



Pod—Membership Development

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

Public Relations

2011-2012 American Legion Auxiliary Plan of Action

Purpose: To work collaboratively with all levels of the organization to create, implement and support a proactive communications network that advances the objectives and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary and positively projects our image and programs to the general public.

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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.

Public Relations

National-level Objectives:

1. To promote a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary, its mission and goals, through a variety of materials and resources available to Departments and Units online.
 - a. Provide training to departments/units on utilization of online resources.
 - b. Develop talking points that members can use to create speeches/news releases for the following: Memorial Day, Poppy, Four Chaplains Sunday, D-Day, American Legion Day, Pearl Harbor Day and other veteran-related days as appropriate.
 - c. Be familiar with brochures and other National Headquarters' publications that represent the Auxiliary's programs and purpose and educate departments and units on what is available and how to obtain them.
 - d. Involve Junior members in promoting social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and YouTube through bulletins that identify the process to participate.
 - e. Work collaboratively with National Headquarters to provide content for the ALA website to include best practices from Units and Departments.
 - f. Promote the free *ALA e-News* and emphasize increased member subscriptions.
 - g. Promote the identity of the American Legion Auxiliary, its mission and goals, by expanding the distribution of ALA materials, including gift subscriptions of the magazine, pamphlets and applications within the community at local libraries, job fairs, medical facilities and supermarkets.
 - h. Work collaboratively with all National Chairmen to identify public relations needs for their programs.
 - i. Work with Department Chairmen to compile a list of media contacts for Units to use within each Department.
 - j. Promote American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary collaboration through linkages with information included on The American Legion website.

Public Relations Awards

- A. Department award: Public Relations - Outstanding PR Program
Award: citation
Presented to: Department Chairman in each Division
Materials and guidelines:
 - articles, newsletters, pictures of displays, events promoting Units, speeches given, website URL, etc.
 - typewritten narrative not to exceed 1,000 words
 - deadline: June 1, 2012
 - send to National PR Chairman Diane Duscheck
- B. Unit award: Program Emphasis-Best Three Media Releases
Award: Chairman's choice
Presented to: one Unit Chairman in each Division
Materials and guidelines:
 - Include three different media publications, highlighting different ALA programs, published in three different months (September 1, 2011 – May 1, 2012).
 - Acceptable media publications must support the Auxiliary's mission and goals.
 - deadline: June 1, 2012

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Public Relations

- send to National PR Vice Chairman Teri Miller
- C. Unit award: Innovative Public Relations Activities
Award: citation
Presented to: all Units submitting an online PR campaign (e.g., updating Facebook, posting Unit website updates, e-mail blasts, and online newsletters)
Materials and guidelines:
- Unit documents the PR campaign activity and submits a copy to the Divisional Chairman.
 - Documentation must be from a media source between April 30, 2011, and May 1, 2012.
 - deadline: June 1, 2012
 - send to Divisional Chairman
- D. Unit award: Website - New Website Launch
Award: citation
Presented to: all Units developing a website during 2011-2012
Materials and guidelines:
- Website URL, webmaster name and contact info
 - Website must have been created since September 1, 2011.
 - deadline: June 1, 2012
 - send to PR Committee Member Dee Dee Buckley
- E. Junior Public Relations Award - Best Media Coverage of Activity or Project
Award: Chairman's choice
Presented to: one Junior group (Department, District or Unit)
Materials and guidelines:
- articles, newsletters, pictures of displays promoting the event
 - deadline: June 1, 2012
 - send to PR Committee Member Gloria J. Shaw Johnston

Resources

1. Auxiliary information: www.ALAforVeterans.org.
2. The American Legion: www.legion.org.
3. ALA sample news release template for Units: available online or by contacting National Headquarters at pr@ALAforVeterans.org.
4. *AP Stylebook*: www.apstylebook.com/

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



Committee:

Public Relations

Submitted by:

Diane Duscheck, National Public Relations Chairman

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Objective:

#1 Effectively communicate ALA program information and project a positive image to the general public.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- 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), and other special information a member or the general public would need to know in order to participate in this event. Templates are available through National Headquarters at pr@ALAforVeterans.org.
- Include contact information: a name, phone number, email address.
- Provide deadline information if applicable.
- Distribute public relations information via resources available in your community—to newspaper, radio station, TV station; post to a website; display advertising posters in laundromat, restaurant community board, gas station community board, city hall, grocery store, VA hospital; share information with other persons who may help your unit reach the target audience such as a veteran service officer or National Guard armory officer.
- Online public relations resources are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.



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Objective:

Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Contact the newspaper for their guidelines for letters to the editor and “op-ed” columns.
- The newspaper will dictate:
 - ideal word count
 - manner of submission
- A letter to the editor is usually brief (about 200 words in length) and responds to an item published in a previous edition of the newspaper.
- An “op-ed” piece usually appears opposite from the editorial page, is a longer statement (about 400-500 words), and is intended to present both facts and the author’s point of view in order to stir the readers’ emotions.
- Structure of a letter to the editor:
 - First paragraph—state the position of the organization.
 - § Make a statement that entices the reader to read on.
 - § Check and recheck facts.
 - Middle section—explain key points in the first paragraph.
 - § Introduce quotes from third parties.
 - Final paragraph—reiterate information in first paragraph or present a statement explaining how the American Legion Auxiliary will address the situation.
 - § Provide at least one solution to the problem.
- General format:
 - Use a common typeface, like Arial or Times, in 10- to 12-point type.
 - Write in short sentences.
 - Avoid jargon and abbreviations.
 - Put your name, address, and phone number on the top of the page.
 - Suggest a headline based on the first paragraph.
 - Place a “# # #” at the bottom of the last page to indicate the end of your letter.
 - Enclose a brief cover letter that summarizes the letter to the editor or op-ed piece, and your expertise or qualifications.