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# How to Organize a School Supply Drive for Military Children

## When Should We Hold a School Supply Drive?

School supplies are needed year round. It makes more sense to donate supplies at the beginning of the school year, but supplies also need to be replenished throughout the school year. Therefore, a school supply drive at any time of year is a good idea.

## Organizing the Drive:

1. Consider partnering with at least one other unit in your district and/or area. Collaboration will allow more ground to be covered as well as pooling of contacts in the community.
2. If the unit(s) is near an active-duty base, reserve unit or National Guard Armory, call and ask for the unit commander. Identify yourself as an American Legion Auxiliary member and explain what your unit(s) is trying to do. The Auxiliary unit will need approval from the company commander in order to have items distributed to the troops' children.
  - a. If the Auxiliary cannot donate to a base, unit or armory, consider a Fisher House or a 4-H Military Partnership.
3. Approach local businesses and civic organizations to see if they would be willing to place collection boxes in their establishments.
  - a. Consider having members collect school supplies outside businesses, similar to collecting donations for poppies.
  - b. Ask a retail company who's willing to be a collection location to offer patrons a discount to reward donors.
4. Launch an aggressive PR campaign. List the event on your unit's website and send press releases and letters to the editor of local newspapers. Invite churches to promote the event in the church bulletin. Create flyers. All promotional information must contain the following six things:
  - a. One-Day Extravaganza!
  - b. A list of collection sites, with times
  - c. The date when the drive is ending
  - d. All donations will go to military children (list military unit, if known)
  - e. Sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary Unit(s) \_\_\_\_ [insert unit number(s)]
  - f. Examples of donations wanted, specifying the requirement for new/unused items (see *Things to Collect*, next section).
5. Have members pick up donation boxes at the end of the supply drive. If there was additional fundraising for supplies, have members shop for items not donated.
6. Distribute the school supplies. The easiest method will probably be to stuff backpacks or some other type of bag with approximately the same type and amount of items in all bags.
7. Send thank-you letters to all businesses and organizations that participated in any way in the supply drive.



## AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

A collection of resources from National Headquarters to assist and guide members and volunteers in serving veterans, servicemembers and their families.

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### Things to Collect:

- glue, both sticks and bottles
- No. 2 pencils
- pencil sharpeners
- erasers
- colored pencils
- markers
- crayons
- composition notebooks
- loose-leaf, wide-ruled notebook paper
- three-ring binders
- pocket folders
- rulers
- tape
- calculators
- backpacks for all ages or specific age groups, depending on the recipients of the supplies