

**AMERICAN  
LEGION**  
**AUXILIARY**

# Unit Guide Book

Revised April 2024



**A Community of Volunteers  
Serving Veterans, Military,  
and their Families**





## **UNIT GUIDE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY**

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit Guide provides information, direction to desired information, and guidance to unit members about the history, mission, programs, membership eligibility, customs, and operations of an American Legion Auxiliary unit, the community-level organization of the Auxiliary.

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**Revised April 2024**



## How to Use This Guide

The Unit Guide, published by the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters, is a compilation of information and best practices on a variety of topics pertinent to unit operations. The aim of the Unit Guide is to help members make informed decisions about unit operations and governance. However, adherence to a guideline does not guarantee a successful outcome. Ultimately, unit members must make their own governance and operational decisions based on the unit, department, and ALA national governing documents, and their individual judgment, knowledge, and expertise. Consult a professional parliamentarian or attorney for assistance interpreting your governing documents and state law.

The National Headquarters staff, national officers, and national chairmen disclaim all liability for the accuracy or completeness of a guideline, and disclaim all warranties, express or implied, to their incorrect use. The Unit Guide, either printed or online version, may not be complete or accurate.

Because units and departments are separately chartered and operate according to their own governing documents and the non-profit laws governing each state, this guide addresses operations from a general perspective only.

Unit Guide users are urged to seek out newer information that might impact the operational recommendations contained within a guideline. This publication's purpose is to help units locate and use the most up-to-date information from the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. District and/or department officers are available to assist you. *The department is the final authority for units.* Please contact your department office if you have questions or need assistance.

Units are also advised to seek advice from a professional parliamentarian or attorney to ensure compliance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised and state law.

## Recommended Online Resources

Find a Professional Registered Parliamentarian

*[www.parliamentarians.org/prp-search](http://www.parliamentarians.org/prp-search)*

Robert's Rules Online Official Website

*[www.robertsrules.com](http://www.robertsrules.com)*

## Helpful Icons



This icon indicates that more information can be found on the ALA national website or elsewhere online. This Unit Guide, the ALA Department Operations Guide, and many other publications and resources on programs and procedures of the ALA may be accessed at *[www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)*. The national website may have more up-to-date information. Members will need to use their membership ID number to create a username and password to access the MyAuxiliary member portal.



**Note:** This icon is used to call your attention to important information.

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# **PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY**

For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state, and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on Earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity, the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy; to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

## **ALA NATIONAL CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

The ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules are referenced throughout this Unit Guide.



The ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules can be found in the MyAuxiliary member portal of the national website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

# CHAPTER 1: HISTORY, MISSION, AND PURPOSE

## HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

With the cessation of World War I, the Great War, the men and women of the armed forces banded together in The American Legion to carry forward their services to the country in peacetime. It was only natural that the women of their families should desire to continue to serve with them. The result was the American Legion Auxiliary.

The founding purposes of the Auxiliary encompassed rehabilitation of veterans, children and youth activities, community service, disaster relief, peace, and security. This tradition of service continues today.

The establishment of an Auxiliary to The American Legion was provided for by the first National Convention of The American Legion in 1919. By the 1920 National Convention, 1,342 local units of this Auxiliary had been formed and intensive organizational efforts were authorized. The first National Convention of the Auxiliary was held in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1921. At that time, the name “American Legion Auxiliary” was adopted, and the first national officers elected.

The Auxiliary grew from a first-year enrollment of 121,000 to approximately 500,000 at the beginning of WWII. After the women of WWII families became eligible, enrollment rose rapidly to a record of 1,001,545 in 1955.

On July 30, 2019, the President of the United States signed into law the landmark LEGION Act. This act opened eligibility for membership in The American Legion to those who served honorably since December 7, 1941. That same year, in recognition of the rising number of women in military service, The American Legion opened membership eligibility in the American Legion Auxiliary to male spouses of American Legion members or those of deceased servicemembers who would have been eligible for membership.

In 2020, eligibility for membership was extended to include the newly formed United States Space Force, created by the

National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 and signed into law. United States Code now reads that the term “armed forces” means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard. Those servicemembers and their families are now authorized to join The American Legion Family.

## **MISSION AND ORGANIZATION**

### **Mission Statement**

In the spirit of *Service Not Self*, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and 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.

### **Vision Statement**

The vision of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, 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 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.

## Organization

The American Legion Auxiliary is incorporated in the state of Indiana as a nonprofit organization classified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a 501(c)(19) veterans organization auxiliary because our purpose is to serve veterans, military, and their families. The Auxiliary also has a 501(c)(3) foundation to facilitate the donation process and ensure the mission of the organization continues.

The Auxiliary organization (i.e., local, state, and national) parallels that of The American Legion. The Auxiliary is organized in units (local), departments (state), and the national organization. A member of the Auxiliary is a member at the unit level, the department level, and the national level. Portions of a member's dues go to support all three levels of the organization. The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters is located in Indianapolis, Indiana, as is the headquarters of The American Legion.



## **THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY NAME AND EMBLEM**

The emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary is our badge of distinction and honor. It stands for God and Country and the highest rights of all mankind. It consists of several parts with distinct meaning. The rays of the sun that form the background stand for the American Legion Auxiliary principles of Loyalty, Justice, Freedom, and Democracy, and dispelling the darkness of violence, strife, and evil. The unbroken circle of blue represents Unity and Loyalty. The field of white exemplifies the hope of Freedom. The star of blue is the emblem of service in war; it is no less the emblem of service in time of peace.

### **Rules Governing Use**

The American Legion Auxiliary name and emblem are fully trademarked. The use of the emblem by an individual Auxiliary member is limited to the wearing of the official insignia and to the possession of authorized jewelry or merchandise bearing the insignia. To obtain approval to use the name or emblem, you must submit a form that can be found on the national website. Units may only use the emblem on stationery, unit publications, notices, posters, place cards, or items of similar character used in the ordinary conduct of legitimate unit business. Departments and programs of the American Legion Auxiliary are similarly limited. Any other use of the name "American Legion Auxiliary" or the emblem shall be subject to the approval of the national organization. These restrictions apply equally to the emblems of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Riders.

Any merchandise intended to bear the name or emblem of the American Legion Auxiliary not ordered from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales requires authorization by the American Legion Auxiliary. A request for permission to use the trademark may be found on the national website. Proceeds from items purchased through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales benefit our veterans, the military, and their families, and units are encouraged to order within the Legion Family.



Visit the MyAuxiliary member portal to download a branding guide and locate the form for requesting use of the ALA emblem.

# CHAPTER 2: ELIGIBILITY AND MEMBERSHIP

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is determined by The American Legion. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the:

- (1) Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and
- (2) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941, who being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;
- (3) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and
- (4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.


A woman who is eligible for American Legion membership is eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary regardless of whether she is a member of The American Legion. However, eligibility of her relatives (spouse, sister, mother, grandmother, daughter, and granddaughter) to join the American Legion Auxiliary depends upon her membership in The American Legion.

In 2019, The American Legion voted to change the eligibility wording from “wife” to “spouse,” allowing the male spouses of American Legion members and the spouses of deceased veterans who served during the expanded eligibility time period to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

The IRS regulation concerning veterans organization auxiliaries states in part that its members are spouses of veterans or related to a veteran within two degrees of consanguinity representing the most distant allowable relationships (for example, grandmother, mother, sister, daughter, granddaughter).

This means that no great- or great-great-granddaughters can join the Auxiliary. Current members whose eligibility relationship is great-granddaughter, great-great-granddaughter or direct descendant can continue being a member, as long as their dues are kept current.

Each unit of the ALA is responsible for verifying eligibility and deciding its membership, as provided in the ALA National Bylaws. However, this responsibility is subject to the restrictions of the national governing documents.

 **NOTE:** While the DD-214 is the most common military document used to verify a service member’s military records, additional official military documents are acceptable:

- Official military orders
- Official military service citations/awards
- Letters on official government letterhead related to the veteran’s military service
- Certificate from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs records center in St. Louis
- Data from the back of older discharges



DD-214 discharge papers can be requested online by visiting [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

Once eligibility is established, applicants who meet the eligibility requirements may seek membership in an Auxiliary unit. A member of a unit is also a member of the department (state) and the national organization.

By payment of dues to the unit, a member also contributes to the support of their department and the national organization.

## **TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP, RIGHTS, TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT UNIT**


The only authorized form of membership is active membership, of which there are two classes: Senior and Junior. Granting special or honorary membership to anyone not eligible for membership for any purpose or reason whatsoever is prohibited. Units can give Honorary Life Membership in their units to those eligible for membership.

Senior members are those who are age 18 or older and those under the age of 18 years and married.

Junior members are defined in the ALA National Constitution as under the age of 18 years whose activities shall be supervised by the Senior membership. Upon reaching the age of 18 years, Junior members are automatically admitted into Senior membership with full privileges.

### **Honorary Life Membership**

This distinction was created for units that confer Honorary Life Membership on outstanding members. Each department shall establish its own rules for conferring Honorary Life Membership and certification of these memberships. Remember: Honorary Life Memberships are not the same as Paid Up For Life (PUFL) memberships. Honorary life Memberships are paid by the unit and cannot be processed at National Headquarters. They should be processed as a regular renewal. Units should submit requests to their department to designate a member as an Honorary Life Member. This will prevent the member from receiving future renewal notices.

 **NOTE:** Honorary Life Membership may not be transferred from unit to unit or department to department.

### **Paid Up For Life Membership**

Any member in good standing whose membership dues are paid for the current year may become a Paid Up For Life member (PUFL). This one-time lump sum payment is based

on the age of the applicant and the member's current annual dues. Once approved, the member will never again pay annual dues. Call ALA National Headquarters' Membership Division at (317) 569-4570 to sign up for PUFL.



Obtain a PUFL application at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

## Applications for Membership

Every applicant for membership in the Auxiliary must complete an individual membership application as proof of eligibility. Membership applications may be completed in paper form or online.

When members join online, they are automatically placed into a holding unit--the Department Headquarters' unit of the state they designate on their mailing address. Members may then transfer to a unit in their area. Contact your department headquarters for assistance in locating a unit in your area.



To join online go to [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

## MyAuxiliary Member Portal

Using MyAuxiliary, the member portal on the national website, members can now view the following information about themselves:

- The unit they belong to
- Member ID number
- Join date
- Their membership category--PUFL, Life Member, Honorary Life Member
- When their membership expires
- Whether their membership is due for renewal
- Their prior years' dues paid
- Their donation history

Members can also take the following actions in the member portal that were not previously possible:

- Pay dues for the current year and the previous year
- Print a current year membership card
- Print membership cards from previous years
- Update contact information

- Add additional addresses (such as a seasonal address) – even adding starting and ending dates
- Opt out of national and department publications and mailings (Communications tab)

## **Membership Cards**

Members can now print copies of their membership cards from their profile in the MyAuxiliary member portal of the national website. Units can obtain additional blank membership cards by contacting their department headquarters.

## **Membership Dues**

Members of the ALA are members at the unit, department, and national level. A portion of the member's annual dues goes to each level of the organization. The unit determines its portion of the dues. Dues increases at the national level are voted on by the delegates at National Convention. The unit membership roster is located in the online membership management system, ALAMIS. Units can avoid entering duplicate dues amounts by using this roster to determine whether a member's dues have been submitted to the department.

## **Payment of Back Dues**

Members who have a lapse in membership have the *option* to pay back dues to re-establish their original membership join date. If back dues are paid, the member's record will be updated, and the corrected join year will be printed on future membership cards and rosters.

## **Membership Rights**

As stated in the ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, a new member joining the American Legion Auxiliary prior to the annual National Convention must pay full current annual dues to be eligible for full membership rights, privileges, and benefits.

A new member joining *after* National Convention will be given full unit membership rights, privileges, and benefits from the date the dues are received through December 31 of the following year.

## **Transfer of Membership**

A member who is not subject to suspension or membership revocation is eligible to transfer membership to another unit if they have paid their membership dues to their current unit for either the current year or immediate past membership year. A member transferring to a new unit must pay current year dues to either their current unit or the unit into which they wish to transfer. The member should contact the new unit into which they wish to transfer to begin the process.

Transfer is final upon verification of eligibility, evidence of paid membership, and acceptance of the transferee by the new unit.

Evidence of paid membership:

1. American Legion Auxiliary membership card;
2. Verification of membership by ALA department or National Headquarters membership records;
3. Other documentation verifying payment of current or immediate past year membership dues, such as a canceled check or receipt; or
4. When verifying documentation is not available, a sworn statement that the member's membership dues payment was tendered.

## **MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Recruiting and retaining a diverse, active membership is critical to the American Legion Auxiliary's mission. Recruitment and retention ensure the Auxiliary continues its mission of serving veterans, military, and their families. The national Membership Committee has developed several tools that can be used to develop a membership recruitment and retention campaign.

### **One-on-One Promotion**

Simple social media recruitment can start with gaining followers on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Focus on people who are eligible but have not yet joined.



Reach out to potential new members personally--either virtually or through a phone call--and invite them to a mission-related event so they can experience the ALA mission firsthand. After the event, follow up and see if there is an interest to learn more.

Be sure to promote Auxiliary events on your personal social media and share a link to the quarterly national *Auxiliary* magazine.

## **Local Mission-Related Events**

To help our organization recruit and retain new members, public relations is a great tool that all members can use. Publicity will go a long way to gain recognition from our communities on who we are, what we do, and why we matter, which in turn, will help with recruiting and retention efforts.

Use local media to recruit new members. Write a letter to the editor and send press releases with photos to local newspapers and radio/TV stations for publication before and after the event to gain interest. However, remember that newspaper editors and media personnel are overwhelmed with requests, so be sure to follow up prior to your event. Just one contact will probably not attract much attention.

Publishing a letter to the editor surrounding patriotic holidays might entice a potential member to reach out and learn more about joining the American Legion Auxiliary because they want to seek details on the mission-related work the unit is doing.

Remember: If a TV station can't make it to your event, it doesn't mean they can't still help spread the word. Most local media have websites and social media and are always looking for great stories. Utilize media to help tell the story of who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Being in the public eye will help units gain members.



Need help with a press release? Templates can be found in the PR/marketing resources in the MyAuxiliary member portal at [www.ALAFORVeterans.org](http://www.ALAFORVeterans.org).

## MEMBERSHIP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**FAQ:** *Must a potential Auxiliary member join the unit of the post where their veteran/servicemember relative is a member?*

**RESPONSE:** No, the potential member is eligible for membership in *any* Auxiliary unit.

**FAQ:** *In a same-gender marriage, is the spouse of a wartime veteran who is a member (or eligible to be a member of The American Legion) also eligible for membership in the Auxiliary?*

**RESPONSE:** On June 26, 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in the case of Obergefell v. Hodges. The Court's ruling requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex and to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed out-of-state.

This decision requires all states to recognize same-gender marriages. The American Legion and the ALA will continue to accept into membership those individuals who meet membership eligibility criteria regardless of the gender of their spouse.

**FAQ:** *Can the eligibility of a member be questioned or challenged?*

**RESPONSE:** Any member can challenge the membership eligibility of another member by presenting the challenge to the unit to whom the member being challenged belongs or to whom the person's membership application is being presented for consideration.

The unit has the responsibility for responding to the challenge of membership ineligibility according to national eligibility requirements/governing documents. If the unit determines that the member is not eligible, the member may appeal to the department. If the unit determines that the member is eligible,

the person challenging that member's eligibility may appeal to the department. The department is the final authority on determining an individual's membership eligibility.

Also note that a unit's or department's decision regarding an individual's membership eligibility is not appealable to the national organization. The national organization has no authority to consider eligibility or discipline appeals from members. The department is the final authority on eligibility and discipline.

**FAQ:** *Is there any circumstance where someone could join the ALA without having a relative as a current member of The American Legion?*

**RESPONSE:** Yes, there are two circumstances:

1. When a woman has served in the military during the requisite dates, she may join the ALA without being a member of the Legion.
2. When membership is based on a deceased veteran who was not a member of The American Legion. The prospective member will be required to provide verifying documentation of the deceased relative's service dates to prove eligibility.

**FAQ:** *Is verification required by the post adjutant/officer if the veteran through whom an applicant is applying is deceased?*

**RESPONSE:** All ALA applications should be signed by the post's adjutant/officer. The officer's signature is to verify that the officer has confirmed the veteran's current status in The American Legion (if living) or to verify the applicable military documentation for the veteran through which the applicant is joining (if the veteran is deceased). However, determination of whether the unit wishes to accept that applicant lies solely with the unit.

**FAQ:** *The Auxiliary unit no longer has an American Legion post, so who would sign the Auxiliary membership application to verify the military documents or Legion status of the veteran through whom the applicant is joining?*

**RESPONSE:** A letter from the department adjutant in which the service relative has their Legion membership will be accepted in lieu of the post officer's statement. A copy of this letter must be attached to the application.

**FAQ:** *Are step-relatives eligible to join the ALA?*

**RESPONSE:** No, IRS regulations for 501(c)(19) organizations do not include stepchildren in their definition of an auxiliary organization.

**FAQ:** *Why is membership limited to two degrees of consanguinity (relationship)?*

**RESPONSE:** The IRS regulation concerning auxiliaries to veteran organizations states in part: "At least 75 percent of its members are veterans, spouses of veterans, or related to a veteran within two degrees of consanguinity (i.e., grandparent, brother, sister, grandchild represent the most distant allowable relationships)."

This means no great- or great-great-granddaughters can join the Auxiliary. Current members whose eligibility relationship is great-granddaughter, great-great-granddaughter or direct descendent can continue being a member, as long as their dues are kept current.

**FAQ:** *How long must units retain membership applications?*

**RESPONSE:** Since eligibility for membership can be challenged at any time during the life of the member, *eligibility information should be retained as long as the member is alive.* Eligibility information needs to be securely retained and records can be digitized to save space and provide a more convenient way to retain the information. Units have a duty to protect the personal identifying information of their members and are advised to have access to a locked file cabinet in the post or other secure place for record. Redact (permanently cover) any personal identifying information (e.g., birthdates, Social Security numbers, etc.) to protect from identity theft.

**FAQ:** *Are men eligible to join the Auxiliary?*

**RESPONSE:** Male spouses of current members of The American Legion are eligible to join the Auxiliary. Male spouses of all men and women who served in the eligible periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge are eligible to join the Auxiliary. Grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers, or other male descendants are not eligible to join the Auxiliary.

**FAQ:** *Is an individual eligible for ALA membership through the war service of a divorced spouse?*

**RESPONSE:** A divorced person does not occupy the status of spouse and, therefore, has no eligibility. But the fact that a member of the Auxiliary has become divorced from the person whom they originally gained eligibility does not force them to surrender Auxiliary membership, even if they remarry as long as their membership has never lapsed. If they become delinquent in membership dues, they may reinstate their membership only by payment of back dues for all years of delinquency or by establishing new eligibility.

**FAQ:** *Is a common-law spouse eligible through the war service of their common-law spouse?*

**RESPONSE:** No, IRS definition of spouse does not recognize common-law spouses. The IRS defines the terms “spouse,” “husband,” and “wife” to mean an individual lawfully married to another individual.

**FAQ:** *Why has the join date on my membership card changed?*

**RESPONSE:** A member’s join date changes when a year’s dues payment is not received at National Headquarters. There are three possible scenarios why a join date has changed:

1. The member did not renew for a particular membership year;
2. The member’s dues were not transmitted from the unit to the department for processing;

3. The department did not apply the member's dues to the member record in ALAMIS.

Members are advised to **contact their local unit** if they feel there is an error with their join date. Units can contact their department for verification of dues received.

# CHAPTER 3: THE UNIT

The basic organization of the American Legion Auxiliary is the local unit. The unit is the grass-roots level of the organization. Units implement the mission of the department and national programs. All Auxiliary members must hold membership in a unit and in only one unit. There are no national memberships. A member may volunteer to help with activities in more than one unit such as is the case for someone who resides part of the year in two different states. However, the member can only have *membership* in one unit.

The unit is a not-for-profit veterans organization auxiliary allied to The American Legion, a Congressionally chartered non-profit veterans service organization. As stated in the ALA National Bylaws, the unit shall be given the name, location, and number of The American Legion post to which it is attached.

## How to Organize a New Unit

Organization of an Auxiliary unit requires a group of at least 10 Senior members. Units must secure authorization for the formation of an Auxiliary unit from the post to which it would like to attach. The newly formed unit will need to be chartered by the national organization to be recognized as a unit in the American Legion Auxiliary. Charter application forms, individual membership applications, sample constitution and bylaws, and any other needed supplies or information may be obtained from your department headquarters.


The post commander and department Auxiliary officers should attend the organizational meeting to outline the nature and purposes of the Auxiliary. The following procedure is suggested protocol for the meeting:

- Elect a temporary chairman and secretary to preside over the meeting.
- Adopt a temporary unit constitution. (Please see the Appendix for an example of a unit constitution and bylaws)
- Establish dues amounts for both senior and junior members, enough to cover unit administrative

expenses plus assessment amounts due to national, department, and, on occasion, district, or county.

- The temporary chairman asks for nominations for officers.
- Following election, the newly elected officers will assume their duties.

## Procedures for Obtaining a Unit Charter

 The Unit Charter Application is available online at the national website [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). Following are the steps to complete to apply for a charter as a new unit:

1. Print a copy of the charter application.
2. Fully complete the charter application.
3. Have the application signed by the post commander and attested by the post adjutant.
4. Collect all new member applications (both Junior members and Senior members) or transfer forms signed by the members transferring from another unit (and any dues they may owe for the current year).  
NOTE: A minimum of 10 Senior members is required to form a unit. Junior members currently cannot be counted in the original 10 applicants for a unit charter but can be charter members.
5. Collect dues from the new members.
6. Send the following to your **department headquarters**:
  - a. the fully completed charter application;
  - b. all completed member applications or transfer forms;
  - c. department and national portion of dues for each member (don't send the unit portion!);
  - d. a completed form or letter indicating the unit's total annual dues amount for each Junior and each Senior member.

National Headquarters will process the application from the department and send the charter to the department. The department will then return the charter to the unit. National HQ will mail out new membership cards to the charter members.



## eUnits

Electronic units (eUnits) allow members to conduct meetings via teleconferencing or online platforms. There is no difference in how an eUnit would charter or operate except for how they choose to meet. Starting an eUnit involves the same procedure for a traditional unit. Both traditional and eUnits should have provisions in their bylaws for meeting and voting electronically that are compliant with their state laws, which vary from state to state.


Some traditional brick-and-mortar American Legion Auxiliary units may choose to utilize an eUnit/hybrid meeting structure in which members sometimes meet in person and sometimes online. The in-person meetings are held in a physical location with some members choosing to video conference into the meeting. eUnits may meet by teleconferencing or phone conferencing. Examples of these formats are Zoom and Freeconferencecall.com, but many other options are available.

## Charter Lost or Destroyed

If a charter has been lost or destroyed, a duplicate can be requested by the department secretary with the payment of the charter fee. Duplicate charter rolls can also be obtained by the same procedure.

## Charter Cancellation

Should the unit decide to cancel its charter, a vote by the unit should be conducted at a meeting, with advance written notice to the membership. The Department Executive Committee (DEC) will vote on the cancellation and then submit a notification to National Headquarters for ratification by the National Executive Committee (NEC). Please check with your department to see what process they have in place.

 **NOTE:** Members belonging to a unit whose cancellation has been ratified by the NEC will automatically be transferred into their department headquarters unit.

According to the ALA National Bylaws, unit charters may be cancelled by the Department Executive Committee for good cause. Cancellation is in order when two or more units merge

or when a unit voluntarily ceases to function. If a unit's charter has been cancelled, the unit may appeal to the National Executive Committee following the process in ALA National Standing Rules.

## **Holding Membership Dues**

Unit officers should submit dues in a timely manner and should not hold collected membership dues for an extended amount of time. Not submitting membership dues in a timely manner can have several consequences:

- members unnecessarily receive multiple renewal reminders, increasing costs incurred by National Headquarters;
- the potential for duplicate payments from members;
- frustration by members who have already renewed, have their card, but receive a renewal reminder;
- underreports membership for reports and awards.

Therefore, all member dues should be submitted to the department as soon as possible.

The national Standing Rules of the American Legion Auxiliary state "Units have the authority to establish annual Unit dues. Annual dues collected by the Unit shall include Department and National dues. Units shall remit Department and National dues according to the policies adopted by the National Executive Committee." Another national standing rule states, "...each department shall remit the national per capita dues promptly to the National Treasurer via National Headquarters at least monthly."

## **Units and The American Legion Post**

The unit must take the exact same name, number, and location of The American Legion post to which it is attached and are reflected on its charter. If the post to which an Auxiliary unit is attached changes its name or number, it is mandatory the unit take the same action and forward the change to its department secretary/executive director.

The cancellation or revocation of a post charter does not invalidate the charter of its Auxiliary unit. The unit may

continue to operate, bearing the name, location, and number of the post to which it was attached. The number of such post shall not be reassigned so long as the Auxiliary unit continues to be active.

When two or more American Legion posts surrender their charters and consolidate into a new post, the Auxiliary units have options. The unit may continue as a “widow unit” under the original charters where the department adjutant certifies the members, or the unit can choose to surrender the charters for cancellation and consolidate as an Auxiliary unit to the new post. Another option is to surrender the original charter and secure a new charter to a post. The last option is to surrender the charter and disband.

## **Recommended Unit Operations**

For ALA units to manage the operations of their separate entities in compliance with good governance practices of non-profit organizations, there are general practices that each entity should follow:

- Advance preparation of a budget for the next administrative year for review and approval by the governing body.
- Annual membership analysis of expected dues revenue. When developing a budget, units should use a realistic expectation of anticipated members paying their dues.
- Governing body and committee meeting schedules; set standards of reporting and accountability.
- Governing and committee meeting minutes: review, approve, distribute, and retain according to the laws of the unit’s state.
- Distribution of funds should require *two* signatures.
- Handling of cash or checks should be by two unrelated people.
- Independent review of bank, investment, and credit card statements.
- Reserves plan: Develop a plan for reserves to equal three times the annual budgeted amount.
- Cross training of unit responsibilities.
- Confidentiality.

- Preparation and presentation of monthly financial statements: current month to budget; year-to-date budget to the Finance Committee for review; standard of reporting and accountability.
- Preparation and presentation of quarterly financial statements: quarter to budget; year-to-date to budget to Finance Committee and unit members for review and acceptance; standard of reporting and accountability.
- Engagement of an audit firm by the Risk & Compliance Committee: review and acceptance for public disclosure.
- Annual engagement of a tax preparer by the Risk & Compliance Committee and reporting all federal, state, and local compliance requirements fulfilled.

## Policies

A policy sets the rules and standards; the process defines what, who, and when the policy will be enforced. The procedure is the *how* and *where* the policy is implemented. Not all these policies will apply to your unit, depending on its size. Check with your state government to see which policies are required for non-profit organizations in your state.

## Examples of Policies

- Code of Ethics
- Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement
- Whistleblower Policy
- Document Retention and Destruction Policy
- Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy
- Gift and Grant Acceptance Policy
- Review Policy of Audited Financial Statements and Annual Reports
- Endowment Spending Policy
- Fundraising Policy
- Public Scrutiny (Federal) Policy
- Minutes of Governing and Committee Meetings Policy
- Check Signing Policy
- Business Credit Card Policy
- Reserve Funds (Surplus) Policy

- Purchasing Policy
- Emergency Response and Disaster Recovery Policy
- IT Emergency and Disaster Recovery
- Social Media Policy

All policies should be presented to and approved by the unit. Policies should be reviewed annually if there have been changes in federal and state requirements, operations, and programs.

A procedure is a way of accomplishing something. It should be designed as a series of steps to be followed as a consistent and repetitive approach or cycle to accomplish a result. Once complete, you will have a set of established methods for conducting the business of your organization, which can be utilized for training, process auditing, process improvement, or compliance initiatives.

## **Budgets**

Budgets provide for financial stability by setting goals through the annual budget process.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Create a Finance Committee for your unit.
2. Conduct a budget planning meeting of the Finance Committee prior to the start of your fiscal year; make sure to invite unit officers.
3. The agenda should include but is not limited to the following reviews of unit activities:
  - Current financials in comparison to the IRS and nonprofit watchdog organizations' benchmarks. All categories should reflect a percentage. These will change from year to year, dependent upon the activities of the programs or the focus of resources for fundraising. Management and General will always have expenses associated with the general operations of the organization.
  - Program Services (expenditures related to the organization's primary mission and purpose): the target should be 65-75%.

- Management and General Administrative (expenditures spent on managing the operations of the organization): the target should be 5-10%.
  - 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 10-20%.
- Progress status toward long-range goals (i.e., fundraising for new building, equipment).
  - Annual ALA obligations: for example, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, poppy promotion, ALA Girls State, etc. These are programs and services.
  - Annual operating expenses (i.e., rent, heat, bank fees, conference registrations, etc.).
  - Membership numbers and the related dues income.
  - Other sources of revenue (donations, events, bequests, etc.).
4. On a 12-month calendar, plot out when you anticipate your revenue and expenditures will occur relative to the activities of the unit.
  5. Compare your total estimated revenue versus your total estimated expenses.
    - Also compare the estimated allocation of these expenses and their overall impact to the mission.
    - Determine what areas need further consideration to accomplish your long-range goals and meet the IRS and nonprofit watchdog organizations expense benchmarks
  6. Try to create a positive bottom line. Remember: Budgets are just a guide. And when change happens or is needed, the unit should have a procedure for how those overages get authorized.

7. Have the Finance Committee vote to approve the budget and forward on to the unit.
8. Have unit membership vote on the adoption of the annual budget.

## **Privacy Protection for Unit Members**

By National Convention resolution, officers and members of the American Legion Auxiliary are not allowed to distribute the names and addresses of any units or members of the Auxiliary, except in carrying out the duties of their offices.

## **Legal Opinions**

All requests for information from The American Legion national judge advocate must come through the department president or department secretary to the ALA National Headquarters executive director.

# CHAPTER 4: NON-PROFIT INFORMATION, COMPLIANCE, AND PRACTICES

American Legion Auxiliary units are separate entities that operate independently as affiliates of the ALA National Organization.

All chartered ALA units are permitted by the National Organization to use the name and trademarks of the American Legion Auxiliary and must comply with national legal requirements. As independently operating not-for-profit organizations, units must duly report to their respective state governments and to the federal government.



**Note: Check with your state government for laws governing non-profits in your state.**

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Units that maintain their exempt status by complying with IRS requirements and are in good standing can be tax-exempt under the ALA National Organization Group Exemption ruling or can be tax-exempt in their own right.

Units that have had their tax-exempt status revoked by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for failure to file the annual required return for three consecutive years will need to initiate appropriate steps to regain the unit's federal tax-exempt status as well as any state and local exempt statuses.

Unit leaders should be knowledgeable about the following information, which is intended to guide units in understanding their obligations for:

- operating as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation or tax-exempt unincorporated association permitted to use the name and trademarks of the American Legion Auxiliary;
- federal requirements of filing an annual IRS Form 990 Series and meeting any state and local requirements;



- taking appropriate steps for addressing the IRS's revocation of the tax-exempt status of an ALA unit.

## **Federal Compliance and Tax Laws**

Prior to reporting annually as a not-for-profit and being recognized as a federally tax-exempt organization, a unit will be required to seek formal recognition via IRS Form 1024 or by making a request for inclusion under the American Legion Auxiliary National Group Exemption Ruling. To be included under the ALA National Group Exemption ruling, the unit must be recognized as a 501(c)(19) veterans organization auxiliary.

## **Public Scrutiny of IRS Tax Documents**

Organizations that file IRS Form 990 and 990-EZ must make their annual returns available for public inspection or copying, excluding certain documents that are not available to the public for inspection, such as Schedule B – List of Contributors.

The IRS provides online access to filings of all versions of the IRS Form 990 to charity rating and watchdog organizations, and to the news media following the same public inspection and protection regulations. To view the Exempt Organization Public Disclosure and Availability Requirements, visit [www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Exempt-Organization-Public-Disclosure-and-Availability-Requirements](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Exempt-Organization-Public-Disclosure-and-Availability-Requirements).

This is a summary of the steps to take to conduct business and report annually to the federal government:

- Obtain a Tax Identification Number (TIN)/ Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Request Inclusion under American Legion Auxiliary Group Exemption ruling (GEN-0964) by submission of a letter and provide IRS verification of TIN/EIN assignment.
- File annually a 990 series of return (see instructions for 990, 990EZ and 990-N).
- File annual requirements at state and local levels.
- Report and annually file 1099s for non-incorporated vendors and service providers.


- Report change of address or responsible party (annually, if applicable).
- When applicable, file all employment tax returns.

## **Federal Tax Identification Number (TIN)/Employer Identification Number (EIN)**

The American Legion Auxiliary Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules as adopted, revised, and updated, provides guidance as to the expectation that units will operate as independent, separate entities as affiliates of the ALA National Organization.

If an ALA unit discovers they are currently operating with their American Legion post as one entity, the ALA unit needs to immediately establish separate operations to conduct business. The post has no authority over the unit's finances. The unit can obtain a TIN/EIN by completing and submitting IRS Form SS-4 to the IRS. This form initiates the entity type and structure of the classification as a 501(c)(19) veterans organization auxiliary.

The federal TIN or the federal EIN (both terms are used by the IRS interchangeably) is a unique nine-digit identification number assigned to your organization by completing IRS Form SS-4. Each TIN/EIN assigned is on file with the IRS and should be used on all tax returns and correspondence.

 **NOTE: A copy of the letter confirming the TIN/EIN assignment should be retained permanently in the records of the organization.**

An additional step is required for formal recognition in seeking exemption from federal taxation and the ability to receive tax-deductible donations by choosing to make and seek a unique determination from the IRS by submitting IRS Form 1024 or by requesting inclusion under the ALA National Group Exemption ruling.

### **How to Obtain a TIN/EIN**

Complete and submit an SS-4 to the IRS. The unit can apply for a TIN/EIN via mail, fax, or online by visiting [www.IRS.gov](http://www.IRS.gov)

(type SS4 in the search box on the homepage). Once the TIN/EIN is assigned, retain the letter from the IRS as a permanent record.

## **Request Inclusion Under American Legion Auxiliary Group Exemption Ruling**

Compose a letter from the ALA unit to the ALA National Organization requesting formal inclusion to the Group Exemption ruling. A template of the Inclusion Request letter can be obtained by contacting ALA National Headquarters at *compliance@ALAforVeterans.org*. Send a signed copy of the letter together with a copy of the IRS verification letter assigning the new TIN/EIN to the legal name of the unit to:

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters  
ATTN: Compliance  
3450 Founders Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46268

Once ALA National Headquarters receives the request, correspondence will then be sent to the IRS from the ALA National Organization (as the “central” or “parent”) on behalf of the ALA unit to be included under the ALA National Group ruling. It typically takes the IRS six to eight weeks to update their records. Most likely there will be no notification from the IRS when the unit has been added to the group ruling roster. Six to eight weeks after submitting the initial inclusion request, please contact the ALA National Headquarters Compliance Team at *compliance@ALAforVeterans.org*. The team will be able to verify if the IRS has included the unit TIN/EIN to the group exemption roster through the IRS Business Master File ([www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-business-master-file-extract-eo-bmf](http://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/exempt-organizations-business-master-file-extract-eo-bmf)).

## **Nonprofit Organization Classification 501(c)(19)**

The American Legion Auxiliary National Organization is classified as a 501(c)(19) veterans organization auxiliary for federal tax-exempt purposes and can receive tax-deductible donations per the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Title 26 §170(c)(3). In October 1946, the individual ruling letter for the American Legion Auxiliary National Organization was changed

to include the recognition of the subordinate ALA entities as being classified as 501(c)(19) organizations that meet the following criteria:

- Organized in the United States or any of its possessions.
- Seventy-five percent of members are spouses of or within two degrees of kinship related to past or present members who served in the U.S. armed forces.
- No personal inurement (private benefit) is received by an individual.
- Affiliated and organized in accordance with the bylaws and regulations formulated by the parent organization.

See IRS Publication 557 and Publication 3386 for more detailed information.

The IRS affirmed the ALA National Organization's federal tax-exempt status and its ability to receive tax-deductible donations of the group ruling via its IRS Letter of Determination to the American Legion Auxiliary National Secretary dated March 26, 1973.

## **Tax-Exempt and Deductibility Status Are Not Automatic**

An organization can be established as a nonprofit and have the required TIN/EIN but still NOT be tax-exempt or able to receive tax-deductible donations. It is at the discretion of the IRS to grant exemption from paying federal income taxes and the ability to receive tax-deductible donations – this is an entirely separate federal filing and determination process. For ALA entities, the ALA National Organization Group Exemption ruling provides federal tax-exemption and deductibility of donations unless the IRS has specifically revoked an ALA unit's status. See more details about tax-exempt status revocation within this document.

Newly chartered ALA entities that have obtained a TIN/EIN to conduct business and operate can easily seek federal tax-exempt recognition as a 501(c)(19) and the ability to receive tax-deductible donations per IRC § 170(c) by requesting inclusion under the ALA National Group Ruling as already described.

ALA entities also have the option to seek their own unique tax-exempt and deductibility status by completing IRS Form 1024 and paying applicable fees.


## **ALA Federal Group Exemption Number (GEN) GEN 0964**

On Oct. 31, 1946, the IRS granted a group ruling to the American Legion Auxiliary National Organization that allows the inclusion of ALA entities, by request, to be recognized as 501(c)(19) organizations for exemption from federal taxes and with the ability to receive tax-deductible donations, as subordinates of a group exemption ruling.

The IRS does not require separate applications of recognition from each individual subordinate for organizations with like mission and purpose as the ALA National Organization. However, the ALA National Organization does not file an annual group return for those ALA entities that are identified as subordinates to the Group Exemption ruling. *Subordinates of the group ruling are responsible for filing the appropriate 990 series of annual return for their ALA unit.*

The American Legion Auxiliary National Organization's group ruling is identified by the IRS Group Exemption Number (GEN) 0964. When proof of federal tax-exemption or the ability to receive tax-deductible donations is requested, a photocopy of the 1973 IRS Letter of Determination for ALA National Group Exemption ruling is generally sufficient.


ALA units requesting a copy of the IRS Letter of Determination for the ALA National Group Exemption Ruling can contact the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters Compliance Team at [compliance@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:compliance@ALAforVeterans.org). Verification that the unit is currently included under the Group Exemption ruling and compliant (in good standing) will be confirmed prior to sending a copy of the IRS determination letter.

 **NOTE:** The purpose of the IRS federal group exemption ruling is to exempt the American Legion Auxiliary National Organization and its ALA entities (subordinates) under the ALA's National Group Exemption ruling (GEN 0964) from federal income tax and with the ability to receive tax-deductible contributions.

The Auxiliary at all levels is still subject to other federal taxes such as payroll taxes and tax on unrelated business income. ALA entities may also be subject to certain state and local taxes, including hotel, hospitality, service, and sales taxes. Nonprofit tax requirements differ by state and locality; be sure to consult with a tax adviser knowledgeable about your state's nonprofit tax requirements to determine if nonprofit organizations in your state are afforded any state tax exemptions.

## **Tax-Deductible Donations and Gifts**


Per the IRS Determination Letter for the ALA National Group Ruling, donations and contributions to organizations included under/in the group ruling are tax deductible per Internal Revenue Code Section 170(c)(3).

 **NOTE:** ALA entities that have their own unique determination letter issued from the IRS can verify the deductibility status of donations and contributions via the IRS Business Master file accessible through the IRS website (Column H – Deductibility; coded as 1 = able to receive tax deductible donations; coded as 2 = not able to receive tax-deductible donations) or by calling the IRS Exempt Organization (EO) Division at 1-877-829-5500. If the organization is coded as 2= unable to receive tax deductible donations, verify with the IRS the process for reconsideration. Entities will want to take special care describing the mission and purpose of the organization when completing IRS Form 1024.

## **ALA Unit Structure: Nonprofit Corporation or Association (Unincorporated)**

Incorporation is a legal process used to form a corporate legal entity. A corporation is a separate legal entity from its organizers (members) that has its own rights and obligations and provides legal protection for an organization by limiting the liability of the individual members of the organization. A nonprofit corporation is a special type of corporation that has been organized to meet specific tax-exempt purposes. Incorporation involves jurisdiction (state) specific registration

information and fees. **The American Legion Auxiliary strongly recommends incorporation.**

 **NOTE:** The act of incorporating as a nonprofit corporation does not automatically grant federal tax-exempt status and the ability to receive tax-deductible donations.

A nonprofit association (unincorporated) forms whenever at least two people agree to pursue a common lawful purpose that is not for profit. In general, an association is a group of persons banded together for a specific mission and purpose. Historically, many ALA units were formed with this entity structure and continue in existence. The definition of a nonprofit association can vary under state law, and you should consult the law of the state in which the organization exists. The nonprofit association may be subject to certain legal requirements, even though it has not filed for incorporation under its state's incorporation laws. There may also be multiple state and local registration requirements no different from a similar nonprofit corporation.

## **State & Local Requirement – Tax and Charity Registration**

Federal tax exemption does not automatically grant exemption from state and local taxation. Each state and local municipality has its own tax laws and rulings on tax exemptions, including sales tax. State tax exemptions may only be granted by the state in which your ALA unit is located. Sales tax exemption is only recognized in the state where it is granted.

Most states require a specific nonprofit status tax return form be filed annually. State tax returns for a nonprofit organization may be required to maintain state and local tax-exempt status.

Some states regulate charitable organizations' fundraising activities. States may require an additional annual filing to verify these activities. Be sure to consult with your state's agencies and/or a knowledgeable legal/tax professional in your state to ensure you are meeting all the requirements for filing, and for complying with any state and local charitable regulations. State and local charity compliance may include doing the following:

- Business entity reports – annual and biennial (corporate).
- State tax-exempt annual returns.
- When applicable, state employment returns.
- Renew or update sales tax-exemption certificates.
- Charity registrations, reporting, and licensing. State statutes usually require organizations to register with the state before they solicit or conduct fundraising activities asking the state's residents for contributions.


## Tax-Exempt Status Revocation

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 (Title XII; Subtitle B; Part I Sec. 1223) imposed certain reporting requirements on exempt organizations that did not previously have to file. These requirements were implemented in the 2007 tax year.

Additionally, organizations that do not file the required IRS Form 990 Series for three consecutive years automatically have their federal tax-exempt status and their ability to receive tax-deductible donations revoked.

Consequences of losing your federal tax-exemption may include, but are not limited to, the following:


1. Your ALA unit is no longer exempt from federal income tax, does not have the ability to receive tax-deductible donations, and will be subject to corporate income tax on annual revenue.

 **NOTE:** Your ALA unit should proactively communicate with your donors explaining that the organization's tax-exempt status has been revoked. You should communicate the reason for the revocation, consequences of the revocation, and that all steps are being taken to have the organization's tax-exempt status reinstated.

2. State and local tax exemptions, dependent on the organizations' federal tax-exempt status, may also be revoked. Please consult with the state and local regulatory agencies and/or a tax professional.



3. ALA entities that have had their tax-exempt status revoked are unlikely to be considered for grants.

 **NOTE:** ALA entities that have lost federal (and/or state, local) tax-exempt status may remain chartered entities with the American Legion Auxiliary. The ALA National Organization does not require chartered entities to be tax-exempt.

# CHAPTER 5: UNIT OFFICERS

Unit officers and committee chairs share in the responsibility of the success of their unit. Each should be familiar with the duties of their office and fulfill such obligation to the best of their ability. Consult Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, for a fuller explanation of the duties of officers.

## Duties of the Unit President

The unit president should be familiar with the duties of all officers and committee chairs and encourage and inspire them in their work. It is the responsibility of the president to see that all officers are supplied with all available information and material from department and National Headquarters.

The unit president should preside at all meetings of the unit and the Unit Executive Committee and

- require adherence to the Constitution and Bylaws, rules and regulations established by the National and Department Conventions, National and Department Executive Committees, and the unit itself;
- appoint members of standing committees and create other committees as necessary; and
- appoint all non-elected officers and perform all other duties assigned to the office.

## Duties of the Unit Vice President

The vice president is given the responsibility, with the president, for complete development of the unit program. The vice president should be prepared to preside at meetings in the absence of the president.

## Duties of the Unit Secretary

The duties of the unit secretary are administrative and require the ability to be adept with email. The unit secretary:

- makes a record of all business transacted at each unit and executive board meeting (the minutes);

- counts a rising vote when requested by the president;
- prepares a statement of unfinished business to come before the meeting for the use of the presiding officer;
- has on hand for reference at each meeting a list of the names of members of all standing committees, a copy of the unit's bylaws, and correspondence sorted for reading; and
- is responsible for sending all name and address changes to Department Headquarters.

## **Minutes**

Minutes should record the action that was taken at the meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable or otherwise.

The first paragraph of the minutes should have the following information:

- type of meeting (regular, special, adjourned regular, or adjourned special);
- name of the unit;
- date and time of the meeting, and the place, if it is not always the same;
- name of the presiding officer, officers present, committee chairs present, and those absent; and
- whether the minutes of the previous meeting were distributed in advance, read, and approved as read or as corrected.

The body of the minutes should have a separate paragraph for each subject matter, giving the name of the person who made the motion, and should show the following:

- specific wording of each motion;
- disposition of the motion (adopted or rejected); example: "Mary Smith moved that the unit spend \$200 for landscaping plants. The motion was adopted.";
- secondary motions that were lost or withdrawn;

- all notices of motions (i.e., changes to constitution and bylaws which require prior notice before actual voting can occur); and
- all points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for their ruling.

The last paragraph should state the hour of adjournment.

Additional rules and practices relating to the content of the minutes:

- The name of the seconder of a motion should not be entered in the minutes unless ordered by the assembly.
- When a count has been ordered or the vote by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered; and when the voting is by roll call, the names of those voting on each side and those answering “present” should be entered. If members do not respond on a roll call vote, enough of their names should be recorded as present to reflect that a quorum was present at the time of the vote. If the chair voted, no special mention of this fact is made in the minutes.
- The proceedings of a committee should not be entered in the minutes.
- When a question is considered informally, the same information should be recorded as under the regular rules, since the only informality in the proceedings is in the debate.
- When a committee report is significant or should be recorded to show the legislative history of a measure, the assembly can order it “to be entered in the minutes,” in which case the secretary copies it in full in the minutes.
- The name and subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize their remarks.

## Unit Permanent Records

It is the responsibility of the secretary to keep a permanent file whether by paper or electronically for the unit, which should include the following:

- unit charter and charter roll;
- complete membership lists for every year;
- individual membership applications, filed alphabetically, for everyone who is or has ever been a member of the unit;
- complete record of members lost by death, transfer, nonpayment of dues, resignation, or expulsion;
- record of individual member identification numbers;
- complete file of the local post and unit's publications should be saved for history purposes;
- complete file of department's current year bulletins;
- unit, district/county/council, department, and national constitutions of the Auxiliary;
- minutes of the meetings and officers' reports; and
- correspondence file.

## Duties of the Unit Treasurer

The unit treasurer has a duty to safeguard the funds of the unit and to ensure that proper accounting practices and internal controls are maintained. The unit treasurer is responsible for the following:

- handling all unit funds. *It is strongly recommended to have at least two unrelated people present for accountability when accepting cash or checks and to issue a receipt;*
- collection of dues from members and donations to special funds;
- sending dues and special funds to department or national;
- providing a monthly financial statement to the unit, Finance Committee, and others as required by the unit constitution and bylaws;
- facilitating an audit. If the bylaws do not say how the audit is to be conducted, the unit may hire an

- outside auditor or appoint the Risk & Compliance Committee of two or more unrelated persons; and
- provide a report after an annual audit of the treasurer's books. Once the audited report has been accepted, it becomes part of the unit's permanent record.

## **Dues**

The membership year is based on a calendar year: January 1 – December 31. ALA National Headquarters begins taking dues in July for the upcoming Auxiliary year. For example: In July 2020, ALA National Headquarters started taking dues for the 2021 Auxiliary year.

ALA National Headquarters sends the first renewal notice for the upcoming membership year to members in mid-September. *All current year dues should be collected and sent to departments by December 31 each year.* A second dues renewal notice is sent by February 1 to anyone whose dues have not yet been entered in the system.

Units are encouraged to find their own ways to contact their members about the importance of renewing.

Encourage members to use one of the following ways to renew:

1. by mail to the unit
2. online at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
3. by calling the dues payment line at National Headquarters at (317) 569-4570 or
4. by paying at a unit meeting

It is strongly recommended that members not pay dues with cash or to someone outside of the unit, such as a bartender at the post.

## **Duties of the Unit Historian**

The unit historian is charged with the responsibility of recording the activities and accomplishments of the unit.

Unit historians are encouraged to keep a factual continuing story of the accomplishments of each program in the unit.

## Duties of the Unit Chaplain

The unit chaplain will express, by word and action, our founding principle of service to God and Country.

- The unit chaplain will encourage the unit to celebrate the diversity of its members and their faiths.
- The unit chaplain will provide spiritual and emotional guidance to members and their families as needed while keeping confidentiality.
- The unit chaplain is responsible for presenting the invocation and benediction at Auxiliary meetings.
- The unit chaplain will take part as needed in installations; initiations of new members; dedication of halls, monuments, or colors; Four Chaplains services; POW/MIA recognition programs; and the memorial service of a member, always lending dignity and respect to the occasion.
- The chaplain should stay in close contact with the president and other officers of the unit and should attend all meetings of the unit and the Unit Executive Committee.



Connect on social media at

*[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAChaplains](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAChaplains)*

## Duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms

The sergeant-at-arms is responsible for keeping order at unit meetings, for the advancement and retirement of the unit colors and their proper care, and for such other duties as may be assigned by the unit president.

## Requirement for Holding Office

Units cannot require meeting attendance or membership for a specified length of time before a member is eligible to run for office.

Once a member has been accepted for membership and paid dues, that individual becomes a member in good standing with all the rights and privileges connected with that membership, not the least of which is the right to aspire to and hold office.

## **ALAMIS**

The American Legion Auxiliary Management Information System (ALAMIS) can be used by units to manage members and leadership information. Units can stay informed of important reminders from National Headquarters by viewing the announcements on ALAMIS. Units are also able to make updates (depending on access level), perform searches, and view unit reports. Units can appoint up to two users for login access.

There is a yearly login fee per user collected through the department and transmitted to National Headquarters. The department headquarters authorizes who has access. Units must contact their department with the name of the member who should have access to ALAMIS, along with the member's email address, member ID number, and phone number for the person at the unit who will be using the account. All users must be current in dues before requesting access.

## **Installation of Officers**

Unit officers can be installed immediately following their election or as soon thereafter as possible, but an installation ceremony is not mandatory for officers to assume their duties.

An officer takes possession of the office immediately upon election unless the bylaws or other rules specify a later time.

## **Initiation of New Members**

Initiation of new members is not mandatory. If conducted, every new member should be invited and encouraged to take part in the ceremony. New members should receive a copy of the unit's constitution and bylaws.



# CHAPTER 6: UNIT MEETING

## Conducting a Unit Meeting

To be successful as a volunteer organization in today's busy world, unit meetings need to be planned to best honor the volunteers' time. Plan your agenda, keeping in mind your unit's bylaws, and publicize it to your members in advance so that they can plan their time accordingly. The sample meeting agenda that follows shows the order of a variety of activities including officer installation. It is not necessary that every one of the examples be on the agenda at every meeting. Units may find that their members prefer a more abbreviated agenda.

Committee meetings are where discussion and research take place. Committee chairs should only bring important matters before the unit for decision.

Unit elections and all unit business must be conducted following unit bylaws and state nonprofit laws. All members are entitled to have access to the unit's constitution, bylaws, and standing rules. The national organization does not dictate to units how they must operate. Unit bylaws, however, cannot conflict with federal, state, or local laws or regulations as well as department and ALA National Constitution and Bylaws.

Unit presidents should be impartial while presiding and *not take part in discussion*. The majority vote rules, but the minority has the right to be heard. For more information, refer to Fundamentals of Parliamentary Procedure in the Appendix. It describes the roles and responsibilities of everyone taking part in the unit meeting.

## The President as Presiding Officer

The president calls the meeting to order. If a quorum is present, the president proceeds with necessary business. The presiding officer performs the following functions:

- preserves order throughout the meeting;
- follows the published agenda;
- uses the reference "the Chair" instead of "I";
- follows parliamentary procedures;

- while presiding, takes no part in any discussion and refrains from expressing personal opinions;
- calls upon the vice president to preside if the president wishes to speak on a motion or leave the chair. Remains out of chair until the vote on the pending motion is taken; and
- depending on bylaws, may vote.

## **Example of Order of Business**

Not every item will be used at every meeting throughout the year. The order should be changed to fit the type of meeting being held.

1. Call to Order
2. Advancement of colors (optional). Salute the colors if colors are not advanced
3. Prayer
4. Pledge of Allegiance
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: president, secretary, unit officers, executive committee, standing committee reports (membership, etc.) and special committee reports
12. Reading of communications, including those from national, department, and district officers (email these to members if possible)
13. Unfinished business
14. New business
15. Election and installation of officers
16. Announcements
17. Program – service project (mission) or educational and entertaining (optional)
18. Closing prayer
19. Adjournment of business meeting

20. Retirement of colors (optional)

**NOTE:** Use only full-sized flags to advance/retire colors. The American flag and a miniature banner of the American Legion Auxiliary flag in a small stand should not be used for the advancement or retirement of colors.

### **Requirement for Voting**

A unit cannot require that a member attend a certain number of meetings to vote. The right to vote and the right to hold office are clear privileges of membership.

# CHAPTER 7: CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

A unit is a not-for-profit veterans auxiliary organization. It is the expectation of the American Legion Auxiliary that the National Headquarters, departments, and units adhere to the highest ethical standards to earn and protect the public's trust in our business standards, operations, and mission.

The American Legion Auxiliary strongly recommends all chartered entities and affiliated units adopt a code of conduct that follows the organization's governing documents and conduct themselves accordingly.

The National Executive Committee has adopted a national Code of Ethical Conduct. Units may use the national Code of Ethical Conduct as a sample for setting up their own code of conduct or develop their own.



The national Code of Ethical Conduct is included in ALA's National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules and available at [www.ALAFORVeterans.org](http://www.ALAFORVeterans.org).

# CHAPTER 8: RESOLVING CONFLICT

As a nonprofit organization, respect for individuals should guide how we conduct ourselves within the unit and how we represent ourselves to the community. Remember that your conduct should honor the sacrifice of our veterans and their families. Conflicts can and do arise in the best of circumstances, so being prepared for them can alleviate stressful situations.



A free ALA Academy training course on how to handle conflict is available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

## PRIVATE CONVERSATION

Resolving conflict within your unit is dependent upon confidentiality and respect and goodwill of both parties. Have a private conversation to address the conflict, not a public one. Having uncomfortable conversations is never easy. This is especially true for people who are afraid of conflict and would do anything possible to avoid it.

However, avoiding difficult conversations can lead to dysfunction and lack of performance, which can have a negative impact on your unit. Many times, a member might not be aware of the issue, and a conversation may be enlightening and all that is needed.

### Five Tips for Engaging in a Private Conversation

It is important to realize that conflict is a part of life, and the ability to address conflict is a desirable life skill.

Here are five steps to help you address conflict in a private conversation:

1. *Identify the source of the conflict.*  
Take a step back from your frustration for a moment and try to assess exactly what you find inappropriate or irritating. Sometimes the source of irritation is easy to identify, but, in other situations, it may take some thoughtful consideration for you to figure out just what

is bothering you. It is important not to jump to conclusions.

2. *Find a suitable time and place for your private discussion.*

This step may be the most important. You need to decide when and where the discussion of the conflict would best take place. Do not choose a time when you and the other party may be tired or rushed to do other things. Make sure the place is a neutral setting that allows for a quiet conversation.

3. *Use a good-natured approach.*

You want the member to listen to you, so start in a positive manner, such as, "Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. I know we both are interested in the good work our unit is doing to help so many veterans."

4. *Identify the member's behavior and your emotion.*

Specifically identify the behavior that is the problem for you. Do not generalize. Naming the other person's inappropriate behavior and naming your emotions is a two-step process.

- a. Be specific about when and where the behavior happened. Numbers often help. You can say things like, "Last week in our unit meeting, you interrupted me four times." Remember: The member may not be aware they interrupted you at all.
- b. Next, be sure to express the emotion you felt in reaction to the behavior. Use a phrase like, "I felt disrespected" or "I felt like you didn't value my opinion" or "That made me feel angry." This part of the conversation is about you, not the other member.

So, putting it together, here is what you might say to the other member: "You might not have realized it, but last week in our unit meeting, you interrupted me four times. I felt disrespected; I felt like you didn't value my opinion."

5. *Build an agreement that works.*

At this point, make sure to focus on the present and future and not on the past. Decide what you want to do when you are finished with the conversation. Ask yourself: "What will make me feel like the conflict is

resolved?” You may propose a solution and ask for the other person’s agreement, or you may want to brainstorm together until you find a mutually agreeable outcome to resolve the conflict.

Have an idea before you start the conversation: Do you want only an apology, or are you looking for something specific to change? By figuring out your desired outcome to resolve the conflict before having the conversation, you will make this step of the conversation much easier.

Be willing to be open-minded and flexible. You may learn information during the conversation that changes your entire perspective. For example, you felt like a member was ignoring you, yet you learned in your discussion that the member has a significant hearing loss and often cannot hear others speaking.

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### **Remember...**

A private conversation to address behavior does not have to be long. You should spend more time *planning* the conversation than *having* the conversation.

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It is much easier to have a positive outcome when you have a plan. Even if the other member does not respond how you would have liked, your concerns will have been expressed, which is a critical first step toward improving relationships with anyone. Hopefully, having a private, candid conversation leads to a better understanding and a more harmonious relationship.

### **Some Helpful Phrases in Conflict Resolution**

- Help me understand...
- I need your help (to understand...)
- I want to understand your point of view.
- Let’s... (talk, discuss, and help each other understand...)
- Could you please...
- What are the options?
- How can we make this work?
- How can we resolve this?

- So, what you're saying is...
- I'd like to make sure we're on the same page.
- I feel that...
- When you say \_\_\_\_\_, I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
- When you do \_\_\_\_\_, the way it affects me is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I noticed \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm wondering \_\_\_\_\_.
- I'm concerned...
- I would appreciate...
- What will it take?
- Would you consider...?
- Would you be willing to...?
- I'd like your thoughts on...
- Could you live with it if we...?
- How might I gain your cooperation?
- What do you think about...?
- Would you be open to...?
- Would you be OK with...?
- I would like your support.
- Please be more specific.
- What do you need from me (to help resolve, improve, better understand...?)
- Tell me more.
- What do you suggest?
- I would prefer...
- I appreciate your letting me know
- Fantastic!
- Thank you!



## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Should the individuals and unit exhaust all other avenues of conflict resolution and conversations, the unit may choose to pursue disciplinary action. The unit has the responsibility for the discipline of its members. A department may discipline a Unit for failure to discipline a member. All disciplinary actions must be fundamentally fair.

### What is fundamentally fair?

Fundamental fairness means a member receives **advance notice** and the **opportunity to be heard**. What fulfills this requirement may vary from state to state so check your state's specific rules.

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A member disciplined by the unit may appeal the unit's disciplinary action in writing to the Department Executive Committee. Disciplinary actions against members, however, are not appealable to the National Organization.

The unit should follow its governing documents on member discipline. It is strongly recommended that a unit consult a professional parliamentarian or an attorney. Chapter 20 of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, provides guidance on discipline of a member. If a unit has not defined a disciplinary process in its governing documents, it should follow parliamentary procedure as defined in Robert's Rules.

According to the ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules, a member subject to suspension or membership revocation is no longer a member in good standing and cannot transfer to another unit. In other words, expulsion from a unit of the ALA is expulsion from the organization.

Most state laws do not allow suspensions for longer than 12 months. Check your state's non-profit laws.

After completing a procedure for expulsion of a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, National Headquarters requires the guidelines listed below to be followed.

1. All department requests to ALA National Headquarters for expelling a member must come in writing from the department secretary.
2. The written request must have the following:
  - name and membership ID number of person being expelled;
  - reason for being expelled;
  - effective date of being expelled;
  - a clear statement that all procedures have been conducted with fundamental fairness and that the department has written copies of all documentation about the expulsion in their files.
3. Departments are required to submit this documentation to the National Secretary's mailbox at ALA National Headquarters at *NatlSecy@ALAforVeterans.org*.

# CHAPTER 9: CEREMONIAL UNIT PROTOCOL

The ALA Manual of Ceremonies is available as a separate downloadable document on the national website. This publication provides examples of optional ceremonies for unit meetings and special occasions, such as initiation and installation. These ceremonies are not required by any official action of the American Legion Auxiliary. They may be modified to match the occasion, taking care to be respectful to all present.



The ALA Manual of Ceremonies may be found in the MyAuxiliary member portal at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

## Advancement of Colors

### Proper Advancement of Colors

- The flag of the United States is carried on the right and passes in the front.
- The left hand is placed up on the staff, not on the flag.
- The right hand is held down straight at the side, with the hand firmly on the staff.
- The eagle flies forward.
- Cross directly in front of the president's station; the flag of the United States closest to the president's station.
- The colors may all be posted at the same time, but if the color guard chooses to post each color (flag) separately, the United States flag must be released last. When retrieving the colors, the United States flag should be retrieved first.
- The eagle should face the audience--fly toward the audience.
- Do not touch the colors (flag or banner) after they are posted. Let them hang free.

- Take one step back from the colors (flag or banner). Face the flag of the United States and salute.
- Return to your seats.

## **Advancement of Officers**

All Past Department Presidents enter before the current officers. The department president, if present, is always last in line. The National Executive Committee person enters immediately before the department president.

## **Advancement of Guests**

The Distinguished Guests chair should meet the guest at the door of the meeting room. The guest is then escorted down the aisle on the chairman's right upon receiving a signal from the chair.

The guest should have been notified in advance regarding whether the meeting is formal or informal, the time and place of the meeting, and the amount of time given for speeches/presentations.

## **Seating of Guests**

The guest of honor is always seated at the right of the presiding officer; the second most important guest is placed at left of the presiding officer.

## **Wearing the American Legion Auxiliary Pin**

When it is worn, it is customary to wear the ALA pin over the heart, but it is not a requirement. If also wearing an American flag pin, the ALA pin should be placed underneath. The flag is always worn above other pins.

## **Function of National Executive Committee member**

The National Executive Committee member serves as a corporate director on the national board of directors, the NEC.


The NEC member should be given all the courtesies at meetings and social events that are given to a national officer. When a national officer pays an official visit to a department or unit, the National Executive Committee member often acts as a host along with the department president and/or unit president.

## **Relationship Between Unit and Department**

The unit is an integral part of the department, and close contact must always be kept between the unit and department headquarters. Immediately following the election or appointment of a unit officer or committee chair, their name should be reported to department headquarters so that they may receive information and guidance in their work from the corresponding department officer or chair. Units should send dues to the department promptly and reports of activities should be made as requested by the department.

# CHAPTER 10: UNIT COMMITTEES/PROGRAMS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

The National Organization has the following national committees: Americanism, Auxiliary Emergency Fund, Children & Youth, Constitution & Bylaws, Community Service, Education, Finance, ALA Girls Nation, Junior Activities, Leadership, Legislative, Membership, National Security, Poppy, Public Relations, Risk & Compliance, and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. Although there are no longer national history and past president's parley committees, and the national Audit Committee has been renamed Risk & Compliance, units may continue to have such committees. Although departments usually follow the national plan, units are not required to have all committees.

 The purpose, goals, and “best practices” of each program can be found in the MyAuxiliary member portal of the national website. Along with the department's plan, it should be used as a guideline for the unit. Most national committees have social media groups where members can get the most current news, ask questions, and share ideas.

## DUTIES OF UNIT COMMITTEES

The unit president appoints a chair and members to committees. It is the duty of the committee chair and members to become familiar with their program and to encourage unit members to take part in its activities.

Following is an explanation of the purpose and goals of each national standing committee. While it is hoped that each unit will support these committees, it is not required that units have all these committees.

## AMERICANISM

The purpose of the national Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. The Americanism work of the Auxiliary includes all activities that

strengthen American ideals and uphold the principles of democracy. The security of America lies in citizens who have a true understanding, love for those ideals and principles upon which the nation was founded, and a willingness to perform these duties even at great personal sacrifice. The work of the Americanism program is educationally based and divided into three phases: work with youth, work with adults, and work within the community. All matters about the flag or patriotic education are rightly classified as Americanism activities.

### ***Patriotic Education***

Every citizen should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States. Therefore, the American Legion Auxiliary has a very definite goal in emphasizing the teachings of good citizenship. Activities that fall under Americanism: present Americanism awards in schools; sponsor debates and essay contests; work with The American Legion to sponsor local oratorical contests; present flags to schools and encourage the Pledge of Allegiance to be recited daily; promote [www.Legion.org/flag](http://www.Legion.org/flag) and flag advocacy; and encourage formation of student councils in elementary schools.

### ***Americanism as an Individual***

Be able to answer, "What kind of an American am I?" Take an interest in our country's affairs. Express our belief in our love for America in our words and deeds. Inspire children and young people in our homes and schools to develop fine characters, high ideals, and a sincere appreciation of our heritage. Be tolerant in thought and deeds toward others. Vote intelligently after careful study of candidates and issues. Proudly fly our nation's flag in front of your home on all patriotic holidays.

### ***Unit***

Appoint an active Americanism chair. Support the Americanism activities of your Legion post. Plan a patriotic conference. Observe patriotic holidays. Display the flag, keep it clean, and fold it properly. Sponsor citizenship classes and

present small American flags to new citizens. Host Americanism meetings and community forums. Instill in members the responsibility of voting, attend local caucuses, and mentor members to be informed voters.

### ***Community***

Plan town meetings and other study groups, presenting both sides of a question. Host “Meet the Candidate” nights where all candidates are invited to take part since the American Legion Auxiliary is non-partisan. This encourages citizens to be informed voters. Help with community observance of patriotic holidays; write editorials encouraging citizens to proudly display the flag on all patriotic holidays. Present flags where needed and send certificates of appreciation to community businesses that fly the American flag. Use both printed and electronic media when presenting Americanism programs. Watch for subversive group activities and report them to proper authorities. Visit local government groups in action and show interest in school boards, city councils, county boards, and town meetings.

### ***Cooperative Effort in The American Legion Family***

American Legion Auxiliary members can effectively make patriotism a personal matter and select and successfully carry out projects adaptable to the needs of their communities. Work as an American Legion Family to promote these activities at home, in your schools, and throughout your communities.



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAAmericanism](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAAmericanism)

### **AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND**

The purpose of the national Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee is to raise funds for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF), to promote knowledge about the program, and to send information to members about the application process. The Auxiliary Emergency Fund was created to help members who have suffered a significant financial setback as the result of an act of nature or other personal crisis when no other source of aid is readily available.



## ***AEF Assistance Information***

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund provides eligible members with temporary aid for:

1. Financial crisis: funds are available to pay for shelter and utilities.
2. Disaster relief: for weather-related emergencies and natural disasters.
3. Educational training: due to life changes such as death of a spouse, divorce, or separation, causing the Auxiliary member to assume the role of primary source of support for the family.

In each case, as a first course of action, applicants are encouraged to make every effort to secure financial help through local, state, and federal agencies.

## ***Who is Eligible?***

Members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have maintained membership for at least the immediate past two years and who have paid their dues for the current year (three consecutive years of membership) are eligible to apply.

## ***How Much Can a Member Receive?***

The maximum amount of any grant is \$2,400 and may be disbursed as decided by the AEF review and processing subcommittee. Payments may be made directly to the member, or at the discretion of the subcommittee, to a mortgage company or utility company. In the case of educational grants, payments may be made directly to the educational institution.



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/AuxEmergencyFund)

## **CHILDREN & YOUTH**

The purpose of the national Children & Youth program is to work collaboratively with The American Legion to promote

programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, especially those of our military and veterans.

Every American Legion Auxiliary unit should have a C&Y chair. Larger units may want to select a C&Y Committee to work with the chair. Auxiliary C&Y chairs may want to work together with their American Legion post's C&Y chairs on projects and events in the community.

Units should support and promote the Children & Youth program of their American Legion post.

### ***The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation***

In 1954, The American Legion's National Executive Committee authorized the creation of an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. The Foundation was incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana.

Not all American children grow up inside the comfortable definition of normal childhood development. For thousands, each day is a challenge marked by pain, prayer, and perseverance. Many of these children require specialized care.

The priority of the Child Welfare Foundation is to use donations to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual welfare of children and youth. It does this by aiding progress in the field of child welfare through dissemination of knowledge about research, studies, surveys, projects, or by supporting programs and activities benefiting the welfare of children and youth. For more information on the Child Welfare Foundation, visit [www.cwf-inc.org](http://www.cwf-inc.org).



Connect on social media at  
[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAChildrenandYouth](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAChildrenandYouth)

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Support of community service projects of The American Legion post is a responsibility of the American Legion Auxiliary unit. In almost every American Legion project, there will be phases in which the post, unit, and squadron can work together as The American Legion Family. The unit may collaborate with other organizations on practical, worthwhile

projects for community improvement, and ask for their cooperation with ALA projects as well.



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACommunityService](https://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALACommunityService)

## **CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

The national Constitution & Bylaws Committee informs members about having proper governing documents at all levels of the organization. The success of any nonprofit organization depends on a sound governance structure that relies on well-written governing documents to frame the organization's fundamental policies for driving its mission. Governing documents must be carefully developed, properly written, and periodically reviewed and updated for an organization to carry out its goals and objectives. Everything done well, including serving the ALA's mission in communities across the United States, requires written, reasonable parameters for conducting the mission.

Updated documents allow questions about the Auxiliary, its governance, its programs, and eligibility to be answered easily--a benefit to all members. Unit members are entitled to a copy of the unit's governing documents. Well-written constitution, bylaws, and standing rules ensure the unit operates according to its agreed-upon rules.

## **EDUCATION**

The purpose of the national Education Committee is to promote 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.

The education of America's children is essential for the future of our nation. The American Legion Auxiliary joins with The American Legion to aid and support the basic rights of all children to receive a suitable education.

It is suggested the unit Education Committee thoroughly familiarize itself with existing sources of scholarships available in their own communities and states.

The American Legion Auxiliary National Organization annually awards the following scholarships:

1. Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship: Fifteen \$5,000 scholarships are given to high school seniors who are direct descendants of U.S. veterans who served during these periods:
  - a. April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918
  - b. Any time after December 7, 1941.
2. Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior Members: Five scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 each are awarded annually to Junior members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Current ALA Junior members who are high school seniors and who have been Junior members for the past three years are eligible to apply.
3. Non-traditional Student Scholarship: This scholarship helps people who are part of The American Legion Family pursue a college degree later in life or allow them to pick up where they left off when their studies were interrupted. Five scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each are awarded annually.
4. Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship: This scholarship is to reward Junior members who keep their membership into adulthood, the ALA offers the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students. Ten scholarships in the amount of \$2,500 each are awarded to a current college student.

Units should join with the Education Committee of the local American Legion post to support the development or expansion of legislation which would set up new scholarship sources for the increasing numbers of students reaching college age.

Units may also want to work with their post on The American Legion's Veterans in Community Schools. This activity 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, Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, or Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom and other current conflicts and operations.




Scholarship applications are available online at [www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org). Connect on social media at [www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAEducation](https://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAEducation)

## FINANCE

The purpose of the national Finance Committee is to oversee the development and implementation of general national financial policy of the organization and to provide oversight of budgeted funds, reporting any significant variance to the National Executive Committee. A unit may form a Finance Committee to oversee the administration, collection, and disbursement of the financial resources of the unit.

It is essential that a well-planned budget be one of the first goals of the administrative year. An adequate budget ensures there will be funds earmarked for the various Auxiliary programs throughout the year. A close review should be made each month to make sure that operating expenses are kept within the budget.

 **Note:** *Revenue from the distribution of poppies should be carried as a separate item in the books; such revenue is to be used solely for programs benefiting veterans and their families.*

Handling unit finances presents a high risk to the unit. It is recommended the Finance Committee ensure that proper internal controls are designed, implemented, and maintained.

The national Risk & Compliance Committee is authorized to consider matters related to (a) the financial statements of the organization and other official financial information provided to the public; and (b) the systems of internal controls, including overseeing compliance by management with applicable policies and procedures and risk management.

### Shared responsibilities of the Finance Committee and the Risk & Compliance Committee

The Finance Committee ensures budgets and financial statements are prepared; the Risk & Compliance Committee has oversight for ensuring reports are received, checked, and shared appropriately. The Finance Committee checks financial transactions; the Risk & Compliance Committee makes sure things are done according to policy and with adequate controls.

The Finance Committee provides guidance about what can be done; the Risk & Compliance Committee ensures independent oversight occurs.

Units should have an annual audit, as described in the “Duties of Unit Treasurer” section of this Unit Guide and must file an annual tax return. See “Federal Compliance and Tax Laws” for further information. It is recommended the unit engage a certified public accountant (CPA) or tax professional to aid in financial matters of the unit. Additionally, units may wish to consult with their Department Headquarters for a recommendation.

By provision of the ALA National Constitution and Bylaws, unit officers having custody of organization funds shall be bonded. The National Organization keeps a blanket position bond so that all unit officers are bonded. Departments reimburse National for this coverage based upon the number of units in the department. Contact your department secretary for more information about bond coverage and instructions on filing a claim.

Finally, it is important that the Finance Committee is familiar with federal and state compliance and tax laws.

## **ALA GIRLS STATE/ALA GIRLS NATION**

The purpose of ALA Girls State/Girls Nation is to provide an outstanding, unique, and coveted educational opportunity for the young women of our nation and instills the basic ideals and principles of American government and good citizenship.

ALA Girls State is a state-level government-in-action learning program in which American Legion Auxiliary members guide young women to become patriotic citizens and knowledgeable stewards of freedom and democracy.

ALA Girls State is a highly selective program designed for young women with above average academic standing, outstanding character, and exemplary leadership qualities. Administered by the individual states, units follow the selection and participation guidelines set up by their respective departments. Units work with schools to find candidates, but the final decision is up to the unit. It is crucial to continually cultivate the relationship with school personnel to ensure recruitment of qualified candidates.

## ***Sponsorship***

Funds for ALA Girls State are raised through unit activities. You can also reach out to the community and local businesses for financial support. The benefits of the program are often the strongest selling point when asking for additional support. The American Legion Auxiliary is still the sponsor and shall be known as such. Once the young women have attended their ALA Girls State session, each delegate should be invited to appear before their local unit, the contributing organizations, and their local high school to present a report on her experience at ALA Girls State.

## ***ALA Girls Nation***

ALA Girls Nation, a continuation of ALA Girls State, began in 1947 in Washington, D.C., with a focus on national government. Two girls are selected from each ALA Girls State program, and these “senators” meet in Washington, D.C. For seven days, the senators hold mock Senate sessions which require them to write, caucus, and debate bills; campaign for elected office; elect an ALA Girls Nation president and vice president; and work together to pass legislation. The young women take part in a variety of other activities, including daily flag ceremonies and a community service project to benefit veterans. The ALA Girls Nation senators get the unique opportunity to meet with their respective state senators on Capitol Hill. The week is often capped with meeting the President of the United States at The White House or another high-ranking government official.

The national ALA Girls Nation committee supervises the activity of the senators and reports to each department about the participation of their senators.



Connect on social media at  
[www.Facebook.com/ALAGirlsNation](http://www.Facebook.com/ALAGirlsNation)

## **HISTORY**

Even though there is no longer be a national history committee, it is still vital that each unit collect and preserve the history of the American Legion Auxiliary through photographs,

documents, personal mementos, and other artifacts. The National Organization displays ALA national artifacts in the Cavalcade of Memories museum at ALA National Headquarters. Members are invited to tour the Cavalcade when visiting Indianapolis. Please contact National Headquarters at [ALAHQ@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:ALAHQ@ALAforVeterans.org) regarding guidelines for historical contributions and to arrange a tour. Departments and units are encouraged to participate by creating their own Cavalcade of Memories.



Connect on social media at  
[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAHistorians](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAHistorians)

## **JUNIOR ACTIVITIES**

The ALA Junior Activities program inspires active participation in American Legion Auxiliary members aged 17 and under so they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their ALA membership into adulthood. Enrollment in the Auxiliary of many daughters of American Legion members prompted the formation of Junior groups within many units.

Junior members do not form a separate organization but are members of the American Legion Auxiliary, grouped separately so they may be given a program within the scope of their years and understanding. Junior membership is the training ground for active Auxiliary membership. Junior Activities instill in Junior members the ideals of the Auxiliary and present opportunities to teach the ALA's founding principles of justice, freedom, loyalty, and democracy.

Junior groups function under the guidance of an advisor and committee from the Senior ALA members. Organized as a committee of the unit, Juniors conduct their own meetings and carry out their own activities. The Junior officers shall be known as honorary Junior officers. Their work should be coordinated with the work of the Senior group, and they should have a role in regular unit activities whenever possible so they will feel they are truly a part of the Auxiliary.

Americanism should be a major focus for Juniors and help teach patriotism, citizenship, and loyalty to American ideals and principles. Most Auxiliary activities can be adapted to



allow Juniors some level of participation in all phases of the year's program.

Success of the Junior group is dependent on leadership provided by the unit. The unit Junior advisor should be someone capable of managing and instructing children of all ages and having the energy and ability to keep interest alive while organizing activities designed to carry out the purposes of the organization.

### ***ALA Junior Patch Program***

Junior members are encouraged to take part in the Auxiliary's Junior Activities Patch Program. Completing required criteria for patches provides Junior members an opportunity to increase their knowledge of the various aspects of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Patches are available on topics such as Americanism, health and fitness, and leadership. Regardless of their location, Juniors can be involved with the program as part of their active Junior group or as an individual member.

### ***ALA Junior Activities Handbook***

The *ALA Junior Activities Handbook* has details for organizing and directing a program for Junior members, as well as information on eligibility, ceremonies for initiations, installations and graduations, contests, meetings, and programs.

The *ALA Junior Activities Handbook* can be downloaded from [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org). It can also be purchased from American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales toll free at 1-888-453-4466 or online at [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org).



Connect on social media at  
[www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors](http://www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors)

## **LEADERSHIP**

The purpose of the national Leadership Committee is to find new leaders, develop existing leaders, and enhance members' knowledge to better equip members with the confidence and skills to carry out the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

The key to good leadership is to build confidence in those you lead, treat all members with dignity and respect, and to be a good listener.

No matter the experience, education, or technical skills, anyone can be trained to be a leader if they are willing to make a commitment, devote their time and energy to listen, learn, and communicate.

### ***ALA Unit Member of the Year Award***

American Legion Auxiliary units all have hardworking, dedicated members who give their time and talent to further the mission of our organization but have no desire to serve beyond the unit level. To recognize such dedicated service, each unit may select one candidate for Unit Member of the Year in its department. Each department will select the Unit Member of the Year for that department. The member will be honored at the National Convention. Contact your Department Headquarters for more information.



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALeadership](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALeadership)

## **LEGISLATIVE**

The national Legislative Program provides information and help to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. Through lobbying efforts, The American Legion Family can influence legislation to benefit veterans, military, their families, as well as our communities, states, and nation.

### ***National and State Legislative Committee***

The national Legislative Committee works closely with the national Legislative Commission of The American Legion. The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary have offices in Washington, D.C., and continually promote the passage of legislation supported by The American Legion. Departments of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary also have Legislative committees which function in a comparable manner within the states.

The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are non-partisan organizations that do not promote, advance, or support any party, candidate, or policy, but advocate solely for The American Legion's position on legislative issues on behalf of veterans. When legislation important to The American Legion comes before legislative bodies for consideration, appeals are distributed to members at all levels for support on these issues.

### ***How Legislative Policy is Formed***

The department conventions formulate the legislative program for each department and follow the action of The American Legion department convention. They outline the policy to be followed regarding measures to come before their respective state legislatures.

### ***Legislative Work for Units***

The legislative activities of the unit may be handled by the unit president, by a standing unit committee, or by a special committee appointed to conduct legislative work at critical times.

These legislative matters usually pertain to some aspect of Auxiliary work, such as Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, to support legislation beneficial to veterans; Children & Youth, securing legislation to benefit children, particularly those of veterans and servicemembers; National Security, supporting legislation that provides the necessary means to promote a strong national defense, strengthen military families, and prepare our community for response to natural and man-made disasters; and Americanism, supporting the passage of legislation to promote better citizenship. The arousing of public sentiment in support of such measures might well be left to the committee under which they fall, in conjunction with the Public Relations Committee to enhance public awareness of issues at critical junctures.

Unit members are encouraged to form relationships with their legislators so that when issues of critical importance to The American Legion and Auxiliary arise, they are poised to make contact, urging them to take the action desired.

The American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Advocacy Guide is designed to help members at all levels with building and fostering relationships with their local, state, and national legislators. The guide provides a wealth of information, including how to set up and conduct visits with legislators, tools to guide written and email correspondence, and phone contact details to advocate for legislation supported by The American Legion. Contact your department to obtain copies or download for free from the national website.

All members, particularly unit Legislative Committee chairs, should familiarize themselves with The American Legion's legislative agenda at [www.Legion.org/legislative](http://www.Legion.org/legislative).



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative)

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The purpose of the national Membership Committee is to promote the benefits of American Legion Auxiliary membership and to retain and recruit a diverse, active membership to carry out the American Legion Auxiliary mission and programs. See Chapter 2 for more on Membership. Membership chairs can connect and share recruiting ideas on the social media page!



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAMembership](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAMembership)

## **NATIONAL SECURITY**

The purpose of the ALA National Security Committee is to maintain and promote a strong national defense, strengthen our military families, and prepare our population for response to natural and other disasters.

### ***Unit Activities***

Units are encouraged to have a National Security chair. However, many of the activities that support the mission of this program can be done in conjunction with other activities and programs.

Supporting a strong military means supporting their families on the home front. It is each unit's responsibility to identify these

families in their local communities and ensure their day-to-day needs are met before, during, and after deployment. Collaborate with The American Legion Family and other organizations and agencies that work hand in hand with servicemembers and their families.

The local chapter of the USO, a National Guard armory, or an active-duty military installation can be approached to participate in “welcome home” activities or Blue Star Banner programs. Another show of support for military families would be to fly a POW/MIA flag or conduct a POW/MIA ceremony at unit events.

Pay special attention to the needs of military children in your unit’s community by incorporating these kids in Junior member and Children & Youth programming.

Your American Legion post home is an ideal setting for hosting programs recommended by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that assist members and communities in preparing for and/or responding to natural and manmade disasters.



Connect on social media at

[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANat/Sec](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALANat/Sec)

## **POPPY**

The national Poppy Committee educates our membership and the public concerning the poppy’s significance and the financial benefit for veterans, servicemembers, and their families through its distribution.

Poppy distribution is an important part of the American Legion Auxiliary mission and tradition. Dress in attire branded with the American Legion Auxiliary emblem, wear your best smile, and be prepared to answer questions about the poppy and how poppy funds are used.

History of the poppy and the American Legion Auxiliary:

- In the spring of 1919, amidst complete devastation, poppies bloomed in abundance on the battlefields of France where so many men had fallen in battle. A replica of this poppy has become the memorial flower of The American Legion Family.

- The American Legion was the first national organization to adopt the poppy as its memorial flower, having taken this action at the National Convention in Cleveland, September 27-29, 1920.
- The American Legion Auxiliary adopted the poppy as its memorial flower at its organizing convention held in Kansas City in October 1921.
- When the American Legion Auxiliary adopted the poppy, it pledged 100 percent of profits from poppy distribution to welfare relief for servicemembers and their families, thus fulfilling the true meaning of the poppy: an emblem of faith, faith which is being kept with all who died through service to the living.
- To protect the memorial poppy from the inroads of commercialism, the American Legion Auxiliary adopted a national poppy program at the St. Paul Convention in 1924.
- Through the American Legion Auxiliary poppy program, hundreds of thousands of dollars are paid annually to needy and disabled servicemembers for making poppies.
- Proceeds from the distribution of millions of poppies annually under the guidance of the American Legion Auxiliary amount to millions of dollars. The method of distribution varies in each department, depending upon the nature of demands for help.

### ***Uses of the Poppy Fund***

How Poppy funds CAN be used

- For the rehabilitation of veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917
- For the welfare of the families of veterans of the above-named period
- For the rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals
- For the welfare of veterans, active military personnel, and the families of veterans and active

military personnel of the above-named period where financial and medical need is clear

- For poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy Fund

### How Poppy funds CANNOT be used

- Any general operating fund of a department, unit, or post
- Any community service project that does not directly benefit the welfare of an individual veteran/military servicemember or the welfare of his/her family
- General maintenance, enhancement or improvement projects of American Legion or Auxiliary facilities, including adding ramp(s) to a post home
- Investments, even those that would bring profit to the unit or post
- POW/MIA programs
- Memberships, including other veteran support organizations such as Gold Star Mothers
- Contributions to, or payouts from, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- ALA Girls State/ALA Girls Nation fees
- Flags or flagpoles
- Scholarships which do not restrict eligibility solely to military servicemembers or their children, or where the financial need is not clear
- Mileage, travel, or lodging expenses; registration of conference fees; or costs incurred by a person--including ALA members, volunteers, and staff--to attend any meeting, conference, or event about veterans
- Attire or uniforms used by volunteers or staff in promoting or conducting ALA program activity or business

Use of poppy funds is allowable for care packages only when it is for a welfare need, such as first aid topical treatment or

vital hygiene items, as opposed to comfort needs, such as leisure items like baked goods or books.

### ***National Poppy Day®***

Congress designated the Friday before Memorial Day as National Poppy Day. Units should plan accordingly to distribute poppies and share the poppy story in their communities. Remember: Anyone can take part in National Poppy Day. Here are a few simple ways:

- Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.
- Distribute poppies to friends, coworkers, and family and tell everyone why.
- Collect donations at your workplace to give to the ALA Poppy Program.
- Tell the story on social media of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support on National Poppy Day.
- Accept a poppy and donate if you see a member of The American Legion Family in your neighborhood distributing poppies.

The public is given an opportunity each year to help in the significant work of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, as well as an opportunity to pay tribute to all who died in service, by wearing a poppy on National Poppy Day.

The ALA Poppy Program Guide is a particularly useful tool having answers to frequently asked questions about the American Legion Auxiliary poppy program. It is available as a free download from the national website at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) or for purchase through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org).



Connect on social media at  
[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAPoppy)

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The national Public Relations Committee works collaboratively with all levels of the organization to create, implement, and support communication that advances the mission of the



American Legion Auxiliary and positively projects our image and programs to the public.

The success of our programs is due to the support and volunteerism of our members. The unit PR chair should be included in program planning and be informed of newsworthy activities or events at the unit and department levels. It is the goal of the PR chairs and committees to use all forms of communication to tell the media and our communities who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

The goal of public relations is to establish and maintain a positive public image. It covers every kind of communication, from casual conversation to speaking at a public meeting about the ALA, to carefully prepared news releases for the media about an upcoming event. It is communicating to the public the value the American Legion Auxiliary provides to the community and to the country. While not a complicated job, it is vitally important and involves not only the Public Relations Committee, but also every member of the Auxiliary to help spread the word of the ALA's mission.

Social media is an important part of public relations. Units should have at least one social media account (Facebook, Instagram, X, etc.). If the PR chair needs assistance maintaining the page, a committee can be organized to create content for the account. Be sure to have more than one administrator for the account. It is important for the account to properly identify the unit. Include the unit's city, state, and unit number (i.e., "American Legion Auxiliary Unit 123 of Indianapolis, IN"). Make sure the account does not refer to the ALA as the "women's Auxiliary" or any variety of that phrase. Remember: The ALA now has male ALA members.

Effective public relations require the PR chair to set up a good relationship with local media. Appointing a committee to make personal contact with newspapers, radio, and television stations is a great first step toward establishing a relationship between the unit and the media. Sharing interesting and relevant information with the public about the American Legion Auxiliary, its programs, and its mission will increase the visibility and public awareness of the ALA.

## ***Community Programming***

Another PR option to explore is community programming. Many radio and television stations provide airtime for public service announcements. Locally produced talk shows, spots on human-interest stories, community access television, and community calendars are other possibilities for media exposure.

The unit PR chair should meet with the staff of local media outlets to explain the unit's goals for its programs and ask for suggestions on how these programs can be promoted. Requesting the professional opinion and help from your media contacts can help build rapport.

The mission and story of the American Legion Auxiliary is an excellent value to America's communities. Using the right approach, knowing your programs, and establishing goodwill with the local media will allow you to bring invaluable support to all your program activities.

## ***Auxiliary Magazine***

The quarterly *Auxiliary* magazine is the official publication of the American Legion Auxiliary and serves to promote the ALA's mission. It is published by National Headquarters, and senior members receive a subscription as a benefit of joining the Auxiliary.

Contained within *Auxiliary* is a section called *Impact ALA!*, a best practice showcase focused on information related to specific American Legion Auxiliary programs, departments, units, and members. There is also a direct link between the member and the national organization through letters to the editor and articles by national committee chairs.

## ***e-Newsletters and the Internet***

Units should actively move forward to develop their own websites or social media pages to highlight and promote ALA programs and the unit's involvement in and impact on their local communities.

ALA eNews — This electronic newsletter is published monthly and focuses on programs, activities, and events. One-topic eblasts are also sent to announce special events or news.



Connect on social media at

*[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPublicRelations](http://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAPublicRelations)*

## **RISK & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE**

The American Legion Auxiliary's national Audit Committee was renamed to the Risk & Compliance Committee to accurately reflect the duties of a national committee and meet the governance expectations of the multi-faceted IRS Form 990 for nonprofits. The national committee serves in a risk management role for the National Organization. The committee's foremost responsibility is to ensure the American Legion Auxiliary, as a corporate entity, 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 keeping with the vision, expectations, and requirements of the IRS Form 990, the Risk & Compliance Committee operates at arm's length from the ALA and reviews, evaluates, and checks the organization's policies, standards, compliance, and potential for risk. Risk & Compliance Committee members have a strong background and experience in financial reporting and auditing, risk management, corporate governance or management, and have no conflicts of interest. Risk & Compliance Committee members must be unbiased and do not currently serve in ALA national leadership positions within the organization or serve on other ALA national committees except for the liaisons from the national Finance Committee and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

A unit may have the Risk & Compliance Committee oversee or conduct an audit of the unit's books as well as manage unit compliance requirements of the IRS Form 990 or the unit may hire a CPA to conduct the audit.

## **VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION**

The national Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee is committed to the promotion of programs and services that aid

and enhance the lives of veterans and their families, ensuring that they may live their best life possible.

American Legion Auxiliary members are the go-to resource for our veterans and their families. We are proud of our legacy of volunteer service and wish to continue this tradition for years to come.

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation work includes bringing physical comfort and mental cheer to veterans in hospitals and helping them to re-establish themselves in life. The American Legion Auxiliary cooperates with The American Legion in ALL its endeavors on behalf of veterans.

There are many opportunities to serve veterans both inside and outside U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities. Reach out to local mission-compatible organizations that focus on serving veterans, servicemembers, and their families. Develop collaborations with like-minded organizations to efficiently deliver the Auxiliary's mission throughout the community as well as the department.

ALA Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers is a valuable resource available both online as a free download at [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org) and for purchase through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales.

The guide has information on the types of volunteer services available – both at VA facilities across the country and through the ALA's Service to Veterans. It also has the most up-to-date information on the VA&R Committee and its structure.



Connect on social media at  
[www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR](https://www.Facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR)

# CHAPTER 11: AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY FOUNDATION

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation, provides a way for individuals and corporations to support the American Legion Auxiliary's charitable and educational outreach programs through endowed gifts, grants, and sponsorships.

The ALA Foundation supports America's core values by providing additional resources to ensure the success of the American Legion Auxiliary's programs and services benefiting the lives of our veterans, military, and their families.

## TYPES OF FOUNDATION GRANTS

The ALA Foundation offers four types of grants to American Legion Auxiliary entities:

### **Veteran Projects Fund Grants**

If your ALA unit or department finds a specific one-time need for local veterans or active military, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation's Veteran Projects Fund may be able to lend a helping hand. The proposal must address a specific new need that supports veterans and military.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation will fund new projects in the amount of \$1,000 – \$10,000. Applicants can be awarded a Veteran Projects Fund grant once in a 12-month period.

### **Veterans Creative Arts Festival Grants**

Veterans Creative Arts Festival (VCAF) grants aid in the well-being of veterans by introducing them to art therapy. Whether used for workshops, preparation for, or facilitation of local competitions which feed into the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, grant funds may be requested for needs that contribute to this effort.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation will fund Veterans Creative Arts Festival grants up to \$2,500. Applicants can be awarded a grant once in a 12-month period.

### **Mission in Action Grants**

The Mission in Action grant can help members be recognized in the community for all their good works throughout the year. Whether it's storage totes to transport items to a local food pantry, a branded vehicle or trailer to deliver meals to homeless veterans, or signage and banners for your department's ALA Girls State program, the Mission in Action grant will help you work the mission while promoting the organization behind it all.

The proposal must address a specific ALA branding need that will help members with mission delivery and be recognizable in the community. The project must support the ALA mission or an ALA program.

The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation will fund Mission in Action grants up to \$5,000. Applicants can be awarded a grant once in a 12-month period.

### **Subgrants**

American Legion Auxiliary units or departments that have identified a source for grant funding from a foundation or corporation that requires the recipient to be a 501(c)(3) can have the ALA Foundation serve as the recipient. The ALA Foundation will then, in turn, subgrant to the unit or department according to the terms and conditions of the grantor. For subgranting of third-party grants to be considered, they must support the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

## **WAYS TO DONATE TO THE FOUNDATION**

*[www.ALAFoundation.org/donate](http://www.ALAFoundation.org/donate)*

Making an online donation to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is easy! On the online donation form, you can select the fund to which you would like to donate —

- Mission Endowment Fund
- Veteran Projects Fund
- Veterans Creative Arts Festival Fund


## Checks

Checks should be made payable to the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation and mailed to:

American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters  
ATTN: Development Division  
3450 Founders Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46268

## Planned Giving

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 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.

 Visit [www.ALAFoundation.org/planned-giving](http://www.ALAFoundation.org/planned-giving) for more details on planned giving, and to download the ALA Planned Giving Guide, plus the confidential charitable bequest intention form. !

## Tributes/Memorials

Making a tribute or memorial donation to the American Legion Auxiliary in honor 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 donate in lieu of flowers to the American Legion Auxiliary or American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, the person or family you are honoring will receive an acknowledgment from National Headquarters informing them of your gift without disclosing the amount. Tribute and memorial gifts in any amount can be made to celebrate achievements or remember ones who have passed away.



# CHAPTER 12: NATIONAL DIVISIONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

American Legion Auxiliary departments are grouped into five divisions: Central, Eastern, Northwestern, Southern, and Western. One national division vice president is elected from each division every year. ALA division groupings:

## Central Division

Illinois	Kansas	Ohio
Indiana	Michigan	West Virginia
Iowa	Missouri	Wisconsin

## Eastern Division

Connecticut	Maryland	New York
Delaware	Massachusetts	Pennsylvania
District of Columbia	New Hampshire	Rhode Island
Maine	New Jersey	Vermont

## Northwestern Division

Colorado	Nebraska	South Dakota
Minnesota	North Dakota	Wyoming
Montana		

## **Southern Division**

Alabama	Louisiana	South Carolina
Arkansas	Mississippi	Tennessee
Florida	North Carolina	Texas
Georgia	Oklahoma	Tennessee
Kentucky	Puerto Rico	Virginia

## **Western Division**

Alaska	Idaho	Oregon
Arizona	Nevada	Utah
California	New Mexico	Washington
Hawaii		

## **A FINAL WORD**

Remember that you have an entire organization to help you and your unit. Your district and department officers and program chairs are available to answer your questions or brainstorm solutions to problems. Your department headquarters is the final authority for members and units and has a wealth of history and knowledge to share. In this unprecedented time of continuous conflict, our country needs the volunteers in the American Legion Auxiliary to support not just the veterans and the military, but their families on the home front as well.

**We are a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families.**

# APPENDIX A: SAMPLE UNIT CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Units are separate entities that operate independently as affiliates of the American Legion Auxiliary National Organization. Units are governed by their own constitution, bylaws, and standing rules. The formulation and adoption of a constitution and bylaws should be one of the first acts of a new unit. Contact your Secretary of State's office for laws on non-profits in your state before writing your constitution and bylaws; consult a local non-profit attorney for help if desired. For example, in Indiana, it is mandated a non-profit have at least three directors (officers). A committee of three or more members, with the unit president as an ex-officio member, should be appointed by the president to draft a constitution and bylaws.

The unit's governing documents should make provisions for the governance of the unit which are not already determined by the department and ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. They usually include the following: amount of unit dues; frequency of unit meetings; whether electronic meetings will be used (as permitted under state law); the composition of the executive committee; what constitutes a quorum at meetings; how vacancies of offices shall be filled; the procedure for admission of applicants for membership; the method of amending the constitution and bylaws; discipline of members; and similar matters.

The National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules—the acts of National Conventions and the National Executive Committee—constitute the fundamental law of the American Legion Auxiliary. Just as the acts of the department convention and the Department Executive Committees must conform to them or be rendered invalid, the constitution of a unit must conform to the constitution of the department in which it is located. Any provision of a unit constitution which conflicts with the constitution of the department or with any action of the department convention or Department Executive Committee is invalid and without effect.

# Sample Unit Constitution and Bylaws

This is only an example of a constitution and bylaws and is provided as a reference only; is *not* required to be adopted. It is recommended that you consult with a professional parliamentarian when drafting or making changes to your unit's bylaws. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, has sample wording for many of these sections, including electronic meetings.

## Preamble

For God and country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our association in all wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion; to consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

## Constitution

### Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be American Legion Auxiliary, (*post name*) Unit No. \_\_\_\_\_, Department of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Article II - Nature

**Section 1.** The American Legion Auxiliary is a civilian organization.

## Article III - Object

**Section 1.** The object of the American Legion Auxiliary, (*post name*) Unit No. \_\_\_\_\_, Department of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution.

## Article IV - Eligibility

**Section 1.** Eligibility for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary is determined by The American Legion. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the:

- (1) Grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and
- (2) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918 and any time after December 7, 1941 who being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;
- (3) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and
- (4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.

**Section 2.** There shall be two classes of membership, Senior and Junior.

a. Senior membership shall be composed of members over the age of 18 years, provided, however, that a wife under the age of 18 years, who is eligible under Section 1 of this article, shall be classed as a Senior member.

b. Junior membership shall consist of that group under the age of 18 years, whose activities shall be supervised by the Senior membership. Upon reaching the age of 18 years, Junior members shall automatically be admitted into Senior membership with full privileges.

c. Dues of both classes shall be paid annually or for life.

## **Article V - Unit Officers**

**Section 1.** The Unit shall elect annually a president, a vice president (*additional vice presidents if desired or required by your state*), secretary, treasurer, chaplain, historian, and sergeant-at-arms who shall serve until their successors are duly elected or as otherwise provided.

## **Article VI - Executive Committee**

**Section 1.** There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall consist of the officers and members-at-large elected by the Unit.

## **Article VII - Amendments**

**Section 1.** This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular Unit meeting if the proposed amendments have been read at the previous meeting or distributed in advance.

**Section 2.** This constitution shall be automatically amended to conform to the National and Department Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules of the American Legion Auxiliary.

## **Bylaws**

### **Article I - Executive Committee**

**Section 1.** Between meetings, the government and management of this Unit shall be entrusted to the Executive Committee and all proceedings of said committee shall be presented to the Unit at the next meeting for approval.

**Section 2.** A vacancy existing in the Executive Committee from any cause other than the end of a term shall be filled by a majority vote of the entire committee. A person so elected shall hold office for the unexpired term of the member succeeded.

**Section 3.** One-third of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 4.** Special meetings may be called by order of the president or on written request of at least three members of the Executive Committee. Uniform notice of such special meeting shall be given to all members of the Executive Committee; and, except in extreme emergency, shall be given at least 48 hours in advance. At special meetings, only the business specified in advance shall be transacted.

### **Article II - Duties and Powers of Officers**

**Section 1.** Duties of the Unit President: It shall be the duty of the president to preside at all meetings of the Unit and Unit Executive Committee; to enforce strict observance of the constitution and bylaws; to appoint members of the standing committees; to create such other committees and appoint members as the president considers advisable; to perform such other duties as custom and parliamentary usage require; and to appoint all officers not otherwise provided for.

**Section 2.** Duties of the Vice President: The vice president shall assist the president when called upon and, in the absence of the president, perform the duties and shall succeed to the office in case of death, resignation, or removal.

**Section 3.** Duties of the Secretary: It shall be the duty of the secretary to record the minutes of all the meetings of the Unit; to act as custodian of all books, papers, and records; to keep a



record of names and addresses of the members, showing the source of their eligibility; to send out such notices as are directed by the president; to process the correspondence of the Unit; to keep on file in a comprehensive manner copies of all the correspondence sent and received; and perform such other duties as shall be required by the president.

**Section 4.** Duties of the Treasurer: It shall be the duty of the Unit treasurer to receive all money belonging to the Unit and to account for them. The treasurer shall keep two separate funds: a general fund and a poppy fund. All poppy donations shall be placed in the poppy fund and be used only to help veterans or active-duty military and their families following the poppy guidelines of the national organization. The treasurer shall keep all receipts and account for expenditures in a monthly report and such other reports as may be considered necessary by the Unit Executive Committee. Unit accounts shall be audited annually. All current bills shall be paid before transferring all funds, books, and papers belonging to the Unit to the treasurer's successor.

**Section 5.** Duties of the Chaplain: It shall be the duty of the chaplain to offer prayer at the opening and closing of each meeting, and to perform such other duties as the president may direct.

**Section 6.** Duties of the Historian: It shall be the duty of the Unit historian to compile historical records of the Unit and to make a report to the Department.

**Section 7.** Duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms: It shall be the duty of the sergeant-at-arms to preserve order at the meetings of the Unit and to perform such other duties as may be requested by the president.

**Section 8.** Where considered necessary, a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary may be elected to carry out the duties normally performed by the secretary.

**Section 9.** The office of secretary may be combined with that of treasurer and called "secretary-treasurer." (*if allowed under state law*)

## Article III - Dues

**Section 1.** The annual membership dues of this Unit shall be as stated in the standing rules, paid annually or for life, and shall include the Department and national per capita.

**Section 2.** A member not paying annual dues, including the Unit, Department, and national assessments by Jan. 31, shall be classified as delinquent, and shall be suspended from membership privileges.

A member considered delinquent for not paying dues by December 31 of the current membership year shall be classified as expired. Such expired member may rejoin as an active member under the member's original join date without interruption of continuous years of membership, and membership privileges reinstated, by payment of all past dues. A member considered expired for not paying dues by December 31 of the current membership year may rejoin, with a new join date, at any time in the future by re-establishing eligibility and making application as a new member.

**Article IV - Unit Meetings** *(if electronic meetings are authorized in your state, include a statement here authorizing them, with details in the standing rules. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12<sup>th</sup> edition, has examples.)*

**Section 1.** Regular meetings of the Auxiliary Unit shall be held at a time and place as specified in the standing rules.

**Section 2.** An annual meeting of this Unit shall be held in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ each year for the purpose of electing officers and receiving annual reports.

**Section 3.** Special meetings of this Unit may be called by \_\_\_\_ *(include detail on who may call special meetings and the number of days required).*

## Article V - Election

**Section 1.** Election may be by voice vote if there is only one candidate; but where there is more than one candidate for the

same office, election shall be by ballot and the majority of votes cast shall be necessary to elect.

**Section 2.** Delegates and alternates to a Department convention shall be elected at a Unit meeting duly called for that purpose not less than two weeks prior to the convention. Alternates shall have priority in the order of their election.

**Section 3.** All officers and executive board members shall serve for one term or until their successors are elected. *(define the term of office here)*

**Article VI – Committees** *(name the standing committees here but put details in the standing rules)*

## **Article VII - Transfers**

A member who is not subject to suspension or membership revocation is eligible to transfer membership to another Unit if they have paid their membership dues to their current Unit for either the current year or immediate past membership year. A member transferring to a new Unit must pay current year dues to either their current Unit or the Unit into which they wish to transfer.

Transfer is final upon verification of eligibility, evidence of paid membership, and acceptance of the transferee by the new Unit.

Evidence of paid membership:

1. American Legion Auxiliary membership card
2. Verification of membership by ALA department or National Headquarters membership records
3. Other documentation verifying payment of current or immediate past year membership dues, such as a canceled check or receipt; or
4. When verifying documentation is not available, a sworn statement that the member's membership dues payment was tendered.

## Article VIII - Discipline

*Consult Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, for suggested parliamentary discipline procedures. Remember you need to adopt a code of ethics or conduct to enforce standards of conduct and that all discipline must be fundamentally fair.*

## Article IX - Parliamentary Authority

*Section 1.* The Unit organization shall be governed by the current edition of "Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised" on all points not covered by this constitution and bylaws.

## Article X - Amendments

**Section 1.** These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a regular Unit meeting if the proposed amendments have been read at the previous Unit meeting.

**Section 2.** These bylaws shall be automatically amended to conform to the national and Department constitutions and bylaws and standing rules of the American Legion Auxiliary.

*\*\*End Sample Unit Constitution and Bylaws\*\**

## Standing Rules Examples

A standing rule relates to the details of the administration of a society, and which can be adopted or changed the same way as any other act of the deliberative assembly. Standing rules can be suspended by a majority vote for the duration of the session, but not for longer. Examples of standing rules include wearing name badges, signing a guest register, or using recording devices.

Following is an example of the standing rules from the ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules (see more at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)).

# Sample Standing Rules

## I. UNITS

1. Units of the American Legion Auxiliary are separate entities that operate independently as affiliates of the American Legion Auxiliary National Organization. Units shall be governed by their own Unit Constitution and/or Bylaws which shall not conflict with the National Constitution and Bylaws, National Standing Rules, National rules and policies, Department Constitution and Bylaws, or Department rules and policies. Units may refer to the Unit Guide, the Manual of Ceremonies, and other publications of the National and Department organizations for guidance in the conduct of their programs and the administration of Unit activities.
2. Units have the authority to set annual Unit dues. Annual dues collected by the Unit shall include Department and National dues. Units shall send Department and National dues according to the policies adopted by the National Executive Committee.
3. As provided in the National Bylaws, the minimum membership of a Unit shall be ten (10) Senior members. A Department Headquarters Unit shall have no minimum membership requirement.

No person may, at any time, be a member of more than one Unit.

A new member joining the American Legion Auxiliary prior to the annual National Convention must pay full current annual dues to be eligible for full membership rights, privileges, and benefits.

A new member joining after the National Convention may be given by their Unit full membership rights, privileges, and benefits from the date the dues are received through December 31 of the following year.

A member who is not subject to suspension or membership revocation is eligible to transfer

membership to another Unit if the member has paid membership dues to the current Unit for either the current year or immediate past membership year. A member transferring to a new Unit must pay current year dues to either the current Unit or to the Unit into which the member wishes to transfer.

Evidence of paid membership includes:

- American Legion Auxiliary membership card.
- Verification of membership by ALA Department or National Headquarters membership records.
- Other documentation verifying payment of current or immediate past year membership dues such as a cancelled check or receipt; or
- When verifying documentation is not available, a sworn statement that the member's membership dues payment was tendered.

A member whose dues are paid up-to-date and who is not subject to suspension or membership revocation shall be considered in good standing and the member shall be entitled to full membership rights, privileges, and benefits in the new Unit.

4. A valid American Legion Auxiliary membership card shall reflect the member's current pertinent membership information, and may either be:
  - a) A preprinted Auxiliary membership card conveyed by a Unit or Department.
  - b) A preprinted Auxiliary membership card mailed via the United States Postal Service or couriered via a professional delivery service.
  - c) An Auxiliary membership card electronically or digitally printed from a new membership generated online or a renewed membership paid online or by phone via the American Legion Auxiliary website online membership system; an official American Legion Auxiliary membership card printed online must bear the electronic signature of the American Legion Auxiliary national secretary and be hand-signed by the member.

An American Legion Auxiliary membership card electronically printed online as described above in

subsection 4(c) carries all the American Legion Auxiliary rights and privileges the same as does a pre-printed stock Auxiliary membership card as described above in subsections 4(a) and (b).

5. A Legion post has no authority to regulate a Unit and vice versa.
6. The Unit has the responsibility for the discipline of its members. A member disciplined by the member's Unit may appeal the Unit's disciplinary action in writing to the Department Executive Committee.
7. Disciplinary actions against members, including membership suspensions, are not appealable to the National Organization. All discipline must be imposed following the principle of fundamental fairness. A Department may discipline a Unit for failure to discipline a member.
8. When a Unit ceases to function, or its charter has been canceled, the charter and all Unit records and funds shall be immediately sent to Department Headquarters which has no obligation to assume any of the Unit's debt or other obligations.
9. A Unit whose charter has been canceled by its Department without the Unit's consent may appeal the Department's decision to the National Executive Committee as provided in these Standing Rules.

*\*\*End Sample Standing Rules\*\**

## 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 unless they have been distributed in advance. 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.
- **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; 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 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 prepares a list of such unfinished business from the last meeting for the presiding officer. Only when the unfinished business has been disposed of can any new business be brought forward, unless the regular order of business has been changed 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 chair to take charge.
- **Closing Prayer:** The president asks the chaplain to offer the closing prayer.



- Charge: The president may state, “Until 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.”)

# APPENDIX B: FUNDAMENTALS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

This information is to help unit officers in conducting the business of the American Legion Auxiliary in formal meeting settings, both in person and virtual meetings. The information contained here is based on Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

## Basic Parliamentary Principles

Parliamentary procedures exist to facilitate efficiently conducted meetings that protect the rights of members. Fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure include the following:

- Fairness of process and courtesy for all.
- Only one thing, speaker, motion, or action at a time.
- The majority rules.
- The minority must be heard.
- Each proposition is entitled to a full and free debate.
- The purpose is to facilitate action, not to obstruct it.

## Common Definitions

- Parliamentary procedure: Rules by which meetings of deliberative assemblies, societies, boards, clubs, etc., are formally conducted.
- Chair: Short form of the word "chairman," used to refer to the member conducting the meeting. Chair, chairman, and chairperson are all correct and may be used at the preference of the chair.
- Gavel: The traditional mallet used by the presiding officer to keep order. It is to be used on the table and not on members.
- Quorum: The number of members needed to conduct business. Quorum cannot be suspended.
- Agenda: A list of the order of business to be considered.

- Minutes: A record of the meeting kept by the secretary.
- Adjourn: To end a meeting officially.
- Amendment: A specific proposal to change an organization's entity/governance documents.

## **Roles for Those Leading and Attending a Meeting**

Roles of those responsible for the process of conducting the business of a meeting:

1. Chair: The presiding officer, usually the president (or vice president if president is unavailable), and is responsible for:
  - Keeping the meeting on schedule and within time limits.
  - Remains neutral by not engaging in discussions from the chair.
  - Expedites the transaction of business by preparing the agenda and keeping order during the meetings.
  - States motions that are in order or rules them out of order; asks for discussion, asks for a second to the motion, puts motion to vote, and declares the result of the vote.
2. Vice President: Presides in the absence of the president or whenever the president temporarily vacates the chair (e.g., so the president can join a discussion on a motion).
3. Parliamentarian: The parliamentarian is a consultant who advises the president and other officers, committees, and members on parliamentary procedure. During a meeting, it is a purely advisory role. Only the chair can make rulings.

Duties of the parliamentarian before a meeting: reviews the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible procedural problems that may arise; reviews and knows the bylaws and standing rules of the organization; works with committee members who request help in preparing reports for the meeting.

4. **Secretary:** In the absence of the president and vice president, the secretary calls the meeting to order and entertains a motion for a temporary chair. The secretary sees that minutes of the meeting are taken – whether taken by the secretary or a designee – including recording the type of meeting (regular, special, etc.), place, date, hour, presiding officer, all motions and their disposal, names of makers of motions.
5. **Treasurer:** Custodian of funds of the organization; receives and disburses them upon authority from the organization. The treasurer reports on budget performance and the financial health of the organization to the assembly.
6. **Members:** All members whose current membership dues are paid and are not subject to suspension or membership revocation are considered members in good standing and are entitled to all rights and privileges of membership, including those aspiring to and holding office, and voting in the ALA.

Rise and address the chair if you want to discuss the motion under consideration or to offer another motion.

7. **Committees:** Members of committees have no authority except that which is granted by bylaws or by a vote of the assembly.

Members of committees should not conduct business of the committee without a quorum present. A majority of committee members constitutes a quorum unless the assembly orders otherwise.

Motions and resolutions originating in committees need no seconding if the committee members are also members of the governing body. They already have been seconded by committee action.

## **Presenting a Motion**

A proposal for action is made in the form of a motion. For the group to consider a motion, at least two members must be in favor of it. The first member makes the motion. The second member seconds the motion to show agreement that the

motion should come before the assembly. Seconding a motion does not signify that the member is in favor of the motion; they simply wish the subject to be discussed.

There are eight simple steps in presenting a (main) motion:

1. The member rises and addresses the chair.
2. The member is recognized by the chair.
3. The member states their proposal.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The motion is restated by the chair.
6. The chair conducts the discussion.
7. The chair puts the question to a vote.
8. The chair announces the result.

## Parliamentary Procedure – Frequently Used Motions

To Do This:	You Say This:	Can You Interrupt A Speaker?	Do You Need A Second?	Is it Debatable?	Can It Be Amended?	What Vote?
Introduce new business.	“I move that...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion.	“I move to amend the motion by...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Request information.	“I rise for a point of information.”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Complain about noise, etc.	“I rise for a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	No vote

<b>To Do This:</b>	<b>You Say This:</b>	<b>Can You Interrupt A Speaker?</b>	<b>Do You Need A Second?</b>	<b>Is it Debatable?</b>	<b>Can It Be Amended?</b>	<b>What Vote?</b>
Call for a brief intermission.	"I move to recess for ___ minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Postpone the question to a later time.	"I move to postpone the question until next week."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer the question to a committee for further study.	"I move to refer the motion to the _____ committee to study."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

<b>To Do This:</b>	<b>You Say This:</b>	<b>Can You Interrupt A Speaker?</b>	<b>Do You Need A Second?</b>	<b>Is it Debatable?</b>	<b>Can It Be Amended?</b>	<b>What Vote?</b>
Put a limit on the debate.	"I move that debate be limited to 5 minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
End debate and vote.	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Verify a voice vote by rising.	"Division."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Want to do something, but do not know how to do it.	"I rise to a parliamentary inquiry."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote



<b>To Do This:</b>	<b>You Say This:</b>	<b>Can You Interrupt A Speaker?</b>	<b>Do You Need A Second?</b>	<b>Is it Debatable?</b>	<b>Can It Be Amended?</b>	<b>What Vote?</b>
Reconsider an action.	"I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to..."	No	Yes	Yes/No	No	Majority
Call attention to breach of rules.	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Suspend the rules temporarily.	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Adjourn the meeting.	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

# APPENDIX C: Proposing Changes

## Amending Governing Documents

Amendment is the process used to make changes to the governing documents. A motion can be made to strike out, add, or substitute words or paragraphs. The ALA national organization uses a 3-column amendment form that shows the current wording, the proposed wording with changes, and then the wording if adopted. It also includes a short rationale for the change being made. A unit must follow the procedure described in its constitution, bylaws, and standing rules regarding giving notice of an upcoming vote on an amendment, whether it must be read in the meeting, and the voting threshold required to adopt the amendment.

## How to Write a Resolution

A resolution is a formal, written motion. In the ALA, resolutions are used when the subject matter is honorary, for a limited time frame, or contains detailed reasons for proposing the motion. A well-written resolution makes it easier for members to consider the proposal's importance and makes it easier to follow a lengthy or complex motion. Resolutions are also useful when a large assembly will be considering its motion.

A resolution has two sections: 1) the main reasons a motion should be adopted are included in the "whereas" clauses; and 2) resolving clauses that state the specifics of the proposal. Neither section should include more clauses than are necessary to clearly articulate the reasons for the motion and the proposed outcome(s) if adopted.

For more examples of how to write and format resolutions, consult Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

## Procedure for Proposing an Amendment to a Motion

If a motion on the floor does not accurately capture what the group wants to do, before the group votes on the proposed motion, a member can make a motion for an amendment.

The procedure below is followed when presenting amendments:

**Step 1:** The motion is made, seconded, and opened for discussion.

**Step 2:** The amendment is made, seconded, and open for discussion.

**Step 3:** The chair asks, "Is there further discussion?"

**Step 4:** Hearing no objection, the chair restates the amendment.

**Step 5:** The chair states, "The yes's have it. The amendment is carried, and the motion now reads..."

**Step 6:** The chair then returns to a discussion, or debate, of the motion which is followed by a call for the vote, the vote, and announcement of the results.

# APPENDIX D: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS--CONDUCTING ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

Does your governing document have provisions for emergency operations? When emergency circumstances prevent the unit from meeting in person, the unit's governing documents should spell out how business will be conducted in compliance with the laws of its state. There is no national guidance for units to follow because each state's laws are different. Consult Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12<sup>th</sup> edition, for suggestions on making provisions for electronic meetings.

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## **Check your state's laws on conducting business electronically.**

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In Indiana, for example, the state office of government that oversees incorporation and state corporate filings is the office of the Indiana Secretary of State. The ALA National Organization, being incorporated in Indiana, follows Indiana law, and may conduct meetings of the National Executive Committee (its board of directors) if all participants can hear each other simultaneously. Keep in mind that unit meetings are considered "membership meetings" and meetings of the executive committee are "board meetings." There might be laws that apply to each type of meeting.

If state laws allow conducting business electronically, then that constitutes a meeting, and minutes need to be kept--the same as if the meeting were held in person. Some things to keep in mind:

1. Email or mail an agenda and any documents that participants will need to reference in advance so that participants can follow the flow of the meeting.
2. Begin the meeting with an instruction to the participants that the meeting is being held electronically to conduct business and state the legal authority for conducting the electronic meeting.

3. State the business clearly.
4. Create minutes of the special electronic meeting, recording motions and votes just as in an in-person meeting.

# APPENDIX E: HONORARY JUNIOR OFFICERS

The ALA National Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules state that the national titles bestowed on Junior officers are courtesy titles.

Any honorary national Junior division vice president elected by Juniors who attend a national Junior meeting, or any other honorary Junior officer, is solely an honorary, courtesy position without any formal duties. She shall not conduct fundraising for Junior election campaigns or related activities benefiting an honorary national Junior officer or candidate. Any Junior officer must be paying dues as a Junior member for the membership year in which she is installed.

At the unit level, honorary Junior officers traditionally include president, vice president, chaplain, historian, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. Honorary Junior officers may vary by district and department but are likely to reflect the structure of the unit.

Remember: These are children we are helping teach and shape to be our ALA future leaders.

## Leadership Roles for Juniors

Nothing in the national governing documents (check your department and unit constitutions and bylaws) prohibits a Junior member (most likely a high school-aged Junior member) from serving in an administrative appointed or elected Senior position. This could include a unit historian, unit chaplain or a mission-outreach committee member (i.e., Poppy or Community Service), because those positions operate under the guidance of a Senior member who is a governing officer or leader. It is not advised that a Junior member be elected or appointed to serve in a policymaking/governance position.

## APPENDIX F: ALA ACADEMY

ALA Academy is a series of self-paced online courses that are free, easily accessible, and user-friendly. Available for all American Legion Auxiliary members, ALA Academy offers professionally developed training designed to help members learn through a process that includes learning the information, sharing it with others, practicing their new skills, and, eventually, making those new skills a habit. Some examples of courses on ALA Academy:

*ALA 101:* the introductory course to ALA Academy focuses on who we are, what we do, and why we matter. ALA 101 provides a general overview of the American Legion Auxiliary and our mission, with information helpful for most members to learn.

*ALA Juniors E-Learning Course:* Junior members will learn about the purpose of the program and how to excel as leaders

*How to Deal with Conflict:* how to resolve conflict in a professional, positive, and proactive manner.

All ALA members can benefit from this training program, enabling them to reach more veterans and better serve our mission.



See the full list of ALA Academy courses as well as ALA Academy Live webinars by visiting [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org).

# American Legion Auxiliary Mission:

*In the spirit of Service Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and 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.*



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