members to subscribe to the Legion's *Legislative Action Alerts* to receive notification when they call on all Legion Family members to take immediate action on a topic. Visit www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup to subscribe.
- Encourage members to subscribe to the Legion's *Legislative Update* to remain informed about current legislation activities on Capitol Hill. Visit www.legion.org/enewsletters to subscribe.
- Encourage all Legion Family members to complete the Legion's *Congressional Meeting Report Form* following all meetings with U.S. representatives, senators and/or their legislative staff members. Visit www.legion.org/legislative/aar to complete the form.

- Visit the Legion’s legislative website, www.legion.org/legislative, to keep your units and members current on our legislative priorities. The site also contains the Legion’s legislative priority sheets and point papers.
 - The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion’s priorities and you can “drop” these in your elected official’s office. Printed color copies can be requested by email by contacting Legion Headquarters. Be sure to include the quantity you are requesting and your contact information.
 - Point papers provide more information and the Legion’s position.
- Work with your Legion department Legislative chairman and request that the Auxiliary be included in Legion meetings with national and state officials, and be invited to legislative briefings and other functions. Encourage members to attend.
- Hold a department legislative workshop and invite members to participate in activities to articulate the purpose of the Legislative program.
 - Legion Legislative staff is authorized to travel to Auxiliary department functions by submitting a request to the national adjutant.
- Write articles on the Legion’s current legislative activities and publish them in ALA newsletters, newspapers and on websites. Article content can be drawn from the *Legislative Update*, articles in the Legion’s *Dispatch* or other Legion media.
- The work of the Legislative committee amplifies the work of other committees. Collaborate with your department’s Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Education and Americanism chairmen, depending on the legislative issue, to mobilize members and help distribute the “Calls to Action” throughout their spheres of influence.
- In joint effort with the Legion, advocate at the state level to identify and initiate specific steps that need to be taken to provide transitioning servicemembers and military spouses with the credentials they need as they transition into civilian life, reducing barriers to licensing based on military experience or frequent moves.
- In collaboration with your Legion department, coordinate days for the Legion Family to storm your state capital.

Legislative Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Legislative chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Legislative chairman, plus copy the national Legislative chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Legislative chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Legislative chairman, plus copy the national Legislative chairman. Members and units should follow their department’s protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Legislative Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did you educate members in the legislative issues promoted by The American Legion and how did your members employ those methods?
- What legislative activities (town hall meetings, legislative receptions) did members attend in their communities and departments? What suggestions did members have to improve those activities? Please describe.
- How did members develop relationships with their elected officials? Please describe.
- Please describe how members were able to connect with their local and state officials and what were their successes.

Legislative Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award’s materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Legislative committee contact information may be found on the Legislative committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- A. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Legislative Program**
 - Award: Citation Plaque
 - Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
 - Materials and Guidelines:
 - Entries must be typewritten in narrative form.
 - Include pictures and newspaper articles.
- B. Department Award: Best Department Legislative Program**
 - Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department in each division (5)
 - Materials and Guidelines:
 - Entries must be typewritten in narrative form.
 - Include pictures and newspaper articles.

How To Sheets

- How To Host A “Meet the Candidate” Night

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Legislative program page:
 - *ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide*
 - How to Fill Out the Congressional Contact Form

- How to Contact Legislators to Advocate for Veterans, Servicemembers and their Families
2. www.legion.org/legislative (The American Legion's Legislative Center):
 - Legislative Testimony Information
 - Point Papers, Priority Sheets, Letters of Support
 - Congressional Contact Report Form
 3. Facebook:
 - ALA National Headquarters: www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans
 - The national Legislative Committee Facebook group, search "ALA National Legislative Group Page"
 4. Your national Legislative committee members (see Legislative program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)



HOW TO HOST A “MEET THE CANDIDATE” NIGHT

Committee:

Legislative

Contact Information for Questions:

legislative@ALAforVeterans.org

Encourage and empower members to be more knowledgeable to take action on The American Legion’s legislative priorities.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

A “meet the candidate” night is a question-and-answer session where all candidates for a specific election are invited to answer questions. It is not intended to be a debate.

Suggested Date of Event: 2-3 weeks before elections

3 Months Prior to the Event

1. In an effort to make this a Legion Family event, work with your Legion post, SAL squadron and Riders chapter (if applicable) to form a planning committee. If this isn’t a Legion Family event, the unit Legislative chairman and unit president should appoint a planning committee. Identify a place, date and time for the event. Map out a plan to get the word out to the general community. Think about if you’ll serve refreshments; will they be donated or do you need to buy them? Set guidelines for candidates before the event about literature, political signs and handouts.
 - a. If the place is the post home, ensure you have approval for the space and it’s on the calendar. Determine if your post allows political material (like signs) to be displayed on post property.
2. After the candidate filing deadline has passed, pull a list of candidates from your state’s election board or Supervisor of Elections’ website. Prepare a spreadsheet of all ballot-ready candidates (local, state and/or federal) who will be invited. List their name, address, phone, email, party and office. Allow ample time to contact them and receive their response.
3. Mail and email invitation letters with Legion Family Point of Contact name and the deadline date to reply. Remember: The Legion Family is nonpartisan, so you need to invite **ALL** candidates. Follow up periodically with candidates who have not replied. Suggest to the candidate they send another representative if there is a conflict in their scheduling.

2 Months Prior

1. The planning committee arranges for volunteers for the following roles:
 - a. Moderator (1) – Someone impartial and ideally not a part of the Legion Family, such as local news reporter or radio host or someone known and



respected by the community. Using someone on TV or radio also ensures that it will be announced on TV/radio.

- b. Timekeeper (1) – To keep everyone on track. Each candidate should get an equal amount of time each round.
 - c. Legion Family Ambassadors (Several) – To man a table on programs and services your Legion Family offers. They should also have membership applications on hand.
 - d. Servers (Several) – Have a small team of volunteers serve refreshments.
 - e. Crowd Control (Several) – Volunteers to ensure that no attendee gets out of control. (Legion Family Sergeants at Arms might be great for this role).
 - f. Screeners (Several) - Volunteers to collect and review questions from attendees. Selected questions will be given to the moderator for a Q&A period.
**Note: Candidates can stay after to talk with people and address their issues.*
 - g. Public Relations Coordinator (1) – Someone who will ensure that event is advertised in local newspapers, social media, websites and any other media outlet. They might invite a radio station or local TV station to stream the event live. (They might form a team to help promote the event on social media, create a hashtag, etc.).
2. The planning committee sets an agenda and how the event will proceed. Depending on the number of candidates in attendance, allow time for opening and closing speeches for each (this could be 2 to 3 minutes). After opening speeches and introductions, the moderator will ask for questions (that have been screened).
 - a. If question is to a particular candidate, allow 1-2 minutes for the answer and allow opposing candidate the same amount of time. There should be no rebuttals!
 - b. If it is a general question, the moderator can ask any candidate to address it, but again only 1-2 minutes per candidate.

Day of Event

1. Set up the room with the candidates in front of the audience.
2. Prepare tent cards for all candidates with their name, party and the office they're seeking. You may wish to seat candidates alphabetically in an effort to not show favoritism.
3. Set up a table to talk about the programs and services your Legion Family offers. They should also have membership applications on hand and other Legion Family branded information.



4. Setup a table for voter registration¹. Members of your Americanism committee might be good to man this table, or you can invite an outside organization, like the League of Women Voters to help with the voter registration.

After the Event

1. Follow up with thank you notes to all the candidates who participated.
2. If media did not attend, work with your Public Relations chairman to send pictures to be published and posted on social media.

¹ Remember: The deadline to register to vote may be up to 30 days prior to the election. Check with your local Election Board or Supervisor of Election.

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

National Security

The National Security Program promotes a strong national defense by supporting servicemembers and their families.

Committee Contact Information

nationalsecurity@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

A. Support the emotional and social needs of active, reserve and transitioning military servicemembers and their families.

Ideas:

Member

- Let your unit know of any military families or businesses that should receive a Blue Star or Gold Star Banner in recognition of a servicemember's service.
- Provide support on a spouse-to-spouse or family-to-family basis, such as to a family member, neighbor or another military family. Refer to the *ALA Military Family Readiness Action Guide* for specific suggestions of the type of support military families may value.
- Provide assistance to servicemembers and their families directly affected by current conflicts. Get to know your local Legion Service Officer, they may be able to help you in your efforts.
- Become more informed about issues affecting a military family's home life and the resources available to help, such as PTSD, TBI, domestic violence, financial literacy and other issues.
- Refer servicemembers with financial assistance needs to the American Red Cross Armed Forces Call Center at 1 (877) 272-7337.

Unit

- Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG). Contact the Family Readiness Center on your nearby military installation for more information.
- Support reserve and transitioning servicemembers and families by working with a returning National Guard or Reserve unit or an individual transitioning servicemember or family.
 - *Note:* Units may find servicemembers and families independently or by working with the servicemember transition programs of the U.S. Department of Defense, the military service branches or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Members may provide support on a spouse-to-spouse or family-to-family basis, such as to a family member, neighbor or another military family to which they come in contact. Refer to the *ALA Military Family Readiness Action Guide* for additional information and specific steps.

- When a servicemember or military family you're working with is relocating to a different community, help identify an ALA unit in the new community and make introductions.
- Greet servicemembers and families as they deploy and/or return from a deployment.
- Work with a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program office of a local military unit (Reserve or National Guard) or a state National Guard Joint Force Headquarters to show patriotic and moral support at Yellow Ribbon events; offering hospitality, refreshments or children and youth activities; or making presentations on Auxiliary resources and services to family members of returning servicemembers.
- If you're near a military installation, a U.S. Department of Defense policy makes it easier for you to get and provide information about our services and programs to servicemembers and military families. Refer to the *How to Support Troops and their Families on Military Installations* for additional information and specific steps.
- Organize a Welcome To Our Hometown event to welcome military families that are moving or transitioning out of the military to your community. Refer to the *Welcome To Our Hometown Action Guide* for additional information and specific steps.
- Coordinate for community donations and assemble servicemember care packages and family member support packages.
- Work with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and refer a survivor or caregiver for specialized support. Refer to *How to Collaborate with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors* for information and specific steps.

Department

- Include information about military spouse job fairs in your department newsletter.
- Provide information about what Legion Service Officers do and sign members up to help them.

B. Assist military spouses in getting and maintaining employment.

Ideas:

Member

- Serve as a mentor in the career e-mentoring network through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Employment Program and Academy Women. Current military spouses will be virtually paired with more experienced spouses and/or corporate and career mentors for guidance and support.
- Promote military spouse job fairs in your community and volunteer to help.
- Help staff an information booth about the ALA at a job fair for military spouses.
- Write an editorial about why military spouses make good employees.
- Contact school guidance counselor in your local area and offer to be "on call" for assistance with military children.

Unit

- Support military spouse job fairs organized by U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation or The American Legion, or host one in your own community. Encourage local business to participate and hire veterans and military spouses.

- Help to implement a Legion-sponsored job fair and/or co-host a Legion Family information table at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation-sponsored job fair.
- Seek grant funds to help military spouses start small businesses. Promote participation among military spouses at www.theveteranmarket.com.
- Create a scholarship fund for military spouses learning a new skill.

Department

- Assist units and members with specific idea plans outlined above.

C. Support the National Security programs of The American Legion.

Ideas:

Member

- Complete a Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) course. Refer to *How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams* for information and specific steps.
- Build and/or help a neighbor build an emergency preparedness kit and plan.
 - Remember, new military families in your community may not be familiar with the types of emergencies that affect your area. As needed, help them update their emergency kit and plan.
- Sign up for the Legion's Legislative Action Alerts, and be sure to act on the ones regarding a strong national defense and affecting current and transitioning servicemembers and their families.
- Donate blood.

Unit

- Get involved in the Citizen Corps Council (www.ready.gov) to ensure citizens are prepared to respond to natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, blizzards and manmade disasters and emergencies.
 - Junior members can get involved in and/or start a Youth Preparedness Program in their community.
- Collect supplies for emergency preparedness kits and distribute them in your community.
 - Remember: new military families in your community may not be familiar with the types of emergencies that affect your area. As needed, help them update their emergency preparedness kit and plan.
- Encourage members to complete Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). Refer to *How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams* for information and specific steps.
- Have a training exercise in your post home to give training in first aid, CPR or other types of emergency skills.
- Join with your Legion post to host a POW/MIA ceremony on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, commemorated annually on the third Friday of September.
- Follow the Legion's POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288 for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings.
- Host a remembrance event for any MIA servicemembers who have been identified from your area.
- Work with Legion posts to honor ROTC and JROTC cadets by having dinners and recognizing their accomplishments.
- Support future military by presenting ROTC and JROTC recognition awards.

Department

- Support your Legion department and posts to raise funds for Operation Comfort Warriors to provide supplies to wounded servicemembers.
- Encourage members to complete Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). Refer to *How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams* for information and specific steps.
- Follow the Legion's POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288 for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings.
- Work with your ALA and Legion department legislative committees around topics that ensure a strong national defense and support current and transitioning servicemembers and their families.
- If your Legion department has a job fair in conjunction with a department meeting, ensure military spouses are included (or a special track is offered for them), assist in promoting the job fair and staff an information table at the job fair.

National Security Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department National Security chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division National Security chairman, plus copy the national National Security chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department National Security chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division National Security chairman, plus copy the national National Security chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the National Security Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- Did members organize Welcome To Our Hometown events? If so, what was most successful? Did they have any challenges?
- What types of national security activities and/or projects were done at units in your department that weren't near a military installation?

National Security Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and National Security committee contact information may be found on the National Security committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- A. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit National Security Program**
 - Award: Citation Plaque
 - Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Entries must be typewritten in narrative form
 - Include pictures and newspaper articles

- B. Department Award: Dorothy Pearl Best Department National Security Program**
 - Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department in each division (5)
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Each entry must be typewritten in narrative form.
 - Include pictures and newspaper articles.

- C. Department Award: Military Spouse Mentor**

Note: This award is related to AcademyWomen's eMentoring program.

 - Award: Citation Plaque
 - Presented to: One department
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - For the department having the highest percentage of members actively participating in military spouse eMentoring and connected to military spouses
 - Entries must have a list/spreadsheet of participating members
 - Each department's participation percentage will be determined by the national chairman. The percentage will be calculated based on the number of reported participating members who are serving as an eMentor, as reported by the eMentoring program staff, divided by the department's membership total as of June of the current administrative year. (For example, if 250 of the 300 members listed on the department's submitted spreadsheet were connected to military spouses, in a department with 5,000 members, the percentage would be 5 percent).

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org resources on the National Security program page:
 - *American Legion Auxiliary Military Family Readiness Action Guide*
 - A training package is also online for departments and units. It includes an instruction sheet, PowerPoint presentation and script, sample agenda,

learning exercises, pre- and post-session survey, satisfaction survey and sample marketing text.

- *Welcome To Our Hometown Action Guide*
 - *ALA-Operation Homefront Action Guide*
 - *ALA-USO Action Guide*
2. Instructional How To sheets found on the National Security program page on the national website:
 - How to Welcome Home Separating Servicemembers
 - How to Identify Veteran and Servicemember Families who are In Need of Assistance
 - How to Support Troops and their Families on Military Installations
 - How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams
 - Planning a POW/MIA Remembrance Service
 - How to Collaborate with the American Red Cross' Service to the Armed Forces
 - How to Collaborate with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
 - How to Collaborate with the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse eMentor Program
 3. Legion Resources:
 - Blue Star and Gold Star Banner: www.legion.org/troops/bluestar
 - Disaster Preparedness and Response for American Legion Posts: www.legion.org/documents/pdf/talarc_disaster_preparedness.pdf
 - Family Support Network: www.legion.org/familysupport
 - Operation Comfort Warriors: www.legion.org/troops/operationcomfort
 - POW/MIA: www.legion.org/powmia
 - Legislative Action Alerts: <http://capwiz.com/legion/home/>
 4. Follow Us on Facebook:
 - ALA National Headquarters: www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans
 - The national National Security Committee Facebook group, search "ALA National Security"
 5. Your national, National Security committee members (see National Security program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Poppy

Using the image and story of the Flanders Field poppy to educate people about the sacrifices of our military service members helps us raise awareness of The Legion Family and link us to our mission in the eyes of the public.

Committee Contact Information

poppy@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Promote the Poppy program and increase poppy revenue.

Ideas:

Member

- Contact local businesses for permission to distribute poppies on their premises. Make sure you have permission for liability purposes; in some instances, permits are required.
- Send a thank you to businesses that allow distribution. Consider using the Poppy Poster thank you cards, available through Emblem Sales, for your communication.
- Help local schools organize poppy drives. Make the drive competitive. Give a citation to the class raising the most money during their poppy drive.
- Wear a poppy to promote conversation and interest.

Unit

- Educate your community about how funds collected help veterans.
- Contact local legislative offices to announce poppy distribution days, and request proclamations declaring Poppy Days in your community.
- Deliver poppies to local media outlets (television, newspaper and radio) along with facts about where and when poppies will be distributed in your community. Even if they are not visible “on air,” these people tend to be influencers in the community.

Department

- Distribute material and make it available to members. Poppy tools are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Organize a department poppy drive with The American Legion Family. Encourage The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, Riders, and Junior members to make poppy distribution rules that are available at your department headquarters for members.
- Publish material for units in your department to send to organizations and businesses to foster positive relationships and encourage their owners to promote the poppy.
- Have your department leaders promote the Poppy program by writing letters to community leaders and hold a Poppy Making Day. Teach your leaders about the poppy's

symbolism and how the poppy can build positive relationships. Consider using the Poppy Poster thank you cards, available through Emblem Sales, for your communication.

2. Increase the number of poppy makers in your department.

Ideas:

Member

- Set up meetings with recreational and occupational therapists at local Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers (VAMCs), Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) or community hospitals to incorporate poppy-making into their therapy programs.

Unit

- Distribute “How to Recruit New Poppy Makers” promotion information. See resource section in this program Plan for information.
- Partner with The American Legion to recruit poppy makers within their post homes and departments.
- Post information on “How Veterans Can Make Money by Making Poppies” in local VA homes, medical centers, clinics, nursing homes and other community organizations that house and care for veterans.

Department

- Inform veterans that those enrolled in department poppy production will be paid for each poppy completed, as outlined in department agreement with the facility (if applicable).

3. Celebrate National Poppy Day and educate your community on the meaning and the history of the poppy.

Ideas:

Member

- Search Pinterest.com for ideas of items you could distribute alongside red crepe paper poppies, like Spritz cookies.
- Send a bouquet of poppies and bookmarks to school with your child.
- Make a poppy wreath for the door of your home, office, or school.
- Collect donations at your workplace/hair salon/doctor’s office to donate to the Poppy program.
- Tell your story on Facebook of who your poppy represents or remembers on National Poppy Day. Don’t forget to tag with #PoppyDay #LegionFamily.

Unit

- Talk to leaders of nearby post and units to make sure key areas in your community are covered, and organize a poppy distribution at local Memorial Day ceremonies. Make sure to wear your Auxiliary branded apparel.
- Invite a local dignitary to lay a poppy wreath at a memorial in your community and invite unit members to be present. Consider singing patriotic songs or other ways to involve your unit members.

Poppy Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Poppy chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Poppy chairman, plus copy the national Poppy chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Poppy chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Poppy chairman, plus copy the national Poppy chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Poppy Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did your members promote the Poppy program?
- How did your members increase poppy revenue?
- How did your members increase the number of poppy makers in your department?
- How did units promote the Poppy Poster Contest?
- How do units in your department promote Little Miss Poppy?

Poppy Contest and Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

A. I. Poppy Poster Contest

- Units shall sponsor contests in local schools. When schools do not conduct activities, other youth groups, including Junior members, may participate under direct supervision of the unit.
- The contest shall have seven classes:
 - Class I: Grades 2 and 3
 - Class II: Grades 4 and 5
 - Class III: Grades 6 and 7
 - Class IV: Grades 8 and 9
 - Class V: Grades 10 and 11
 - Class VI: Grade 12
 - Class VII: Students with special needs defined as:
 - Those in special education classes
 - A student recommended for special education classes but who has not been admitted due to a waiting list or various other factors.
 - A child identified as having a disability, but not in a special education class due to lack of facilities. Identification contingent upon discretion of school officials.

- Poppy Poster Requirements:
 - Each poster shall have a fitting slogan not to exceed 10 words. Articles – “a,” “and,” “an,” “the” – are not to be counted as words. The words “buddy” and “buy” cannot be used.
 - The words “American Legion Auxiliary” must be used in the design of the poster and will not be counted in the 10-word count.
 - Each poster must include a picture of the red Flanders Field poppy.
 - The department shall determine the closing date for the unit contest. The poster shall be on 11x14” poster board. (Drawing paper will not be accepted).
 - The United States flag may be used as long as there are no infractions of the flag code.
 - Posters will be judged using the following criteria:
 - 50% - poster appeal (layout, message, originality)
 - 40% - artistic ability (design and color)
 - 10% - neatness
 - Media used shall be watercolors, crayons, powder or oil paint, handmade paper cutouts, ink or textures, acrylics, pencils and markers.
 - Written in ink on the back of the poster (not attached) shall be the class in which the entry is submitted, the name, address, age and grade of the contestant and the name of the department.
 - Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of artwork, contestants and their legal guardians’ grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and artwork published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
 - The poster shall be the work of only one individual.
 - The label “In Memoriam” from the veteran-made poppy may not be used.

II. Poppy Poster Contest Judging and Awards

- Each department shall establish its own procedure for judging.
- A citation will be given for the most outstanding poster in each classification within the five divisions.
- Unit members should follow deadlines and process for the department.
- All department adjudicated entries must be sent by the department chairman to her national division chairman postmarked by the date found in the current supplement. (See addresses located in the supplement for specific division contact information and postmark deadline.)
- While ALA representatives will do their best to return all posters, it is not guaranteed. We recommend participants take a picture or scan their poster for their records.
- Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. Through submission of artwork, contestants and their legal guardians grant nonexclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works

submitted, and agree to have their names and artwork published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.

B. National Miss Poppy Contest: Little Miss Poppy (Ages 6-12)

- Participant must be between six and 12 years of age and be a Junior member in good standing of the American Legion Auxiliary.
- Promotional activity of the Poppy story must occur through the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and the community.
- Selection of Little Miss Poppy is at the discretion of the unit.
- For National Little Miss Poppy consideration, participant must submit a Little Miss Poppy scrapbook (8½” x11”) containing photographs and clippings illustrating how she promoted the American Legion Auxiliary poppy in her department. Only those scrapbooks that contain a self-addressed envelope with postage will be returned. Although every effort will be made to return the scrapbook, accidents do happen, so all entrants must allow for that risk.
- Criteria for judging Little Miss Poppy Scrapbook entries:
 - Costume (there is no specific dress code or particular dress color for Miss Poppy).
 - Promotion of the Poppy program: What did you share and do?
 - Publicity of poppy activities (newspapers, radio/TV, etc.).
 - Narrative report on “What I Have Learned Being Little Miss Poppy.”
 - Essay on “Memorial Poppy” not to exceed 100 words.
 - The memorial poppy must be visible in all promotion and publicity submitted.
 - Neatness and creativity.
 - Cover page to include member name, unit name, state, age division and year.
 - Judging scale should be 1 through 10 for each area of judging for entire entry.
- The Little Miss Poppy (age 6-12) winner will be invited to appear at the ALA National Convention, immediately following her selection, and if she so chooses, will travel at her own expense.
 - Winners of the National Little Miss Poppy contest each will receive a citation plaque.
- Please follow department guidelines for submitting entries.
 - If the Poppy scrapbook is to be returned, members must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Although every effort will be made to return the scrapbook, accidents do happen so all entrants must allow for that risk.

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Poppy committee contact information may be found on the Poppy committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

C. Unit Awards: Most Outstanding Unit Poppy Program

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5) announced by the national Poppy committee at the pre-convention meeting.
- Materials and guidelines:
 - The entry must be typewritten in narrative format not to exceed 1,000 words.
 - The report should cover all areas of emphasis and any relevant information involving program activity and describing your use of the poppy throughout the year.

D. Department Award: Best Department Poppy Program

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5) announced by the national Poppy committee at the pre-convention meeting.
- Materials and guidelines:
 - The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
 - The report should cover all areas of emphasis and any relevant information involving program activity and describing your use of the poppy throughout the year.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. *ALA Poppy Program Guide: Expanded Ways to Use the Poppy Symbol to Raise Funds and Awareness* (available for download at www.ALAforVeterans.org). Related materials and information can be found on the Poppy page of www.alaforveterans.org/Programs/Poppy/ under Poppy Toolkit
2. Poppy Poster thank you cards, available through Emblem Sales
3. *American Legion Auxiliary Unit Guide Book*
4. Poppy seed packets for Poppies Across America can be purchased at America Meadows, www.AmericanMeadows.com, (877) 309-7333, or at a local garden shop.

5. For the following how to sheets, visit www.alaforveterans.org/Programs/Poppy/ :
 - How to Recruit New Poppy Makers
 - How to Increase Unit Poppy Revenues
 - How to be an ALA Poppy Production Manager
 - How to Promote Membership Through Poppy
 - How to Maximize Poppy Contributions
6. The national Poppy Facebook group, search “ALA Poppy”
7. Your national Poppy committee members (see Poppy program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of U.S. veterans, military, and their families.

Committee Contact Information

va&r@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Assist in activities that help homeless veterans.

Ideas:

Members and Units

- Give a helping hand to the Legion's homeless veteran coordinator in your department and offer to assist that coordinator in responding to requests for assistance from homeless veterans or homeless veteran service providers.
- Crochet hats, scarves or mittens to be distributed to homeless veterans. Use information provided by your department chairman to contact the homeless veteran coordinator at the VA health care system nearest you to explore what the unit or you can do to help homeless veterans in your community.
- Participate in the VA Project CHALENG organized by the VA health care system nearest to you. (Project CHALENG for Veterans enhances the care for homeless veterans provided by your local VA and its surrounding community service agencies.)
- Contact your local post chairman and offer your assistance if requests for help come through the Legion's Family Support Network (FSN).
- Raise funds for local American Legion posts to help veterans and their families through the Family Support Network for veterans at risk of losing their housing or homeless veterans transitioning to permanent housing.
 - Make payments of overdue rent, utility payments or deposits and security deposits.
- Host or volunteer at homeless veterans' stand downs, events where homeless veterans receive free goods and services such as haircuts and medical exams.
- Contact homeless veteran emergency shelters, transitional housing projects and permanent housing projects in your community and identify the organization's volunteer and in-kind contribution needs, including:
 - Meal preparation and serving
 - Clothes collection and distribution
 - Assembly and delivery of hygiene kits, buddy baskets
 - Purchasing or securing household items or furniture
- Reach out to specific homeless veterans, such as residents of projects mentioned above to provide her/him practical, social and moral support.

- Compile “blessing bags” to be given to the local police department or other organizations that deal with the homeless veteran population.
- Create a “Tree of Warmth” by collecting scarves, mittens, hats and attaching them to a tree in a location the homeless frequent. Include a sign that says “Please Take if Needed,” “Free if Needed,” or something similar.

Department

- Identify methods of helping homeless veterans in local communities by identifying VA homeless coordinators, state VA coordinators or attending Homeless Roundtables.
- Identify The American Legion’s homeless veteran coordinator in your department and prepare a resources bulletin for units.
- Contact the homeless veteran coordinator at the VA health care system located in your state to explore what the unit or individual member can do to help homeless veterans in their community. Distribute information to units and members within the department.
- Coordinate and encourage participation in the following programs:
 - VA Project CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment, Local Education and Networking Groups) for Veterans, which enhances the care for homeless veterans, provided by the local VA and its surrounding community service agencies: www.va.gov/homeless/chaleng.asp.
 - Stand Downs
 - VA sponsored events

2. Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)

NVCAF is the national, annual competition and festival that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation’s veterans after disease, disability or life crisis. As the national presenting sponsor, the American Legion Auxiliary should strive to increase monetary support by encouraging departments to sponsor fundraisers that will contribute to the increased awareness and support of this program.

Ideas:

Members/Units

- Obtain and become familiar with the *ALA Guide for Volunteers*.
- Help your unit and department earn recognition at National Convention through donations to support VA Creative Arts Festivals. Volunteer individually, with a fellow member, or as a unit at a local Creative Arts Festival.
- Identify arts, crafts and hobby projects targeted to veterans (such as writing, oral history recording, visual and performing arts, quilting and gardening). A unit may organize a project of its own or introduce a unit to veteran arts, crafts and hobby projects already operational in the community.
- Contribute donated supplies to help supplement visual veteran artists’ needs for their projects. Contact your department chairman or your local VA hospital coordinator for a list of items.

- Donate, through departments, funds that help local veterans attend state and national Wheel Chair Games, Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, Paralympics, etc.

Department

- Promote member awareness of the Auxiliary's vital role as the presenting sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF).
- Encourage units and individuals to support state VA Creative Arts Festivals through donations. Contributing departments will be recognized at National Convention. One method may include challenging units to earn a bronze, silver or gold award given by NVCAF in recognition for financial donations to the program. Departments, units or individuals can earn the Bronze award for donations to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival of \$1,000 to \$1,999; the Silver award for donating \$2,000 to \$4,999; or the Gold award for \$5,000 and above. ALA National Headquarters submits qualifying donations to NVCAF staff each July. Donations considered are those received in the national office from August 1, 2016, to July 31, 2017.
- Recruit members to volunteer at local Veterans Creative Arts Festivals conducted by many VA health care systems across the country.
- Apply to the ALA Foundation for an ALA Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival/Creative Arts Workshop Grant to assist your local VA health care system in preparing for and/or conducting a local Creative Arts Festival.
- Advocate for art therapy, music therapy, drama and recreational therapy programs in VA health care systems.
- Research other forms of rehabilitation for veterans such as the National Wheel Chair games. Distribute contact information to units.

3. Help The American Legion, State Department of Veterans Affairs and Chamber of Commerce promote job fairs for veterans and their families.

Ideas:

Members

- Take part in a veteran job fair by organizing or working at an informational table. Other opportunities include helping implement a Legion-sponsored job fair and/or co-hosting a Legion Family information table at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation-sponsored job fair. Additionally, Auxiliary members may initiate and host a job fair for veterans in their community.
- Serve as a career e-mentor for women veterans.
- Volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, specifically if a house build is supported by The American Legion.

Unit

- Host an informational table at a local job fair.
- Support the Legion by helping host a local job fair at your post home.

Department

- Support veteran job fairs organized by The American Legion and/or the National Chamber Foundation. Encourage members to volunteer or host a job fair for veterans in their community.

4. Enroll Auxiliary members as VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers at VA health care facilities.

Ideas:

Members

- If you live near a VA facility, become a regular VAVS volunteer and invite others to become VAVS volunteers with you.
- Send notes and provide supplies to support those who volunteer at VA facilities.
- Enter all of your VAVS hours into the VAVS tracking system. Note: VA Healthcare facilities volunteer hour tracking system is different from the tracking utilized for ALA hour bars. Please consult your department.

Department (and ALA VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives)

- Work with VAVS directors to create meaningful assignments for every volunteer.
- Work with VAVS directors to identify service projects suitable for Junior members and their friends and adults with time for occasional service only.
- Educate units and community partners about volunteer opportunities available at VA medical centers, state veterans homes, Fisher Houses, and other VA health care locations. Sponsor informational programs and recruitment tables at department meetings, post and unit functions and at community events. Utilize department websites, newsletters and other media.
- Contribute to the VAVS National Advisory Committee by enabling the American Legion Auxiliary national representative to best represent the interest of and exert influence on behalf of the American Legion Auxiliary. Develop a deeper connection with the VAVS national representative and deputy representative.
- Attend the annual VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Meeting and Conference. All VA facility representatives, deputies and volunteers are eligible to attend at their own expense.
- Share member volunteer concerns and suggestions with ALA National VAVS Representative (name and contact information can be found in supplement).
- Inform your Auxiliary hospital VAVS representative of any concerns or suggestions.
(Note: Volunteers in veterans' state homes that have a Memorandum of Understanding with a VA health care system are eligible to be considered VAVS volunteers.)

5. There isn't a VA hospital close to your community? Find opportunities for Auxiliary members to serve veterans in your area. These hours will count toward your Service to Veterans pin and hour bars.

Service to Veterans recognizes volunteers who provide service to veterans, servicemembers and their families outside a VAMC. Volunteers conduct projects and work for military/veterans and/or families from their homes and in their communities. Service to

Veterans volunteers maintain their own recordkeeping and dollars spent. The Service to Veterans pin has been designed to reflect the work of those who volunteer in their communities and at home for veterans. Hour bars, which attach to the pin, are also available to earn. More information may be in the *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers* available online for download at www.alaforveterans.org. To purchase a printed copy, please visit www.emblem.legion.org.

Ideas:

Member

- Read the *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers*
- Sew quilts for the Quilts of Valor Foundation. For more information, please visit www.qovf.org/.
- Help a veteran use the Internet.
- Supply postage for local veterans in rest homes or assisted living facilities.
- Organize transportation for veterans to assist them with essential errands or medical appointments; many live far from a VA facility and shouldn't be driving if they don't feel well.
- Contact the Legion Service Officer at your post and offer to be on the list of people to call when a military family needs help.
- Buy school supplies, throw a baby shower, or send care packages to military kids who are headed to college.
- Report your Service to Veterans hours to your unit VA&R chairman.
- See Awards section of this plan for information on Hour Bar Recognition.

Unit

- Become the catalyst to find needs and encourage members to help veterans in their community.
- Provide hospitality for a job fair for veterans.
- Coordinate with local quilt shops to help your unit sponsor a quilting event in support of Quilts of Valor.
- Contact members, including those who never or only occasionally attend meetings and events and invite them to participate for specific limited duration projects that would help area veterans.
- Compile and record hours provided by your members.
- Coordinate with your PR chairman to tell the community what work your unit members are doing for veterans.

Department

- Distribute information to units and members to help them understand the opportunities to volunteer through ALA's recently combined category, Service to Veterans, and how to report such service hours.
- Promote volunteer opportunities available in community settings or from home to unit and individual members. Sponsor informational programs and recruitment tables at department meetings, post and unit functions and at community events. Utilize department websites, newsletters and other media.

- Encourage units and individual members to participate in the Quilts of Valor project through the Quilts of Valor Foundation: www.qovf.org.

6. Transitioning back to civilian life is one of the biggest challenges veterans face today. Educate yourself about resources so you can help veterans access all their VA benefits, not just health care. Work with your local American Legion Post Service Officer.

Ideas:

Members

- Coordinate with local American Legion posts to identify the local Service Officer or see list at www.legion.org/serviceofficers.
- Help eligible veterans attain benefits through referrals.
- Encourage eligible veterans to use the VA health care system and its services, including hospitals, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Vet Centers, etc.
- Participate in and encourage veterans and their family members to participate in town-hall meetings organized by The American Legion in advance of the Legion's *System Worth Saving* site visits to VA health care systems: www.legion.org/systemworthsaving.
- **Resource:**
VA Health Care Hotline for women veterans
1-855-VA-Women (1-855-829-6636); explore.va.gov/health-care

Unit/Department

- Invite the local, county or state Service Officer to be the guest speaker at a unit/department event.

7. Assist and support caregivers of veterans.

Ideas:

Members

- Familiarize yourself with the service of the VA caregiver support program.
- Familiarize yourself with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network.
- Become a veteran caregiver peer support trainer or volunteer.
- Become a Legacy Corps AmeriCorps member if the Legacy Corps project is offered in a state or locality near you.
- Volunteer as a VA Voluntary Service volunteer support caregiver if the VA health care system closest to you offers such volunteer opportunity.

Units

- Familiarize your unit and community with the services of the VA caregiver support program.
- Invite the VA caregiver support coordinator in the VA healthcare system closest to you to make a presentation to your unit, district or community-wide meeting.

Department

- Prepare information for units concerning the needs of caregiver support.
- Familiarize yourself with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for caregivers.

Additional Resources

ALA Resources: How to Organize a Job Fair for Veterans and/or Military and Veteran Spouses

- www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes
- www.ementorprogram.org/militaryspouse-ementor/
- The American Legion and Habitat For Humanity Volunteer involvement toolkit–
www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/habitat.pdf
- VA Caregiver Support – www.caregiver.va.gov/
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation- www.elizabethdolefoundation.org
- Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network - milvetcaregivernetwork.org

VA&R Reporting*

Mid Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department VA&R chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division VA&R chairman, plus copy the national VA&R chairman.

Year End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department VA&R chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division VA&R chairman, plus copy the national VA&R chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the VA&R Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did the units participate in the caregiver support program?
- Describe any exceptional efforts members made in earning their Service to Veterans hours.
- What assistance did units give at a stand down in your department? What did units learn about hosting a stand down? What went well; what would they do differently?

VA&R Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and VA&R committee contact information may be found on the VA&R committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Service to Veterans

- A. **Member Award: Hour Bar Recognition for Service to Veterans Volunteers**
 - Award: Hour Bar
 - Presented to: Member by her department via ALA National Headquarters
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Volunteers are recognized when specific hour milestones are reached: 50, 100, 300, 500, and 1,000.
 - After the first 1,000-hour bar is awarded, the next bar will be earned in 1,000-hour increments up to 20,000 hours. Hour bars are also offered in increments of 25,000 and 30,000 hours. After achieving 35,000 hours ALA National Headquarters will issue a separate Lifetime Service to Veterans pin.
 - Hour bars are provided at no cost to departments; however, the appropriate pin (from which the hour bar is affixed) can be obtained from Emblem Sales at the department's expense. See *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers*.
- B. **Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program**
 - Award: Citation Plaque
 - Presented to: One unit in each division (5) announced by the national VA&R committee at the pre-convention meeting.
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
 - Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc.
- C. **Department Award: Best Department VA&R Program**
 - Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department in each division (5) announced by the national VA&R committee at the pre-convention meeting.
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
 - Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) support recognition

A. NVCAF Award: NVCAF Support Recognition

- Award: Recognition during VA&R chairman's remarks at the ALA National Convention
- Presented to: Departments, units, and/or members who qualify for stated contribution level to NVCAF. Donations are made through the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.
- Materials and guidelines:
 - To be considered, donations to the ALAF must be received by the ALA Foundation from Aug. 1-July 31 of the following year.
 - ALA National Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to NVCAF staff in August.

NVCAF will recognize departments/units/members that contribute:

- Bronze: \$1,000-\$2,499 to the NVCAF from Aug. 1-July 31 of the following year.
- Silver: \$2,500-\$4,999 to the NVCAF from Aug. 1-July 31 of the following year.
- Gold: \$5,000-\$14,999 to the NVCAF from Aug. 1-July 31 of the following year.
- To be considered, donations to the ALAF must be received by the ALA Foundation from Aug. 1-July 31 of the following year.
- ALA National Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to NVCAF staff in August.

Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)

A. National Award: VAVS Volunteer of the Year Award/ALA NAC Nominee

- Award: Citation + \$500 donation to VAVS facility or VCAF of her choice presented by the American Legion Auxiliary
- Presented to: Member
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Candidates for VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) Volunteer of the Year will be submitted by the chiefs of voluntary service to the national VAVS deputy (please see supplement for deadline and contact information).
 - Awarded to the nominee who has given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans through the ALA VA&R program and the VAVS program.
 - Nominee must serve in an established VA assignment and be defined as a regularly scheduled volunteer.
 - Should be actively involved in working with veterans in any one of the following areas: outpatient clinics, nursing homes, homeless veteran

programs, hosted veteran-related functions outside the VA, or visited veterans confined to their homes (as assigned by VAVS).

- The American Legion Auxiliary selects the ALA Volunteer of the Year. The name of the ALA Volunteer of the Year is forwarded for consideration as the NAC Volunteer of the Year.

B. Member Award: 10,000 Hour Volunteer Service Award

- Award: Citation plus \$100 donation to VAVS facility or VCAF of her choice presented by the American Legion Auxiliary
- Presented to: Member
- Materials and Guidelines:
 - Given to volunteers who have reached 10,000 hours of service in a VA facility from April 1 to March 31 of the following year.
 - Verification of hours must be received at National Headquarters by the first Friday in June.

C. Member Award: 20,000 Hour Volunteer Service

- Award: Citation plus \$200 donation to local VAVS facility or VCAF of her choice presented by the American Legion Auxiliary
- Presented to: Member
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Given to volunteers who have reached more than 20,000 hours of service in a VA facility from April 1 to March 31 of the following year.
 - Verification of hours must be received at National Headquarters by the first Friday in June.

D. Individual Recognition Award: Volunteer Recruitment & Service Department

- Award: Citation presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Presented to: Hospital Representative
- Materials and guidelines:
 - No entry form required
 - Awarded to the hospital rep at every facility that shows an increase in both volunteers and volunteer hours at a VA Medical Center from April 1 to March 31 of the following year.
 - The award winners will be determined by the national VAVS representative through verification of hours and number of volunteers as recorded by VAVS.

E. Individual Recognition Award: 100 Percent VAVS Meeting Attendance

- Award: Attendance Card presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Presented to: Hospital Representative and Deputy
- Materials and guidelines:
 - No entry form required.

- An “Attendance Card” will be awarded to each representative and deputy who has 100 percent attendance to VAVS committee meetings at her assigned facility.
- The national VAVS representative will verify the winners from VA records.

F. Department Recognition from The American Legion Award: Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach

Please note this is not an ALA award, it must be submitted to The American Legion.

- Award: Plaque presented by The American Legion National Commander at The American Legion’s National Convention
- This award will be given to The American Legion department that demonstrates American Legion Family involvement in homeless veteran initiatives that show outstanding support for activity in any or all of these areas: volunteerism, prevention, supportive housing, advocacy, and fundraising.
- The required nomination form is available at www.legion.org or by writing or calling the Veterans Employment and Education Commission, The American Legion, 1608 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20006; phone 202-861-2700; by email at VE&E@legion.org; or on the VA&R program page at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

G. James H. Parke Scholarship

- This substantial scholarship is awarded annually by Veterans Affairs to a student volunteer.
- The American Legion Auxiliary contributes \$2,000 annually to this scholarship fund.
- To be eligible, candidates must
 - Have completed 100 hours of regularly scheduled VAVS volunteer service during the calendar year prior to September 1
 - Be a student in the 10th grade or above
 - Not have reached their 19th birthday.
- The Medical Center director nominates a candidate for the award by submission of the nomination form to the president of the fund by November 1 of each calendar year, late nominations will not be considered.
- The nomination form should be completed to reflect the volunteer service and background of the candidate and include: age, years of volunteering, number of volunteer hours, areas of service and affiliated/supporting organizations, if any. See www.va.gov for information on VAVS, James H. Parke Scholarship.
- The national winner receives a plaque and a letter of commitment. This presentation is usually made at the Annual Meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee.

Additional Information

Welcome Home Celebrations

Provide assistance to your local VA health care system in supporting returning servicemembers and their families in the community. VA supports this initiative by providing information about the opportunities available to them through the VA. Every VA health care system sponsors welcome home celebrations in their facilities and community.

National Salute to Veterans

This initiative salutes America's heroes, the more than 98,000 veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who are cared for every day in VA Medical Centers during the week of February 14 annually.

How-to Sheets

- How to Raise Awareness in Your Communities About the Ever-Increasing Number of Homeless Veterans.
- How to Increase Donations to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. Homeless Veterans Coalition: www.nchv.org
2. Other "How to Sheets" can be found at ALAforVeterans.org
3. Quilts of Valor: www.qovf.org
4. VA Homeless Programs: www.va.gov/homeless/
5. HUD Homeless Assistance Programs:
https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/homeless/programs
6. On-Call: Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers
www.legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook
7. The American Legion Family Support Network: www.legion.org/familysupport
8. American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Creative Activities Action Guide,
www.ALAforVeterans.org
9. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov
10. The national VA&R Committee Facebook group, search ALA Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)
11. Your national VA&R committee members (see VA&R program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)



HOW TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE EVER-INCREASING NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS

Committee:

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Contact Information for Questions:

va&r@ALAforVeterans.org

Raise awareness in your communities about the ever-increasing number of homeless veterans, especially women veterans and those with children.

Background information:

- The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans states that homeless veterans are mostly males, but about 8% are females. Most are single and many may suffer from mental illness, alcohol and/or substance abuse. About 12,700 veterans of the recent conflicts were homeless in 2014 and the number of younger homeless veterans is increasing. 77% of homeless female veterans are unemployed. Your unit can get involved in several ways. We hope to supply you with ideas that will help you participate in the fight against homelessness and its impact on veterans.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- First, learn about the homeless veterans in your area. Identify the needs of the homeless veteran population in your area by contacting community organizations like shelters, food banks, and if available, a Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC).
- If you have a VAMC in your area, work with the VAMC homeless coordinator to see what kinds of programs they already have in place and identify how your unit can help.
- Use funds collected through the Poppy program to support the needs of homeless veterans.
- Advertise the Department of Veterans Affairs help line for homeless veterans in homeless shelters, community centers, VAMC's, CBOCs, local hospitals, mental health service facilities and other community centers in your area. The hotline, 1-800-4AID-VET or 1-877-424-3838 is a free, confidential hotline that pairs homeless veterans and their families with trained counselors who are able to refer veterans to services in their area. Posters are available at no cost on www.ALAforVeterans.org. Also visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans/Default.aspx.
- Get the word out! As a unit or member, contact your local and state representatives in person, by mail, phone or email. Ask them to keep veteran legislation on their agendas.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs also has founded a national suicide prevention hotline to ensure veterans in emotional crisis have free 24/7 access to trained counselors. Ask the local homeless shelter, hospital, schools, community centers, mental health services facilities and other public places to post the free flyer or hand out free brochures. Visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/Veterans/Default.aspx.



Three projects your unit might consider:

- Host a stand down or Homeless Veterans' health fair. Contact your local VAMC homeless outreach coordinator or visit the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans website www.nchv.com. They have a simple guide to follow called, *Stand Down Guide*.
- Assemble Buddy Baskets for homeless veterans transitioning into housing. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org for a How To Sheet that further details the Buddy Basket process.
- Work with your Legion Family to develop a fundraising plan. These funds can be used for emergency housing, supporting local shelters, and supplying veterans with basic needs. Contact local businesses, churches, and civic groups, for item and monetary donations. Ask to receive a portion of the proceeds raised at a community event. For example ask an organization to sponsor a 5k run/walk on behalf of homeless veterans. Involve media to ensure donors are recognized for their support of America's veterans.



HOW TO INCREASE DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

Committee:

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Contact Information for Questions:

va&r@alaforveterans.org

Objective:

#3 Support rehabilitation of veterans through art therapy by fulfilling the Auxiliary's annual financial obligation as a presenting co-sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF). **Step-by-Step Instructions:**

- Check with your department VA&R chairman to see what your unit goal is, and develop a plan to meet that goal.
- Once you have your goal, share it with your unit and keep them informed about your fundraising progress.
- Here are some ideas to help you develop your plan and achieve your goals. Brainstorm with your unit to come up with ideas that will work for your members:
 - Order your donation cans from National Headquarters today! This year, we are introducing donation cans to help your unit raise funds for NVCAF. A limited number of cans will be available, so check with your department VA&R chairman about details on how to order. Decorative wraps for cans will be available from National Headquarters or online for free at www.ALAforVeterans.org. The cans will be decorated with information about NVCAF and pictures from the event. You can place one or more cans in your Post home and make them available at each meeting. Ask banks, local retailers and many more places for spots to display our NVCAF contribution cans. Just use your imagination. It will be a great way for your Unit to reach your fundraising goal for NVCAF. More information will follow; watch for content posted in bulletins and on the website.
 - At each of your unit meetings, have a penny parade. Set an overall goal of how much you want to raise at each meeting that will help you make that overall goal.
 - A no-bake sale is an easy way to help reach your unit's fundraising goal. Assign a committee to select a date for your no-bake sale. Your invitation should include information about NVCAF. Have the committee send an invitation to the members of your unit and post. After your sale, be sure to let your unit and post know how much money was raised for NVCAF.
- Assign a small committee to ask local businesses for in-kind donations for a special NVCAF raffle. With the items collected, you can create special baskets to raffle. Don't forget to ask your friends and family to purchase raffle tickets. Take the February 2013 issue of the *Auxiliary* magazine. Take



the attached fact sheet with you to help explain the festival. When you visit local businesses, be sure your committee is well informed. For additional information visit www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov/.

- Hold your raffle at a special fundraising dinner for NVCAF. Invite the local business leaders who contributed and community leaders to the event (mayor, police and fire chief, Chamber of Commerce plus the others who are important in your community).
- If you have a veterans hospital or veterans home in your area, check with your hospital or home representative to see if they have local Creative Arts program. Check to see if they have any medal winners (gold, silver and bronze). If they do, invite the participants to your fundraiser and ask them to bring their art and talent. You might ask if they are willing to donate a piece of art for your fundraiser. Perhaps the performing arts medal winners would provide entertainment. If you don't have access to a Creative Arts artist, you can access a list of artists to see if any are in your area:
<http://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/caf/2010/participant-info.asp>.
- Don't forget to include your Legion Family in your event. The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion are a great help, and getting them involved helps build a strong Family relationship.
- Remember to promote your event. Send information to your local newspaper, write a letter to the editor, and invite local reporters and news stations to your event.
- A great and simple way to raise funds for NVCAF is to incorporate it into your poppy program. Check with your department VA&R chairman or Poppy chairman for your department's approved dates to distribute poppies (i.e., Memorial Day, Veterans Day, etc.). Select a small group of volunteers who are willing to distribute poppies one day just for the NVCAF. Select a good spot—Target, Wal-Mart, local market, liquor store or anywhere in your community that has lots of traffic. Be sure to get approval from the location before you go so your hard work will be successful. Bring materials with you that reference NVCAF and what it does for participants.
- Does your local veterans hospital or veterans home have a Creative Arts Festival? If not, it's a great opportunity for your unit members to work with your local VA hospital or home to get one started. *How to Facilitate a Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival how-to sheet*, found in the Members Only Area on the VA&R program page of the National website, will help you get started. Work with your hospital representative to see how you can get this project started. If you don't know who your representative is, check with your department VA&R chairman. This year, a grant fund has been set up to help your local VA hospital or VA home with its Creative Arts Festival and/or workshop. The fund is also available for hospitals that want to start a new local Creative Arts Festival or Creative Arts Workshop. You can find the application for the mini-grant www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Once you get your local Creative Arts Festival started, or if you have one in your area, why not host a mini Creative Arts Festival at your post home or at



a facility at your hospital/home? Your Unit can supply art supplies, volunteers and refreshments. Be sure to work with the recreational therapist at your local hospital/home, and don't forget that you can use poppy funds for this event.

- Don't forget to promote your local Creative Arts Festival to all veterans in your area (i.e., letter to the editor, flyers in local posts, your VA hospital/home—just to name a few).
- Did you know that awards are presented to departments, Units and individuals that donate money to NVCAF? Awards are presented for Bronze (\$1,000 to \$2,499), Silver (\$2,500 to \$4,999), and Gold (\$5,000 to \$14,999) by close of books of the administrative year.
- As unit chairman, you can create a special awards program for your members' participation in the Creative Arts program. Your awards program might include awards for different levels of contributions or the most creative fundraiser.
- The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is a week of learning, exploring fellowship and celebration of the healing power of the arts. Each dollar you raise helps a veteran in his or her quest for healing. Be creative in your fundraising and please pass on your success and struggles to your department VA&R chairman with a cc to your division chairman.

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SECTION 2.2 MEMBER SUPPORT COMMITTEES

- AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND (AEF)
- HISTORY
- CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
- LEADERSHIP
- MEMBERSHIP
- PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY
- PUBLIC RELATIONS

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund provides temporary financial assistance to eligible members during times of financial crises or weather-related emergencies and natural disasters and promotes awareness and knowledge of the program.

Committee Contact Information

aef@ALAforVeterans.org

What Can You Do?

- 1. Familiarize each unit and department with what AEF can and cannot do, where to locate the current application and how to apply.**

Ideas:

Member

- Distribute the “Before you Begin – Frequently Asked Questions” sheet and AEF brochure found at www.ALAforVeterans.org to eligible members. Promote as a benefit to new members.

Unit

- Have printed applications and AEF brochures available during unit meetings and at the local post.

Department

- Educate each unit and department AEF chairman on Auxiliary Emergency Fund roles and responsibilities. Encourage AEF chairman to procure brochures for their eligible members. This can be at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- 2. Help the National Auxiliary Emergency Fund obtain donations by supporting department and unit fundraisers.**

Ideas:

Member

- Support fundraisers sponsored by your department and unit.
- Make a personal donation to the AEF. Donations of \$50 or more will receive a pin requested by your department from National Headquarters.

Unit

- Put an AEF donation can in your local post (visit www.ALAforVeterans.org for a free, downloadable can label). Solicit local businesses for monetary or in-kind donations to your unit for AEF.

- Schedule an annual “Members Helping Members” night at your local post. Not only is this a great time for an AEF fundraiser, but it gives you the opportunity to share information about what makes a member eligible to receive help from the AEF. Have membership applications available, and sign up new members during an event. Legion members might sign up eligible relatives in order to provide this protection for them. Prior to the event, be sure all unit members have read and are familiar with the AEF frequently asked questions as well as the criteria for assistance.

Department

- Share fundraising ideas on all levels through newsletters, bulletins and stories, and circulate at every meeting. Along with the brochures, inform members that any donation of \$50 or more will receive a pin. AEF Donation Pin Order Forms are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org or by contacting National Headquarters at (317) 569-4500, or by emailing your request to aef@ALAforVeterans.org. Departments track and distribute pins to individual members.

Programs and Activities

1. The AEF brochure is available through departments and also online at www.ALAforVeterans.org
2. Please use the current form and follow directions to ensure that evaluation and processing are completed in a timely fashion. Incomplete applications can delay the application process. The current application and expedited application are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
3. Forms are available to order pins for individuals who donate \$50 or more. AEF Donation Pin Order Forms are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org, by contacting National Headquarters at (317) 569-4500, or by emailing your request to aef@ALAforVeterans.org. Departments track and distribute pins to individual members.
4. AEF frequently asked questions and additional AEF information are available on the AEF page at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
5. The following core rules apply to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund:
 - a. Temporary assistance to eligible members during:
 - A time of financial crisis when no other source of aid is readily available to pay for shelter, food and utilities.
 - Weather-related emergencies and natural disasters, for food and shelter.
 - Educational training for eligible members who lack the necessary skills for employment or to upgrade competitive workforce skills.
 - b. Assistance will not be granted to pay accumulated debts or medical expenses. The intent is to help members who have suffered a financial setback and is meant to be a bridge offering a helping hand until financial stability is re-established. Incomplete applications and missing documentation will significantly slow processing the case file.
 - c. Eligibility: Persons who have been members of the American Legion Auxiliary for at least the immediate past two consecutive years and whose current

membership dues are paid at the time the emergency occurs (three consecutive years' dues) may apply for assistance.

- d. Assistance provided: The maximum grant amount is \$2,400, disbursed as the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Grant Committee determines.

AEF Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department AEF chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division AEF chairman, plus copy the national AEF chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department AEF chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division AEF chairman, plus copy the national AEF chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the AEF Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

AEF Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and AEF committee contact information may be found on the AEF committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- A. Department Award: Largest Contribution**
 - Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department per division contributing the largest donations (per capita) to the AEF as of June 1.

- B. Member Award: Individual Contribution of \$50 or More**
 - Award: Citation and Lapel Pin Recognition
 - Presented to: Individual contributor donating \$50 or more
 - Materials and guidelines:

- The citation form is available at www.ALAforVeterans.org. Citations may be printed by the unit or department.

C. Unit Award: Largest Contribution by a Unit

- Award: Citation Plaque and special recognition at national convention
- Presented to: One unit contributing the largest amount (per capita)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Total donations per unit will be tracked by National Headquarters and will be divided by the units' current membership totals as of June 1 to determine the per capita donation amount

D. Department Award: Largest Contribution by a Department

- Award: Citation Plaque and special recognition at national convention
- Presented to: One department contributing the largest amount (per capita)
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Total donations per unit will be tracked by National Headquarters and will be divided by the units' current membership totals as of June 1 to determine the per capita donation amount.

How To Sheets

- How to Implement a Successful Water Bottle Coin Collection

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org (for additional resources and descriptions)
2. www.legion.org
3. www.operationhomefront.net (general financial assistance for military families)
4. www.211.org (referral program for local help with food, housing and employment)
5. www.fema.gov (disaster assistance)
6. www.redcross.org (disaster assistance)
7. www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
8. www.liheap.ncat.org (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program)
9. The AEF Committee Facebook group, search "Aux Emergency Fund"
10. Your national Auxiliary Emergency Fund committee members (see AEF program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)



HOW TO HOLD WATER BOTTLE COIN COLLECTION DONATIONS TO THE AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND

Committee:

Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)

Contact Information for Questions: aef@ALAforVeterans.org

Water Bottle Coin Collection:

Hand out a free 20 oz. bottle of water at a meeting to all members in attendance and ask them to return the bottle filled with coins to the next meeting. A 20 oz. water bottle filled with dimes adds up to almost \$100!

Unit: Offer a prize to the member donating the largest amount.

Department: Offer an award for the unit that collected the largest amount the previous year.

Suggested label for bottles:



**MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS
FILL WITH COINS
FOR
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND
UNIT #xxxxxx**

**Other AEF Fundraising Ideas:**

It's a Wrap - Offer gift-wrapping services at Christmas time for families along with babysitting services for a small donation. Other ideas include: show a holiday movie, make cards for veterans and military or assemble Pocket Flags. A lot of activities could be rolled into one night! Imagine how this wonderful service would help families in your community deal with stress during the holidays.

Buy a Meal - Volunteers donate homemade meals to sell. Could be in conjunction with a bake sale. Or sell food and baked goods at local sports games or dances.

Eat for a Cause - Contact local restaurants and ask them to set aside a night where a percentage of the sales would be donated to AEF.

Talent Show - Hold a talent show and charge for admission. Sell light fare and refreshments. Note: A Delaware unit held a talent show, charged \$5 per person, sold food and 50/50 and raised almost \$2,000 for the USO!

Otterbox - Sign up and request product donations for your raffles and/or silent auctions at <http://www.otterbox.com/en-us/product-donations.html>. Requests can take up to 6 weeks to be processed.

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

History Committee

The heart of any organization's history is in its records – items that officers, members, directors, staff, and volunteers have produced and compiled over the years. They provide unique testimony to the achievements of an organization.

Records also contribute in other ways:

- Members are able to look back and learn what efforts were successful, or unsuccessful, and why. Understanding the missteps as well as the achievements can assist in determining a future strategy.
- Exhibiting materials stimulates enthusiasm and encourages members to maintain the organization's standards and promote its future. Pride in the organization has a direct correlation to motivating the current membership to bring in new members, achieve more goals, create a sense of strength and conviction while developing leaders.
- Maintaining and preserving our records are invaluable to society by serving as informative and educational resources to a variety of potential users. In other words, an organization benefits itself and the public by preserving its records and making them available for use by everyone inside and outside the organization.

The ALA history is contained in artifacts, our documents, newspaper articles, publications, meeting minutes, photos, newsletters, written histories, etc. We do this to honor those members who have made differences in our organization at all levels. Additionally, history allows us to build a stronger organization based upon those experiences. The Cavalcade of Memories museum, as well as the library and archives located at ALA National Headquarters, serve as a resource for our members, volunteers, staff, and the general public.

Committee Contact Information

History@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. **If you currently have a History/Cavalcade committee, mirror the efforts of National Headquarters to promote your history.**

Ideas:

Member

- Share Auxiliary memorabilia with your unit/department.
- Ask longtime members or family of deceased members if they would like to donate an item(s).
- If you enjoy history and want to learn more, volunteer to be the History/Cavalcade chairman or committee member for your unit/department.

Unit and Department

- Appoint a History/Cavalcade Committee chairman. Invite members and units to participate.
- Post your unit history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration webpage at <http://centennial.legion.org/>.

- Involve your Junior members in your activities, helping them earn the History patch.
- Participate in the Members Remember project (see Resources).
- Create displays that are attractive, interesting, and relevant.
- Highlight historical/important/interesting events in your unit/department.
- Include memorabilia of your honorary Junior presidents.
- Use new technology to create and maintain digital images and records. Be sure to make more than one digital copy and store them in different places.
- Make an inventory of your entire collection. **This includes your organizational documents, written histories, scrapbooks, etc.** Be sure to include information such as who donated the item and when.
- Periodically, feature a historical item or write an article about an important time in the unit's/department's history for your newsletter.
- Attend local workshops to learn preservation and conservation methods.
- Partner with local museums, historical societies, public libraries, or local merchants for consulting and displaying.
- Ask members to consider donating or loaning important items they may have.

2. If you do not currently have a History/Cavalcade committee and/or a Cavalcade of Memories Museum, initiate the project.

Ideas:

Members

- Look through your own collection; assist a fellow member in searching through her collection; or search throughout the post/unit home for items.
- Gather photos and document the event(s) at which they were taken as well as the people in the photos.
- Learn the history of your unit, department, and national organization. If you do not have a written unit or department history, volunteer to help put one together.
- Determine if your materials should be displayed in the unit or department Cavalcade of Memories.
- For documents and photos, digitize them, making sure to make more than one copy and that the additional copies are stored in different places.

Units and Departments

- Your history is in more places than just artifacts. It is in your meeting minutes, governing documents, newspaper articles, photos, etc. Set up a system as to how these will be kept.
- Make sure you initiate a record management program. Review the records management policy sample in the Department Operations Guide to see which records you are mandated to keep permanently.
- If you have no room to keep these items, contact a local historical society, state library, or university to see if they can keep them for you.

3. Become visible throughout your community and let them know the ALA's history and contributions to the community, state, nation, and the world.

Ideas:

Members

- Talk about the history of your unit/department at other community functions you attend.
- Invite people to tour your Cavalcade of Memories, photos, documents, etc.
- Tell your story. Refer to the “What’s Your Story” article in Resources.

Units and Departments

- Partner with local museums, historical societies, public libraries, or university archives for consulting, displaying, and preservation advice. If there is no space available for your collection, determine if one of the above organizations may be interested in sharing some of their space for your collection.
- Invite the community and members to tour the area, familiarizing themselves with the organization’s history and accomplishments.

History Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department History chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the national History chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department History chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the national History chairman. Members and units should follow their department’s protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the History Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

How To Sheets

- How to Record Oral Histories – The Members Remember Project
- How to Celebrate Women’s History Month
- How to Involve a Junior Member

Additional Resources You Can Use

- Your national History committee members (see History program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)
- March is Women’s History Month
- National Archives www.archives.gov/preservation
- Gaylord Archival www.gaylord.com/resources
- See History program page at www.ALAforVeterans.org for additional resources, including *What’s Your Story? The Importance of Sharing with Others and Preservation Resources*

History is more than artifacts and/or a summary of events listed in a dusty book somewhere. As we look back on our achievements, let us make history come alive!



HOW TO RECORD AND POST TO “MEMBERS REMEMBER”

Committee:

History

Contact Information for Questions:

History@ALAforVeterans.org

Objective:

Record the ALA’s history through the eyes of its members

Background Information

The history of the American Legion Auxiliary begins back in November 1919, and continues with you. The organization’s history, like any other history, is more than names and dates. It is about its membership and how it developed the ALA’s programs and projects to fulfill our mission of serving the veterans, servicemembers, and their families who sacrifice much for this country of ours.

A written history can only tell so much. However, when an organization’s history is told through the eyes of its membership, everyone learns a great deal more about who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Here are some tips:

- This is a two-person project so find someone to assist. This is a good time to enlist the help of your 9th-12th grade Junior members as it is a required activity in earning the History Patch. If your unit does not have Junior members, enlist the assistance of college students.
- Find longtime members of the Auxiliary and ask them to share their stories in a video. These stories can be about:
 - A special project,
 - A particular highlight during her membership
 - How many generations of her family have been members and why
 - If a chartered member, her experience in starting the unit
- Find a location where it is quiet and where there will be no interruptions.
- Record with iPhones/Smartphones. Please keep in mind that your video file must be either a .mov; .avi; .mpeg; or a .wmv file extension.
- Each recording should be no longer than five (5) minutes long. You may make more than one. Cover one topic in each video.
- Post the video on YouTube. An instructional video on how to upload is located at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O7iUiftbKU.
 - Go to YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com>
 - Give the video the following title: ALA Dept. of __ (two letter abbreviation for your state) Unit ____ Members Remember.

History



- Provide a description and tags that will help people locate the video easily.
- Under Category, click on Nonprofits & Activism.
- Under Privacy, click on Share your video with the world.
- Click Save Changes.



HOW TO CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Committee:

History

Contact Information for Questions:

History@ALAforVeterans.org

Objective:

Celebrate the special women of our organization

Background Information

The month of March is dedicated to the celebration of women's history. It corresponds with International Women's Day on March 8th. What could be better for a women's organization to do than celebrate their own history? Our Auxiliary members have accomplished a great deal all around the world. Now it's time to celebrate what makes them so special!

Step-by-Step Instructions

What can we do?

- Learn more about Auxiliary members who made history within your department or unit. This could include girls sponsored to ALA Girls State who have gone on to do great things or those members who have improved their communities, state or country.
- Celebrate the women in your life – mom, grandma, even your sister.
- Donate money to the ALA Cavalcade of Memories budget at the unit, department, or national level in honor of a special woman.
- Set up a display in honor of those members who have gone above and beyond the ALA's mission.
- Write an article for your unit/department newsletter about Women's History Month or about the woman you are honoring.
- Check out how women's fashion has changed over time in the Auxiliary, as well as women's hair fashion. There has been a great deal of change from 1919 to today!
- Research and write about how the former and present members make a difference in the community and share with others.
- Put up a display at your local library, historical society, or storefront, celebrating the work that the women of the ALA have done and still do every day.

History



Remember – these activities can be shared with the Junior members. Honoring our members provides them with a role model. Sharing our history with our Junior members allows them to know that they, too, are valuable members of this great organization. Hopefully, they will begin to own this history and remain members throughout their lifetimes.



HOW TO INVOLVE A JUNIOR MEMBER

Committee:

History

Contact Information for Questions:

History@ALAforVeterans.org

Objective:

Help a Junior member (9th – 12th grades) earn the new History Patch

Background Information



In a joint effort with the National Junior Activities Committee, we have developed a History Patch for our high school (9th – 12th grades) Junior members. These young ladies have an opportunity to work with, learn from, and take ownership of the American Legion Auxiliary history. It is important for them to understand that they are a part of the Auxiliary's history. By earning this patch, they may become interested not only in the history itself, but in preserving it as well, and become a unit's or department's History/Cavalcade chairman.

Step-by-Step Instructions

What can we do?

- Contact the department Junior Activities chairman and ask her to help promote this new patch. Make joint announcements at your fall/winter/spring meetings, division/district meetings, etc.
- Write an article about the patch for the department newsletter.
- Make a poster to promote the patch for meetings. Include the patch and activities list (see below).
- Encourage the unit History/Cavalcade chairmen to promote this patch and work with their unit Junior Activities committee chairman.
- Find a high school aged Junior member and be a mentor to her as she works the activities to earn the patch.

History



HISTORY PATCH BLUE LEVEL 3
(Grade 9th-12th)

Educate yourself about the history of the ALA and The American Legion Family

Level 3: Twelve (12) possibilities; **Three* (3) activities are required;** Six (6) are your choice. A total of Nine (9) activities must be completed from the Twelve (12) choices.

No.:	Activity:	Date:	Adult Signature:
*1	Interview at least two ALA members for the <i>Members Remember</i> project. Post your video interviews on YouTube.com. Information can be found on the National History Committee page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org .		
2	Learn about the Veterans History Project. Interview at least two veterans and preserve their stories. Send your project to the Library of Congress www.loc.gov/vets .		
3	Contribute to your unit's ALA Senior History Book. Focus on who we are, what we do and why it matters.		
*4	Contribute to your unit's ALA Junior History Book.		
5	Contribute to and/or start a unit history museum to capture the impact the ALA has had on your community.		
*6	Research and do a presentation on the history of your unit. Present it to your Junior unit, or at a unit or post meeting.		
7	Research current, former or deceased members of your Legion Family (unit, post or squadron) who made a significant contribution to your community.		
8	Organize a <i>Veterans in Community Schools</i> presentation. Work with a veteran in your post, and find a school or classroom in which to make a presentation.		
9	Organize a library of past issues of <i>Auxiliary</i> magazine for your unit. Make special notation of issues with articles relevant to your unit or		



	department.		
10	Start a Blue Star/Gold Star Mothers and Families database for your unit.		
11	Start an ALA Girls State database for your unit: who your unit sponsored, what offices the girls held, and if anyone went on to ALA Girls Nation.		
12	Start a Poppy Program History: Keep track of your unit's Poppy Poster Contest, Miss Poppy, and Little Miss Poppy winners. Make special notation of those who also went on to win at the department or national level.		

Name of Junior Member: _____
Grade: _____ Unit #: _____
Department: _____

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Constitution & Bylaws

The Constitution & Bylaws program informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures at all levels. Constitution & Bylaws are the basis for governance of your department, district, county, and unit. Preparing and adhering to updated Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules will ensure a more successful organizational process, and provide the structures to follow at all levels of our organization.

Committee Contact Information

Constitution&Bylaws@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

The following is provided as a guideline to help facilitate reviews of your current Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. *Please remember that department, district, county and unit Constitutions, Bylaws and Standing Rules cannot be in conflict with national governing documents.*

Guidelines for Units and Departments

- A. Constitution & Bylaws:
 - a. are the foundation of the organization
 - b. contain the most essential provisions relating to the organization, its name, purpose, membership, officers, meetings, governing board, committees, parliamentary authority and amendments to prescribe structure changes
 - c. are the law of the organization
 - should be reviewed, but not changed, every year
 - have direct bearing on the rights of members
 - d. should have a standard form and content
 - e. define the primary characteristics of the organization
 - f. prescribe how the organization is structured and functions
 - g. include all rules that are so important that they cannot be changed without prior notice.
- B. Standing Rules
 - a. Relate to the details of administration for the organization
 - b. May be adopted by a majority vote
 - may be amended or rescinded at any regularly scheduled meeting: with prior notification, by a majority vote, unless the bylaws stipulate otherwise, without prior notification by a two-thirds vote.
- C. Parliamentary Authority – The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern this organization in all cases that are not in conflict with state statute, the constitution, the bylaws, or any special rules of order adopted by the organization.
- D. Definitions
 - a. Resolution: An elaborate, formally written motion. A resolution may contain a preamble that lists the reasons for adoption. Each reason is listed in a separate paragraph starting with the word “whereas.” A resolution must have at least

- one “resolved” clause that specifies the action or position being proposed.
- b. Amendment: Proposes a change to the Constitution, Bylaws, Special Rules of Order, or Standing Rules. It is also used to modify a motion under consideration.

Ideas:

Member

- Volunteer to create a game of Constitution & Bylaws questions for members to play at unit meetings; make Constitutions & Bylaws fun!
- Volunteer to write a resolution or amendment to be brought before your unit.
- Volunteer to help your department, district and/or unit to update governing documents to conform to the national organization’s governing documents.
- Become familiar with the most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

Unit

- Update Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, as well as policies and procedures, to conform to the national organization’s recent update.
- Plan a parliamentary procedure seminar at a unit/district function.

Department

- Update Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, as well as policies and procedures, to conform with the national organization’s governing documents.
- Plan a parliamentary procedure seminar at a department function.

Constitution & Bylaws Reporting*

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Constitution & Bylaws chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the national Constitution & Bylaws chairman. Members and units should follow their department’s protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Constitution & Bylaws Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your Narrative Report, please include answers to the following questions:

- Have you done an annual review of your Constitution & Bylaws?
- When were your department and unit Constitution & Bylaws last revised?
- How were units inspired to review their governing documents?
- Has your unit/department sponsored any Constitution & Bylaws activities? If so, what were those activities?
- Did your department participate in a web based Constitution & Bylaws activity? If so, was it helpful?

How To Sheets

- How To Write Standing Rules
- How to Utilize Facebook and Twitter to Promote Auxiliary Events and Activities
- How to Set up a Department or Unit Website

Additional Resources You Can Use (*available through Emblem Sales emblem.legion.org)

1. Your national Constitution & Bylaws committee members (see Constitution & Bylaws program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)
2. National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules* (also available for download at www.ALAforVeterans.org)
3. Policies and Procedures Manual*
4. Unit Guide Book*
5. Parliamentary Procedure*
6. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised**
7. C&B program page at www.ALAforVeterans.org
8. *ALA Department Operations Guide* at www.ALAforVeterans.org



HOW TO WRITE STANDING RULES

Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

Contact Information for Questions:

constitution&bylaws@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Constitution & Bylaws chairman

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Start with a specific need that relates to the administration of your department, district or unit (e.g., awards you present, budget for convention attendees, voting body).
- Write the Standing Rule. See “Guidelines for Writing Standing Rules” on the next page.
- Present it at a department, district or unit meeting.
- A standing rule can be adopted with majority vote at any regular meeting with advance notice, unless otherwise stipulated in the bylaws. Without advance notice, a standing rule requires a 2/3 vote for adoption.
- The Standing Rules document should be kept up-to-date, and each new Standing Rule should record the date it was adopted.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STANDING RULES

Standing Rules are those rules and regulations which relate to the details of the administration of an organization for the guidance of an assembly. Standing Rules are usually adopted in the form of a resolution, and require a majority vote to pass with previous notice at any regularly scheduled meeting, and a 2/3 vote in the affirmative to pass without prior notice.

The following points are intended to be a helpful guide for writing or updating Standing Rules. Not every topic or item will apply in every instance, and some things may not be listed.

The (NAME AND NUMBER) of the _____ District, American Legion Auxiliary, hereby adopts the Constitution & Bylaws as prescribed by the American Legion Auxiliary, Department of _____.

The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, in all questions not governed by articles of the National, (department/district/unit) Constitution & Bylaws, shall govern this (department/district/unit).



1. State time (day and hour) of meeting, place of meeting and information on notification of meeting. Are you meeting all twelve (12) months?
2. Dues – Senior, Junior, Gold Star Mothers, Life Members.
3. Process for selecting Life Members.
4. Election
 - a. When will election be held?
 - b. Secretary and/or Treasurer – elected or appointed?
 - c. A nominating committee – yes or no? Elected per the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.
5. Election of delegates for department convention, fall conference, district meetings – when and how selected.
6. Installation of officers – when, where, who is in charge.
7. Equipment – rules for loaning, maintenance, etc.
8. Finances
 - a. Rent
 - b. Utilities
 - c. Working funds for officers, chairmen, poppy purchases, ALA Girls State, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, etc.
 - d. Annual gifts for district president's visit, retiring officers, etc.
 - e. Flowers and/or gifts for illness, death, etc.
 - f. Expenses for delegates to department convention, fall conference, district meetings, etc. (registration fee, mileage, per diem)
 - g. How bills are paid and who signs the checks
 - h. Contest prizes – how much for poppy, essay contests, etc.
 - i. Department and district mandatory funds
 - j. Arrangements for special dinners – funerals, etc.
 - k. Annual donations to special programs or charities
9. The fiscal year of this department/district/unit will be _____.
10. Audit – when and by whom.
11. This paragraph should appear at the end of your Standing Rules: “Standing Rules are adopted by a majority vote and may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote at any meeting, or if notice has been given, by a majority vote.” Standing



Rules are usually adopted from time to time, as they are needed, in the form of resolutions.

12. The date of the meeting at which these Standing Rules were approved **MUST** be shown. **ALSO** – The signature of the Constitution & Bylaws chairman and president or secretary **MUST** appear on the bottom of the list.

Date Approved

President or Secretary

Constitution & Bylaws Chairman



HOW TO WRITE A RESOLUTION

Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

Contact Information for Questions:

constitution&bylaws@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Constitution & Bylaws chairman

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- A resolution is a written, formal motion. Resolutions are used because the motion may be presented in written form with some of the reasons included in the document. If written well, the resolution makes it easier for members to consider the proposal. Importance, length and complexity of the motion, and size and formality of the assembly are major considerations in using resolutions.
- A resolution has two sections - the resolving clauses and the reasons. Resolving clauses tell the specifics of the proposal. The main reasons a motion should be adopted are included in the "Whereas" clauses. Neither section should include more clauses than are absolutely necessary. Simple, but specific is best.
- When developing a written motion or resolution, consult with members who can be of assistance to improve the wording and whose support will assist in its adoption.
- The two sections of a resolution can be written in either order, but many believe it is better to write the main motion first and then write the reasons it should be adopted. This way, you first determine what is to be done. Focus on the most crucial specifics essential in the motion. Say it in one or two sentences. A third sentence could include who is responsible and a timeline.
- Once the main motion is determined, develop three to five statements to support the adoption of it. These are worded as "Whereas" clauses. These points should be the most important and least controversial arguments for the motion. Less than three points may not make the case depending on the motion, and more than five may get too complicated and confuse the issue. Again, it is important to stay focused on the points that are strictly necessary. Leave other points for the discussion.
- When the resolution is finally written, it begins with the "Whereas" clauses and ends with the resolved clauses. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* prescribes the proper format, capitalization and punctuation. Again, it is a good idea to consult with members who can be of assistance, as well as the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, to ensure your resolution is correctly formatted.

See the sample resolution in Support Tools at www.ALAforVeterans.org.



HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARIAN

Committee:

Constitution & Bylaws

Contact Information for Questions:

constitution&bylaws@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Constitution & Bylaws chairman

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- **BE IMPARTIAL** – The parliamentarian is much like an official in a game. She is to be impartial and make sure everyone plays by the rules. Similarly, as the official does not play the game, the parliamentarian does not exercise the same rights as a member. She does not make motions, debate, or vote, except by ballot.
- **KNOW THE RULES** – Just as a referee must know the rules of the game, a parliamentarian must know the rules of the organization and of the parliamentary authority. As the size of the group increases, so must the depth of knowledge of the parliamentarian. A department parliamentarian must know and understand bylaws, standing rules, and parliamentary procedure much better than a unit parliamentarian.
- **PRESIDENT'S APPOINTMENT** – The president appoints the parliamentarian for her knowledge and skills, not as an honor or special appointment for a friend. The parliamentarian should be someone reliable and trusted to provide accurate advice for everyone on both sides of an issue. The president and parliamentarian should have a good working relationship.
- **VARIED ROLES** – The parliamentarian has a variety of duties before and during meetings with members, committees, officers, and boards. The goal is for the business to be handled properly and smoothly.
- **DUTIES BEFORE A MEETING** – Review the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible problems that may arise. Review the bylaws and standing rules of the organization. Work with any committee members who request assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.
- **DUTIES DURING A MEETING** – Preparatory work before the meeting should reduce the work necessary during the meeting. The parliamentarian should arrive early to counsel as needed. Have a copy of the governing documents at the meeting. Keep track of the motions to assist the presiding officer. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Provide advice when requested and communicate with the president tactfully and discreetly. Remain impartial and be prepared to cite references if needed. Be available after the meeting for further counsel.



- **DUTIES FOR A CONVENTION** – The duties of the parliamentarian for a convention include those listed for meetings. Also be prepared to advise convention committees such as resolutions, credentials, rules, and elections. Review the script with the presiding officer. Stay focused, steady, patient, and fair.
- **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY** – Any organization requires rules of operation. The most important should be the hardest to change. Typically these include a Corporate Charter, Constitution and/or Bylaws, Rules of Order such as *Robert's Rules*, and Standing Rules. The Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules are written specifically for a given organization. Those rules take precedence in governance. On matters not specifically addressed in those documents, the Rules of Order specified in the Bylaws are the parliamentary authority. This is usually the most recent edition *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. A parliamentarian should spend time studying these rules.
- **HELP MEMBERS LEARN** – During your year of service as parliamentarian also consider working with members to educate them in parliamentary procedure. This can be as you counsel them in their roles or teach lessons to further develop their knowledge and skills.
- **DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE** – Good parliamentarians are always learning their craft. Invest in your knowledge. Resources are available through Emblem Sales, through parliamentary associations, and online.

Resources Available through Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org:

1. National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules (also available on the Auxiliary's website at www.ALAforVeterans.org)
2. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (also available on the internet at <http://www.robertsrules.com/>)
3. Parliamentary Procedure Booklet

See the Constitution & Bylaws page at www.ALAforVeterans.org for additional resources.

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Leadership

The Leadership program raises awareness of ALA leadership development opportunities.

Committee Contact Information

leadership@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Learn about and promote participation in the ALA Academy, which is a result of the 2014-2019 ALA Centennial Strategic Plan.

Ideas:

Member

- Work with a mentor to develop/enhance interest, skills and knowledge of the ALA.
- Become familiar with the different types of leadership training available through your department, the national organization and your community. Pick one that appeals to you and participate wholeheartedly.
- Build your leadership skills by volunteering to chair a short-term project.
- Give a short presentation on ALA training opportunities to the unit.

Unit

- Get to know the members of your unit. Help them identify the skills they can put to use in service to our veterans. Not all leaders have titles.
- Survey members to identify their interests and skills. Match projects based on individual member's strengths.
- Develop a plan to incorporate at least one aspect of leadership learning, monthly or quarterly, at meetings.
- Hold a workshop/brunch focusing on preparation of reports and applying for awards.
- Provide the ALA pin to new members.
- Purchase a Unit Guidebook to share among members at meetings and encourage them to go online to download information.
- Identify individuals willing to assist members who wish to acquire or strengthen computer skills in order to communicate via the internet.
- Identify individuals who lack the ability to communicate via the internet and ensure their inclusion in all unit and department communications.
- Participate in the ALA Academy as a unit.

Department

- Provide members with opportunities to use their skills and energy.
- Hold a workshop to explain the department governing documents, to include Constitution & Bylaws, how the department budget is developed and their importance to the organization. The goal is not only to be transparent to your membership, but to reduce obstacles toward members volunteering for leadership roles by replacing fears with concrete information.

- Hold a workshop to train department chairmen and unit chairmen on effective written communication.
- Encourage department leaders and units to use tools and resources provided on the national website. More than 2,000 documents are provided on the national website at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Survey units to identify barriers to leadership and work to reduce them.
- Provide information to units for participation in the ALA Academy.

2. Enhance leaders' knowledge about ALA history, programs, and organization.

Ideas:

Member

- Take *Welcome to the American Legion Auxiliary Senior Auxiliary Basics, A Course on our History and Legacy* at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Leadership tab.
- Attend district/department training sessions/workshops.
- Volunteer to be a trainer/course leader.
- Ask questions.
- Share past experiences.
- Prepare a personal history of your involvement in the organization; refer to *Welcome to the American Legion Auxiliary Senior Auxiliary Basics, A Course on our History and Legacy* at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Leadership tab, to discover how national endeavors may have influenced your personal history.
- Attend an ALA Mission Training session or other national event.

Unit

- Initiate new members. Offer every new member an orientation packet.
- Offer an ALA information refresher course for all members.
- Encourage members to take *Welcome to the American Legion Auxiliary Senior Auxiliary Basics, A Course on our History and Legacy* at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Leadership tab.
- Recognize members who have completed the course either in a meeting or via public relations.
- Encourage members to participate in Mission Training or other national event.

Department

- Offer *Welcome to the American Legion Auxiliary Senior Auxiliary Basics, A Course on our History and Legacy* at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Leadership tab.
- Offer *Welcome to the Junior ALA Course "The ALA: My Organization and What I Need to Know to Grow as a Member"* at www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Leadership tab.
- Use the training PowerPoint presentations provided on the Leadership page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Challenge department leaders and units to use the tools and resources provided in the Programs Action Plan or on the website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Plan workshops on leadership skill development for your department and individual units.

- Hold a workshop to train department chairmen and unit chairmen on how to write an effective Programs Action Plan (formerly Plan of Action) for their programs and how to complete more informative reports.
- Survey units to identify skills/interests in order to develop leadership.

3. Encourage the use of ALA reference documents and materials, such as the Unit Guide Book, Unit, Department, and National Constitution & Bylaws, Department Operations Guide, ALA Girls State Program Guide, and the national website listing of previous annual reports, to include the Centennial Strategic Plan initiatives.

Ideas:

Member

- Download/purchase the referenced documents and become familiar with them.
- Volunteer to assist a Junior member in learning about the documents of the ALA.
- Ask questions about any programs or terminology you don't fully understand.
- Ask members to review the Unit Guide Book, Unit Constitution & Bylaws, Department Constitution & Bylaws and National Constitution & Bylaws, noting things found puzzling or not understood. Bring these questions to your Leadership chairman for clarification.
- Participate in the ALA Innovative Leadership Video Contest Challenge. If chosen, your video will be playing on the ALA YouTube channel. Go to www.ALAforVeterans.org or your department Leadership chairman for specific information.

Unit

- Set aside a time to discuss important ALA documents at unit meetings and develop a committee to address changes in procedures based upon a review of the referenced documents.
- Develop a plan to assist Junior members in learning about the referenced documents.
- Utilizing available materials, collectively develop a unit plan for projects on which your unit wishes to work.
- Hold a workshop to explain unit Constitution & Bylaws, Standing Rules, how the unit finances are structured, how the budget is planned, and how to write meeting minutes.
- Set aside a "show me where it's printed" at meetings where members can ask why something is done the way it is or where in the governing documents it says we have to do it this way.
- Ask members to review the Unit Guide Book, Unit Constitution & Bylaws, Department Constitution & Bylaws and National Constitution & Bylaws noting things they don't understand or find puzzling and address what comes from the discussion by documenting the results. Set aside time to answer any questions that arise from any discussions on ALA documents. Follow guidelines on www.ALAforVeterans.org. Submit, to the national organization, the name of any member who demonstrates an innovative leadership recruitment or development practice, for a National President 'Shout out.'" Follow guidelines on www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Department

- Hold a workshop on these documents, providing guidance on the basics of protocol, parliamentary rules, and how to conduct a meeting using correct protocol.
- Ask members to review the ALA Unit Guide Book, Unit Constitution & Bylaws, Department Constitution & Bylaws and National Constitution & Bylaws noting things they don't understand or find puzzling and address what comes from the discussion by documenting the results.
- Set aside a time to discuss reference documents at department meetings.
- Each year, develop a committee to address changes in procedures based on a review of the referenced materials.
- When sending communications to members, be sure to include changes adopted by the national organization such as Constitution & Bylaws changes, rules affecting a program, or deadline date changes that have been immediately affected.
- Develop a complete department Programs Action Plan (formerly Plan of Action) for units' information.
- Help units and members participate in the ALA Innovative Leadership Video Contest Challenge. If chosen, your video will be playing on the ALA YouTube channel. Go to www.ALAforVeterans.org for specific information.

4. Offer a mentoring program, utilizing the knowledge and experiences of members who have served as leaders beyond the unit level.

Ideas:

Member

- Complete a (member/leader data) unit survey for your unit. Refer to www.ALAforVeterans.org, Leadership page, and How To sheet found at the end of this program Plan.
- Volunteer to be a mentor for a member or Junior member on the unit/department level.
- Learn the process and apply for a unit, department and/or national appointment.
- Seek election to a unit, department or national office.
- Apply for a unit, department or national committee appointment.

Unit

- Use positive, experienced members to train and guide new members.
- Encourage members to volunteer to train/guide new members.
- Encourage members to become "experts" in some areas so that they can become the unit mentor in that area.
- Discover potential leaders and talent within your unit by collecting a unit survey form from every member.

Department

- Assign positive, experienced chairmen to mentor new chairmen.
- Share articles on mentoring with members.
- Ask new/younger members to serve as leaders.
- Train members to be mentors.
- Choose and submit ALA Innovative Leadership Video Contest videos to eBulletin@ALAforVeterans.org. Keep a copy for your department records. More information can be found on www.ALAforVeterans.org under the Leadership tab.

5. Nurture a culture of goodwill at all levels of the organization.

Ideas:

Member

- Resolve to consider your own behavior before evaluating others.' Expect the best of people.
- Participate in discussions or debates while demonstrating respect for opinions that are different from your own. When you disagree, extend the olive branch of friendship since we all share a common mission.
- Speak privately with another member directly, rather than involving others with your concerns.

Unit

- Invite new members to participate in meetings and events.
- Always greet new members and offer a new member packet.
- Provide unit officers/board of directors contact information.
- Unit leaders should encourage members to work their issues out directly with the parties involved rather than attempting to fix the situation by intervening.
- Listen to what members have to say and thank them for their ideas.
- Be open, rather than critical, of the ideas of others.
- Assist in positive solutions to conflicts by focusing on the desired outcome.
- Give praise and recognition when members do what is asked or go beyond what was expected.

Department

- Welcome new members graciously by recognizing them at meetings.
- Lead by example; work with officers and chairmen in a team effort.
- Listen to members' concerns before responding.
- Keep an open mind.
- Answer questions seeking assistance from other leaders to give a clear and defining answer.
- Give praise and recognition when members do what is asked or go beyond what was expected.

Leadership Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Leadership chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Leadership chairman, plus copy the national Leadership chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Leadership chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Leadership chairman, plus

copy the national Leadership chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Leadership Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- What department trainings were held for units and/or the department and were they well attended by returning and new participants?
- What topics or presentations were included in your trainings?
- Of members attending these trainings, did you require feedback concerning what they learned, how this training will improve their ability to lead, and what trainings they would like to attend in the future?
- Did you hold training on nurturing a culture of goodwill?
- Did your department successfully implement the unit member/leader data survey? What were the unit responses?

Leadership Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Leadership committee contact information may be found on the Leadership committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

A. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Leadership Program

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5) that best demonstrates innovative methods to help members develop the leader within.
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words
 - Types of training provided
 - Number of members attending leadership skills workshops/trainings
 - Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Leadership chairman
 - Must have participation in *American Legion Auxiliary Senior Auxiliary Basics, A Course on our History and Legacy*
 - Pictures and examples are encouraged

- Must show increased participation in Mission Training

B. Department Award: Best Department Leadership Program

- Award: Citation to a department in each division (5)
- Presented to: One department in each division that best demonstrates what her department did to promote a culture of goodwill.
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words
 - Include recommendations from units and members.
 - Pictures and examples are encouraged
 - Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department Leadership chairman

How to Sheets

- How to Utilize a Member Data Survey Form
- How to Conduct a Unit Meeting
- How to Lead a Small Unit
- How to Grow Leadership Capacity, Nurturing a Culture of Goodwill

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org:
 - a. *ALA Senior Basics Course: A Course on our History and Legacy*
 - b. *Junior Leadership Course: “The ALA: My Organization and What I Need to Know to Grow as a Member”*
 - c. PowerPoint: “Officer Duties and Responsibilities”
 - d. How to sheets
 - e. *ALA Unit Guide Book*
 - f. *ALA Constitution & Bylaws*
 - g. ALA New Member Packet, refer to Membership Programs Action Plan How To sheets
 - h. Members Only section - filled with valuable information for all members: Membership and new members suggestions and sample information; member resources and benefits; department and unit resources for support tools
2. Robert’s Rules of Order
3. Basic Parliamentary Procedure
4. Your national Leadership committee members (see Leadership program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)
5. American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales: 1-888-4LEGION, emblem.legion.org
P.O. Box 36460, Indianapolis, IN 46236-0460



HOW TO UTILIZE A MEMBER DATA SURVEY FORM

Committee:

Leadership

Contact Information for Questions:

Leadership@ALAforVeterans.org

Utilize member strengths (ALA Centennial Strategic Plan, Goal 3D)

Not all members profess to be leaders but each member of your unit brings with her talents and strengths that will enhance the unit. While meetings allow us to become acquainted with members, not all members are able or willing to attend. You still would like their help when needed. Far too often we don't really know each member's training, likes or what she is able to offer the unit.

What is the purpose of a member data survey?

This form, when completed by each unit member, will give the unit a snapshot of the strengths each member possesses. Have each member of your unit complete a form. Decide who in the unit will be responsible for maintaining member records. Then, use these forms when you need help in the unit. For example, need a yearly audit of your "books?" The survey has identified someone in your unit who is a professional accountant. She doesn't come to meetings, but she may be willing to help the unit by auditing the books.

Ideas:

- Make copies of the data survey form and have each member in your unit complete and return it to the unit president. (*The Data Survey Form is in the Leadership Program Action Plan how to sheets.*)
- Have a designated person or committee members contact unit members who do not attend meetings to explain and complete the form remotely.
- The unit president compiles survey information and establishes her own references.
- The unit selects a person responsible for maintaining member survey records.
- The department provides a copy of the survey on their website for units to download, and includes a copy in their department's Programs Action Plan.
- Departments should award department certificates to units that have 100% of their membership complete the survey.

Leadership



American Legion Auxiliary
Member Data Survey

Name

Phone Number- Home

Address

Phone Number – Work

City/State/Zip

Phone Number – Cell

Briefly tell us about yourself and your family:

What interests or hobbies do you have?

In order to help our unit and community grow and to honor our military and veterans would you be interested in any of the following:

People: _____

Participating in Education Activities: _____

Working with Youth: _____

Scholarships: _____

Community Awareness/Activities: _____

Helping with Unit Activities: _____

Fundraising: _____

Assisting Auxiliary Members in Need (Auxiliary Emergency Fund): _____

Working projects that benefit our military and veterans: _____

If you are physically unable, would you be able to assist in your home with projects: _____

Or helping with a phone tree, when the need arises: _____

Do you have experience in a leadership role? _____

Please explain:

Thank you for continuing to honor our veterans, military and their families.



HOW TO CONDUCT A UNIT MEETING

Committee:

Leadership

Contact Information for Questions:

Leadership@ALAforVeterans.org

The manner in which a unit meeting is conducted has a great bearing on its success or failure. Unless a meeting is well planned, intelligently conducted, and subjects are presented and discussed interestingly, members cannot be expected to be faithful in attendance. Routine business should be transacted in an efficient manner, yet the opportunity should be presented for active participation of members in the program. It is most important that unit elections and all unit business be conducted in accordance with unit bylaws, the current edition of “Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised,” and department and national constitution and bylaws. All unit presidents must remember to be impartial while presiding and not participate in discussion. The majority vote rules, but the minority has the right to be heard. Committee members and officers may transact detailed business and should only bring important matters before the unit for decision. Special monthly activities should be stressed, and district and department officers, as well as local speakers, should be asked to add interest to the programs. Variety should be introduced in music and entertainment.

The President as Presiding Officer

- Calls the meeting to order at the designated time and, if a quorum is present, proceeds with necessary business.
- Preserves order throughout the meeting.
- Follows the accepted order of business.
- Refers to herself as “the Chair.”
- Decides parliamentary questions. The president states the motion clearly after it has been seconded and before allowing discussion.
- Takes no part in any discussion while presiding; refrains from expressing a personal opinion on questions before the house; avoids all personal bias when giving information to the organization.
- Calls upon the vice president to preside if she wishes to speak on a motion or leave the chair. Remains out of chair until the vote on the pending motion is taken.
- May vote according to local bylaws.
- Recognizes a member who has not spoken previously on the question in preference to one who has spoken.

Leadership



Suggested Order of Business

While this suggested order of business for unit meetings includes items that will not be used at every meeting throughout the year, this may be of some assistance to presidents of new units and to others who are not entirely familiar with the business to be transacted. The order should be modified to fit the circumstances of the particular occasion.

1. Call to Order
2. Advancement of Colors (optional); Salute to the colors if colors are not advanced
3. Prayer
4. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
5. National Anthem or other patriotic song
6. Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary
7. Roll call of officers
8. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
9. Treasurer's Financial Report
10. Initiation of candidates (quarterly, biannually, or annually, as is the unit custom)
11. Reports of: president, secretary, unit officers, executive committee, Membership committee, standing committees, special committees
12. Reading of communications, including those from national, department and district officers
13. Unfinished business
14. New business
15. Election and installation of officers
16. Announcements
17. Program - educational and entertaining (optional)
18. Adjournment of business meeting
19. Closing prayer
20. Retirement of Colors (optional). The American flag and the banner of the American Legion Auxiliary in miniature and in a small stand should not be used for the advancement or retirement of colors, as the stand of colors was not intended to be used for this purpose.

Unit Meeting Terminology

Call to Order: The presiding officer first calls the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes: The president asks the secretary to read the minutes of the previous regular meeting. If special meetings have been held, these minutes should be acted upon after the regular ones. The presiding officer asks for any corrections or additions to the minutes, she then declares the minutes "approved as read" or "approved as corrected" if any corrections have been made. The minutes can also be distributed ahead of time and adopted without a full reading.

Statement of the Treasurer: After the reading of the report by the treasurer, the report is entered into the minutes and filed for audit. At the annual meeting the annual report is read, and the auditor's report is read. The report of the auditor including the treasurer's report is accepted.



Reading of Communications: The secretary reads all communications from the department and national headquarters, local organization notices and matters of general interest. Any action, which may arise from the reading, is deferred until unfinished business or new business is considered.

Unfinished Business: Any business postponed from the previous meeting or any matter introduced at the meeting on which action of the unit was deferred is unfinished business. The secretary from the minutes of the last meeting prepares a list of such unfinished business for the presiding officer. Only when the unfinished business has been disposed of may new business be brought forward, unless the regular order of business has been modified by vote of the members present.

New Business: Any business brought forward for the first time.

Announcements: The date of the next meeting or special event is announced. If a social hour is to follow, this should be announced at this time.

Program: The president asks the program chairman to take charge.

Closing Prayer: The president asks the chaplain to offer the closing prayer.

Charge: The president states, "Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the American Legion Auxiliary and its members. Let us ever be watchful of our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy."

Adjournment: The president states, "If there is no further business to come before this meeting, the meeting is adjourned."

Retirement of the Colors: The color bearers will retire the Colors (Optional). If colors are not retired the president should say, "Colors in place, hand salute."



HOW TO LEAD A SMALL UNIT

Committee:

Leadership

Contact Information for Questions:

Leadership@ALAforVeterans.org

"History, although sometimes made up of the few acts of the great, is more often shaped by the many acts of the small." – Mark Twain

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Avoid the "burnout" syndrome. Ask members to buy into a "one" concept: mentor one member, write one article for the unit newsletter, volunteer to be a greeter at one meeting or make reminder meeting calls to members for one meeting. By not overwhelming members with large projects, they will have the opportunity to adjust to learning and helping build their unit. If an experience is enjoyable, members will be more likely to look forward to helping more.
- Develop a plan to continually develop new leadership within your unit. As members are selected to chair committees, mentor them. Offer help when needed. Be prepared to provide support when asked or assign another mentor for support. Provide training sessions. Consider that you may have seasoned unit members capable and available for help with the training. Also, other community leaders may be willing to provide leadership training.
- Communicate with members. Find those who may wish to help contact members via phone/email or personal contact for such activities as meetings and program participation. Utilize local media. Foster good relations with local newspapers, TV and radio. Issue news releases. Publish the meeting schedule at the beginning of the year in your unit newsletter, and write "TBA" (To Be Announced) for those programs still tentative. Invite a member familiar with social networking to set up and monitor an account for the unit.
- Work in groups of like-minded programs, rather than each program individually. Some units have said it is hard to work all programs when they have few active members. The grouping system is a way to simplify the programs so you need no more than five program chairmen instead of 15 or more program chairmen. Grouping allows for more combined and efficient efforts within a unit. For examples: Juniors, Education, Children & Youth, and ALA Girls State/Nation can be grouped into one "youth" program grouping.
- You are not expected to complete all action steps in the Programs Action Plan; just pick a few that fit your unit well. If unit members enjoy their work, it will create an inviting atmosphere, and others who care about veterans will want to join in.



- Consider implementing quality programs to help invigorate meetings. Survey the interests of the membership when considering topics - a great way to reinforce information about Auxiliary programs.
- Be positive! Unit leaders have an obligation to minimize criticism and maximize positive feedback. A small unit needs and deserves frequent kudos for each of its successes.



HOW TO GROW LEADERSHIP CAPACITY, NURTURING A CULTURE OF GOODWILL

Committee:

Leadership

Contact Information for Questions:

Leadership@ALAforVeterans.org

“The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.”

If we fail in our efforts to cultivate leadership ability, our leadership will deteriorate and ultimately disappear. So where do we begin?

Build confidence in those you lead

- Help people learn and develop. To increase members’ confidence, you should encourage them to utilize the Auxiliary Basics course (www.ALAforVeterans.org) and the ALA Leadership Academy; and to attend ALA Mission Training or conferences held in their departments.
- A great way to build up members’ competence—and thereby their confidence—is to delegate specific tasks that will help them grow in an area they’re interested in. Just be careful that you don’t delegate too soon or too quickly. Your job is to help members set reachable goals and, if necessary, to break difficult tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.
- Focus on member’s strengths. Their confidence (and motivation) will generally grow when they’re given the chance to put their skills or expertise into practice.
- Be supportive. One of the most fundamental ways to boost people’s confidence is to actively support them and build them up emotionally. When you get to know people on a more personal level (e.g., what motivates them; what really matters to them) you’ll intuitively know how to best support them.

Treat all members with dignity and respect

- Treat everyone with respect. Each of us has a direct impact on developing future leaders by setting an example for others to emulate.
- Actively praise a member and provide positive feedback when someone does something well. We all like to feel appreciated and it takes so little to say, “Thanks, that was an awesome job you did!”
- Build members up and let them know that it’s OK to make mistakes. When you remove the fear of failure, people will be more likely to take good risks.

Challenge them

- Including others in projects or programs helps build emotional and creative capacity.



- Leaders should inspire, challenge, enable and encourage members. They should mobilize others toward transforming our values into action, our vision into reality, and potential obstacles into innovations.
- Empower members.
- Empowerment begins by painting the big-picture for those you lead. Empowerment also is all about trust.
- Leaders should give opportunities to those they lead, and then hold them accountable.
- Share with them past insecurities or challenges you faced when you first assumed a leadership role. Your openness will only make them feel more confident and inspired by your example.
- Acknowledge past mistakes. People want to work with someone who is human.

Listen and listen more

- When building a member's confidence, listening to them is crucial. Allow them to communicate openly and honestly about their strengths, weakness, fears, accomplishments, and ultimate goals.
- Actively listen to what others have to say before giving your viewpoint. Demonstrate, by your actions, that their thoughts and ideas are important to you. Remember your reaction and body language is an important indicator that you are truly listening.

Connect with your members

- Connection doesn't happen unless you invest the time to learn about someone's unique personality, perspective and motivations. Ask questions of members to uncover their interests, while observing them in action to find out their leadership strengths and potential.
- Demonstrate your commitment to their success by consistently adding value to them, providing ongoing encouragement, and making yourself available.

Be a model they can emulate

- Effective leaders should seize every opportunity to express, by their own example, their deep commitment to our organization. Leading by example makes our vision and our values tangible.
- Effective leaders do what they say they will. This builds credibility and trust among members, who realize that their leaders' promises are not empty words.
- Effective leaders are able to regroup and determine a new course when faced with adversity or an unexpected obstacle. They understand that needs and goals change over time and they must adapt to meet them.
- Leaders take initiative and responsibility for their actions.

"It takes a village to raise a child," is a popular African proverb. By the same token, it takes an organization to raise a leader. Developing leadership is a serious endeavor, but it's worth the time and effort because leaders are necessary for our organization to thrive into the future.

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Membership

The role of the national Membership Committee is to encourage and support the nationwide effort to attract and retain a diverse, active membership and establish new units to ensure the future of the American Legion Auxiliary. Members enable us to carry out our mission to assist veterans, military, and their families.

Committee Contact Information

membership@ALAforVeterans.org

What Can You Do?

1. Enhance member experience

Ideas:

Units and Departments

- Retain all current members
 - What is a member in good standing?
 - A member who is current with annual dues is a member in good standing. A member failing to pay annual dues by January 31 of the current membership year, shall be classed as delinquent and shall be suspended from all membership privileges.
 - What is the value of a volunteer's time?
 - To enhance a member's volunteer contributions, offer ideas and opportunities in which members can support and deliver the Auxiliary's mission.
 - Examples for members: Volunteer at a VA Medical Center serving as veterans' escorts to appointments, participate in a stand down to provide necessities for homeless veterans, mentor military children with the big brother/big sister concept.
 - Recognize all members for any and all contributions — volunteering, serving as a chairman or officer, preparing food, organizing events, being a mentor to new members, contacting other members to renew, being a good example of *Service Not Self*, etc.
- Share member tools.
 - Help members set up a user profile on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org, so that they can access the "Members Only" section and take advantage of all the tips and tools available.
 - Inform members of member benefits and discounts available.
- Rid units/departments of member discrimination. (Goal 1 & 2)
- Ensure a positive experience for all members.
- Be welcoming, kind and respectful to members of all ages and backgrounds.
 - Ask for new ideas and be open to them. Encourage personal contact between members of the unit. Demonstrate *Service Not Self* in all activities and interactions with others. Realize that not all members will attend meetings, and be respectful of their choice.
- Create meaningful participation.

- Hold regular information sessions to refresh members on ALA programs.
- Ask members to participate in programs they are passionate about.
- Establish a membership committee or team to support efforts throughout the department.
 - Deploy active and consistent communication with units and districts/counties. Share contact information of committee/team with units.
 - Use membership tools, available at www.ALAforVeterans.org, and ensure all units have access to all membership resources.
 - Utilize your committee/team by giving them an assignment to make your program a success.

2. Reach out to former and expired members.

Ideas:

Units and Departments

- Identify former and expired members: Use the ALAMIS member database, or contact your department headquarters, to obtain a former member report, expired member report and/or a current year unpaid dues roster.
- Reach out to former/expired members: Set up a committee to establish a phone bank of members who will call former members. Meet periodically to make calls – monthly, quarterly, semi-annually. Develop a script to identify reasons for not renewing and what would cause the former member to consider rejoining. A sample phone script is included in the “How to hold a revitalization event or participate in TAL District Revitalizations” how to sheet. Send follow-up letters to those contacted, thanking them for taking the time to talk with you. Send letters to those you were unable to reach (*see “How to hold a revitalization event or participate in TAL District Revitalizations” for a sample letter to former members*).
- Share former members’ feedback with the unit; determine what the unit might need to do differently to retain all members.

3. Attract new members.

Ideas:

Units and Departments

- Ensure a positive new-member experience.
 - Personally contact a new member shortly after she joins.
 - Provide a personalized welcome letter from the unit president or membership chairman. Also send a New Member Kit, available at www.ALAforVeterans.org, and personalize it for your unit and department. *See “Suggested Additions to New Member Kit” to help create a complete new member packet.*
 - Find out how a new member wants to be involved and which volunteer activities might best suit her skills and interests. *Utilize the interest form provided in the Leadership Programs Action Plan.*
 - Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities in which new members can participate, at times convenient to them, to support and deliver the Auxiliary’s mission. *See the ALA Service Not Self Volunteer Toolbox at www.ALAforVeterans.org for tips, ideas and strategies on how to be a better volunteer.*
 - Be welcoming, kind and respectful to persons of all ages and backgrounds.

- Do not expect all new members to attend regular meetings; be grateful for whatever way she wants to participate, even if only to pay her dues.
- Increase the ALA's visibility in the community.
- Increase community involvement by using ALA programs that encourage responsible, active citizenship supporting our military servicemembers and their families.
- Engage other community-based organizations in ALA projects such as welcome-home/deployment events, support of military families and providing services that may include plumbing, carpentry, childcare, etc., for families of those deployed.
- Volunteer at schools, giving flag demonstrations and serving as mentors, with a special emphasis on military children and the issues they face with deployments and transfers. Contact JROTC leaders to assist with projects.
- Encourage Junior members to recruit their eligible friends and relatives.
- Identify recruitment target groups such as women veterans, military families, and relatives of American Legion members, ALA Girls State alumnae and local colleges.
- Ensure the ALA is appealing to new members.
- Exhibit *Service Not Self* in all activities and interaction with others.
- Create a significant membership experience for Junior members. Encourage Junior members to attend the senior meeting to share their vision of the unit. Encourage struggling units to elect Junior members to positions that don't incur significant liability risks. Examples include: Chaplain, Sgt.-At-Arms, and Historian.

4. Understand and Respect Member Rights

Units

- Membership dues
 - Members can pay dues in one of the following ways:
 - Directly to the appropriate member in their unit
 - Via the renewal notice sent by National Headquarters
 - Via www.ALAforVeterans.org
 - Effective with the 2016 membership year, members have the *option* to renew their dues online.
 - Membership cannot be withheld from a member who chooses to pay her dues online.
 - Once a member has paid her current year's dues, regardless of payment method, she is a member in good standing and entitled to all rights and privileges of membership.
 - Units have a legal and fiduciary responsibility to process a member's dues (new or renewal) in a timely manner. Failure to do so is a violation of the members' rights and due process. Dues received by the unit should be transmitted to your department once a month (minimum).
- Membership cards
 - Membership cards are provided by the national organization and shipped to departments to distribute to their units.
 - Units must provide to members their membership card as soon as payment is received.
 - Units must provide membership cards to members who renew online as soon as the unit becomes aware that the member has paid – either by member providing their emailed receipt, notification from their department, or, for

units having ALAMIS access, via the “Unit Dues Paid Online” report which is available 24/7.

Departments

- Membership Dues
 - Departments have a legal and fiduciary responsibility to process a member’s dues (new or renewal) in a timely manner; failure to do so is a violation of the members’ rights and due process.
- Membership cards
 - Membership cards cannot be withheld from units for any purpose. Distribute membership cards and rosters to units in a timely manner so they can be promptly provided to members upon payment.
- American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System (ALAMIS)
 - Encourage units to sign up for access to ALAMIS. Units having access to ALAMIS can minimize work for the department by entering new members as pending members, update their member’s profile, run reports showing who has and has not paid dues, and can pull the “Unit Dues Paid Online” report which means that units can promptly provide membership cards to members who pay dues on-line.

Membership Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Membership chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Membership chairman, plus copy the national Membership chairman.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How is your department encouraging renewals? Provide three examples.
- Did working any of the ALA programs help to generate new members? (Example: Teaching flag etiquette at a school resulted in two teachers joining the ALA.)
- Have any of your units implemented new/innovative ideas or practices to increase renewals and/or sign up new members? If so, what are they?

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Membership chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Membership chairman, plus copy the national Membership chairman. Members and units should follow their department’s protocol and deadlines.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- As the department Membership chairman, how have you disseminated information to your units?
- Did your department have any department membership awards (not including any national membership awards)?
- Did having these membership awards help to retain or increase membership?
- What did you do to encourage membership?
- What were your successes throughout the year?
- What were some of your hurdles/difficulties faced during this year?

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Membership Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

Membership Awards

For Membership awards, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Membership Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

How To Sheets

- How to Create a New Member Packet
- How to Hold a Revitalization Event or Participate in a TAL District Revitalization
- How to Create An Account for the Members Only Section of the National Website
- How to Make a Personal Connection to Get Members to Renew

Renewal Notice Schedule

The first renewal notice will be mailed by September 15 for the following membership year. A second notice is mailed by January 15 for the current membership year. Units are welcome to supplement the national renewal notices with unit generated renewal notices. The ALA membership year is from January 1 to December 31.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. Your national Membership committee members (see membership program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).
2. *ALA Unit Guide Book*, available at www.ALAforVeterans.org or from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales.
3. Materials provided during the Department Leadership National Conference.
4. www.ALAforVeterans.org for award forms and additional resources.



HOW TO CREATE A NEW MEMBER PACKET

Committee:

Membership

Contact Information for Questions:

membership@ALAforVeterans.org

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Download the New Member Kit available on the national website:
<https://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Members/Membership/>
- Personalize the New Member Kit with additions that are unique to your unit.
Additions could include:
 - Welcome letter from your unit president
 - Membership card and pin (*Pin is optional*)
 - Unit Constitution and Bylaws
 - Unit budget – A budget communicates a unit’s values and priorities. A unit may use the budget to determine whether resources are being appropriately and beneficially used to achieve its stated mission and objectives. Essentially, the budget is a numerical representation of the Programs Action Plan for a specific time period. Make sure the budget is flexible to allow the unit to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. Identify the sources of the funds and their planned uses.
 - Unit roster – A list of all of the current members, as well as a list of past officers, district, department and national information, and even local contact information for the press and city officials.
 - Latest newsletter (if applicable)
 - Calendar of events including monthly meetings
- Other suggested items (available on the national website) include:
 - TAL Family Brochure
 - AEF Brochure
 - Scholarships Brochure
 - American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Brochure
 - Member Benefits Flyer
- Include an interest form (available in the Leadership Committee Programs Action Plan) for the new member to complete and return to the unit.



HOW TO HOLD A REVITALIZATION EVENT OR PARTICIPATE IN A TAL DISTRICT REVITALIZATION

Committee:

Membership

Contact Information for Questions:

membership@ALAforVeterans.org

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Revitalization is about identifying new and current members with new ideas that breathe life into units that are declining in membership and mission outreach. Revitalization is also about providing mentors for struggling units, providing training for new members and finding leaders to replace longtime chairmen and officers. More importantly, revitalization is about finding, exploring and trying new ways for all members to become more engaged in meaningful opportunities for mission outreach. Outlined below are three revitalization events that your unit may want to consider:

1. Hold an open house for your unit.

- Establish a time and place for your open house.
- Promote your open house by sending flyers/pamphlets/postcards/brochures to your units' current and former members. Work with your American Legion post to obtain a roster of their membership so you can send information to their households.
- Notify your local newspaper of the event and post flyers within your community. Newsletter and news release templates are available at <https://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Resources/Marketing---Promotional-Materials/>
- During the event, have several tables set up and manned by unit members. Tables to include are:
 - Membership: Members can renew/rejoin or sign up as a new member. Make sure to have plenty of membership applications, American Legion Auxiliary At-A-Glance brochures and Legion Family brochures.
 - Program tables: Set up tables for each program in which the unit participates. Include information regarding each program and include pictures of the units' activities if possible.
 - Member benefits: Have a unit member available to answer any questions and highlight all of the member benefits. Display copies of *Auxiliary* magazine and make sure to have plenty of copies of the member benefits flyers and the Auxiliary Emergency Fund brochure.
 - ALA national website: Enlist a member to demonstrate how to navigate the ALA national website and assist members in creating a login and/or paying their dues online.
- Keep a list of those attending the event. Don't forget to follow up afterwards to thank them for coming and to notify them of upcoming unit events.



2. Hold a phone tree night

- Establish a time and place for your phone tree night.
- Obtain a list of expired and former members. If the unit currently has access to ALAMIS they can pull this report themselves or you can request a report from your department.
- Enlist the assistance of unit members to make phone calls to expired and/or former members. *See the sample phone script at the end of this document.*
- Have members offer to drive and pick up dues from members.
- Keep a list of members who renew. Follow up to thank them for their membership and to keep them informed of unit activities.

3. Participate in a TAL District Revitalization

• Preparing for a TAL District Revitalization

- Departments: Contact National Headquarters for a schedule of TAL visit(s) to your state. Assist affected units prepare for revitalization events.
- Units: Contact your department headquarters to see if/when a TAL district revitalization event will be scheduled in an area near you.
 - Identify a revitalization coordinator(s) or point of contact(s) to organize the unit revitalization
 - Solicit ALA members to participate. Contact other units within your district to see if they would like to participate. You may wish to create two groups from your volunteers: One group to stay at the location and make phone calls to former/expired/department headquarters unit members (see attached sample script) and to be available to speak with any walk-ins. Have a display table showing Auxiliary programs. The second group will ride along with TAL teams who are canvassing neighborhoods knocking on doors to make contact with expired/former TAL members and inviting them to rejoin.

Note: ALA members that go door knocking with TAL members may not always have an opportunity to ask each homeowner about women in the home who might be interested in the ALA. TAL members have a short amount of time when talking to someone. If no opportunity is presented to discuss the ALA, politely ask if the homeowner would like an ALA brochure to pass on.

- Make arrangements with the hosting post to have a section of tables and chairs for your needs. Create signs for your table(s).
- Make arrangements to have ALA information (brochures, applications, etc.) for walk-ins. Have clipboards and writing utensils for both those who stay on site and those who go out knocking on doors with TAL members.
- Arrange for drinks and food/snacks to be available for all of the participating volunteers.

• Publicity

- Publicize the dates, times and information of the revitalization event in post and/or unit newsletters two months prior to the event so that members are aware that TAL and the ALA will be out in their community. This can also be used as a way to solicit volunteers for the event.



- Two weeks prior to the event obtain newspaper coverage. Display posters/flyers in the area (community bulletin board, grocery stores, church bulletin board, etc.). Let the community know that there will be ALA members available throughout the day at the location of the event to answer questions and talk to people if they are interested in joining and/or rejoining the ALA.
- **Unit and Post Rosters**
 - Obtain a membership roster for local units in the area to be covered as well as the department headquarters unit to identify any of those members that live in the area. Rosters for your individual unit can be pulled from ALAMIS. If your unit does not have access to ALAMIS, you can request a membership roster for local units from your department. Reports that show members who are paid and not paid for the current membership year are also available.
 - Ask the local post if they can provide a TAL membership roster with mailing addresses. This can be used to send mailings to Legionnaires to invite their eligible family members to join the ALA.
- **Letters**
 - Letters/invitations to the event can be sent to current unit and post members who may have family members who are eligible to join the ALA, members of the department headquarters unit in the local area who you may wish to invite to transfer to a local unit, and members who have not yet renewed or that you are asking to rejoin the unit.
 - See sample letters included in this document that can be used to contact current unit members, post members from TAL commander and unit president, and to past Auxiliary members from unit president.
 - Make your own mailing labels or secure mailing labels from department (check with your department to see if this option is available).
 - Letters should be mailed two-three weeks in advance of the revitalization event. This allows time for letters with wrong addresses to be returned. Keep track of any returned mail and update your records that the address currently on file is inaccurate. If the bad address belongs to a member of the ALA (current or former), notify your department headquarters so that they can update that member's record. *If your unit currently has access to ALAMIS, you can update the records yourself.*
- **Brochures**
 - From your department headquarters, order the "American Legion Auxiliary At-A-Glance" brochure and in the space provided on the back, place a label with the name, address and phone number of a contact person. Also include contact information for other participating units.
 - Obtain copies of the "ALA Member Benefits" flyer, fold and insert in the brochure. The Member Benefits flyer can be printed off the national website (found in the "Member's Only" section of the website under "Member Benefits") or ordered from your department.
- **Day of TAL Revitalization Event**
 - Meet at the designated time and event location. Advise participants to bring cell phone chargers for both wall and car.
 - Members who go out door knocking with TAL members: Take several of the "American Legion Auxiliary At-A-Glance" brochures that are stuffed with the



Member Benefits flyer and the local unit's contact information to hand out or leave on doors.

NOTE: Reminders when visiting homes:

- *Wear appropriate ALA-branded clothing; make a good first impression. Smile!*
- *Wear visible name tag with Auxiliary emblem on it if possible.*
- *Keep a list of the names and addresses where ALA information was distributed. Each TAL team will have their list of homes to visit. Ask (in advance of the event date) if the Auxiliary member may have a copy to use during the door knocking session.*
- Members who stay at the event location should set up a table/display of ALA program pamphlets/brochures and membership applications for any walk-ins.
- **Follow-Up**
 - Have a plan for who will follow up at a later date and contact anyone who was a walk-in (and those homes that you handed out ALA information to) and do it **SOON** after the event! Do not lose the momentum and fresh contacts you just made.
 - Consider writing an article for the unit/post/dept newsletter to “celebrate” the outcome of the event. Include helpful hints that made your event a success and state statistics for the number of new or renewed members. Also thank all of those members who participated and gave of their time.



(LETTER TO UNIT MEMBER CONCERNING REVITALIZATION EVENT)

It is recommended this letter be written on unit stationery.
SAMPLE LETTER

Date

Dear Unit Member,

As you know, the American Legion Auxiliary has a proud heritage of volunteering, and as a volunteer member you understand the importance of our programs and activities and the effect they have on our veterans, service members and their families. The possibilities for us to continue to have an impact in these areas are limited only by our creativity, desires and enthusiasm.

As a member you have been able to volunteer in many capacities in your unit. If you are a member who has not volunteered as much as you would like, now is the time to take another look your options and find new ways for our mission outreach programs to fit into your life. We also ask your help in attracting other women who want to make a difference in the lives of veterans, servicemembers and their families.

We invite you to attend a special revitalization event for Unit _____. This event will be held on *date* _____ at _____ *location* _____ from _____ *Start time* _____ to _____ *End time*.

A team of unit members will be available to answer questions on the Auxiliary's programs and activities to help you decide where your interests best fit and at what level you would like to participate. Please come by and visit us anytime between *Start Time* and *End Time*.

Thank you for being a member and a volunteer with our exceptional organization. We look forward to your continued membership and volunteer work.

Sincerely,

Unit President

Unit Secretary



(LETTER TO LEGIONNAIRE CONCERNING REVITALIZING A UNIT)

It is recommended this letter be written on post stationery.
SAMPLE LETTER

Date

Dear Legionnaire,

When you joined The American Legion, you chose to continue your fellowship with others who have served our country. You also chose to support an organization that stands strong for veterans and their rights as American citizens.

Our American Legion post is very interested in assisting the American Legion Auxiliary in re-organizing our local ALA unit. The American Legion is proud of this unit’s past goals and accomplishments. Thanks to these Auxiliary volunteers, many veterans, service members and their families as well as our community have benefited.

To make this unit stronger, we welcome the eligible girls and women you know to join our American Legion Family. There are many different programs and activities for members of all ages to volunteer. Please contact either of us for additional information about the Auxiliary’s programs and activities. We can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXXX and XXX-XXX-XXXX respectively.

The revitalization event for both Post _____ and Unit _____ will be held on _____ date _____ at _____ location _____ from *start time* to *end time*. Representatives from the unit will be available to speak to anyone interested in joining the American Legion Auxiliary.

Remember, those eligible for membership are the wife, daughter, mother, granddaughter, great granddaughter, sister and grandmother of a Legionnaire or deceased veteran who served during the eligibility dates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Post Commander

Unit President



(LETTER TO FORMER MEMBER ASKING HER TO REJOIN THE UNIT)

It is recommended this letter be written on unit stationery.
SAMPLE LETTER

Date

Dear Former Member,

When you joined the American Legion Auxiliary, you chose to stand strong for veterans, the military, their families and our communities. You chose an organization that has supported and touched with kindness many veterans and their families.

I know that you cared about the programs and activities of the American Legion Auxiliary. That is why I am inviting you to rejoin Unit _____.

An application for membership is enclosed along with a sheet showing the many benefits available to Auxiliary members. The dues are \$XX.XX for senior members and \$X.XX for Juniors. Please mail completed application and dues to:

Name, Unit Secretary
American Legion Auxiliary Unit XXXX
Street Address
City, State Zip

Or, please come visit us during our revitalization event occurring, Date at location from Start Time to End Time. Members of the unit will be available to answer any questions you may have about the Auxiliary and our programs as well as assist you in rejoining the unit.

If you have any questions, contact one of the individuals at the address and phone number listed below.

We look forward to your participation in the programs and activities of the American Legion Auxiliary!

Sincerely,

Unit President
Unit XXXX
Street Address
City, State Zip
Phone Number
Email

Unit Membership Chairman
Unit XXXX
Street Address
City, State Zip
Phone Number
Email



**SUGGESTED TELEPHONE SCRIPT
FOR
FORMER/EXPIRED MEMBERS**

Hello. This is _____. I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in insert city and/or state and I see that you were once an ALA member. I'm calling because we are conducting a membership drive and want to invite you to renew your membership.

If they reply affirmatively:

Great! I'd be happy to email or send you the application. Is this contact information still correct? (Verify address & email). If you aren't sure if you still have your proof of eligibility documents, you may be able to contact your previous unit or your department headquarters to see if they've retained them.

Optional: If there are other women in your family who might be interested in joining, please invite them. I can send additional applications or you can forward my email address to them.

If they object or reply negatively, simply thank them for their time.

If they have any questions that you are unable to answer, you can refer them to the department headquarters:

American Legion Auxiliary Department of XXXXX

Phone: XXX.XXX.XXXX

Name of Department Secretary

If you need to leave a message:

Hello. This is _____. I am a member of the American Legion Auxiliary in insert city and/or state and I see you were once an ALA member. I'm calling because we are conducting a membership drive, and we want to invite you to rejoin our great organization.

If you are interested in rejoining the American Legion Auxiliary, please call the Department of insert state at insert dept secretary/membership chair's phone number and they will be happy to assist you!

****Keep a record of the objections to find a pattern of responses. This indicates changes your unit may need to address to get members to pay their dues and participate in our programs. If your unit is not experiencing growth or renewals, changes should be made.**



HOW TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT FOR THE MEMBERS ONLY SECTION OF THE NATIONAL WEBSITE

Committee:
Membership

Contact Information for Questions: ALAMIS Help Desk, alamishelp@ALAforVeterans.org

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Go to the American Legion Auxiliary’s national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org
- Click on “Log In,” which is located in the upper right hand corner of the home page.
- Click on “Sign Up” which is located under the “Log In” button.
- Provide the following information:
 - Member Number
 - First Name*
 - Last Name*
 - Department
 - E-mail Address
- Click “Submit”
- Check your email. Registration instructions will be mailed to you to finish the Log In process.
- Click on the link provided in the email you receive to claim your account.
 - The link will open a page of the American Legion Auxiliary’s website. You will need to create the following:
 - Username
 - Password (Your password must be at least 6 characters long and exclude spaces, tabs, single quotes, double quotes, percent signs and pound signs).
 - Reconfirm your password
 - Click “Submit”
- Once you click submit you will be redirected to the American Legion Auxiliary homepage. You now have full access to the American Legion Auxiliary’s national website!

****Please note that names (first and last) need to be spelled exactly as they are entered into the ALAMIS database.***



HOW TO MAKE A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO GET MEMBERS TO RENEW

Committee:
Membership

Contact Information for Questions:
membership@ALAforVeterans.org

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Too often the only contact a member receives is her Dues Renewal Notice sent by the national headquarters office. Personal connection is necessary to help members become engaged in the American Legion Auxiliary. Below are samples for how units can reach out and make a personal connection with their members and ask them to renew their membership:

- Personal phone call – Remind members why they joined the American Legion Auxiliary. Share the ways your unit has made a difference in the lives of veterans in your community, state and country. Encourage them to become a part of activities. Transportation may be an issue, so if your unit members can offer to provide a ride, this may be the key to increasing involvement. Offer to pick up their dues at a scheduled time.
- Personal letter – Send letters out to all of your members at the beginning of the Auxiliary year. Outline the events on a calendar for all of the exciting things your unit is planning throughout the year and let members know that their membership is important to the mission of the organization. *See sample letter.*
- Renewal Open House – Host an event at the beginning of the year where members can come renew their dues and mingle with other members. Encourage them to bring other family members along. These family members may be eligible for membership, but if not, remind them they are welcome to attend activities and that you do welcome their help in advancing the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary. Combine this event with your Legion family. It is a win-win for everyone.
- Plan a Member Day of Recognition. Everyone needs a pat on the back or a “way to go.” At your meetings, you can share information about a member’s family history with the Auxiliary, what she is doing to advance the mission of the Auxiliary, her community service work, etc. Then share this information with your division Membership chairman so we can begin to share her accomplishments with the entire American Legion Auxiliary membership.
- Share your own personal experience as a member. Let your members know there will be ups and downs, but to always keep their eye on the big picture – the mission of the Auxiliary – not just personal rewards.

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Past Presidents Parley

The purpose of the Past Presidents Parley committee is to utilize the experience and knowledge of past Auxiliary leaders for training and encouragement of future Auxiliary leaders. Through the Past Presidents Parley committee, women who have served as unit, department, and national presidents have an opportunity to continue in active service to the Auxiliary, helping ensure strong future leadership for the organization. The Past Presidents Parley also recognizes and honors outstanding unit members through the Unit Member of the Year Award and women veterans through the Salute to Servicewomen Award.

Committee Contact Information

pastpresidentsparley@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Promote mentoring opportunities of unit members.

As former leaders, past presidents at all levels are encouraged to continue their support to the organization by accepting responsibility to contribute their experience, knowledge and wisdom. As ambassadors for the organization, there is much information to share in achieving a stronger organization, at each level, by sustaining growth through positive actions.

Ideas:

Unit

- Form a unit Past Presidents Parley
- Encourage past presidents to continue providing support through the process of sharing 'best practices' with members.

Department

- Encourage past presidents at all levels to continue their support of the organization.
- Encourage past presidents to embrace the concept that their knowledge and wisdom, as a past leader, can make a difference in the development and mentoring of future leaders, and present and future members.
- As past leaders, join the group as ambassadors for the organization knowing there is much information to share to make each level of the organization stronger and maintain its growth with positive actions.

2. Promote and submit nominations for the Unit Member of the Year Award.

This award recognizes the contributions made by a valued unit member. Select one member to compete for department recognition by researching the criteria within your department and making a nomination; honor her within your department. Also honor the member in her unit for significant contributions made to the unit. Encourage other units to participate. All Unit Members of the Year are recognized at National Convention. Committee contact: national committee member, consult the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan for contact information.

Ideas:**Unit**

- Select one member to compete for the department Unit Member of the Year award by researching the criteria within your department and personally making a nomination.
- Honor her within the unit.

Department

- Promote the Unit Member of the Year Award to all units and members. This is a very special award that recognizes the contributions made by a valued unit member who never held an office higher than unit president. It celebrates and recognizes those members who quietly work the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.
 - Follow the application criteria below, establish entry dates for your department, and establish a committee to judge the award entries and select the winning entry from your department.
- Plan to recognize the winner at your department convention.
- Raise funds to provide the winner from your department a means to attend the ALA Woman of the Year Luncheon held annually at the national convention. Special recognition at the luncheon is bestowed on all winners in attendance.

3. Promote and submit nominations for the Salute to Servicewomen Award.

The Past Presidents Parley will continue to recognize the military service of female personnel, including the National Guard and Reserve components, representing each branch of service at the national convention. Committee contact: national chairman, consult the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan for contact information.

Ideas:**Unit**

- Seek candidates to nominate for the Salute to Servicewomen Award. Assist in the application process.
- Honor all nominees at a unit function.

Department

- Encourage units and members to seek deserving women to apply for this award.
- Assist in the application process.
- Recognize all award entries at a department function.

Past Presidents Parley Reporting*

An annual report is not required; however, an annual summary and a mid-year progress report are suggested as tools to gauge the direction and effectiveness of department activities. Both narratives should be forwarded to the national chairman.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Past Presidents Parley Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

Past Presidents Parley Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Past Presidents Parley committee contact information may be found on the Past Presidents Parley committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

A. Member Award: Unit Member of the Year

- Presented to: A senior member in good standing who hasn't obtained an elected or appointed leadership role higher than that of unit president.
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Selection is based on accomplishments, activities, etc., for the current administrative year.
 - Years of membership are not a part of the criteria; the nominee may be a new member.
 - All entry forms, including a narrative, must be completed and submitted by the deadline. The unit president and secretary must sign the entry form unless the nominee is one of them, in which case a past unit president must sign the entry form. Please see Unit Member of the Year Award Form for more information.
 - Each department may submit only one department winner.

B. National Award: Salute to Servicewomen Award

- Presented to: One servicewoman in each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Materials and guidelines
 - Nominees should be willing to attend National Convention, if possible.
 - All entry forms, including a narrative/YouTube video, must be completed and submitted by the deadline. A YouTube video can take the place of a written narrative. Please see Salute to Servicewomen Award Nomination Form for more information.
 - Entry must have the nominee's name and address, unit name and number (if applicable), and, most importantly, contact information for the servicewoman.
 - One applicant for each branch of service per unit will be accepted.

How To Sheets

- How to Establish a Past Presidents Parley in Your Department
- How to Host a National-Level Visitor at Your Department
- How to Mentor a New Member

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. Your national Past Presidents Parley committee members (see Past Presidents Parley program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)



HOW TO ESTABLISH A PAST PRESIDENTS PARLEY IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

Committee:

Past Presidents Parley

Contact Information for Questions:

pastpresidentsparley@ALAforVeterans.org

Establish a Past Presidents Parley in your department

- Departments are encouraged to establish a Past Presidents Parley (PPP) consisting of their past department presidents. These groups can continue their support of the organization by using their experience, knowledge and wisdom to be goodwill ambassadors and to strengthen our organization and help maintain its growth.
- PPPs can play an important part in the mentoring of current members to develop knowledgeable leadership within the department. They can support and assist in a recruitment effort for new members.
- They are encouraged to select a mission-outreach project of interest and support the program with time and/or financial contributions. They may choose to have a courtesy fund and chairman to remember past presidents when the need arises.
- They should make themselves available to current officers as well as potential candidates for office. Their guidance and constructive feedback should help the department maintain continuity and good cooperation.
- This group could hold a luncheon during department meetings to share current department news. They may choose to donate or raise funds for ex-servicewomen and PPP nurses scholarships. They may discuss making specific donations or how they could assist with issues within their department to help create a positive result. A discussion could be held about ideas for proposing a resolution to help clarify a questionable Constitution & Bylaws article. They may decide to take a leadership role regarding a proposal from the national organization. Some members of the Parley may be serving at the national level.
- They could invite the current department president and any national guest who may be in attendance at their meeting.
- Your knowledge can be invaluable on the department's Finance Committee, as PPP chairman, or as parliamentarian, if appointed.
- Continue to be involved: You are a valuable department member.



HOW TO HOST A NATIONAL-LEVEL VISITOR AT YOUR DEPARTMENT

Committee:

Past Presidents Parley

Contact Information for Questions:

pastpresidentparley@ALAforVeterans.org

Suggestions for hosting a national-level visitor at your department

- Make sure all pre-visit forms are filled out completely and correctly. The national president's form requests detailed information regarding events, expectations for speaking obligations, appropriate attire, etc. Visitors should be informed of any changes made to the information submitted on the pre-visit forms.
- Identify a distinguished guest committee that will be responsible for all activities during the visit. This committee should be familiar with the area and will represent your organization in a professional manner. Make the committee members aware of the dress code for the visit. Have them develop a plan that assigns individual responsibilities. If you have a national chairman, national officer or Past National President in your department, it is suggested she be on this committee.
- If the guest is flying into the area, designate who will be at the airport at the scheduled time of arrival. The visit begins at the airport. Be on time and either at the gate or at the luggage area to make your guest feel welcome. Assist with luggage at every location. Transport her in a clean vehicle that has a large luggage storage area. Many times, the guest has been traveling for several days and has multiple suitcases. Ask if she has eaten or would like to stop at a suitable restaurant prior to escorting her to the final destination.
- If possible, pick up the key to your guest's room before her arrival. Check the room to make sure everything is prepared for her visit. You may choose to place a small gift, bottled water or small snacks in the room. When you arrive at the location where your guest will be staying, escort her immediately to her room. Allow the guest some time to unpack, check her messages and relax before the first scheduled event.
- She should be escorted at all times. Ask if she prefers breakfast in her room or in the dining room and what time she would like to retire to her room.
- Facilitating a reception or social activity is an effective way of enabling the national-level visitor to meet as many members as possible.
- The department president will introduce the guest. When addressing an audience, she should speak last. In a processional, the national president would be the last to be introduced and the last to be seated or step onto the platform.
- A gift list of items given to the visitor is always appreciated. Send one list with the gifts mailed to her home and send a copy to National Headquarters. Prior to the day of departure, ask the visitor what time she would like to arrive at the airport. Many guests prefer to be checked in and waiting at their departure gate one hour prior to boarding the plane. Please plan departure day events accordingly.



HOW TO MENTOR A NEW MEMBER

Committee:

Past Presidents Parley

Contact Information for Questions:

pastpresidentsparley@ALAforVeterans.org

Unit Past President Parley Responsibilities

- Offer to escort a new member to your meeting.
- Introduce her to the president as well as other members in attendance. Ask her to share a little about herself. The information could be helpful in determining in which committee she may have the greatest interest. Have each attendee introduce herself.
- As each program report is given, request that the chairman explain the purpose of the program and how the unit supports it. Explain the duties of the officers, the chairmen and the committee members.
- Help maintain a positive attitude and assist in avoiding controversy during the meeting. Interject some occasional humor to help make the meeting fun.
- A prospective member is more likely to join if she feels she is joining an organization that is fun and whose activities support the community. All members will be more willing to attend meetings and assist with activities if the meetings are short and interesting. Remind the members to try new ideas without criticism if they fail. Suggest trying something else. Help keep the meeting moving toward a positive conclusion.
- Evaluate your new member's capabilities. If you feel she is ready to participate, ask her which of the programs holds her greatest interest. Discourage naming a new member as an officer or a chairman, but instead suggest she be given the opportunity of working on a committee with an experienced chairman. Let her know you are willing to mentor her and assist by answering her questions. Remember to praise her efforts.
- Past presidents should advise when asked, but preferably not serve as a chairman. Chairmanships should be held by other members so they may learn the programs and become good unit leaders who may develop an interest in moving into district, county or department positions.
- As a past president, you may wish to promote the nomination of a Unit Member of the Year. You may take the lead in recommending servicewomen to submit for an award. Develop a fundraising activity for donations to the nursing scholarship program.
- Continue to support through your ongoing leadership!

2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Public Relations

Public Relations promotes who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Committee Contact Information

publicrelations@ALAforVeterans.org

What can you do?

1. Promote a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary by supporting and promoting the efforts of Goal 5 of the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan (*With The American Legion, Build Brand Loyalty*) and the use of the variety of public relations materials and resources available online.

Ideas:

Member

- Give an *Auxiliary* magazine gift subscription to your local library and doctors' offices. See the subscription form at the end of this program Plan.
- Distribute ALA brochures and posters in the community at libraries, job fairs, medical facilities, and post homes. Print brochures online from the PR/Marketing Resources section at www.ALAforVeterans.org, or order them from your department secretary.
- Wear your officially branded ALA apparel and "Honor Their Service" button when out and about. Button order forms are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Be prepared to answer when asked who the Auxiliary is, what we do in your community, and why we matter.

Unit

- Develop a list of local media contacts for your unit to use. Step-by-step instructions are included in the *ALA Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, available in PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Build relationships with your local media and political figures to educate them on who we are, what we do, and why we matter.
- Write a letter to the editor and/or news release for patriotic holidays and events. Templates can be found in PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Familiarize yourself with and utilize the *ALA Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, *ALA Branding Guide*, and other tools available in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Department

- Compile a list of media contacts for distributing department news. Step-by-step instructions are available in the *ALA Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, available in PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- Be familiar with Auxiliary public service announcements (PSAs), brochures, and other ALA publications. Educate units on materials available and how to obtain them. View the compilation of resources in the *ALA Marketing Resource Guide*, available in the PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Monitor news coverage to share with department and national leadership, if needed.

2. Build brand loyalty of the American Legion Auxiliary through the utilization and promotion of websites, social media, and other electronic communications.

Ideas:

Member

- Promote Auxiliary events on your personal social media accounts.
- Subscribe to *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* via www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Link to www.ALAforVeterans.org in your personal email signature.

Unit

- Create or improve and actively maintain a unit website that adheres to brand standards (for tips, see *ALA Branding Guide*, available in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Create and maintain an active social media presence for your unit on one or more platforms that you are comfortable with (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

Department

- Create or improve and actively maintain a department website that adheres to brand standards. Be familiar with “Department Website Best Practices,” which can be found in the *ALA Branding Guide* located in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Promote American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion collaborations through links to www.ALAforVeterans.org and www.legion.org.
- Create and maintain an active social media presence for the department on one or more platforms that you are comfortable with (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).
- Encourage members to sign up for *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* via www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Forward electronic publications such as *ALA eNews* and *In the Know eBulletin* to your unit PR chairmen.

Public Relations Reporting*

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Public Relations chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Public Relations chairman, plus copy the national Public Relations chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Public Relations chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Public Relations

chairman, plus copy the national Public Relations chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

**For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Public Relations Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.*

As part of your Narrative Report, please include the answers to the following questions:

- How has your department website and/or social media page(s) inspired units to develop social media at the local level?
- Have units in your department been mentioned in local media promotion of mission-related activities? What type of promotions have they received?
- Were PSAs distributed in your department and what type of response did you receive?
- How does your department keep an active and updated media contact list? How has this list impacted units?
- Have there been specific social media events coordinated by either a unit or department that broadly spread the ALA brand?
- What specific activities have you done to help build brand loyalty?

Public Relations Awards

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Public Relations committee contact information may be found on the Public Relations committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

A. Member Award: ALA Brand Ambassador

- Award: Lapel Pin
- Presented to: One member in each department who achieves excellence in promotion of the American Legion Auxiliary with her use of social media, her appearance in public wearing ALA-branded apparel, and other activities that showcase the Auxiliary's unique branding through visual identity
- Materials and guidelines:
 - Document with action photographs, screen shots, and other evidence of brand promotion activities
 - Activity must occur between May 1 prior to the start of the current admin year and May 1 before the end of the current admin year

- B. Unit Award: New Website or Social Media Account Launch**
- Award: Personalized mouse pad and congrats letter
 - Presented to: All units developing a properly branded website or social media account during the current ALA administrative year
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Web address/URL, webmaster/administrator name and contact info, or name and contact info for ALA coordinator if webmaster/administrator is a third party vendor
 - Site/Account must have been created after September 1 of the current ALA admin year
 - Website/Facebook page must conform to “Website and Social Media Guidelines” in the *ALA Branding Guide*
- C. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program**
- Award: Citation Plaque
 - Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Include three different media placements/coverage highlighting different ALA programs, featured in three different months (September 1 – May 1 of the current ALA administrative year)
 - Acceptable media publications must support the Auxiliary’s mission and goals
- D. Department Award: Best Department Public Relations Program**
- Award: Citation
 - Presented to: One department in each division (5)
 - Materials and guidelines:
 - Articles, newsletters, pictures of displays, ALA events, speeches, website address, social media activity, etc.
 - Narrative not to exceed 500 words

How To Sheets

- How To Write a News Release
- How to Utilize Facebook and Twitter to Promote Auxiliary Events and Activities
- How to Set up a Department or Unit Website

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. *American Legion Auxiliary Branding Guide*, available under PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only area at www.ALAforVeterans.org
2. “Photography Guidelines,” see *ALA Branding Guide* pages 20 and 21, available at www.ALAforVeterans.org
3. *ALA Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit: www.ALAforVeterans.org
4. *ALA Style Guide*: Available by emailing publicrelations@ALAforVeterans.org; and the *AP Stylebook*: www.apstylebook.com/
5. www.ALAforVeterans.org: For submissions to national ALA media; templates for posters, flyers, news releases, and others; marketing materials; and much more

6. The national Public Relations Committee Facebook group, search “ALA Public Relations”
7. Your national Public Relations committee members (see Public Relations program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)



HOW TO WRITE A NEWS RELEASE

Committee:

Public Relations

Contact information for questions:

publicrelations@ALAforVeterans.org

How to write a news release:

- Gather correct and pertinent information.
- Prepare a news release with the **Who** (who is invited and who is the sponsor), **What** (what is the ALA information/event/program), **When** (day, date, time), **Where** (location, street address, city), **Why** (provides a reason the event is being held) and **How** (other special information a member or the general public would need to know in order to participate in this event). Templates are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.



- The inverted pyramid (shown above) is a common method for writing news articles and releases. It can be thought of as a simple upside-down triangle. The widest part at the top represents the most important information, and it tapers down in order of diminishing importance. **Who, What, When, Where, Why** and **How** should all be included in the opening paragraph or two. This format is valued because readers can leave the story at any point and understand it, even if they don't have all of the details. By placing less important information at the end of the story, it can be removed so the article can fit a fixed size, or it can be “cut from the bottom.”
- Include contact information: a name, phone number and email address.
- Provide deadline information if applicable.
- Distribute public relations information via resources available in your community—to newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, blogs; post to a website; display advertising posters on community boards, in city hall, grocery stores, VA hospitals; share information with other persons who may help your unit reach the target audience such as a veteran service officer, Family Readiness Group or National Guard armory personnel.
- With today’s technology, it is imperative that your information be shared electronically. Utilize Auxiliary websites, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, and YouTube.
- Online public relations resources are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.



HOW TO UTILIZE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER TO PROMOTE AUXILIARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Committee:

Public Relations

Contact information for questions:

publicrelations@ALAforVeterans.org

Facebook

Set up a personal Facebook account (if you do not have an account already)

1. Go to **www.facebook.com**.
2. Enter your **name**.
3. Enter your **email** where indicated.
4. Create a **password**.
5. Enter your **birthdate** and **gender**.
6. Click on the **sign up** button.
7. You are now on your Facebook **home** page.
8. Click on **your name** in upper right hand corner. This is where you update your **profile**.
9. Click on **find friends** in upper right hand corner. You can import contacts from your email address book, or request to be **friends** individually in the **search** bar by name or email address.

Twitter

Set up a Twitter account (if you do not have an account already)

1. Go to **www.twitter.com**.
2. Enter your **full name**, **email** and a **password**.
3. Click **sign up for Twitter**.
4. On the next screen, you will **choose your username** and agree to the terms of service.
5. Click **create my account**.
6. Go through the welcome and follow five accounts (such as @ALAforVeterans and @AmericanLegion) and click **next**. Then select five well-known people or agencies (consider categories like government and news) and click **next**.
7. You are then given the option to see if your friends are already on Twitter by searching your email address book. If you do not want to do this, click **skip**.
8. You can choose to upload an image for your profile picture and write a brief bio about yourself. If you do not want to do this, click **skip**.

Smartphones with Facebook and Twitter

If you own a smartphone, be sure to download both the Facebook and Twitter apps to post and tweet about the American Legion Auxiliary while you're on the go! Facebook and Twitter do not charge for these services; check with your phone provider for data charges.



Got Something to Share?

Twitter

Facebook

How-To

Using your smartphone or computer, send tweets about the accomplishments of your unit's service in the community. Tweets can also include photos (see "Photo Tips" at right). You can even link to a news article or website.

Sample Tweets: (140 characters or less)

- #ALA members teaching 8th graders meaning behind 13 folds of #flag
- 13 #ALA volunteers at @DeptVetAffairs VAMC visiting hospitalized #veterans and passing out socks
- #ALA Unit 98 distributed 750 #poppies today, raising money to assist & support #veterans and their families
- #ALA #LegionRiders @AmericanLegion & SAL members building wheelchair ramp for Iraq #veteran
- #ALA Unit 1 & friends packing care packages & writing thank-you notes for #servicemembers #NationalDayService #2015MLKDay

Other suggested hashtags: #veterans, #volunteer, #military, #nationsheroes, #ALA, #AmericanLegionAuxiliary

Using your smartphone or computer, upload ALA program events and action photos of your unit or department members.

Posts Might Include:

- Meeting date and times.
- Reminders of report deadlines.
- Photos and summaries of ALA members filling backpacks for military children.
- Volunteers serving food to veterans.
- Members in Auxiliary attire distributing poppies.
- Legion Family members painting the exterior of a veteran's house.
- Junior members participating in mission-focused projects.
- Combined functions with the entire American Legion Family.
- How and where to apply for AEF grants in times of need.

Photo Tips:

- Take action shots, not just portrait style.
- Aim for tight, close-up photos.
- Avoid "back-of-head" shots.
- Remember to get vertical photos as well.
- Collect photo release statements when necessary.
- Pay attention to what else appears in the photo (i.e., beer signs, etc.).

You Will Need

A computer, smartphone, or tablet with the ability to download an application.

A smartphone with a built-in camera and data plan, or a computer and digital camera.

Share your posts and photos with @ALAforVeterans on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram! Your photos may appear in ALA media.



HOW TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT OR UNIT WEBSITE

Committee:

Public Relations

Contact Information for Questions:

publicrelations@ALAforVeterans.org

1. Determine the purpose of the site – to attract new members, communicate with current ones, or both.
2. Decide on a domain name (YourSiteName.org) and hosting (service that connects your site to the Internet). You will probably have to pay a nominal fee for the domain name. You may be able to find a host for free.
3. Using the *ALA Branding Guide* (available at www.ALAforVeterans.org), design your website with a professional appearance.
4. Include general information about the American Legion Auxiliary.
5. Use the content suggestions located in the *ALA Branding Guide*.
6. Include at least one link to www.ALAforVeterans.org on your website.
7. When including information on your website from www.ALAforVeterans.org, include links to the information rather than posting it directly to your site. If information changes at the national level, the link will ensure your website visitors receive the latest information.
8. Update your website regularly. People visiting your website will keep checking it if the content is current and fresh.
9. Avoid including information on your website that contains internal language and acronyms that may confuse users. Examples include NEC, PNP, PDP.
10. Care should be exercised when linking to other websites. Information included on websites linked to external sites should be supportive of the Auxiliary's mission, message and values. Suggested links include www.ALAforVeterans.org, www.legion.org, and your department American Legion Auxiliary website.
11. Check your website regularly to ensure the links are working properly. Broken links will frustrate users, and they may stop checking your site.
12. Be sure to include contact information for your department or unit in an easy-to-find location on your site. Also include contact information for the webmaster.

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SECTION 2.3 ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

- NATIONAL FINANCE

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2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Finance

The National Finance Committee is charged with oversight of the general financial policy of the organization, subject to ratification of the National Executive Committee; and, preparation of the annual budget and supervision of the expenditures under the budget.

Committee Contact Information

finance@ALAforVeterans.org

What you should know:

Planning for our future

The Core Values of the Auxiliary and our Mission do not change; they endure. For the organization itself to endure, everything we do needs to be directed towards the five goals of the ALA's Centennial Strategic Plan: 5) With The American Legion, build brand loyalty; 4) Strengthen departments & units; 3) Develop leadership at all levels; 2) Create a culture of goodwill; and succeeding with these four goals we can: 1) Enhance membership strength.

These five goals, adopted by the National Executive Committee, depend on each other, and must all be done at all levels, so that we can become a thriving organization.

At times, Department Finance Committees often focus only on the current year budgeting process and neglect looking three to five years ahead. Each department is strongly advised to replicate this process of defining its own set of goals through a strategic plan. The department needs to measure where it is now and set goals, or benchmarks, for expenses and to broaden the sources of potential income streams. Therefore, at each of your finance meetings, the strategic plan and progress toward those annual and multi-year goals should be reviewed. Remember: This is normally a multi-year process, so members need to understand and be able to measure progress of the organization through reports of the Finance Committee.

Expense

At a minimum, the Key Financial Indicators should include the benchmarks expected by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and nonprofit watchdog organizations. There are three key expense benchmarks:

1. Program Services (expenditures related to the organization's primary mission and purpose): The target should be 65-75 percent.
2. Management and General Administrative (expenditures spent on managing the operations of the organization): The target should be 5-10 percent.
3. Fundraising (expenditures spent on raising additional funds for the organization's purpose and mission expenses – i.e., grants, planned giving, endowments, direct mail campaigns, etc.): The target should be 10-15 percent.

Potential donors expect that the majority of the funds collected by a nonprofit organization be designated to supporting the mission of the organization through its programs.

Revenue

On the revenue side, setting targets is more difficult because there are no specific industry benchmarks other than to have a variety of revenue streams that reduce your dependence on any one source. Since the American Legion Auxiliary is a membership organization, we rely on member dues to cover our expenses. By bringing in other resources that support the ALA mission either by donations to the ALA (ALA National Scholarship Fund and/or the Auxiliary Emergency Fund), donations to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation (ALA Mission Endowment Fund and/or ALA Foundation Veteran Projects Fund), corporate sponsorships, special events, or bequests; we lower the dependence on dues and/or reserves alone to meet our obligations.

Reserves

The ability to build up financial reserves is vital for the future to ensure proper resources are available to maintain operations of the organization if necessary. The recommended amount of reserves/savings is 2.5 times the annual budget of the organization. So for example, an organization with a \$100,000 budget would try to maintain \$250,000 in reserves for emergencies and have a plan to replenish when withdrawals are made.

Financial Reporting

The Finance Committee needs to share with members who are the stakeholders of the organization and have a legal right to know how the organization is being managed and what results are being obtained. The Finance Committee makes recommendations to the governing body, and that body is responsible for the actual policy decisions. The Department Executive Committee (DEC) should receive clear, timely, and accurate information regarding the financial status of the organization at each of their meetings and at additional times as needed.

In partnership with NHQ staff and management, the committee ensures that all tax reporting is completed within appropriate time frames for federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Since 2008, the IRS began requiring small exempt organizations, many of which previously were not required to file tax returns, to submit an annual electronic report, known as a Form 990-N. **This has been a mandate for every ALA department and unit.** The Form 990-N, titled the *Electronic Notice for Tax-Exempt Organizations Not Required to File Form 990 or 990-EZ* (and also known as the e-Postcard) is required of charities whose annual gross receipts are \$50,000 or less.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 also requires the IRS to ***revoke the tax-exempt status of any organization that fails to meet its annual filing requirement for three consecutive years.*** This requirement applies also to small tax-exempt organizations that file the e-Postcard.

Audits

The Finance Committee is responsible for hiring a professional external auditing firm to conduct the annual audit **unless** an Audit Committee exists. If an Audit Committee exists, as it does at the National organization, it is responsible for hiring a professional external auditing firm to conduct the annual audit. This responsibility transfers to the Audit Committee once this committee establishment is adopted. This cannot be a staff or management function because:

1. Independent External Auditor must provide the audited financials to the governing body and report on staff/management activities.
2. Management needs to report on the auditor's activities.

While departments have a Finance Committee in place, it is important to remember that an Audit Committee has different responsibilities. While the Finance Committee reviews investment policies and monitors the funds of the organization on a regular basis, the Audit Committee of an organization provides independent oversight ensuring that the organization has appropriate governance policies and internal and financial reporting controls in place that mitigate the organization's exposure to financial reporting risks and other corporate-level risks.

In Summary

Please remember, the national Finance committee is here to assist departments. If you have questions, please feel free to contact one of the national Finance committee members or the ALA national controller.

How To Sheets

- Unit Donation Forms
- How to Financially Support Our Mission-Based Programs
- How to Set Goals Through Annual Budgeting
- How to Complete The 990 Filing Process

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. Association of Fundraising Professionals: www.afpnet.org
2. Fundraising Success (Periodical): www.fundraisingsuccessmag.com
3. Grassroots Fundraising Journal (Magazine): www.grassrootsfundraising.org
4. Donor Development Databases: www.wealthengine.com
5. Board Source: www.boardsource.org
6. The Impact Foundry: www.impactfoundry.org
7. Internal Revenue Service: www.irs.gov
8. American Legion Auxiliary: www.ALForVeterans.org
9. American Legion Auxiliary Foundation: www.ALAFoundation.org
10. Your National Finance Committee members (see Finance program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)



American Legion Auxiliary

DONATION FORM

Please complete the following information so that we may send you a tax receipt.

Amount of Gift:

- \$100.00
- \$75.00
- \$50.00
- Other: \$ _____

Payment Type:

- Check # _____
- Credit Card (VISA or MasterCard)

- Expiration _____ / _____ CVV# _____

Select One Fund for Your Destination:

- Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund
- Auxiliary Greatest Need
- Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship Fund
- Auxiliary Scholarship Fund with Greatest Need

Name _____ (First) _____ (M.I.) _____ (Last)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Auxiliary Membership ID # (if known) _____ Gift in Honor/Memory (optional) _____
/ /

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make check payable to **American Legion Auxiliary, National**. For credit cards, please provide billing address.
Mail to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, Attention: Development Division, 8945 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46260. Learn more about your donation options by visiting www.ALforVeterans.org.



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION

DONATION FORM

Please complete the following information so that we may send you a tax receipt.

Amount of Gift:

- \$100.00
- \$75.00
- \$50.00
- Other: \$ _____

Payment Type:

- Check # _____
- Credit Card (VISA or MasterCard)

- Expiration _____ / _____ CVV# _____

Select One Fund for Your Destination:

- Veteran/Military Family Projects and Auxiliary Plan of Action Mission Outreach Projects
- National/Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival(s)
- Auxiliary Mission Endowment Fund
- ALA Foundation Greatest Need

Name _____ (First) _____ (M.I.) _____ (Last)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Auxiliary Membership ID # (if known) _____ Gift in Honor/Memory (optional) _____
/ /

Signature _____ Date _____

Please make check payable to **American Legion Auxiliary Foundation**. For credit cards, please provide billing address.
Mail to American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, Attention: Development Division,
8945 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46260.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity that supports the American Legion Auxiliary. All gifts to the foundation are tax-deductible as allowed by the United States Tax Code and U.S. Internal Revenue Service.
Learn more about your donation options by visiting www.ALforVeterans.org.



HOW TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT ALA MISSION-BASED PROGRAMS

Committee:

National Finance

Contact Information for Questions:

Finance@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Finance Committee chairman

Objective:

Provide support for the mission-based programs and activities of our national organization.

How to donate to the American Legion Auxiliary National organization and to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation:

Once your annual unit budget has been approved, it is time to start supporting the mission-based programs and activities your unit has budgeted by completing the donation form and submitting donations directly to National Headquarters or via your department. Please make this form available to individual unit members, and explain the importance of donating to the national mission funds.

National Funds Supporting the ALA Mission:

Donations can be made to support the American Legion Auxiliary as follows:

A. ALA National Scholarship Fund

1. **Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship Fund:** Supports the children of our nation's heroes — our veterans — through endowed gifts. These scholarships are awarded to 15 students annually who excel in academics and volunteer in their communities.
2. **Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund:** Supports three separate scholarship opportunities. One area of opportunity is scholarships for five honorary American Legion Auxiliary national division Junior vice presidents; one area of opportunity is scholarships for participants in the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation program; and one area of opportunity is for Non-Traditional Student Scholarships supporting people who are part of the Legion Family pursuing a college degree later in life or allowing them to pick up where they left off when their studies were interrupted.

B. Auxiliary Emergency Fund: When a sudden financial crisis befalls an eligible Auxiliary member, the AEF may be able to provide temporary emergency assistance when no other source of help is available.

C. American Legion Auxiliary Foundation: As a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation, the ALA Foundation provides ways for individuals and corporations to support the Auxiliary's charitable and educational outreach programs through endowed gifts, grants, and sponsorships that require donations go to a 501(c)(3). The ALA Foundation secures our legacy of service for future generations of veterans, military, and their families. The ALA Foundation supports the mission of the ALA and receives donations for:



1. **ALA Mission Endowment Fund** – a long-term fund where earnings from the endowment’s principal are used to support the American Legion Auxiliary for as long as the organization exists.

2. **ALA Foundation Veteran Projects Fund** – a fund where donations can be received and then granted to benefit American Legion Auxiliary national programs, districts/counties, departments, and units through:
 - Small grants being made to help districts/counties, departments, and units to support emergent projects that support veterans. Districts/counties, departments, and units must demonstrate that they will be funding part of the project for which a small grant is sought.
 - Supporting Veterans Creative Arts Festivals that showcase the artistic achievements of veterans receiving services through the VA’s healthcare system. The American Legion Auxiliary is the national co-presenter of the national event. ALA Foundation mini grants support local Creative Arts Festivals.



HOW TO SET GOALS THROUGH ANNUAL BUDGETING

Committee:

National Finance

Contact Information for Questions:

Finance@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Finance Committee chairman

Objective:

Provide for financial stability by setting goals through the annual budget process.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Create a three-member Finance Committee for your unit.
 - Conduct a budget planning meeting of the Finance Committee prior to the start of your fiscal year; make sure to invite unit officers at which time the agenda should include, but not limited to the following:
 - Review your current financials in comparison to the IRS and nonprofit watchdog organizations' benchmarks outlined in the Programs Action Plan.
 - Review your progress status of your long-range goals (e.g., fundraising for a new building).
 - Review your annual ALA obligations (Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, poppy promotion, ALA Girls State, etc.).
 - Review your annual operating expenses (e.g., rent, heat, bank fees, and conference registrations, etc.).
 - Review your membership numbers and the related dues income.
 - Review other sources of revenue (donations, events, bequests, etc.).
 - On a 12-month calendar, plot out when you anticipate your revenue and expenditures will occur.
 - Compare your total estimated revenue vs. your total estimated expenses.
 - Determine which areas need further consideration to accomplish your long-range goals and meet the IRS and nonprofit watchdog organizations' expense benchmarks:
 - Program Services (expenditures related to the organization's primary mission and purpose): The target should be 65-75 percent.
 - Management and General Administrative (expenditures spent on managing the operations of the organization): The target should be 5-10 percent.
 - Fundraising (expenditures spent on raising additional funds for the organization's purpose and mission expenses — e.g., grants, planned giving, endowments, direct mail campaigns, etc.): The target should be 10-15 percent.
 - Try to create a positive bottom line. Remember: Budgets are just a guide.
 - Have the Finance Committee vote to approve the budget and forward onto unit membership for adoption.
 - Have unit membership vote on the adoption of the annual budget.
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HOW TO COMPLETE THE 990 FILING PROCESS

Committee:

National Finance

Contact Information for Questions:

Finance@ALAforVeterans.org or your department Finance Committee chairman

Objective:

Provide for compliance with IRS regulations to maintain nonprofit tax-exempt status annually.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Create a three-member Finance Committee for your unit.
- Create a three-member Audit Committee for your unit.
- Obtain the Form 990, Form 990-EZ or Form 990-N from the IRS website at www.irs.gov.
- Have your unit treasurer attempt to complete as many forms as possible.
- Have the Finance Committee work with unit officers and an outside accountant to finalize the tax form.
- If you have an outside auditing firm, get its approval of the tax form.
- If you have an Audit Committee, have the Audit Committee review, approve, and forward the completed tax form onto unit membership. If you do not have an Audit Committee, have the Finance Committee review, approve, and forward the completed tax form onto unit membership.
- Have unit membership vote on the adoption of the Form 990, Form 990-EZ, or Form 990-N.
- Submit the Form 990, Form 990-EZ, or Form 990-N prior to the annual deadline, which is based on the unit's fiscal year, not calendar year.