



Pod—Family Support

- Americanism
- Education
- Community Service
- National Chaplain

Community Service

2011-2012 American Legion Auxiliary Plan of Action

Purpose: Mobilize The American Legion Family, the veteran and military community, and the general population of the community to provide service directed to veterans, active duty service members, and their families.

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For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan, refer to the *How To* component at the end of this section.

Community Service

National-level Objectives

1. **Objective:** Develop, implement and monitor community service activities that aid veterans, active-duty servicemembers and their families while positioning the American Legion Auxiliary as a one-stop-shop organization to assist them in meeting their needs.

Action Steps

- a. Activity suggestions to aid and/or assist veterans, active-duty servicemembers and their families: rake/mow their lawn; rebuild the back porch; paint and clean their homes; prepare and deliver meals to their home; invite them to your post home for a Family Day of fun activities; adopt a deployed servicemember's family in the community and encourage other service organizations to do the same; help a veteran's family relocate; adopt an elderly veteran and/or family in the community or nursing home or veterans home; serve a meal at a veterans homeless shelter; organize a community-wide Day of Service to aid and assist veterans' and active-duty servicemembers' families. Invite the community to join in your activities. The post home can serve as headquarters for the community service activity. Serve hot dogs, etc., to all volunteers.

Auxiliary-recognized national days of service for 2011-2012:

9/11 National Day of Service & Remembrance/Patriot Day – 10th Anniversary (September 11, 2012)

Gold Star Mother's Day (September 25, 2011)

Make a Difference Day (October 22, 2011)

National Family Volunteer Day (November 19, 2011)

Veterans Day (November 11, 2011)

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day (December 7, 2011)

Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service (January 16, 2012)

Random Acts of Kindness Week (February 13-19, 2012)

National and Global Youth Service Week (April 15-21, 2012)

National Volunteer Week (April 15-21, 2012)

National AmeriCorps Week (May 2012)

Flag Day (June 14, 2012)

Independence Day (July 4, 2012)

Any other day where you can gather a group of volunteers

2. **Objective:** Develop, implement, and monitor community service activities that promote economic security for veterans, active-duty servicemembers, their families, and the homeless veteran while encouraging the public to assist in this endeavor.

Action Steps

- a. Veteran Homelessness Prevention and Response—Plan community service activities to aid veterans, active duty service members, and their families who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. Activities might include regular meal preparation for a homeless veteran program; sponsor or organize an educational or social event for a homeless veteran program; collect new or gently used clothes for homeless veterans; assemble hygiene and comfort kits for homeless veterans; organize a standdown; collect or purchase furnishings or household items for recently re-housed veterans; establish and administer a military and veteran assistance fund. Offer life skills education, spouse career

For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan, refer to the *Mission-Based How To* component at the end of this section.

Community Service

advancement, personal financial management, relocation assistance and tax filing services.

- b. Job Fairs—Sponsor or organize a job fair to connect veterans and their families to employment opportunities. Collaborate job fair efforts with The American Legion department or unit. Help is available through TAL National Economic Commission.
- c. Department or Unit Innovative Activity—Plan a community service activity of your choosing, taking into account the criteria that follows: (1) The activity is unique and/or meets the need of low-income or homeless veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and/or their family members in your geographic area that would otherwise go unmet. (2) The activity will aid/help low-income or homeless veterans, active-duty servicemembers, and/or their family members.

Community Service Awards

Department Award

A citation will be presented to the Department Community Service Chairman in each Division with the most outstanding overall promotion of the Community Service Program during the 2011-2012 administrative year. Each entry must include at least two of the designated areas of special emphasis. Entry must be in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words and include a copy of the annual report form. Photos of program and projects are encouraged. Entry must be postmarked by June 1, 2012, and sent to your Divisional Community Service Chairman.

Unit Award

A citation will be presented to a Unit in each Division with the most outstanding overall promotion of the Community Service Program during the 2011-2012 administrative year. Each entry must include at least two of the designated areas of special emphasis. Entry must be in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. Photos of program and projects are encouraged. The Unit name and address, name of the Department and a completed copy of the annual report form must be included. Entry must be postmarked by May 1, 2012, and sent to the Department Community Service Chairman. Each Department Chairman will select a winning entry and will submit that entry to the Divisional Community Service Chairman and must be postmarked by June 1, 2012.

Operation Impact Award

A citation will be presented to a Unit in each Division with the most outstanding promotion of a monthly Community Service Program. A minimum of 10 months must be covered. The projects must follow the Plan of Action and be mission-related. Each entry must include a monthly breakdown of program, topic of each program, how many attended program and results from that program. Photos are encouraged of each event. Each entry must be in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. The Unit name, Department and address, Unit Chairman's name and contact phone number must be included on cover page. Cover page does not count in the total word count. Each entry must be postmarked by June 1, 2012, and sent to National Chairman Martha Corriher at 950 Daugherty Road, China Grove, NC 28023.

Senior Volunteer of the Year Award

A senior member from each Division will be honored for outstanding service in at least one activity emphasized in the Plan of Action. To be eligible for the award, volunteer service must be provided during the 2011-2012 administrative year. The application must be fully completed with required certification and a narrative of 300-500 words completed by the applicant. Photos are encouraged. Senior entry must be postmarked by May 1, 2012, and sent to the Department Community Service Chairman. Each Department Chairman will select a

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Community Service

winning entry and will submit the entry to the Divisional Community Service Chairman postmarked by June 1, 2012.

Junior Volunteer of the Year Award

A Junior member from each Division will be honored for outstanding community service in at least one activity emphasized in the Plan of Action. To be eligible for the award, the volunteer service must be provided during the 2011-2012 administrative year. The application must be fully completed with required certification, and a narrative of 300-500 words must be completed by the applicant. Photos are encouraged. Junior entry must be postmarked by May 1, 2012, and sent to the Department Community Service Chairman. Each Department Chairman will select a winning entry and will submit the entry to the Divisional Community Service Chairman, postmarked by June 1, 2012.

Resources

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org
 2. www.mlkday.org
 3. www.legion.org (search economic div)
 4. www.serve.gov
 5. www.whitehouse.gov (keywords: military families)
- See program page on www.ALAforVeterans.org for additional resources.

For examples on how to implement each objective in this Plan, refer to the *Mission-Based How To* component at the end of this section.



**American Legion Auxiliary
Department Community Service
2012 Senior Volunteer of the Year Application**

Volunteer Name:	
Unit Name and Number:	
Address of Volunteer:	
ALA Department:	
Project (s) must include one or more of the activities emphasized in the Community Service Plan of Action:	
Number of Volunteer Hours:	
Number of People Assisted:	
Total Number of Volunteers Participating:	
Total Hours:	
Certification by Department President:	
Date:	

Complete this form and attach a narrative of 300-500 words typed or handwritten by the volunteer explaining the project (s) and her involvement.	Mail to: Your Divisional Chairman. Contact communityservice@ALAforVeterans.org for more information.
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Form must be postmarked by June 1, 2012



**American Legion Auxiliary
Department Community Service
2012 Junior Volunteer of the Year Application**

Volunteer Name:	
Unit Name and Number:	
Address of Volunteer:	
ALA Department:	
Project (s) must include one or more of the activities emphasized in the Community Service Plan of Action:	
Number of Volunteer Hours:	
Number of People Assisted:	
Total Number of Volunteers Participating:	
Total Hours:	
Certification by Department President:	
Date:	

Complete this form and attach a narrative of 300-500 words typed or handwritten by the volunteer explaining the project (s) and her involvement.	Mail to: Your Divisional Chairman. Contact communityservice@ALAforVeterans.org for more information.
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Form must be postmarked by June 1, 2012



How to Organize a Job Fair for Veterans (supports Objective #2 – Community Service)

Background Information:

Unemployment among OEF/OIF veterans has more than doubled since 2008. In fact, unemployment among OEF/OIF veterans has risen to 11.3 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics), significantly higher than the overall unemployment rate of 9.7 percent^a.

A job fair brings companies and potential employees together. Servicemembers and veterans can have face-to-face mini-interviews and disseminate copies of their resumes. Having a minute or two to speak with a representative may open the door to an off-site job interview.

Who to Serve:

Before you begin, your Auxiliary unit will need to talk about who you want to attend. Will your unit invite only a National Guard or Reserve unit(s) just returned from deployment, or open up the job fair to all veterans in the community? Please remind servicemembers and veterans planning to attend to bring multiple copies of their resumé to hand to the companies, to dress for success, and if possible bring resumé on a removable USB drive (memory stick/thumb drive) or CD.

Think about the employers you plan to have attend. Consider talking with the Veterans Administration Certifying Officer from a local college or university (perhaps someone from the school would be willing to counsel veterans about the possibility of returning to school with G.I. Bill benefits). Other possibilities include speaking with someone who might work with veterans at the Unemployment Office, as well as inviting the residents of a homeless veterans shelter. If opening the job fair to more than a military unit or those currently serving, it might be beneficial to ask for the veteran's DD-214 or military ID prior to entering the fair to ensure that they are a veteran (such as at a registration table).

The event may be open to all veterans and promoted by writing a news release and/or writing a letter to the editor of local newspapers.

Steps to Plan a Job Fair:

1. Begin by contacting employers to see who is interested in participating. A prepared good timeframe is to contact companies three months in advance of the job fair date. Invite a wide range of companies. Job fairs range in size from 10-100 companies. See *Ideas of Companies to Invite* (next section) for ideas.
2. Decide on your target unemployed population. Those looking for employment will need to bring multiple copies of their resumé. See *Who to Serve* (previous section) for information.
3. Next, determine where the job fair will take place. If your post home will accommodate a large number of people and tables, try to have it there. If not, perhaps a neighboring post in your area can accommodate your needs. The room will need to be large enough for each company to have a table or booth while providing guests enough walking room. Ideally, there should be a partition between each table or booth. It is important to plan for at least 10 percent more people to arrive than planned. Make sure to have enough parking for volunteers (members), the veterans, and the companies. Consider convenience of those attending (i.e., on a bus line). Other venues could include a community center, library or high school gymnasium. Ask about potential costs associated with certain venues. Remember to arrive at the venue early in order to do any cleaning or additional setup, and require companies and volunteers to arrive an hour before the official start time.
4. Your unit should aim to have the job fair in the afternoon. Depending on the size of the job fair, plan between two and four hours in length (i.e., 10am-2pm). Consider hosting your job fair when servicemembers return from deployment or on a national day of service such as Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
5. Arrange for adequate numbers of tables and chairs at the event. Ideally, every company would have their own table and at least two chairs. A registration table might be needed. Create a

^a <http://republicans.veterans.house.gov/news/PRArticle.aspx?NewsID=1832>

handout to provide attendees with a map of booths, with tables and companies numbered and a key (e.g., American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters—Table 19).

6. If the unit or post has a website, promote the job fair and companies that will be attending on the website. This promotion gives servicemembers and veterans attending the opportunity to tailor their resumés to specific jobs and research different companies. You may also consider making flyers and passing them out to local homeless shelters, or posting them in community centers.
7. Designate a team to greet and help the companies, servicemembers and veterans at the job fair. The team should have nametags and wear Auxiliary attire, if available.
8. Consider having a table set up with a few computers connected to the Internet, space permitted, for helping veterans with little or no Web access at your fair. Assign a Web-savvy Auxiliary member to help veterans at this station. If your job fair is open to current Reservists and National Guardsmen, have them use the link to the free job database from Armed Forces Employer Partnership (<http://www.employerpartnership.org/>). Veterans of OEF/OIF also can use Hire Heroes USA (www.hireheroesusa.org). Avue (www.avuecentral.com) is a government job agency that lists jobs by state. To apply for many of these jobs, servicemembers and veterans will need to have their resumé on disk or removable USB drive to upload their job history to these websites. If you do not have the resources for a computer station, make flyers with a list of online resources for job seekers who may be able to access the Internet at another location.
9. Make a satisfaction survey for attendees and companies to complete before they leave. By asking questions about what types of job fields should be present in the future, you will learn valuable information about companies to invite next time.
 - Ask for e-mail addresses from attendees in case you have another job fair.
 - Please remember not to treat your job fair as a membership recruitment event.
10. Within one week of the job fair, send thank-you letters to participating companies for supporting veterans.

Ideas of Companies to Invite^b:

- companies that have declared a willingness to hire veterans, such as Sears Holding Corporation, The Home Depot, Lowe's, Walmart, etc.
- banks/FDIC
- car dealers
- colleges and universities
- electric companies
- federal agencies such as Department of Labor, Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs
- fire departments
- government (local, state, and national, if applicable)
- law enforcement agencies (local police, sheriff's office, and highway patrol)
- newspapers
- phone companies (both landline and mobile)
- railroad companies
- shipping companies
- any local businesses that might be interested

Important Legislation to Be Aware Of:

1. On November 9, 2009, President Obama signed an executive order stating that the government, as well as the private sector, should work to help veterans struggling to find jobs. The federal government will lead by example to promote employment of veterans. To read the order in its entirety, visit www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/executive-order-veterans-employment-initiative.
2. The **Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA)** is a federal law that outlines the rights and responsibilities of National Guardsmen, Reservists, and all

^b This list does not constitute endorsement by the American Legion Auxiliary of these companies, or the information, products or services contained therein. The American Legion Auxiliary does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations.

civilian employers in the event the servicemember becomes activated to service for any length of time. The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) executes USERRA. ESGR works to provide free services to the employer while assisting the servicemember. Services provided by ESGR include helping an employer understand serving in the Armed Forces, mediating between employer and employee (servicemember), and issuing return-to-service letters. Visit www.esgr.org for more information.

3. **Troops to Teachers (TTT)**, which began in 1994, is now part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. TTT provides eligible veterans who would like to teach in schools serving low-income families with counseling and assistance for state certification and employment. Pending legislation will allow approximately 98 percent of schools to hire TTT participants. Visit www.proudtoserveagain.com for more information.



Pod: Family Support

Committees included: Americanism, Education, Community Service, and National Chaplain

Submitted by:

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The American Legion Auxiliary is a hands-on organization to serve veterans, their families, active-duty servicemembers, their families and homeless veterans with their needs, such as:

- meals
- babysitting
- being a sounding board for their concerns
- helping local assistance with needs they might have
- using media of all kinds to help explain their needs and how the public can help assist them

Proposed schedule of activity:

September:

- Gather up team and identify what each members' strengths and weaknesses are.
- Identify the military population in your area with the Family Readiness Group, Post or Base Commander, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Community Based Outreach Clinic or local Service Officer.
- Develop a relationship with the local media by making an appointment to meet with reporters, providing Auxiliary materials at the meeting, determining ways in which the media and local Auxiliary can collaborate, and determining what the media will use vs. what they will not. Be sure to check with the responsible adult in the family before contacting any media. Families may have reasons to protect their privacy, and we don't want to add to their stress during a difficult time.

October:

- Select the veteran's family you will be working with. The selection should be based upon the strengths of Unit members who are involved with the projects (e.g., time restraints, fundraising capabilities to provide financial assistance, and/or cooking ability).
- Don't forget to present a Blue Star Banner if active-duty servicemember.
- Meet with the selected family to identify yourselves and inquire as to their needs and let them know who we are and what we can do to help. Be sure to find out birthdays and anniversary in order to remember them on these days.
- Team meets to discuss one of the needs and their Plan of Action and how they are going to implement it.

November:

- Review progress and add/change needs as appropriate.
- Recognize the family at Veterans Day, and invite them to attend your meeting and ceremonies.
- Make sure family is taken care of on Thanksgiving Day by providing a meal or a food basket for the family. If your Unit is cooking a meal at the Post home, invite the family to attend.

continued



Pod: Family Support and Advocacy continued

December:

- Assist the family with Christmas gifts for each member, store coupons and food basket.
- Ask your local merchants if they will offer merchandise or products for needy families.
- Give the family memberships into the Post, Unit or Squadron.

January:

- Continue with immediate family needs as identified within your demographics, weather and location (e.g., provide shoveling assistance in cold climates or lawnmowing assistance in warmer areas).

February:

- Invite the family to the Post for the Legion birthday celebration honoring all past leadership.
- Offer to take them to a job interview, appointments, doctor appointments, etc.
- Offer to babysit the children and pay for a "Pamper Me Day."

April:

- Offer to provide Easter/Passover meal.
- Sponsor a community egg hunt at your Post and invite your adopted family to participate.

May:

- Invite family to help with poppy distribution during your Unit's Poppy Week.
- Invite your family to the Post for Memorial Day ceremony and celebrations. Offer to pick family up.
- Remember Mother's Day by sending a flower arrangement and card.
- If your Unit is visiting nursing homes or a nearby VAMC, invite the family to join your members.

June:

- Invite your adopted family to help in a flag disposal/retirement ceremony.
- Stay in communication with the family throughout the month to ascertain if they have any special needs.
- Remember to send a Father's Day card.

July:

- Invite the family to your Post and have a BBQ.
- Present an American flag to the family and install pole mount if necessary.
- Don't forget to present a Blue Star Banner if active-duty servicemember.

August:

- Meet with the family to see if you provided the necessary needs and your mission was accomplished.