



Pod—Membership Development

- Advisory
- American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
- Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- Membership
- Leadership
- Public Relations
- Long Range Strategic Planning

Leadership

2011-2012 American Legion Auxiliary Plan of Action

Purpose: To develop and prepare knowledgeable and capable leaders to carry on the growth and success of the Auxiliary by promoting activities and resources that educate, motivate and mentor members of all ages and at all levels of the organization.

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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.

Leadership

Programs and Activities

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

As leaders in the American Legion Auxiliary, we must continue to move forward for a stronger organization filled with potential future leaders. We must provide them with opportunities to use their special skills and energy. We must constantly be looking for those with the potential to become our leaders of tomorrow.

Our attention will be focused on senior members to reach out to the younger women in our communities. Show them what the Auxiliary can do to expand their confidence and leadership abilities.

- Teach the history of the Auxiliary to all members.
- Teach the programs of the Auxiliary and match members' interests with the programs.
- Teach the basics of protocol, parliamentary rules and meeting procedure.
- Establish a mentoring program, utilizing the senior members' knowledge and experiences with younger members.
- Encourage updating program activities so younger eligible women will want to join.
- Promote the Senior and Junior Leadership Courses on the national website.
- Promote the use of the Guide for Department Chairmen, which is available online, so that we may continue efforts to have uniform and consistent information for Department Chairmen to follow.
- Promote the use of the Unit Handbook, the publication that all members should have. It provides guidelines on how to open and close a meeting properly with a complete agenda, various ceremonies and an introduction to all Auxiliary programs. It also provides a question-and-answer section giving members insight into our organization.
- Promote the Unit Constitution & Bylaws as the second necessary tool for members. The document should be made available to all members so that they can become familiar with our organization and the guidelines for the Unit.

Mid-Year Report

Please provide a Mid-Year Report outlining your Department's accomplishments and/or activities of Units in your Department. Please provide this report to the National Chairman by January 15, 2012.

Leadership Awards

1. Most Outstanding Overall Department Leadership Program Award: An award will be presented to the Department Leadership Chairman with the best overall Leadership program. Entry must be in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words, must have 85 percent or greater completion of National Leadership Course by Unit Presidents, and must include a copy of the Consolidated Annual Report Form. E-mail preferably, or mail your pictures of your program to the National Chairman. Mailed pictures will not be returned. All entries must be postmarked by June 1, 2012, and sent to the National Chairman.

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

Leadership

2. Unit Leadership Training Recognition Certificates: A recognition certificate will be presented to individual Unit Leadership Chairman who best implements the mentoring program within her Unit and has 50 percent member participation and completion rate for the National Leadership Training Course. Submit information to the Leadership Vice Chairman postmarked by June 1, 2012.

Resources

1. Emblem Sales <http://emblem.legion.org>
2. Unit Handbook
3. National Constitution & Bylaws
4. Policies & Procedures
5. Robert's Rules of Order
6. Parliamentary Procedure
7. Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette

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



Committee:

Membership

Submitted by:

Trish Ward, National Membership Chairman

Contact Information for Questions:

Trish Ward

Objective:

#1 Engage to retain current members.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Develop and offer "do in a day" service projects. Make it easy and fun to find a project they can do in a day, half day, etc.
- Offer flexible opportunities for members to participate. Members don't need to attend meetings to contribute. Give them a task with clear expectations that suits their schedule, skills and abilities.
- Create and use personal renewal notices which list accomplishments of the past year and show member the value of her membership.
- Use the membership theme "Honor Their Service" in every program activity. Return focus of membership to our eligibility, encouraging an "everyone's all in" philosophy.
- Encourage all members to practice the Golden Rule and foster harmony and diversity. Empower members to stand up to negative attitudes.
- Make personal contact via all methods, both traditional and through newly expanding technology.
- Be aware of your audience and embrace their differences (age, race, etc.) as an opportunity to more effectively reach all eligible members and others who wish to volunteer.



Committee:

Membership

Submitted by:

Trish Ward, National Membership Chairman

Contact Information for Questions:

Trish Ward

Objective:

#2 Attract new members.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Appeal to fellow citizens utilizing core character concepts to exemplify the behavior of our organization. Encourage the use of civility, leadership and volunteerism as the basis for recruitment.
- Implement the "Honor Their Service" membership theme using visual elements of veterans from whom we gain eligibility to encourage dialogue from prospective members (display photos everywhere—around the Post home, your booth at the county fair, with your poppy display, at membership drives, at all community events).
- Make meeting location (Post home, etc.) a center for community activity to include voting locale, training or resources for individuals who wish to volunteer (whether eligible to join or not).
- Be versatile in the type of projects, but all should be mission-focused.
- Obtain the National Membership Promotional DVD and distribute to local organizations, television stations and other appropriate outlets. See www.ALAforVeterans.org for more information.
- Retrieve, review and actively implement tools available at www.ALAforVeterans.org to attract members.
- Take maximum advantage of programs that engage non-members (example: ALA Girls State).



Leadership Support Tools:

Engage to Retain

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How to Develop a Volunteer Project

- 1) Survey your community to identify its needs/resources - every community is different.
- 2) Survey unit members to identify their interests, skills, and availability.
- 3) Match the needs of the community with the membership survey and the Plan of Action.
- 4) Identify a few projects, activities, and events each year for which your unit will become known.
- 5) Form a volunteer committee and elect a leader who will serve as the Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator.
 - a. Responsibilities of a Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator:
 1. Be the visionary – include the organization’s values, priorities, and history in a vision that coincides with future goals of the organization.
 2. Lead the project development process described below.
 - b. Rotate Project Managers so that members in this position can always have a fresh approach.
- 6) Create a step-by-step plan for event planning, including assigning tasks and deadlines.
 - a. Set goals that are:
 1. Measurable – achieve tangible results.
 2. Achievable – set realistic expectations.
 3. Flexible – offer different options so that there are alternative plans.
 4. Demanding – make projects challenging but not unrealistic.
 5. Observable – will be able to identify whether or not objectives were achieved.
 - b. Make sure less popular responsibilities are rotated between members.
 - c. Is this a one-time event or something that can become a tradition?
 - d. Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities.
 - e. Evaluate the current volunteer projects.
 1. Process (day-to-day operations)
 2. Results (direct consequences or outputs of the program)
 3. Impact (the results of a program and how the Auxiliary has achieved its mission)
- 7) Advertise your volunteer opportunity at the post, unit, VA/veterans facilities, community message boards, schools, universities, places of worship, in the newspaper, on local news, etc.
 - a. Recruit volunteers as well as participants. Your event may make the first impression of the Auxiliary on new volunteers, so be prompt and enthusiastic about your events.
 - b. Plan and advertise for more volunteers than you think you will need (30% more).
 - c. Volunteer opportunities are a chance to share the Auxiliary’s mission and recruit members.
 - d. See public relations/marketing materials on the American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion websites for media templates and other tools for promoting your events.
- 8) Record all volunteer hours under VA&R or Community Service programs, depending on the event.
 - a. Create a summary report about the project so that this project may be repeated or improved upon.
 - b. Survey the volunteers and participants for ideas on how to improve the event and thank them for their help.
 - c. Include in the survey report the following items: reporting form, planning worksheets, tracking forms, project evaluations. File all information with the unit.

Project Planning Form

Project Name:

Project Manager:

Team Members:

Project Goal:

Project Scope Statement: A detailed description of what the project encompasses. This includes the project size or how much is to be achieved in the project, when the project must be completed, and obligation of resources. Format: The project starts with...this project includes...and ends with... (goal).

Project Objectives and Deliverables: Any measurable, tangible, verifiable outcome, result, or item that must be produced to complete a project or part of a project.

Project Tasks, Assignments and Anticipated Completion Dates: Anticipated timeline of project tasks/assignments

Project Critical Success Factors: Attributes of the project that are needed for the project to go forward. Fulfillment of these factors commonly involves the completion of a project or a major milestone in a project.

Project Risks and Contingencies: An evaluation of the feasibility or probability that the outcome of a project or policy will be the desired one. What problems did you run into/do you expect to run into and how did you/do you expect to resolve them?

Project Budget:

Volunteering Survey for Members/Volunteers

I am interested in becoming more involved in the following areas: (check all that apply)

- Americanism
- Children & Youth
- Community Service
- Education
- Girls State
- Juniors
- Leadership
- Legislative
- Membership
- National Security
- Poppy
- Public Relations
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee
- Monetary Donation
- Other **Include the programs or community service projects in which your unit is involved**

Best day(s) of the week for volunteer work: (check all that apply)

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

Best time of day for volunteer work: (check all that apply)

- Before 8:00am
- 8:00 to 10:00 am
- 10:00 to 12:00 noon
- 12:00 to 2:00 pm
- 2:00 to 4:00 pm
- 4:00 to 6:00 pm
- 6:00 to 8:00 pm
- 8:00 to 10:00 pm

Please mention any skills, resources, ideas, or interests you have which could contribute to the Auxiliary's mission:

Please provide the names of nonprofit organizations in which you have been a leader in recent years:

Surveying Your Community for Volunteer Opportunities

What resources in the community are available to assist veterans?

Do you have facilities for veterans like a VA hospital or Veterans Home?

What are veterans' needs? Are they being met by the community?

What additional or improvements in veterans' resources can the Auxiliary provide?

What volunteer opportunities designed to help veterans are already established?

How can the Auxiliary better promote volunteer opportunities?

Do you live near a military base?

Are there local colleges/universities where you could solicit volunteers?

What other Veterans Service Organizations have chapters in your community?

Are there any local organizations with which the Auxiliary could partner to hold a volunteer event?

Are there existing volunteer events in which the Auxiliary could participate? Is it being well-promoted?

Ideas for Volunteer Opportunities

No matter your age or interests, there is a way for everyone to contribute!

Children

- Participate in or plan a food or clothing drive for veterans in need.
- Adopt a veteran.
- Help out families of deployed servicemembers by doing odd jobs, walking their dog, babysitting, etc.
- Help plant a garden at a local Fisher House or Veterans Home.
- Older children can volunteer at VA Medical Centers by sitting and talking with patients, playing games or reading to them, being a patient transporter, etc.
- Older children can mentor young children of deployed servicemembers.

Adults

All of the above, plus:

- Volunteer at a homeless shelter for veterans.
- Write letters to Congressmen about issues facing veterans.
- Organize or volunteer at a stand down.
- Help a disabled veteran with household chores or run errands.
- Join the Volunteer Transportation Network (VTN) to help transport veterans to the VA for their appointments.
- Plan an event around a holiday such as Memorial Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, or Veterans Day at a local Veterans Home; brainstorm ways to make it special for each war in which the residents served.
- Volunteer at a local school by teaching children proper flag etiquette or plan to have a veteran in to tell their story to the class (Veterans in the Classroom project).



Ways to Contribute From Home

Would you prefer to support veterans without having to leave the house or support the mission even when you are not out in the community? Whether you are home-bound due to age or health, or have little ones to care for, there are several ways for you to support your unit, veterans, and our troops without stepping out of your front door.

Knitting and Sewing

- Ditty bags
 - These are pouches used for storing a veteran's small belongings, usually distributed to patients at VA hospitals.
- Lap robes
 - You can knit or crochet these for hospital patients or wheelchair-bound individuals.
- Slippers
 - You can knit these with non-skid pads for VA hospital patients and Veterans Home residents.

Coupon Clipping

- Clip coupons and send them to military families overseas, where they can use expired coupons at their base PX and Commissary for up to six months past the expiration date. This helps military families make ends meet. Contact your local military base to find out how to get involved.

Recruiting Volunteers

Reasons people give for volunteering/signing up:

- 1) They care about your cause or the people you serve.
- 2) They want to make a difference (social commitment to others).
- 3) It is an opportunity to use a skill they perform well or are interested in learning.
- 4) They have friends who volunteer with the program.
- 5) They are seeking more fulfillment and challenge than what is offered by their job.
- 6) They want to meet people/make friends (seeking social contact).
- 7) They were told to volunteer by their workplace. Be aware of companies in your community that encourage or mandate employees to volunteer. Some companies pay their workers for volunteering during the work day.

Reasons people give to not volunteer and ways to combat them:

- 1) They don't have enough time because of their job or family responsibilities.
 - a. Present your program as something they will personally enjoy.
 - b. Ask what they would like to do if they had time.
- 2) They have a negative preconceived idea about your program from volunteers or publicity.
 - a. Make sure they have the correct information about your organization. Supply them with brochures, or invite them to attend a volunteer event as an onlooker.
 - b. Tell them all the positive, mission-related things American Legion Auxiliary does.
- 3) They don't want to make a big time commitment.
 - a. Make it easy for them to volunteer (for example, a one-time event).
 - b. Provide them with specifics on how long they will be volunteering. Break the work down into more short, manageable tasks.
 - c. Invite them to an event that requires minimal time commitment.
- 4) They can't volunteer at that time.
 - a. Maximize the time flexibility of your event and planning activities.
 - b. Provide job sharing opportunities for less attractive projects.
- 5) They are afraid.
 - a. Ask, because you will rarely be told this directly.
 - b. Slowly introduce the program to them.
 - c. Recruit volunteers in groups.
- 6) They have poor health.
 - a. Identify volunteer opportunities that can be done from home (for example, coupon clipping, knitting, etc.)
- 7) They were never asked.
 - a. Ask them!



Engaging Volunteers to Retain Them

Keeping volunteers

Keeping volunteers is easier than recruiting new ones! Here are some tips for retaining volunteers for your next activities:

- Make them feel like they are needed from the beginning. Appreciate their work out loud and often.
- Help them see a direct connection between their contributions and making a difference for the cause. Remind them how their work fits into the bigger picture.
- Ask each volunteer to come back for the next volunteer opportunity.
- Give them jobs that are challenging and rewarding to ensure that they enjoy the experience.
- Analyze the volunteer's underlying motivation for volunteering. Make sure your opportunities are meeting their needs.
- Anticipate and be prepared for changing lives and schedules of volunteers. Keep them up-to-date on scheduling and activities. Design multiple flexible volunteer activities.

Why Good Volunteers Quit

Be sure to recognize good volunteers to prevent quitting for some of the following reasons:

- They don't have enough time.
- They feel under appreciated.
- They are tired of having their time wasted.
- They don't feel they are making a difference.
- They feel they are doing the work all alone and not getting any support.
- They don't get any of the credit.
- They are tired of being told how to do everything.
- The program asks for their input and doesn't use it.
- They are bored.
- They are tired of fighting for change when the organization is resistant.
- They keep getting the dirty jobs.
- Lack of training.
- High transportation expense.



Recognition

- Publicly recognize the volunteers at your next unit meeting or at a special luncheon for volunteers.
- Take time to thank volunteers personally. You can tell them:
 1. "Thank you!"
 2. "You made a real difference to our team."
 3. Give them an invitation to return to your next volunteer event.
- Keep volunteers in the loop by sending them a newsletter about events.

How to Participate in a Volunteer Event

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary need to live out the mission by “serving veterans, their families, and their communities.” Each year, more veterans and military families are in need of services. In order to meet these needs, volunteers have become a crucial part of the Auxiliary. As a member of the Auxiliary, each and every woman in this organization has the duty and privilege to help fulfill the mission.

How to Participate

The American Legion Auxiliary supports collaborating with other national and local organizations to promote patriotic community service activities and to build community partnerships that will benefit veterans, servicemembers and their families. Volunteering elevates our presence in the community while focusing on the needs of our American heroes. Volunteering can be a one-time event or a daily occurrence. How often one volunteers and where the volunteering takes place is up to the individual member.

Ways to Serve

The best way to go about finding a volunteer opportunity is to look for areas of need for the veterans and servicemembers in your community. As stated in the VA&R Guide, there are generally three outlets by which to volunteer your services:

VA Medical Centers (VAMC) – This is for those members who feel comfortable volunteering in a VA hospital setting. The duties can include, but are not limited to, sitting and talking with patients, delivering flowers from the gift shop, taking patients to their appointments within the hospital, hosting Auxiliary-sponsored activities on units that have patients able to leave their rooms, etc. VAMCs typically offer orientation that is to be completed through the hospital.

Four Steps to Volunteering for VA Voluntary Services (VAVS):

- 1) Decide if you want to be a Regularly Scheduled, Occasional or Special Event Volunteer.
- 2) Choose your location of service (VAMC, Fisher House, Veterans Home, Vet Center, etc.)
- 3) Choose your assignment preference.
- 4) Contact your closest VAMC (use the locator on the VA website) and speak with the VAVS Program Manager or sign up to volunteer at www.va.gov/volunteer.

Field Service – This is any service provided to a sick or injured veteran outside a VAMC. This service also includes assisting with a veteran’s burial or gravesite maintenance. The duties performed could be, but are not limited to, painting a veteran’s house, doing yard work for a veteran, building a wheelchair ramp for a veteran or servicemember, serving veterans at a homeless shelter or the post home, etc. There may be a Field Service Orientation through your department.

Home Service – This is for those members who volunteer their time sewing, cooking, or shopping for non-family members who are active duty military, veterans and/or their families. No orientation is required for this kind of service. These are not the only ways to volunteer your skills and talents. There are numerous service organizations, veteran-related or not, that are in need of your help. Find a volunteer opportunity in your community in which to participate, whether as an individual or as a unit.

Where to Find Volunteer Opportunities That Help Veterans

Websites, such as www.allforgood.org and www.nchv.org/howtohelp.cfm, compile numerous volunteer databases and display the volunteer locations on a map. If you do not have access to the Internet, contact your local Hands On, MyVetnetwork, or United Way organization.

The All for Good website is continuously updated and will provide you with additional volunteer information such as preferred age or gender, hours and days needed, as well as contact information for the organization. Remember that there may be projects in your area that are not listed on the website.

Here are tips for finding a volunteer opportunity on the All for Good website:

- 1) To search, type “veteran” in the white search box in the blue section at the top of the page next to the words “All for Good.” More than one keyword can be entered (i.e., “military family”).
- 2) Enter your zip code or city/state in the search box above the map.
- 3) Additional criteria based on time can be specified. Directly under the map, there is a section titled, “When.” Options available are “anytime” (by default), “today,” “this weekend,” “this week,” or “this month.”

How to List Your Volunteer Opportunity Online

Before you can post a volunteer opportunity on the Web, be sure to have the event well planned out, including information such as location, date, time, tasks the volunteers will perform, and any other details potential volunteers might need to know about the event. In creating your volunteer event, be mindful of how it can be an opportunity to promote the American Legion Auxiliary and The Legion Family in the community in a new and positive way.

To list an event online, visit the United We Serve website (www.serve.gov).

Here are tips for listing your volunteer opportunity on the United We Serve website:

- 1) On the serve.gov website, scroll down to find and click on the blue “Register Now” button.
- 2) Select “Organization” instead of “Individual/Group/Family,” and fill out the unit’s information to create an account.
- 3) Be sure to include all relevant keywords (i.e., if painting a veteran’s house, enter keywords like “beautification/clean-up,” “painting,” “veteran.”)



Holding a Unit Event

A unit also can participate in any community service event without researching or posting the information on the Web. Be sure to communicate with the membership to spread the word. Consider posting it in the newsletter, on your website, making calls and promoting the event at the post home.

Resources

For an in-depth guide on planning a community service event, visit: www.serve.gov/toolkits.asp.

Welcome Committee

Responsibilities

- Call and welcome the new member
- Greet new members at meetings
- Note who was not at the meeting and follow up with her
- Provide a welcome packet to new members
- Conduct an orientation for new members
- Pair new members with mentors
- Identify a new member's interests and how she would like to be involved



New Member Orientation

- The Preamble
- History and structure of the Auxiliary
- Unit Handbook and Bylaws
- Explain the different types of chairman and officer positions, the responsibilities of those positions, and introduce them to the officers, if possible.
- How to participate in a meeting, explaining parliamentary procedure
- Explain the programs and what your unit does for each program

New Member Packet

- Letter from unit president
- Membership card (pin at initiation ceremony)
- Unit Constitution & Bylaws
- Unit budget
- Unit contact list
- Unit Handbook (provide one, download it from the Auxiliary website, or tell them that they can purchase one online at www.emblem.legion.org)
- Poppy and poppy story
- Member discounts and services handout
- Latest unit newsletter and copy of Auxiliary magazine
- Calendar of events, including monthly meetings
- Extra membership applications - to sign up a friend

How to Be a Mentor

Mentoring is an invaluable service we offer our new members and successors in the American Legion Auxiliary. Mentoring includes teaching, counseling, listening and advising in order to encourage the success of those members who are less experienced in the ways of the Auxiliary.

A mentor is a knowledgeable person who is willing to give her time to explain the policies and procedures of Auxiliary programs, provide encouragement and guidance, and is enthusiastic about teaching others. She is patient and understands that a new member or a member taking on a new role may be hesitant and unsure about her role in the Auxiliary.

How do you mentor a new member or a member wishing to become active in the unit?

- Sit with the member during meetings, get to know her, and explain acronyms as they are used during the meeting.
- Offer to carpool to meetings, if feasible.
- Introduce her to other members, particularly committee chairmen of any committees in which she has an interest.
- Encourage her participation in unit activities.



- Answer any questions she may have about procedures.
- Answer any questions she may have about programming.
- Follow up with a phone call or letter if she misses a meeting. Let her know that she was missed and send her any handouts or notes from the meeting.
- Stay in touch. Call her and send cards for occasions such as a birthday, get well, etc.
- Socialize with her.
- Invite her to attend district meetings and department workshops.

How do you mentor a member for a leadership position?

- Offer advice about the position and the things you wish you would have known as a beginner.
- Provide materials and resources that can help her transition into an officer role.
- Allow the member to take ownership of her position and use her own ideas.
- Support the decisions she makes as a leader.
- Assure her that she may call upon you for advice anytime.

Above all, share what you know and be a resource to her.

You could be the reason she renews her membership!

Engage Each Member: The Thoughtful Brigade

What is the Thoughtful Brigade?

A small group of Auxiliary members dedicated to making all members feel welcome and valued in the organization. This should be a group of volunteers who are friendly, creative and organized.

The Brigade ensures that members' special/personal occasions are recognized. These occasions can include birthdays, anniversaries, personal milestones, illnesses, funerals, or sending a sympathy card to relatives. The Brigade should select which occasions they will honor for all members and collect this voluntary information from each member who would like the unit to recognize their special days.



Showing Auxiliary members consideration for their special occasion can be as easy as a phone call or greeting card, or more elaborate, a cake or party/memorial. Units can keep track of occasions by being organized with dates and by keeping updated on their members' health.

How does the Thoughtful Brigade operate?

The extent of honoring members' special occasions depends on if the Thoughtful Brigade has a budget for celebrations. A collection could be taken up at each unit meeting for the Thoughtful Fund in order for the Thoughtful Brigade to fund activities. Phone calls are free, cards can be handmade or printed by computer, and making a cake or hosting a small party may be kept low-budget. Be creative!

Where do we start?

To begin, the Thoughtful Brigade should consist of a reasonably small amount of members (less than 10). Members may alternate duties between themselves, or work as a group to accomplish tasks. The first order of business is to collect a voluntary list of member phone numbers and birthdays. Please do not demand information or money from members who do not wish to be contacted by the Thoughtful Brigade.

The Brigade can begin by simply calling members on their special occasions in order to wish them well. If the Brigade would like an operating budget, they should set a reasonable amount they wish to collect from members, an appropriate occasion they wish to solicit the amount (such as unit meetings), and frequency of solicitation.

From these basic beginnings and operating budget, the Thoughtful Brigade can expand to incorporate more special occasions to honor its members, or more elaborate celebrations. We suggest a yearly rotation of members into the Thoughtful Brigade such that no one tires of the responsibilities, but if a member shows great love and aptitude for the volunteer position, carry on!

Communicating with Members

There are several useful ways through which members can communicate with each other. The Internet has opened up a new and exciting realm of communication with social networking websites. Good communication makes for happy, successful units--and having happy, successful units means that our veterans are being served to the best of our abilities.

Newsletters

Newsletters are an important communication tool in both units and departments. A newsletter lets members know the latest happenings, upcoming events, and any pertinent information containing changes or additions to the unit or department calendar. It can be a monthly, quarterly, or yearly happening, depending on budget and the information you wish to convey. By nature, newsletters should be short, visually appealing and to the point. Newsletters can be in paper format, online, or both. Newsletters also can be a Legion Family affair to cut costs.



E-mail

It is imperative that every member have an e-mail address. E-mail is free, can be accessed anywhere there is a computer with an Internet connection, and is the quickest way to communicate without picking up a phone. Documents are easily transmitted through e-mail and it speeds up the process of information sharing.

Correspondence Cards

Birthday, get well, welcome to our unit, and other special occasion cards literally send the message that you care about the members in your unit. Consider putting your unit's welcome committee or Thoughtful Brigade (described in this packet) in charge of sending out all greetings and keeping the unit updated on important events in the lives of its members.

Phone Tree

Phone trees are helpful in crisis situations or in any event that the entire unit needs information relayed to them quickly. If your unit already has a phone tree, congratulations! If not, follow these steps to create a phone tree for your unit:

- 1) Determine who needs to know the information your phone tree will communicate. Is the phone tree unit-wide or only for those in leadership positions?
- 2) Compile a list of names and a primary and secondary phone numbers for each member who needs to be in the phone tree.
- 3) Choose who will be at the top of this tree and have that person to decide how many "branches" you need.
- 4) Enlist other members to head the "branches." Assign each of them a specific group of "leaves," or those people who the "branch" will be calling. Be sure your "branches" have all necessary information to get in contact with their "leaves."

Facebook

Facebook is a global social network in which you create a profile for yourself, with as much or as little information as you would like. You can create a page for your unit that can be a forum for unit members. You also can create a specific event that lets others on Facebook know the details for an upcoming event. Go to www.facebook.com to sign up for an account and become a "fan" of the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters to get started!

Twitter

Through your personal Twitter account, you can update your “followers” on anything from your thoughts at the moment to promoting an upcoming Auxiliary event. Twitter is a way to keep others current on the Auxiliary’s happenings as well as keeping yourself well-informed. Consider creating a Twitter account for your unit or department and have members “follow” the tweets. A Twitter account can be set up to draw status updates from Facebook as well.

Easy-to-Follow Instructions: How to Use Twitter and Flickr

Twitter

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

1. Go to www.twitter.com
2. Click the green “**Sign up now**” button
3. Enter your **Full Name**
4. Create a **Username**
5. Enter a **Password** and **Email Address**
6. Type the words that appear in the security verification box
7. Click on the “**Create my account**” button
8. On the next screen, you are given the option to see if your friends are on Twitter. If you do not want to, click on “**Skip this step**” under the “**Continue**” button
9. On the “Look who else is here” screen, you are given the option to follow notable people on Twitter. If you do not want to, click on “**Skip this step**”
10. You are now on your Twitter **Home** page

Connect mobile phone to send texts to Twitter

1. Send a text message with the word **START** to **40404**
2. Reply to the follow-up message with your **Username**
3. Reply to the following message with your **Password**
4. Confirm registration by replying **OK** to the third message and you will receive a confirmation text

Send tweet (text message) updates from phone

1. Enter your text message update (up to 140 characters) on your mobile phone
2. To tag messages that relate to American Legion Auxiliary, include code #**ALAux** in the text message. This makes your Auxiliary-related tweet searchable by other members across the country. Example: “20 Juniors assembling Hero Packs for Operation: Military Kids #**ALAux**”
 - a. Descriptive adjectives and numbers are a plus
3. Send text messages to **40404**

Flickr

Send photos from your mobile phone (or computer) to Flickr

All photos will be posted at

www.flickr.com/auxiliarmagazine

1. From a mobile phone or computer, e-mail **individual** photos as attachments to the American Legion Auxiliary Flickr page: rest02image@photos.flickr.com
2. Include a subject line that will become the photo title
3. Please include a brief caption in the body of the e-mail to serve as the photo description. Include contact email to be considered for print in *Auxiliary* magazine

Twitter and Flickr do not charge for these services. Check with your phone provider for text charges.

E-units: Engaging the Electronic Generation

Nowadays, a website is critical to the success of a unit. A basic website will provide the means through which members can access unit information and schedule events. Members could even attend e-meetings if they did not live near their unit, because now all they need is Internet access!

How to Start an E-unit/Get Your Unit Online

- To start an e-unit, follow the guidelines in the Unit Handbook.
- Sometimes dying units can be saved by making meetings and information more accessible to members, which is one of the benefits of an e-unit.
- A unit that has already been chartered does not have to do any additional paperwork to be an e-unit; they just need a website and electronic tools to communicate and hold meetings...and they can still operate as a regular unit.
- A member who has good computer skills and experience using the Internet and e-mail is the best person to establish the site.
- Visit www.alaunit472.org for an example of a good unit website.

The first e-unit, California Unit 472, used AT&T Yahoo Small Business for their website and provided the following instructions for setting up a basic website. Other options and website design tips are provided in *Develop a Website* (on the following page).

AT&T Yahoo Small Business:

- Free domain name
- Unlimited e-mail storage
- Virtually unlimited number of pages
- Monthly cost could be as little as \$9.95/month
- Pay by credit card or through your phone bill

Step 1: Select Domain Name

- At the AT&T Yahoo site, click on the “Sign Up for Intro” button.
- Type in the domain name you have chosen for your unit. Remember to select the extension “.org”
- If the domain name is available, follow the directions to continue establishing the URL (website address)

Step 2: Build the Site

- Use the website builder at AT&T Yahoo Small Business.
- Personalize the look so the website reflects the colors and theme of the American Legion Auxiliary emblem.
- Use this website to assist with deciding what information your unit needs on its website.

Step 3: Publish the Site

- Follow instructions at AT&T Yahoo Small Business.

Step 4: Add or Subtract from Site

- A good site is one that changes frequently so that the look and content is always fresh.

Develop a Website

Benefits of a Website

- It is an easy and convenient place to keep information that all members should have.
- You can process dues and donations electronically.
- You will attract younger prospective members who rely heavily on the Internet.
- You can promote all unit events.
- You will save printing and mailing costs because all forms can be placed online.

Keep in mind when designing a Website

- Plan before beginning. Research other department/unit websites to see what you like and do not like.
- Less is more. Cramming a lot of information onto a single landing page makes it hard to read.
- Update the website frequently. Make sure that all the information is up to date.
- Select a color scheme that is consistent with that of the National Headquarters website (www.legion-aux.org) and incorporate the color scheme into each landing page.
- Use a template for the initial design. Free templates can be found all around the Internet.
- Make sure your website has an easy-to-use navigation system.
- Many times special effects take away instead of adding to the site: do not go overboard.
- Use a simple background and make sure the text is clear.
- Have a “Search” feature so that visitors can easily locate content within your website.
- Limit page length to two screen lengths to limit scrolling.
- Try to limit the page’s width so that scrolling from side-to-side is not required.
- Include a menu and contact information on every page.

Examples of good American Legion Auxiliary Department Websites

Please contact the respective Webmaster for the site to see how it was developed and maintained:

www.kslegionaux.org/

www.deptny.org/

www.alaskalegionauxiliary.org/

www.alaohio.org/

<http://calegionaux.org/>

Website hosting

For less than \$10 a month:

www.ipage.com

www.inmotionhosting.com

www.iwebhostingplans.com/yahoo/YahooSmallBusiness.asp

There are many good options, so do your research before settling on one!



Conflict Management

“Getting Along”

To be effective and efficient in achieving their goals, American Legion Auxiliary members need to have a shared vision of what they are striving to achieve as well as clear objectives for each program committee. It is important to recognize and resolve conflict among members before conflict becomes a serious problem.

Managing conflict is never easy. Conflict involves members’ needs, their perceptions of reality, power, values and feelings and emotions. All members need to have ways of keeping conflict to a minimum. Conflict management is the process of planning to avoid conflict where possible and organizing to resolve conflict as rapidly and smoothly as possible.

1. “Competition” vs. “Conflict”

Competition usually brings out the best in people as they strive to be the best in their field. Fair and friendly competition can lead to new achievements, inventions or outstanding effort in problem solving. When competition becomes unfriendly or bitter, conflict can begin, which can bring out the worst in people.



Conflict occurs when two or more people disagree because of differing needs, wants, goals or values. Hurt feelings, anger, bruised egos and poor communication are all precursors of conflict.

Common Causes of Conflict

- Different attitudes, values or perceptions
- Disagreements about needs, goals, priorities and interests
- Poor communication
- Poor or inadequate organizational structure
- Lack of teamwork
- Lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities
- Desire for power

Individual Conflict

People have different styles of communication, ambitions, views and different cultural backgrounds. In our diverse society, the possibility of these differences leading to conflict between individuals is imminent. We must be alert to preventing and resolving situations where conflict can arise.

Conflict between Groups

When people form groups, they may emphasize the things that make their group “better” or “different.” This elitist attitude can change from healthy competition to destructive conflict.

Conflict within a Group

Within a group of similar goals and interests, conflict can arise from individual differences, ambitions, or from rivalry between factions. All leaders and members of the unit need to be alert to group dynamics that can result in conflict.

2. How to Identify the Signs and Stages of Conflict

Signs of Conflict between Individuals

- Negative/hostile body language
- Members not speaking to each other
- Members ignoring each other
- Members contradicting and/or bad-mouthing each other
- Members deliberately undermining or not cooperating with each other



Signs of Conflict between Groups of People

- Cliques or factions meet to discuss issues separately from the group
- A group is not invited to or does not attend an event that should include everyone
- A group adopts slogans or symbols to show their group is right and the others are wrong

Stages of Conflict

Handling conflict requires awareness of its developmental stages. If leaders can identify the conflict issue and how far it has developed, they can solve it before it becomes more serious. Typical stages of conflict include the following

- Level 1: Potential for conflict. Lack of sensitivity to individual diversity can result in communication failure and conflict.
- Level 2: Latent conflict. When faced with a competitive situation, conflict can easily develop.
- Level 3: Aftermath conflict. A particular problem may have been resolved, but the potential for conflict still exists.

3. How to Build Teamwork and Cooperation

- Share information by keeping members up-to-date with current issues.
- Express positive expectations about each other.
- Empower each other by publicly crediting members who have performed well and encouraging each other to achieve results.
- Team-build by promoting good morale and protecting the group's reputation.
- Resolve potential conflict by airing differences of opinion and facilitating conflict resolution.

4. Conflict-prone Personalities

Sherman Tanks – They try to intimidate with “in your face” arguments and state their opinion as fact.

- Get their attention by beginning a sentence with their first name.
- Maintain eye contact and give them time to wind down.
- Stand up to them without being aggressive.
- If they try to physically intimidate, suggest that you both sit down to continue the discussion.

Snipers – They make snide comments in meetings and avoid one-on-one confrontations.

- Expose the attack. Draw them out and address their concerns in public.
- Get other opinions. Don't give in to the sniper's views.



Chronic Complainers – They find fault with everyone except themselves.

- Politely interrupt and take control of the situation.
- Quickly sum up the facts and fight them with logic.
- Ask for their complaints in writing.

Negativists – They believe that nothing new works. They will toss a wet blanket on your ideas.

- Acknowledge their valid points.
- Describe past successes of new ideas.
- Avoid the “You’re wrong; I’m right” approach.

Exploders – They throw tantrums and escalate situations quickly into conflict.

- Give them time to regain self-control.
- If they don’t regain control, firmly state a neutral phrase such as “STOP.”
- Take a time out or have a private meeting with them.

5. Reactions to Conflict

Compromise: When there is give and take for each party which is generally not satisfying and lacks trust.

Collaborating: A win/win and often best option, but requires time, assertive communication and cooperation.

Competing: Each party aggressively meets its own needs, which generally increases the level of threat towards the other party.

Accommodating: The smoothing over of the situation at the expense of the party’s needs, because preserving the relation is more important than anything else. This may lead to resentfulness.

Avoiding: The party hopes that the conflict will go away, but often pent up feelings and problems escalate.

6. Methods for Managing and Resolving Conflicts

Conflict Buster Conciliation: “The act of procuring goodwill or inducing a friendly feeling.” In this conflict resolution approach, individuals or groups come together to attempt to settle their differences. It can be useful to involve a facilitator (such as the district president) in the reconciliation process. The president should avoid “taking sides.” If the president is part of the problem, an arbitrator should be called in to assist in resolving the conflict.

Negotiation: When representatives of groups in a conflict situation meet to resolve their differences and reach agreement. Negotiations often involve compromise; there is give and take for each party.

Mediation: When negotiations fail or come to an impasse, parties often call in an independent mediator. This person will try to facilitate settlement of the conflict. The mediator plays an active part in the process, advises both or all groups, acts as intermediary and suggests possible solutions. Mediators act only in an advisory capacity; they have no decision-making powers and cannot impose a settlement on the conflicting parties. Skilled mediators gain trust and confidence from all groups or individuals involved in the conflict.

Arbitration: The appointment of an independent person to act as a judge who decides the terms of a settlement. Both parties in a conflict have to agree on the chosen arbitrator and the finality of their decision.

Conflict Resolution Exercise

Each year, membership chairmen spend countless hours promoting and enrolling new, enthusiastic members. These new members may not renew their memberships due to lackluster meetings, seasoned members not inviting newer members to participate, the same officers serving year after year, or a unit that is unwilling to embrace change. For the Auxiliary to be successful, the revolving membership door must stop.

Many of the issues plaguing our units today can be resolved through conflict resolution. The key to conflict resolution is giving EVERY member a voice. Once the voices are heard, it is up to the leaders and all members to work together to take the steps necessary to implement change.

When individuals or a group of members have problems, they often call on others to solve their dilemmas. However, it is important for unit members to understand how necessary it is to try to solve their own conflicts. When a unit has participated in this exercise, the members soon recognize and appreciate the results, including new ideas and renewed enthusiasm.

Exercise

Call a special meeting and ask each attendee to respond to the following question: "If you had the power to make two major changes in the unit, what would those changes be?" Each response should be written on a flipchart or chalkboard. Once everyone has responded, categorize the list into workable groupings, based on the number of attendees. If you have four groupings, then have the attendees count off: 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4.

Next, ask each numbered group to go to a different area of the room to begin discussing the issues assigned to their group. Each group also should have one group member take notes. This person also will read the notes later in the meeting. The groups should have 10-15 minutes to discuss their assigned issues.

When the allotted time has elapsed, everyone should come back together, and the person responsible for the notes in each discussion group goes to the podium and reports their group's solutions. After each report, ask for additional comments from the floor, and then go on to the next group's report, etc.

peace.

it does not mean to be in a place
where there is no noise, trouble
or hard work. it means to be in
the midst of those things and still
be calm in your heart.

(unknown)

The Joy of Six Team Building Exercise

This exercise will provide a vivid demonstration of the satisfaction (joy) of being included in a group and the uneasiness that results from being excluded.

Required Materials: Sufficient messages and envelopes, prepared in advance, to accommodate all participants.

Exercise

Prepare a series of short sayings (e.g. “The customer is number one”) and make six copies of each. Ideally, the messages should relate to current themes or issues in the unit, such as “Coping with Change.”



Make single copies of 1-5 other messages. Place each of the sayings in an individual (unmarked) envelope, seal the envelopes, and mix them up. Give one envelope to each member.

Instruct members to open their envelopes, read the messages, circulate around the room, introduce themselves, and softly repeat the message. When an individual finds someone else with the same message, they should team up. Tell them to continue this search and teaming up process, staying in growing clusters.

Tell everyone that they are going to end up in a group of six at the end of the exercise (hence the “joy of six”). If time is critical, or the group is large, reduce the number for each team to three or four. When everyone except the surprised “loners” are in groups of six, act surprised and lead the team in the following discussion.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How does it feel to not be accepted into a group or team? Does this ever happen in your jobs? Is it intentional?
- 2) How did it feel when you found someone with the same message?
- 3) Why didn't those persons already in a team reach out to the excluded persons? How did organizational policies, or our own self-interests, prevent us from including others?
- 4) What can we do to include others “in the loop”?
- 5) What lessons does this exercise have for team building?