

American Legion Auxiliary Department Of Minnesota Unit Guide 2026~2027



Linda Kelly
Department President

**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
State Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street - Room #314
St. Paul, MN 55155**

DEDICATION

This 2026-2027 Unit Guide is dedicated to the service and sacrifices of our veterans and active military. Also, to their families and the sacrifices they make when their loved one serves.

Thank you to the department chairman for all their work in preparing their program information and to the department office for compiling the information and making a wonderful resource for Department of Minnesota members.

As you review this unit guide, remember our theme this year is

“Grounded In Our Roots, Growth Through Renewal and New Members”

This unit guide is for you, our members. Share the information with your unit members and use the information to have a wonderful year serving our veterans.



**2026-2027 American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
President Linda Kelly**

Theme: ***“Grounded In Our Roots, Growth Through
Renewal and New Members”***

Greetings! I have been a member of Pine Island Unit 184, 3rd District since 1998. I am eligible through two brothers that served our country. In fact, my oldest brother was in Korea at the time of my birth. I have enjoyed working with my unit, district, and our department to serve our veterans as they have served us.

My late husband, Francis, and I have two daughters, Jennie and Sarah (Craig). I also have one grandson, Miles. We spend a lot of our time cheering him on as he plays football, basketball, and baseball. If I'm not watching Miles play or doing auxiliary activities, I enjoy crafts, reading, and traveling.

My theme is “Grounded in our Roots, Growth through renewals and new members”. We need to remember those that paved the way for our organization to be what it is today. My pin shows a tree, representing the Legion Family, with four branches with a small branch off on one for our juniors. Our four organizations create our family, and the roots represent those that went before us.

I spent a lot of time trying to find a project that benefited our veterans, our military, our youth, and our communities, but was unsuccessful. I decided to accept donations for the Creative Arts program, which is used in the rehabilitation of our veterans throughout their life.

Going beyond helping our veterans, I am inviting members to make 1000 greeting cards at Fall Conference, with all supplies provided. Members will take them home and can mail them to our current military. The poppy tables will also be available so do both!

At Fall Conference attendees will find easels with state of Minnesota posters. The table will provide red, white, and blue post-it notes. Members were encouraged to leave a kind message for all showing that “Minnesota Nice” is alive and well.

I feel my project and the greeting cards made at Fall Conference really define our state's slogan of “Minnesota Nice” to our veterans and military. Building on that, I encourage members to continue that “Minnesota Nice” to our youth and communities. No sign up – No reporting – No commitment --- Just asking all to do something special for someone, maybe someone that needs a helping hand. It may be just as simple as a kind word, a short prayer, a visit with a shut-in, a note telling them you are thinking about them, or it may require a little more such as mowing a neighbor's lawn, babysitting or preparing a meal for a working mother, providing a ride for someone to an appointment. There are so many ways that we can help.

If we accomplish all of this, we will have successfully completed my wish of having a project for our veterans, our military, our youth, and our communities. What more can we ask for?

2026-2027 Department President Projects

Veterans: The 2026-2027 Department project is to raise funds for the Creative Arts program. This program is open to ALL veterans, with the only stipulation that they are registered with the VA. They do not need to live in a veterans' home, nor do they need to receive medical services through the VA – just be registered.



The VA's Creative Arts Program uses therapeutic arts—including art, writing, music, drama, and dance—to help Veterans heal from physical and emotional trauma. Part of the VA's Recreation Therapy Service, it aids in managing PTSD, reducing social isolation, and improving motor skills.

Any donations will be split between the eight veterans' homes in Minnesota to be used for supplies to offer this program to its residents. My goal is \$32,000 - \$4,000 for each home. Any extra money may be awarded to the four VA medical centers.

Gambling funds may be used for this project.



Current Military: I am challenging our units to find names and addresses for our military and send them a card. My reasoning is that we need to let them know that we care – in other words, “thank you for your service” or “thinking of you”

The cards can be purchased or home-made. Ask your local elementary classes to color cards for them. They can include a gift – but don't need to. The biggest cost will be postage.

I have been told due to the HIPA rules, it may be hard to find names and addresses. I think “word-of-mouth” will probably be the most successful. Our unit started this program a few years back starting with relatives and friends of our members. We do not limit the names to only our city's residents – but it may be grandchildren, nieces and nephews, friends.

My suggestions would be flyers, cable announcements, an article in your local paper, talk to other organizations, ask churches to put it in their bulletins – just to mention a few.

To jump start your efforts, I will be providing enough supplies to make 1000 cards at Fall Conference. It will be in the same room where we are making poppies. Come join the fun.

To Make a Donation

Mail Check To:
American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
20 W. 12th St., Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155-2000



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Mission Statement

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

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 per cent 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 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

2026~2027 Department Officers and District Presidents



Sitting: Department 1st VP Jody Hassing, Department President Linda Kelly,
Department 2nd VP Hope Wilson

District Presidents

Standing (left to right): District 1 – Wanda Prescher, District 2 – Kristen Donnelly,
District 4 – Sandy Gibson, District 5 – Becky Nelson, District 6 – Abby Zenzen,
District 7 – Kathy Schmiedeker, District 8 – Tamara Martin, District 9 – Molly Magnusson,
District 10 – Barbara Hopewell

National Executive Committeewoman & Alternate National Executive Committeewoman



Mary Kuperus



Patti Coleman

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS



1st District
Wanda Prescher

Theme: Serving Those Who Served
Symbol: Poppy
Project: Mini Golf Course at Preston Veterans Home
Estimated Cost: \$5000.00



2nd District
Kristen Donnelly

Theme: Be the Helping Hand That We All Desire
Symbol: Helping Hand Tree
Project: Collect funds to be split between Eagles Healing Nest in Redwood Falls and Bravo Zulu House in Martin County
Estimated Cost: \$4000.00 - \$2000 each



3rd District
Cavalene Regan

Theme: Keeping our family together one stitch at a time
Symbol: Quilt Block
Project: Bravo Zulu House in Winnabago
Estimated Cost: \$5000.00



4th District
Sandra Gibson

Theme: Remember, Honor and Thank Women Servicewomen and Women Veterans
Symbol: Woman Wearing a Service Cap
Project: Veterans Pantry at VAMC and Monthly BINGO at VAMC
Estimated Cost: \$1800.00



5th District
Becky Nelson

Theme: Red, White and Blue the Color of Freedom
Symbol: American flag
Project: Joint project at Minneapolis Veterans Home
Estimated Cost: \$2000.00



6th District
Abby Zenzen

Theme: Honoring Yesterday, Serving Today, Inspiring Tomorrow
Symbol: American Flag
Project: New windows and siding on staff cabins. New floors in barracks.
Any additional funds would go towards scholarships
Estimated Cost: \$10000.00



7th District
Kathy Schmiedeker

Theme: Rest and Nest, Taking Care of Our Veterans
Symbol: Flag with a Nest
Project: Relaxation Therapy with Bird Supplies for Veterans Facilities
Estimated Cost: \$2400.00 (\$300 for each Home)



8th District
Tamara Martin

Theme: Side by Side, Heart to Heart, Serving Those Who Served
Symbol: Winne the Pooh with Hearts
Project: Silver Bay Veterans Home
Estimated Cost: \$1500.00



9th District
Molly Magnusson

Theme: Navigating the Distance for Rural Veterans
Symbol: Compass
Project: Raising funds for gas/miscellanies cash cards
for CVSO(s) to distribute where and when needed.
Estimated Cost: \$4,000.00



10th District
Barbara Hopewell

Theme: Listing to the HEARTS of our Veterans
Symbol: Stethoscope shaped into a Heart
Project: Veterans Pantry and Legionville
Estimated Cost: \$5000.00

2026-2027 Department Officers

Dept. President

Linda Kelly

17670 511th Street, Pine Island, MN 55963

1st Vice President

Jody Hassing

108 North Circle Drive, Montgomery, MN 56069

2nd Vice President

Hope Wilson

NEC

Mary Kuperus

313 Pine Street SW, New London, MN 56273

Alt NEC

Patti Coleman

231 Stardust Blvd, Circle Pines, MN 55014

Sergeant at Arms

Lesley Heimer

502 NW Lewison Street, Adams, MN 55909

Chaplain

Sandy Wersal

1667 County Road 9 NE, New London, MN 56273

Department Historian

Karla Otterness

239 Westgate Drive, Winsted, MN 55395

Honorary Jr President

Abigail Koltes

Parliamentarian

Norma Tramm

29052 County Road 50, Cold Spring, MN 56320

Department Secretary

Christie Avant

State Veterans Service Building, St Paul, MN 55155

Department Treasurer

Judy Ackerman

924 Shoreacres Drive, Fairmont, MN 56031

Past Dept President

Robin Dorf

PO Box 1236, Monticello, MN 55362

District Presidents

First District	Wanda Prescher 4826 Tee Court SW, Rochester, MN 55902
Second District	Kristen Donnelly 101 3 rd Street South, Swea City, IA 50590
District 3	Cavalene Regan 5106 207 th Street N, Forest Lake, MN 55025
District 4	Sandy Gibson 4437 Park Court, White Bear Lake, MN 55110
Fifth District	Becky Nelson 3217 19 th Ave S Apt 1, Minneapolis, MN 55407
District 6	Abby Zenzen 274 Country Oak Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378
District 7	Kathy Schmiedeker 11790 North Shore Drive, Spicer, MN 56288
District 8	Tamara Martin 4480 Alderberry Drive, Hermantown, MN 55811
District 9	Molly Magnusson P.O. Box 291, Argyle, MN 56713
District 10	Barbara Hopewell 9145 Highway 55, Apt 105, Golden Balley, MN 55437
Chairman and Committees	
Advisory Committee	Robin Dorf PO Box 1236, Monticello, MN 55362
Advisory Committee	Darlene Wondra 12451 100 th Street, Montgomery, MN 56069
Advisory Committee	Carol Kottom 1909 Goldfinch Drive, Buffalo, MN 55313
Americanism	Barbara Klehr 921 Sommerville Street S, Shakopee, MN 55379
Armed Forces Service Center	Jean Walker 426 E Ross Avenue, Warren, MN 56762
Aux. Emerg. Fund	Joanie Krantz 505 Main Street S, Karlstad, MN 56732
Brain Science Committee	Patti Gunderson 115 E Elm Ave – PO Box 26, Upsala, MN 56384
	Bethany Dickert 5109 Rainbow Lane, Moundsview, MN 55112
	Michelle Weaver 1305 Willow Street Apt 39, La Crescent, MN 55947
Children & Youth	Cari Lamb 3217 19 th Ave S Apt 1, Minneapolis, MN 55407
Community Service	Brandi Christensen

Constitution/Standing Rules	15780 30 th Street, Watertown, MN 55388 Carol Kottom
Education	1909 Goldfinch Drive, Buffalo, MN 55313 Kelly Kauss
Finance Chairman	PO Box 202, Elysian, MN 56028 Cavalene Regan
Finance Committee 1	5106 – 207 th St N, Forest Lake, MN 55025 Tonia Bettermann
Finance Committee 2	1625 Crestview Lane, Owatonna, MN 55060 Jill Davis
Finance Committee 3	2806 64 th Avenue N, Brooklyn Center, MN 55430 Patti Coleman
Finance Committee 4	231 Stardust Blvd, Circle Pines, MN 55014 Bev Grose
Girls State Chairman	1606 Haven Moor, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379 Jen Stolz
GS Director	2901 Clover Preserve Drive, Chaska, MN 55318 Robin Dorf
GS Education Director	PO Box 1236, Monticello, MN 55362 Renee Suess
GS Committee	678 Independence Dr, Big Lake, MN 55309 Ashley Kuperus
GS Committee	405 15 th Ave SW, Apt 108, Willmar, MN 56201 Kelli Frederickson
GS Americanism	1402 Idaho Avenue W, St. Paul, MN 55108 Yolanda Dailey
History	W173N5502 Ravenwood Drive, Menomonee, WI 53051 Karla Otterness
Junior Activities	239 Westgate Drive, Winsted, MN 55395 Sharon Cross
Leadership	10491 Alcott Drive, Sauk Centre, MN 56378 Kollett Kaehlert
Legislation	1943 Sheridan Court, North Mankato, MN 56003 Hope Wilson
Membership	211 8 th Ave SE, Elbow Lake, MN 56531 Wendy Grittner
Memory Book	18881 Boston Street SW, Elk River, MN 55330 Cheryl Grover
Memorial	3781 161 st Avenue, Bagley, MN 56621 Sandy Wersal
National Security	1667 County Road 9 NE, New London, MN 56273 Wanda Prescher
Past Pres. Parley	4826 Tee Court SW, Rochester, MN 55902 Darlene Wondra

Poppy	12451 100 th Street, Montgomery, MN 56069 Mary Kuperus
Public Relations	313 Pine Street SW, New London, MN 56273 Lorinda Kies
Risk & Compliance Committee	2177 Arnold Palmer Drive, Blaine, MN 55449 Sandra Fredrickson
	771 2 nd Street SW, Glenville, MN 56036 Sharon Voltz
	828 NE 1 st Ave, Grand Rapids, MN 55744 Roberta Elvecrog
	29097 Dam Lake Street, Aitkin, MN 56431
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	Jody Hassing
	108 North Circle Drive, Montgomery, MN 56069
	1909 Goldfinch Drive, Buffalo, MN 55313
VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM & MN VETERANS HOME REPRESENTATIVES	
Bemidji Veterans Home	Denise Milton
	PO Box L, Bagley, MN 56621
Fargo VA Medical Center	Becky Olson
	3610 90 th Avenue N, Moorhead, MN 56560
Fergus Falls Veterans Home	Donna Barbknecht
	25891 344 th Ave, Battle Lake, MN 56515
Hastings Veterans Home	Kim Carlander
	10422 Fawns Way, Eden Prairie, MN 55347
Luverne Veterans Home	Lisa Powers
	782 201 st Street, Hardwick, MN 56134
Minneapolis Veterans Home	Sandra J Gibson
	2201 Eustis Street, White Bear Township, MN 55113
Minneapolis VA Medical Center	Janet Thompson
	16235 Glen Oaks Ct, Lakeville, MN 55044
Montevideo Veterans Home	Sandy Wersal
	1667 County Road 9 NE, New London, MN 56273
Preston Veterans Home	Wanda Prescher
	3321 Vista View Court SW, Rochester, MN 55902
Silver Bay Veterans Home	Tamara Martin
	4480 Alderberry Drive, Hermantown, MN 55811
Sioux Falls VA Medical Center	Diane Strassburg
	1993 121 st Street, Magnolia, MN 56158
St. Cloud VA Medical Center	Janet Benson
	824 32 nd Avenue N, St Cloud, MN 56303

Articles for VA Medical Centers / Minnesota Veterans Homes

Send items directly to the Hospital/Home Representative of your choice.

Include the Unit name, number, address, and a list of the articles enclosed.

Be certain to check with the Representative at the Hospital/Home to make sure they can use the items you are sending.

If not, consider contributing them to your local nursing home, assisted living facility, etc. that also have veterans.

DO NOT send any money to the hospitals/homes. Send funds to the Department Office, properly earmarked for credit to your Unit. Make your checks payable to the American Legion Auxiliary, **not** to the Hospital or Home.

Monetary donations for the Gift Shop are to be sent to the Department Office, properly earmarked for credit to your Unit. Make your checks payable to the American Legion Auxiliary.

2026-2027 National Appointments

Mary Kuperus, National Executive Committee and Northwestern Children and Youth Chairman,
New London Unit 537

Patti Coleman, Alternate National Executive Committee and Northwestern Junior Activities
Chairman, Lino Lake Unit 566

Tamara Martin, National Vice Chairman Americanism, Duluth Unit 71

Cavalene Regan, Northwestern Division Education Chairman, Forrest Lake Unit 225

Jean Walker, Northwestern Division Legislative Chairman, Warren Unit 27

Robin Dorf, Northwestern Division Membership Chairman, Monticello Unit 260

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



Christie Avant ~ Department Executive Secretary

651-224-7634

christie@mnala.org



Pa Yang ~ Accounting Technician

651-224-7634

pa@mnala.org



Jocelyn Yasis ~ Administrative Assistant

651-224-7634

jocelyn@mnala.org

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Department of Minnesota - State Veterans Service Building

20 W 12th St Room 314 - St Paul, MN 55155

(651) 224-7634

E-mail – deptoffice@mnala.org

Website - www.mnala.org

Fall Conference

Fall Conference will be held October 23-24, 2026, at
River's Edge Convention Center 4th Ave S, St. Cloud, MN 56301

Department Convention

Department Convention will be held July 15-17, 2027, at
Wilmar Conference Center 240 23rd St SE, Wilmar, MN 56201

DEPARTMENT OFFICE INFORMATION

Embroidered ALA Emblems & Poppy Magnets

The Department office once again has ALA Emblem magnets available.

The ALA Emblem magnet patches are \$8.00



The poppy magnet patches are \$7.00 each. (while supply lasts)

Both items will be available at Department Fall Conference and through the Department office.

Using Current Forms

Each year, the Department Executive Committee meets in August and reviews the donation sheet and the pricing on items that we sell at the Department office. **Please make a point of using the current year's forms when you are submitting items to the Department office.**

Thank you!

SUPPLIES

The following supplies are available from the Department Office. Please send your check to cover costs with your order for supplies. Please make this a "separate" check. (Prices subject to change)

2027 Unit Guide	\$ 5.00 each
2026 Book of Annual Reports	\$ 5.00 each
Membership Handbook	\$3.00 each
ALA Emblem & Logo Magnets	\$ 8.00 each
Poppy Magnets	\$ 7.00 each

POPPIES

There is a special-order blank for 2026-2027 purchases of poppies. It is hot pink. Please use that form.

Small Poppies	\$25.00 per 100
Large Poppies	\$18.00 per dozen

Poppy Cards are available through Emblem Sales at <https://emblem.legion.org>

Items to be Ordered or Sent:

1. Membership transmittal sheets, applications and supplies orders.
2. Membership supplies
3. All Department checks, donations, etc.
4. Poppy Orders

Membership pins, emblems, flags, bookkeeping and minutes books, Unit Handbooks and other such supplies. Order through National Emblem Sales catalog. Unit Presidents receive a copy of the catalog when available.

The Legionnaire - \$20.00 per year
or 2 years for \$35.00
(Paid American Legion members get a
subscription as part of their dues)

The Dispatch
National American Legion publication
Available electronically only

Mail to:

American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Minnesota
State Veterans Service Bldg.
20 W 12th Street - Room 314
St. Paul, MN 55155

National Emblem Sales
The American Legion
Box 1050
Indianapolis, IN 46206
1-888-453-4466
www.emblem.legion.org

The American Legion
Department of Minnesota
20 W 12th St #300
St. Paul, MN 55155

www.legion.org/subscribe

2026-2027 SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

The Department Standing Rules state: “No special requests for money by Department Chairmen and Department Committees or for the District President’s projects shall be made from the Units without the approval of the Department Executive Committee”. (Article X, Section 4)

For this 2026-2027 Auxiliary year of “***Grounded In Our Roots, Growth Through Renewal and New Members***” the following is the list of those solicitations that have been **approved** by the Department Executive Committee. Your support is needed and appreciated.

Make check payable to the American Legion Auxiliary, earmarked for the program(s) of your choice and send to the Department Office to be credited to your Unit. All donations may be combined into one check and earmark the amount for each program on the donation sheet.

Programs

Those denoted with an * are our own Auxiliary programs within the Department of Minnesota. We need to support these. No one else does.

Auxiliary Emergency Fund

Children and Youth

Legionville

Child Well Being

TFA (Temporary Financial Assistance)

Education

****Department Scholarship Fund***

Finance

The American Legion Family Hospital Association

American Legion Auxiliary Foundation

Brain Science Foundation

***Girls State Program**

***Junior Activities**

Honorary Department Junior President’s Project

National Security

Armed Forces Service Center

Past Presidents Parley

****Health Care Scholarship Fund***

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

****ALA (American Legion Auxiliary) Hospital Program***

****\$5.00 Dollar Bill Shower***

Minnesota Fisher Houses

**** Gift Shop***

PLEASE NOTE: Charitable gambling funds may be used to support some of these programs.

The American Legion Auxiliary no longer receives these funds via The Minnesota American Legion Foundation. Please do NOT send any checks payable to that fund. The second Unit mailing has a detailed listing of the programs that can come from gambling funds. Contact the Department office if you need a copy of the list and/or forms.

Special Projects

The 2026-2027 Department project is to raise funds for the Creative Arts program. This program is open to ALL veterans, with the only stipulation that they are registered with the VA.

The VA's Creative Arts Program uses therapeutic arts—including art, writing, music, drama, and dance—to help Veterans heal from physical and emotional trauma. Part of the VA's Recreation Therapy Service, it aids in managing PTSD, reducing social isolation, and improving motor skills.

Any donations will be split between the eight veterans' homes in Minnesota to be used for supplies to offer this program to its residents.

The 2026-2027 Department Junior project focuses on raising money for safe housing for our veterans through MACV (Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans). Through this organization, we ALL can help provide our veterans with a firm foundation to stand on.

Each of the District President's Projects have been approved.

As of this writing, these are the only solicitations for funds that have been approved by the Department Executive Committee.

Your support of our American Legion Auxiliary's programs is needed to make them successful.

SUGGESTIONS FOR UNIT TREASURERS

1. Please make all checks payable to the American Legion Auxiliary.
Use the current year's Donation form to list your Unit's donations. These have been approved by the Executive Committee for 2026-2027. You may list multiple donations on 1 sheet, but please do not add other organizations to this list. You may donate directly to other organizations if you choose.
2. All donations should be included in one (1) check.
Please remember that all contributions for approved Department projects are to be mailed to the Department Office, earmarked for the proper program(s) so that we can credit your Unit accordingly.
3. Separate checks are needed for:
 - a. Membership dues
 - b. Poppy orders
 - c. Supply orders
 - d. Donations
4. Check to make certain your check is made out properly, the amount is correct, and it is signed.
5. Send **District** items to your District Treasurer – (District Dues, District Presidents Project, etc.)
6. Monetary donations for the ALA Hospital Programs benefit all 12 of the VA Hospitals and MN Veterans Homes that we support. They should be sent to the Department Office.
7. Monetary donations for the Gift shop should be sent to the Department Office.

CERTIFICATES OF MERIT 2026-2027

Certificates of Merit will be awarded to Units for the most outstanding work in:

- Americanism
- Auxiliary Emergency Fund
- Children and Youth
- Community Service
- Education
- Girls State
- History (both Senior and Junior) *
- Junior Activities
- Leadership
- Legislation
- Memorial
- National Security
- Past Presidents Parley
- Poppy
- Public Relations
- Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Ten Certificates of Merit based on the Unit Annual reports may be awarded by the Department Chairman in each of the four membership categories based on the Unit Annual Reports. An additional five Certificates may be awarded if warranted regardless of the category. No special entry is needed. (Based on current membership as of March 31st):

- Up to 50 members
- 51 to 100 members
- 101 to 200 members
- 201 and up members

*Certificates of Merit awarded for Junior History will be based on the following Junior membership categories:

- 1-15 Junior members
- 16-30 Junior members
- 31-45 Junior members
- 46 and up Junior members

PLAQUES AND AWARDS 2026-2027

Many plaques and awards are available to Units for exceptional achievements. A complete list, including qualifications and rules for all Department and National plaques and awards will be forthcoming to each Unit in a Unit mailing and will be considered the official rules for all competitions.

Enter all competitions. Tell the story of your accomplishments. Your Unit and your Post will be proud of the recognition you receive.

Entries for Department and National competition must be submitted directly to the Department Chairman by the Unit. Entries for the National competition must be in addition to the Unit's Impact Report. An entry attached to an annual report will NOT be considered as an award entry. Follow the rules as provided in the Unit mailing including narrative, length, photos, etc. A Unit submitting either a Senior or Junior history for competition must submit an extra copy of that history, just like the entries for the other special awards.

There are some Department awards where the Department winner is selected as Minnesota's entry into National competition. For others, separate narrative reports must be submitted if a Unit wants to enter both Department and national competition even though the reports may be the same. Please read the rules carefully.

A Unit does NOT have to reach its membership goal to enter competition unless the rules clearly state that.

Only those entries postmarked no later than April 15th will be considered as entries for awards unless another, date is specified in the rules. All entries must be identified by giving the name of the Unit, unit location, name and address of the Unit President or unit chairman and the specific award for which it is being entered.

Awards will be presented at the Department Convention.

VOLUNTEER HOURS 2026-2027

Each year the Department receives several questions concerning where to credit the volunteer hours that our members give to the various programs. The following is a brief explanation with examples of the various types of hours for which a person may receive credit.

COMMUNITY SERVICE - Are those hours a member spends working within their community for such programs as Bloodmobile, Meals on Wheels, senior citizens groups, etc., done in the name of the American Legion Auxiliary. Church functions may not be included. Masks made for schools, churches, and communities are included here.

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION - These hours are divided into the following categories:

1. **VAVS Hours** are those hours spent in the VA Medical Centers working with our hospitalized veterans. The volunteer has taken the VA Orientation course. Hours are credited through the VA Medical Center.
2. **Service to Veterans Hours** are those hours a person spends working with a veteran in a local nursing home, hospital or in the veteran's own home. This cannot include doing anything for a member of one's own family, serving at a funeral, etc. Also, those hours a member spends working within their own home on behalf of the veterans, doing such things as cooking and taking the meals to the veteran's home, sewing for our hospitalized veterans, Masks for VA and Vets homes are also included.

A person may **not** take credit for hours for their own family, teaching Sunday school, preparing food for a funeral of a Legion or Auxiliary member, distributing Poppies, writing letters to Senators and Representatives on behalf of veteran's legislation, etc. Clipping store coupons and sending them to military bases should be recorded under the National Security program. See each program in this Unit Guide for further details.

Membership Eligibility For The American Legion Auxiliary

Section 2. Membership in The American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to:

- (1) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of members of The American Legion; and
- (2) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and any time after Dec. 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) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers 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 period 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.

**Information on a veteran's service records can be obtained by contacting:
National Military Personnel Records Center
Telephone: 314-801-0800
www.nara.gov**

Americanism

Barbara Klehr ~ Chairman



Purpose: The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship.

Standing Rules #6 of the Core National Standing Committees.

As American Citizens, it is our duty to prove our self-worth of the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. For every one of our privileges, we have a corresponding duty. We have the right to free speech, right to vote, right to worship, right to petition our government for redress of wrongs, right to own property, right to a trial by jury, right to bear arms, and the right to pursue life, liberty and happiness. But each of those rights has a duty back to our Country.

As American Legion Auxiliary members it is our duty to live thus, but to also teach and share our love of our country. We can do this through flag history, etiquette and proper disposal methods, and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so our communities will look to us for that information. We can do this through our Americanism Essay Contest and participation in our Star-Spangled Kids Program. We should support and promote the American Legion's programs also such as the Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball and the American Legions Girls Softball teams, and their Junior Shooting Sports program.

Share your Knowledge

- Work with The American Legion to increase respect for the flag in your community, including the proper way the American Flag should be flown.
- At schools and organizations, teach proper handling, displaying, and respect for the American Flag, as well as our National Anthem, and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Organize a patriotic holiday event or volunteer for local patriotic events in Auxiliary attire and network with prospective members.
- Visit The American Legion's Flag advocacy page at www.legion.org/flag for resources on flag etiquette and display questions.
- Contact and ask state and federal government representatives to support the flag amendment. To find your representatives, visit <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>.
- Encourage members to participate in and utilize Wreaths Across America's patriotic curriculum. For more information, visit <https://learn.wreathsafteramerica.org/teach>.
- Work with schools and organizations to promote Star Spangled Kids. For more information and resources, visit <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Americanism/How-to-Promote-Star-Spangled-Kids>.

Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest

- The Americanism Essay Contest topic for 2026-2027: "How Can You Be A Beacon of Light for Our Veterans?"
- Encourage Junior members and family members to participate in the essay contest.
- Work with school administrations to identify guidance counselors, English and History teachers whose students would be interested in participating.
- Contact Youth organizations to identify potential youth for participation in the contest.
- Provide all interested students with information packets explaining contest rules, deadlines, topics, and award opportunities.

- For details on the Americanism Essay Contest, visit https://www.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/Americanism_Essay_Cover_sheet.pdf

Promote The American Legion's Americanism Programs

American Legion Baseball

- Support, sponsor, or donate to an American Legion Baseball and Girls Softball teams.
- Assist with the logistics of transportation, concession, and statistics for the teams.
- Contact local sports shops and ask if they would be willing to make donations toward a fundraiser or offer a discounted price to purchase items needed.
- Attend events in Auxiliary attire and network with prospective Legion Family members.
- For more information and resources, visit www.legion.org/baseball

Oratorical Contest

- Help prepare your post home to sponsor a local or district contest.
- Volunteer to assist as a judge or timekeeper.
- Offer to help with refreshments.
- Provide transportation for candidates.
- Help recruit candidates at local schools and community organizations.
- Attend events in Auxiliary attire and network with prospective Legion Family members.
- For more Information and resources, visit www.legion.org/oratorical .

Support Junior Shooting Sports

- Volunteer to help with scoring, supervision, or transportation.
- Assist in fundraising for events.
- Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
- Attend events in Auxiliary branded attire and network with prospective Legion Family members.
- For more information and resources, visit www.legion.org/shooting .

Emblem Sales has kits available for the Star Spangled Kids program if you choose to use their kits. Their kits contain a Pledge of Allegiance Comic Book, an Our Country's Flag Comic Book, Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette brochure, a booklet with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, a flag, a flag pin and flag stickers and decals. Or make your own kits.

And National has a download for the America the Beautiful Coloring Book at https://www.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Programs/ALA_AmericaTheBeautiful_Coloring_Book.pdf

Special Event

I challenge each Unit this year to host a special event for an important date in our American History to bring alive to our citizens our patriotism. Whether that event be hosting a remembrance evening for 9-11, or a costume party to come as your favorite historical person, let your imaginations soar. (Can you imagine a bunch of George and Martha Washington's dancing at a Sweetheart dance? Or a "Guess Who I Am" President cocktail party on President's Day?)

Please send me a short description of your events and lots of pictures!

Deadlines/Important Dates

- Americanism Essay Contest: Winning Essays are due to me by March 25th, 2027.
- Unit Reports are due to your District Chairman by April 15th, 2027
- District Reports are due to me by May 1st, 2027.

Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC)

Jean Walker – Representative



The Armed Forces Service Center has been at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport, since November 1970. Founded by Mrs. Maggie Purdum as a 501©(3) nonprofit, 8 months after her son Scott died in a plane crash in Vietnam, with no USO affiliation.

For traveling active duty military, Purple Heart recipients, and Department of Defense ID card holders (includes dependents, retirees in 100% DAV).

The AFSC is located inside security at the MSP Terminal 1, with free food, beverages, a TV lounge, computer, printer, CAC reader, luggage storage, dining room, playroom, separate bunk rooms for men and women with a crib, three bathrooms, lactation station and a shower.

Pre-pandemic the AFSC was open 24/7, since 1970. Currently, the daily hours of operation are 8:00 AM-10:45 PM. The lobby is available 24 hours a day for traveling military, dependents, retirees, and veterans. Free refreshments are available during hours of operation.

Over 1 million military guests assisted to date. In addition to the Center volunteers, we have a group of volunteers that double as Troop Greeters. Post 9/11, they have assisted over 500 military charter flights, deploying/returning troops, wounded military, and **the arrival of fallen military at MSP**. We also support the weekly departure of recruits joining the military, Twin Cities Honor Flight, Snowball Express, and the annual arrival of training troops and military on Holiday Leave.

The Troop Greeter Program was created in October 2006 after we received a satellite call from a Marine LT in Iraq, requesting support for over 300 troops returning to HI. MSP was their first touchdown on American Soil.

The Armed Forces Service Center needs support from all of us, as thousands travel through our airport from and to anywhere in the US and Overseas. So monetary donations are needed to support our Service Center, as our Units prepare their budgets, please add the AFSC as a line item each year. When sending donation checks to the Department office please earmark in the memo line for the Armed Forces Service Center.

When the Center needs nonperishable items and snacks, I will put a list in the Unit mailing, and I will get them delivered to the Center.

Thank you for supporting the Armed Forces Service Center.



AEF

Joanie Krantz ~ Chairman



The Auxiliary Emergency Fund was established in 1969 and is a national grant assistance program that provides temporary assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary during times of financial crises or weather-related emergencies and natural disasters and promote awareness and knowledge of the program.

Learn more at: aef@ALAforVeterans.org

The following core rules apply to the Auxiliary Emergency Fund:

- a. Temporary assistance to eligible members during:
 - A time of financial crisis when no other source of aid is readily available to pay for shelter, food, and utilities.
 - Weather-related emergencies and natural disasters, for food and shelter.
 - Educational training for eligible members who lack the necessary skills for employment or to upgrade competitive skills.
- b. Assistance will not be granted to pay accumulated debts or medical expenses. The intent is to help members who have suffered a financial setback and is meant to be a bridge offering a helping hand until financial stability is re-established. Incomplete applications and missing documentation will significantly slow processing the case file.
- c. Eligibility: persons who have been members of the American Legion Auxiliary for at least the immediate past two consecutive years and whose current membership dues are paid at the time the emergency occurs (three consecutive years' dues) may apply for assistance.
- d. Assistance provided: the maximum grant amount is \$3,000, disbursed as the Auxiliary Emergency Fund Grant Committee determines.

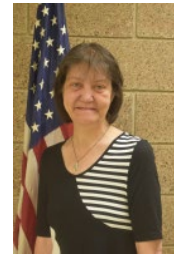
Information to Share at your Unit meetings:

Pass out Auxiliary Emergency Fund brochures available from the Department Office. These brochures can also be printed by going to the Department website, www.mnala.org. There is also a frequently asked questions sheet available at www.alaforveterans.org. Take time at a meeting or a "Members helping Members" night to discuss the Auxiliary Emergency Fund and what your unit can do to help fund this program.

Applications can be acquired from your Unit President, Department Office or online at www.mnala.org. Go to Forms the ALA Emergency Fund Application.

Children and Youth

Cari Lamb ~ Chairman



The Children and youth program emphasizes protecting, caring for, and supporting children and youth. Particularly those of veterans and military families.

National has two awards to recognize and reward the positive actions of our children and youth.

Good Deeds Award: Youth 18 and younger who demonstrated leadership in communities by planning, organizing, and executing a service project.

Youth Hero Award: 17 and under who performs a heroic act of physical bravery.

Donations through the department Office

Child Well-Being foundation: Provides financial assistance

Legionville: Safety educational camp

American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance: Awards grants up to \$1,500 to active-duty service members or American Legion members with minor children at home. Helps families in need of the cost of shelter, food, utilities, and health expenses.

Legion.org/financialassistance.

Purple Up Day: Official Military Children Day

April is the Month of the Military Child

KDH2- Kids of Deployed are Heros 2: Recognition program for military children who experience extended separation from their military parent or parents.

Community Service

Brandi Christiansen ~ Chairman



Purpose: The purpose of the Community Service Committee is to promote the American Legion Auxiliary's commitment to making our communities better places to live by supporting local service projects. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees Mission Outreach.* (Taken directly from the Auxiliary National website alaforveterans.org)

Community Service has been a major mission outreach program of the American Legion Auxiliary since 1926. Shows the American Legion Auxiliary commitment to making our communities a better place to live.

Community Service overlaps with many other committees.

Here is a list of what is included in Community Service:

- Community Service Events such as community dinners or luncheons etc.
- Service Volunteers: Libraries, food shelves, senior centers, nursing homes, assistant living centers, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and churches.
- Community Clean Up such as park clean ups, yard clean ups, roadside clean ups.
- Cards to residents in nursing homes or assistant living centers.
- Donating to food shelves or homeless shelters or domestic violence shelters.
- American Legion Family Day
 - An event the invite the community to that shows Who the American Legion Family is. What we do. Have History, membership applications, and veteran benefits information.
- National Days of Service
 - Martin Luther King Day
 - 9/11 Day of Service

This is where everyone in your community can benefit not just for veterans or military.

Please remember to keep track of your events, money spent, and hours as this goes on the impact form that gets sent into National.

Constitution & Standing Rules

Carol Kottom – Chairman



The backbone of every organization is their rules. They should be written in the best interest of the members.

Members should be encouraged to participate in determining what their rules will be.

The ALAFORVETERANS.ORG website has the preferred form for writing and submitting proposed changes to the rules for our Units, District and Department documents. It is called “Three Column Amendment Template”. There is also the form to write a resolution called the “Resolution Form Template” which we used for a resolution that does not pertain to our existing rules. We do accept either format.

These fundamental rules of the organization state how the membership agrees to govern itself, how it will choose its leaders, hold its meetings, and policies of the administration of the organization.

The unit standing rules are strictly for your unit. May contain your fundraisers, memorials for members, do you pay dues for anyone, do you buy gifts for your officers at yearend – things that may be unique to your unit.

All of Minnesota’s governing documents are reviewed annually. Input from members is greatly appreciated.

Is there something in our Unit Bylaws, Unit Constitution, District Constitution/Bylaws, Department Constitution/Bylaws or the Department Standing Rules that you would like to see changed, added or removed? Let me know! It will be reviewed and if we agree, it will be presented at our Department Convention. You can find the current documents on Minnesota’s website. MNALA.ORG On the blue bar select “About Us”. From the drop down select “Governing Documents” and you will find all available documents and forms mentioned above. We do not post standing rules for the units or districts.

Our rules cannot conflict with the National rules. When the national constitution, bylaws, and standing rules change, departments, districts, counties, and units will automatically amend their governing documents to reflect the National changes. These changes do not require a proposal or resolution.

Everyone should be familiar with the governing documents – read them all!

Need help? Call, text or email me. Glad to help.

Education

Kelly Kauss ~ Chairman



The American Legion Auxiliary Education program is dedicated to promoting quality education, supporting students and educators, and encouraging lifelong learning. Through scholarships, school partnerships, and educational initiatives, it helps strengthen our communities while honoring the sacrifices of our veterans and military families.

The Department of MN encourages every unit to make education a year-round priority. Whether donating school supplies, recognizing outstanding educators, supporting military-connected students, or promoting scholarship opportunities, every effort helps create a positive learning environment and invests in the future of our communities.

One of our ongoing initiatives is Give 10 to Education or for 2026-2027 “Give 20 to Education” which encourages members to donate school supplies or make a monetary contribution to help classrooms throughout the year. While many think of back-to-school as a one-time event, the need for classroom supplies continues long after the first day of school.

Another meaningful program is Veterans in the Classroom, which provides opportunities for veterans to share their experiences, teach lessons in patriotism and citizenship, and inspire students through firsthand accounts of military service. These visits help students better understand the sacrifices made by those who have served our nation while preserving our nation’s history.

We also encourage units to:

- Celebrate American Education Week by recognizing schools, teachers, and education support professionals.
- Participate in Veterans Day activities that honor our nation’s veterans while educating students about military service and patriotism.
- Recognize Teacher Appreciation Week by thanking the educators who make a difference every day.
- Observe Purple Up! Day in support of military children and their unique sacrifices.
- Promote both National and Department of MN Scholarship opportunities and encourage eligible students to apply.

Important Dates

- November – American Education Week
- March 1 – National Scholarship applications due
- April 15 – Purple Up! Day for Military Children
- May (first full week) – Teacher Appreciation Week

The Department of MN encourages units to share their education projects, success stories, and upcoming activities with the Department Education Chairman. Sharing ideas and accomplishments helps inspire others and highlights the outstanding work being done throughout our state.

Together, through education, we empower future generations, honor those who serve, and strengthen our communities — one student, one classroom, and one opportunity at a time.

Flyer Give 20 to Education

https://www.legion-aux.org/CMSDesk/ALA/media/PDF/Brochures/ALA_2026-2027_Big20_Flyer-Ip.pdf

App for Smile Amazon Giving

[ALA National Headquarters partners with SmileAssociate to support Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund](#)

App for Box Tops

www.boxtops4education.com

Finance

Cavalene Regan ~ Chairman



Finance Made Easy

Understanding Your Unit's Money

By the Finance Committee

Money can sometimes seem complicated, but it doesn't have to be. Think of your unit's finances like planning a year-long road trip. Before you hit the road, you need to know:

- How much money do you have
- How much money you'll spend
- How you'll make sure you don't run out along the way

What Is a Budget?

A budget is simply a plan for your money. It estimates how much money will come in and how much will go out during a certain period. Think of it like creating a spending plan before a shopping trip. If you know what you can spend, you're less likely to run out of money halfway through.

Why Does a Unit Need a Budget?

Once members approve the budget, the treasurer can pay bills and expenses that are already included in the plan without needing a new vote every time. Imagine agreeing on the team's game plan before the season starts. Since everyone approved it, the team can move forward without stopping to vote on every small decision. This is especially helpful when bad weather or other circumstances make it difficult to have enough members present at a meeting.

Where Does the Money Come From?

Most units receive money from two main sources:

Membership Dues

Each unit sets the amount charged for senior and junior memberships.

For every senior membership:

- \$18 goes to the National Organization.
- \$12 stays in Minnesota to support programs, leadership development, junior activities, and department operations.

For every junior membership:

- \$2.50 goes to the National Organization.
- \$3.50 stays in Minnesota.

Fundraising

Fundraising is like earning bonus points in a game. Bake sales, raffles, dinners, and special events can bring in extra money to help support your goals and programs.

What Does the Unit Spend Money On?

Some expenses happen every year, including:

- Membership dues sent to the Department
- District assessments
- Auxiliary programs
- Department and District projects
- Administrative expenses and bonding fees.

Think of these as your unit's regular bills, like how families pay for things like electricity, internet, or groceries.

Staying Balanced

The goal is simple - Bring in more money than you spend.

If expenses are greater than income, you may need additional fundraising activities to balance your budget. It's like making sure your phone stays charged. If you're using battery faster than you recharge it, you'll eventually run out of power.

Unexpected Expenses

Sometimes something comes up that isn't included in the budget.

When that happens, members must approve the expense at a unit meeting before the treasurer can pay it. Think of it like asking permission before making a surprise purchase with shared money.

A Smart Safety Tip

It's considered best practice to have **two signatures on every check**. I also recommend having three signatures on all your banking accounts. This gives you a backup if someone leaves unexpectedly.

Why? Because at least two sets of eyes are better than one. It helps prevent mistakes and protects the unit's funds.

General Funds and Poppy Funds

Imagine having two piggy banks:

- * One for everyday expenses
- * One for a special purpose

That's how General Funds and Poppy Funds work. They may be kept in the same bank account, but they must be tracked separately in different ledgers.

What Can Poppy Funds Be Used For?

Poppy Funds are special-purpose funds and can only be used for approved activities, including:

- Helping veterans
- Supporting veterans' families
- Assisting hospitalized service members returning home
- Providing help when financial or medical needs exist
- Purchasing supplies used to make and distribute symbolic poppies

Think of Poppy Funds like a gift card that can only be used at certain stores. The money must be spent only on approved purposes. If you need more information, you can download the donation

forms on the ALA Department website.

Making Donations

When donating to Auxiliary programs:

1. Use the official donation form available through Minnesota Auxiliary resources.
2. Submit one check for donations that may be paid from Poppy Funds.
3. Submit another check for donations that cannot be paid from Poppy Funds.

This helps keep everything organized and follows funding rules.

Membership Matters

This year's theme is:

Grounded in our Roots, Growth through Renewals and New Members

Membership payments must be sent to the Department Office with a separate check and a transmittal form.

Some units now use **ALAMIS**, which allows membership processing online. Units interested in learning more can contact their District or Department Membership Chairman. [

Invite Others to Join!

A great team grows by welcoming new players. Every new member brings fresh ideas, energy, and support for our mission.

Important IRS Requirement

Every Unit and District must file a **Form 990** with the IRS each year. This is required by law.

If you need help understanding the process, reach out to your Risk and Compliance Chairman or District President.

Back to the Basics

Working together and supporting programs financially helps carry out the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary. Every donation matters. Even small contributions add up when everyone participates. Imagine everyone dropping one coin into a jar. One coin doesn't seem like much, but when hundreds of people contribute, the jar fills quickly. That's how positive change happens.

Most importantly: Every dollar, every volunteer, and every member help make a difference.

Together, we recognize, respect, and remember those who have served.

If you have questions or need help with finance, you can contact anyone on your finance committee:

Cavalene Regan	ala100yrs@gmail.com
Tonia Betterman	bettm88@outlook.com
Jill Davis	alajilldavis@gmail.com
Patti Coleman	pjc3555@aol.com
Beverly Gross	gr9562@yahoo.com

American Legion Auxiliary Minnesota Girls State Jennifer Stolz ~ Chairman



Minnesota Girls State is a life-changing leadership and citizenship program that empowers young women to discover their potential, strengthen their confidence, and make a positive impact in their communities. Bringing together students from across the state, the program provides a hands-on opportunity to learn how government works by actively participating in it.

Throughout this immersive experience, participants form cities, create a state government, campaign for office, debate important issues, vote on legislation, and take on leadership roles. Along the way, they build valuable skills in communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, and public speaking. Just as importantly, they learn the value of civic engagement, respectful dialogue, and working with others to achieve common goals.

Girls State is more than a lesson in government. It is a transformative experience that helps young women find their voice, build lasting friendships, and gain confidence in their ability to lead. Participants leave with a deeper understanding of public service, a broader perspective on their role as citizens, and the belief that their ideas can make a difference.

To reach more future leaders, Girls State must combine strong school partnerships with effective use of technology. Working with educators and using digital tools helps us connect with students, share opportunities, and ensure more young women can benefit from this transformative experience.

Call to Action: Help us grow the next generation of leaders. Connect with your local schools, embrace technology to expand outreach, and tap into the experience of our committee. We are here to support you every step of the way. All you need to do is reach out. Together, we can make a lasting difference.

Your 2026-2027 Girls State Committee members are:

Jennifer Stolz, Girls State Chairman

Robin Dorf, Girls State Director

Renee Suess, Education Director

Kelli Frederickson, Committee Member

Ashley Kuperus, Committee Member

Yolanda Dailey, Americanism



History

Karla Otterness - Historian



Genealogy and Our Shared Roots

Genealogy is the study of a person's past. It connects family ancestry, helps identify common ground, and shows how our shared history gives us strength.

President Linda's tree symbol reflects this idea. The deep roots represent our history and provide a strong foundation that supports us as an organization.

Above ground, the branches represent the Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders, with one branch extending to represent the Juniors.

President Linda's theme, "Grounded in Our Roots, Growth Through Renewals and New Membership," carries special meaning for historians. Our 106 years of history connect us with one another and to our greater purpose: serving veterans.

The Historian's Responsibility

As historians, we are responsible for preserving the story of our units, districts, and department for future generations.

This includes recording:

- Who was involved
- What happened
- Where and when it took place
- Why it mattered

Tools for Recording Our History

To help prepare a complete written record of what we accomplish throughout the year, use the following tools and resources:

- Meeting minutes
- Checkbook register
- Facebook posts
- Website updates
- Phone records or notes
- Camera photos
- Newspaper clippings

Remember March is National Women's History Month. Objective: Celebrate the special women of our organization The month of March is dedicated to the celebration of women's history. It corresponds with International Women's Day on March 8th. What could be better for a women's organization to do than celebrate their own history? Our auxiliary members have accomplished a great deal all around the world. Now it's time to celebrate what makes them so special!

Step-by-Step Instructions

What can we do?

- Learn more about Auxiliary members who made history within your department or unit. This could include girls sponsored to ALA Girls State who have gone on to do great things or those members who have improved their communities, state or country.
- Celebrate the women in your life – mom, grandma, even your sister.
- Donate money to the ALA Cavalcade of Memories budget at the unit, department, or national level in honor of a special woman.
- Set up a display in honor of those members who have gone above and beyond the ALA's mission.
- Write an article for your unit/department newsletter about Women's History Month or about the woman you are honoring.
- Check out how women's fashion has changed over time in the Auxiliary, as well as women's hair fashion. There has been a great deal of change from 1919 to today!
- Research and write about how the former and present members make a difference in the community and share with others.
- Put up a display at your local library, historical society, or storefront, celebrating the work that the women of the ALA have done and still do every day.

Remember – these activities can be shared with the Junior members. Honoring our members provides them with a role model. Sharing our history with our junior members allows them to know that they, too, are valuable members of this great organization. Hopefully, they will begin to own this history and remain members throughout their lifetimes

New New! New! - History Pictorial Scrapbook

I am excited to announce the "History Pictorial Scrapbook." Contest rules will be published in the newsletter and on the website.

Let's make memories and enjoy a wonderful year documenting American Legion Auxiliary event.

Junior Activities

Sharon Cross ~ Chairman



“Purpose: The purpose of the Junior Activities Committee is to inspire active participation in members aged 17 and under so they become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood.” – alaforveterans.org

Encouraging and mentoring young members from birth to 17 years of age is a big part of the Junior Program. Let junior members have a voice and share that voice with the people around them. If you have a small group you can always get together with another unit that is near you or as a whole District and do a Fun Day and a service project. You can also invite young Sons of American Legion members to join you as well. This way they can make friends and get together with old friends do something fun and meaningful as well.

Be mentors to junior members. Include them into your meetings and fundraising or any other events you do as a unit. Make them memorable and fun. Most if not all just want to feel included.

Teach them to be future leaders I know that Minnesota has some great juniors who will someday serve this wonderful organization and be very proud to do so. They are amazing girls.

The patch program is a great program to get junior members involved in Auxiliary programs and to learn about them. These can be found on the Department website as well as the National website.

There are also e-learning courses on the National website for junior members to learn about protocols and parliamentary procedures.

There is a National Junior Meeting this year in Minnesota! Please plan to have your juniors attend! It is November 15th. Registration can be done on the National website.

There are also scholarships available to junior members. These are:

- Spirit of Youth Scholarship: must have 3 consecutive year membership and must keep current membership throughout the 4-year scholarship period.
- Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship
- James H Parke Scholarship

Leadership

Kollett Kaehlert ~ Chairman



Purpose: The purpose of the Leadership Committee is to better equip members to serve in leadership positions with confidence and skill. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Member/Organizational Support*

Leadership Theme: “Let the Beacon Guide Us to Be Better Leaders”

National President Cora Lee Grout’s symbol is the Lighthouse, and her slogan, “*A Beacon for our Veterans,*” beautifully reflects our mission. This year, we are adapting that message for leadership development: **“Let the Beacon guide us to be better Leaders.”**

Our focus will be on letting that beacon shine on four key areas:

- **Mentoring**
- **ALA Programs**
- **Education**
- **Developing New Leaders**

Leadership within the American Legion Family is an opportunity to share knowledge, strengthen our mission, and support one another. Effective leaders demonstrate integrity, self-awareness, courage, respect, compassion, and resilience.

Not every member seeks a leadership role, and that is perfectly acceptable. Our organization thrives because of the diverse contributions of supporters, dedicated workers, and those who simply want to learn more about who we are and what we do. Every role has value, and every member helps move our mission forward.

Mentorship is woven throughout our organization. Experienced members are always willing to guide others, offer insight, and step in when a learning opportunity arises. Leadership is not defined solely by titles — it is reflected in the willingness to help, to teach, and to serve.

At the Department level, leadership workshops will be offered at least twice each year. These sessions are open to all members of the American Legion Family, and junior and young SAL members ages 10 and up are encouraged to attend.

Leadership development doesn’t stop at the Department level. Districts are encouraged to host their own leadership classes as well. Leaders are found in every corner of our organization, and providing local opportunities helps members grow, connect, and strengthen their communities. Invite the leaders in your area to participate in District-sponsored classes and share their experience with others.

Not every member aspires to be a leader, and that is absolutely fine. Still, all members are encouraged to attend workshops or classes offered near them. Every session provides valuable insight into our mission, our programs, and the incredible work of our organization.

Members should also consider participating in leadership opportunities within their own communities. Every event, workshop, or gathering is a chance to share the American Legion Auxiliary story and highlight the impact we make together.

The **ALA Unit Member of the Year Award** honors exceptional *unit-level* members who embody the values of the American Legion Auxiliary and significantly impact their unit’s program work. It is **only** for senior members who have **never held leadership above Unit President**.

Is Mission Training Right for You?

Would you like to connect with national leaders and members in your district who share your passion for serving veterans? During this one-day conference, you'll be inspired while learning more about the ALA's core programs in an interactive, engaging environment. Many of the American Legion Auxiliary Mission Outreach programs will be covered.

- **Yes** – if you want to meet members and national leaders outside your local area who share your enthusiasm for helping veterans.
- **Yes** – if you want to exchange great ideas with members across the country or renew your passion for our mission.
- **Yes** – if you're becoming more involved and need guidance, or if you've been doing the same activities for years and want a fresh approach.

2026–2027 ALA Mission Training & National Junior Meetings

- **Nov. 14:** Omaha, NE*
- **Jan. 30:** Albany, NY*
- **Jan. 30:** Springfield, IL
- **Feb. 6:** Atlanta, GA
- **Feb. 6:** Las Vegas, NV*

*Events will be held in conjunction with The American Legion National Information Conference and the SAL Regional Meeting. Link to: [Mission Training](#)

Department Resources

The following resources are available through the Department and can be accessed at **mnala.org**:

- **Unit Guidebook**
- **Constitution and Bylaws**
- **Standing Rules**

National American Legion Auxiliary Resources

National-level materials can be downloaded from **alaforveterans.org**:

- **Unit Guidebook**
- **Constitution & Bylaws**
- **Department Operations Guide**
- **Parliamentary Procedure**
- **Additional ALA Guidebooks**
 - The national website provides many other publications designed to support learning, leadership development, and effective unit operations. Members are encouraged to explore these resources, deepen their understanding of the organization, and share them with fellow Auxiliary members.

Legislation

Hope Wilson ~ Chairman



ALA Legislative Program

- In local Congressional Districts and in Washington, D.C., American Legion Auxiliary members work to keep veterans' issues in front of legislators, strengthening our mission to serve veterans, servicemembers and their families.

While we may think that one voice may not make a difference on its own, that one voice added to the voice of others quickly becomes a collective power of influence that can impact the decisions of our elected officials. Joining together, Auxiliary members can and do make a difference when they advocate for veterans, servicemembers and their families.

Purpose:

- The purpose of the Legislative Committee is to provide information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. *Standing Rule #5, National Committees – Mission Outreach.*

The websites below provide important information regarding the legislative program for the American Legion family:

- <https://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative>
- <https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>
- <https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Legislative/How-to-Host-a-Meet-the-Candidate-Night>
- <https://www.legion.org/information-center>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALALegislative>
- Contact Legislative Committee: Legislative@ALAforVeterans.org
- [Letter to Support Legislation.docx](#)
- [Introduction Letter to Representative.docx](#)

Membership

Wendy Grittner ~ Chairman



2027 Department of Minnesota Membership Awards Department Trophies for Districts

Adam Victory Plaque

Goes to the first District to reach Goal in the 2026-2027 membership year.

Jergens Plaque

Goes to the first District to reach All Time High in the 2026-2027 membership year.

Scallen Carlson Plaque

Goes to the District with the highest percentage of goal by the 2026 Fall Conference. The cut-off date of Fall Conference applies.

Carlson Hollenbeck Plaque

Goes to the District with the highest percentage of membership by July 2027, the exact date in July based on the membership bulletin.

Department Unit Awards

Department Presidents Citation

To all Units reaching their 100% membership goal by January 31, 2027

Unit Membership Chairmen

The Unit chairman with the most new unit members signed up will receive a State Park Pass selected by the Department Membership Chairman.

District Membership Chairmen

To the District Chairman with the most new members signed up District wide will receive National Park Pass!

Recruiting Our Future Stars Award

Any unit who recruits 3 Junior members will be entered into a drawing for \$25.00 to be used to promote Junior Programs.

Outstanding Individual Recruiter

To the Minnesota member who recruits the most new members will receive a one year of paid membership dues.

2027 Department Goal Awards

50%	October 23, 2026	Fall Conference – St Cloud
75%	December 5, 2026	Pearl Harbor Rally
85%	March 13, 2027	Appreciation Rally
95%	May 28, 2027	National Poppy Day

Rally Dates and locations are subject to change

Lottery drawing at the end of membership turn-in for \$75.00 for all units that have reached goal designated for each rally. (One Winner per rally)

Additional Dates & Awards per the National Membership Team

85%	March 15, 2027	The American Legion Birthday
95%	May 28, 2027	National Poppy Day
100%	July 2, 2027	Independence Day
102%	July 30, 2027	30 Days Prior to National Convention

Unit Awards from National

Units reaching 100% by January 31, 2027, will receive a gift from the National Membership Chairman, 2 per unit for the unit president and unit membership chairman.

New Chartered Units between 9/1/2027 thru 7/31/2028 will receive a Unit Guidebook & ALA National Constitution & Bylaws from Emblem Sales.

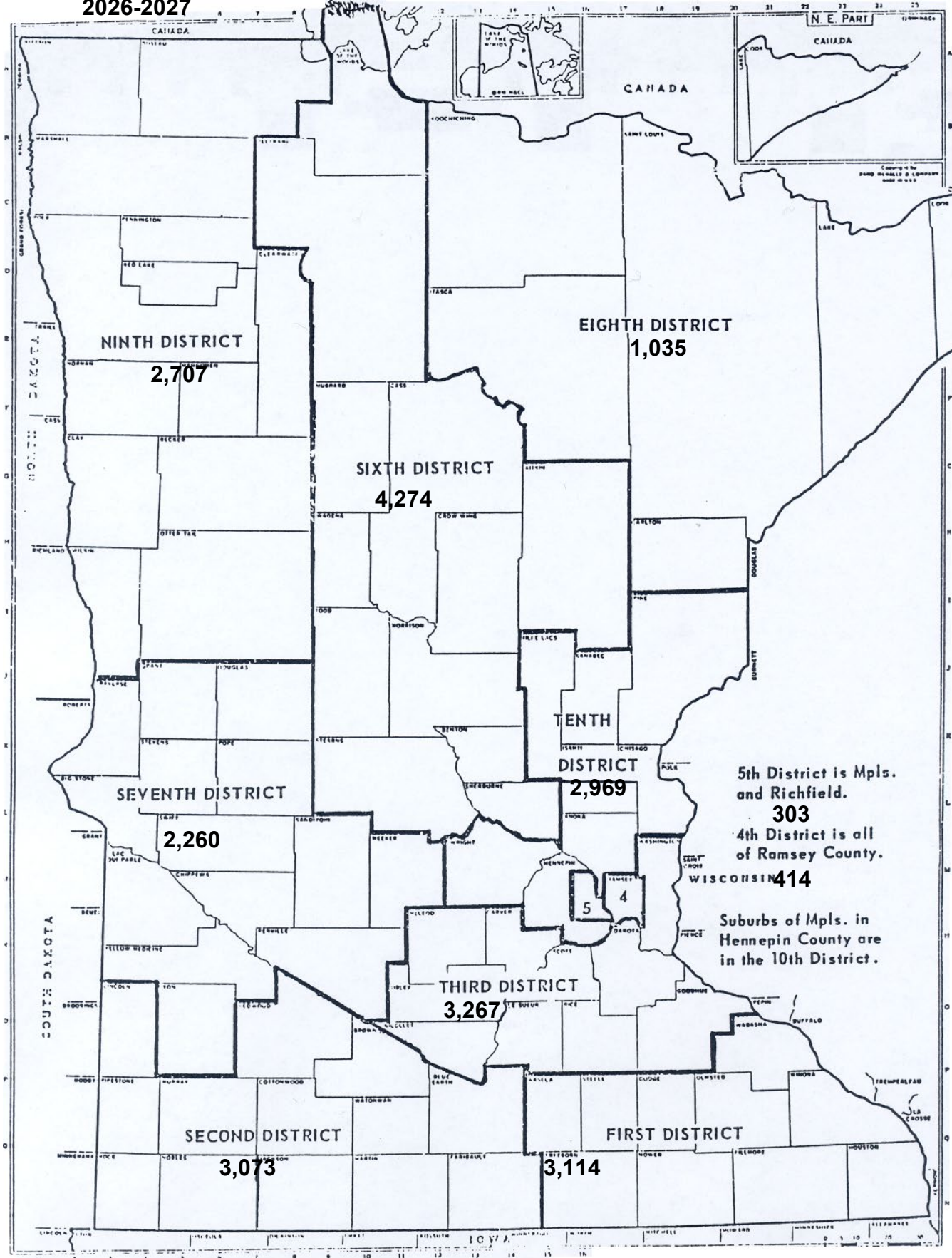
Member Awards from National

Recruit/Rejoin 10 -Any combination of Jr & Sr members by 6/4/2027 - will receive a special gift selected by the National Membership Chairman (1 entry per recruiter/member)

Family3 – Members who recruit 3 New Legion Members, 3 New Auxiliary members & 3 New SAL members – will receive a special gift selected by the National President

DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP GOALS

2026-2027



Memorial \ Chaplain

Sandy Wersal ~ Chairman



The Chaplain is the spiritual leader of your unit or district. Begin and close each meeting with a prayer, you can use the Manual of Ceremonies found on the website for guidance. Units work with your Legion family, make plans this year to hold a Memorial Service, and drape your Charter for Unit members who have died. Keep a list of your deceased members with the date they passed, along with whether they were a Charter Member, Gold Star Mother, Senior or Junior member. This information will be needed for your annual report. The annual report this year will be yes and no questions, but you can write a narrative if you wish, after answering the questions. Asking unit chaplains to send well and sympathy cards all year long, to let members know we are thinking of them.

This year's prayer book for President Linda will be posted on the department websites in a printable form so members and units can print a copy, if they wish. It is open to all the Legion Family. I will take prayers, poems, and scriptures, until December 30th, 2026. The four Minnesota Chaplains plan to work together this year as a team. If you have a need for a chaplain, each of us are willing to come visit you or attend an event. We believe in working together as a Legion Family "For God and Country."

Lord, I thank You for this day, and as we reflect on today's blessings, I am filled with gratitude for your understanding, Love and Grace. Amen

National Security

Wanda Seidler ~ Chairman



The National Security program mission is to maintain and promote a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military service members and their families.

*Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group.

U.S. Navy Family Readiness Group, U.S. Army Soldier and Family Readiness Group, U.S. Air Force Commander's Key Support Program, U.S. Marine Corps Family Readiness Program, and U.S. Coast Guard Work-Life Program.

*Use Military OneSource to locate family support groups and access local information (www.militaryonesource.mil).

*Support The American Legion lobbying initiatives to improve the Quality of Life of servicemembers and families by advocating for housing, healthcare, financial security, family support, and direct outreach through the Base Assessment and Servicemember Experience (BASE) program.

*Collaborate with like-minded organizations such as Blue Star Families, Blue Star Mothers, Taking Care of Our People (defense.gov), Pop-up Food Pantry, USO, and Armed Forces Service Center.

Jean Walker is the Department American Legion Auxiliary Representative at the AFSC.

* Support local National Guard/Reserve Units and institutions of higher education with a Campus Military Recourse Center to aid local servicemembers and their families as needed.

The National Security program raises awareness of POW/MIA's and the work being done by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in search of missing military personnel.

*Visit the DPAA website to read announcements, stories, and learn more (www.dpaa.mil).

*Recognize National POW/MIA Recognition Day- the 3rd Friday in September.

*Post an empty chair and POW/MIA flag at meetings and events (American Legion Resolution 288).

The National Security program supports families whose service members made the ultimate sacrifice through organizations such as Gold Star Families and Gold Star Mothers.

*Recognize Gold Star Mothers and Families Day- the last Sunday in September.

The National Security program nominations for the Salute to Servicemembers Award.

*Due by June 1st nominations include enlisted personnel currently serving in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, or National Guard/Reserve.
The National Security program advocates Community Disaster and Emergencies Readiness.

*Get information on disasters/emergencies, how to create a plan, build a disaster kit, teach kids about emergency preparedness, and the many resources available (www.ready.gov).

What National Security activity can every Unit and every Unit member participate in?

*R.E.D. Friday- Remember Everyone Deployed! Wear red on Fridays to support our troops!

*Collaborate with your Legion Family and other community organizations. Educate and encourage R.E.D. Friday participation in your community with flyers, posters, and newspaper articles.

Dept of MN President Linda's challenge to Units to send cards to our military servicemembers.

*Connect with your Legion Post Family, church, school, community social-based clubs, community service-based organizations, and other veteran and military-based organizations asking if they know of military service members who would appreciate receiving cards from your Unit. Put an announcement in your Post and local newspaper, put up posters and flyers in your community.

Parliamentarian

Norma Tramm ~ Chairman



Why do we use Parliamentary procedure during our meeting?

There are three basic guiding principles in parliamentary procedure

Justice and courtesy for all

The right of the majority to rule

The right of the minority to be heard

What does this mean?

During discussion at the meeting, members must take turns speaking and only speak to the president or chair. It is not proper to have a discussion between members at a meeting.

The resolution of any motion is that the majority vote is what will be the rule. All members have a voice and can share their opinion on the subject, but in the end it is the majority that will prevail.

The parliamentarian is an appointed position in the unit, district and the department. This member should be versed in Robert's Rules of Order and especially in our governing documents from the unit to the national organization.

A good parliamentarian is - impartial - knows the rules - helps members learn the rules - and continues to develop their own knowledge.

The member parliamentarian has a big decision to make when accepting an appointment to the position. Because of the complete impartiality required, they are duty-bound to forego completely their right to vote on any question at any time, unless the vote is by ballot.

Much of the work of the parliamentarian involves assisting in the planning and preparation of the meeting. Checking the agenda and script to ensure correct procedures is an important part of this position. In general, the parliamentarian's role is purely advisory.

A parliamentarian is available to give information to the president when guidance is requested. I think of the parliamentarian as google. The parliamentarian shares information and then the president decides how to rule on the question based on the information available. Similar to when we google something it is still our decision to accept or not the information gathered.

All members should be well versed in the governing documents of our organization as it is difficult to play the game successfully if you don't know the rules. Your meetings will become more congenial when all members understand and practice parliamentary procedure.

References available:

Parliamentary Authority – Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised – 12th Edition – shall govern this organization in all cases that are not in conflict with state statute, the constitution, the bylaws or any special rules of order adopted by the organization.

I also like the book, Robert's Rules for Dummies. It has great information is easy to read and understand the language.

These books are best used as a reference and not just read from front to back.

The Department of Minnesota will be "Grounded In Our Roots, Growth Through Renewals And New Members" under the leadership of Department President Linda Kelly.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Poppy

Mary Kuperus ~ Chairman



Purpose: The purpose of the Poppy Committee is to educate ALA membership and the public on the significance of the poppy and the program's financial benefit for veterans, military, and their families. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Mission Outreach.*

Meeting the continuing needs of our veterans should be the concern of every American who values his or her freedom. The American Legion Auxiliary promotes the poppy as a symbol of the sacrifices our military have made, a symbol to open people's hearts and inspire them to donate.

Use of funds for Veterans and active military

FUNDS COLLECTED BEFORE/AFTER AMERICAN LEGION RESOLUTIONS OF 2013 and 2014

In accordance with The American Legion Poppy Program and Poppy Fund Rules, as revised in 2013 and 2014 by The American Legion National Executive Committee, Poppy Funds may only be used for:

- The rehabilitation of veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917.
- The welfare of the families of veterans of the above-named period.
- The rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals.
- 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 evident.
- For the purpose of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy Fund. All funds collected prior to the passage of this resolution be solely used for the intent and purpose of prior resolutions and not for active-duty service members or families. New funds collected after approval of this resolution may be used for active-duty military and families as outlined. All efforts be made to manufacture the poppies or poppy symbol items by veterans first, but in the event that demand is greater than this supply source, use of a commercial vendor which conforms with the restrictions on the use of The American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary name and emblem may be used.

Increase the number of poppy makers

The Department of Minnesota has very few Veterans making poppies. Many veterans and American Legion Family members made enough poppies this past year that the Department did not have to buy from other Departments. Thank you to all of you who participated in poppy making. Please continue having gatherings, inviting neighboring Units/Posts and anyone who would like to participate to make poppies. Make it fun!

Department President's Special Project

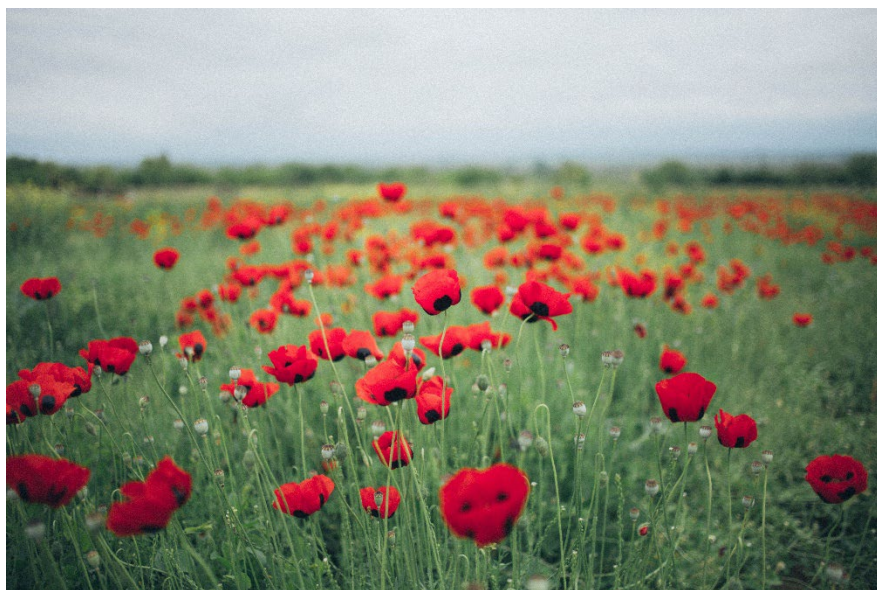
American Legion Auxiliary Department President Linda's special project is to raise funds for the Creative Arts in the eight Veterans Homes in Minnesota. Poppy funds can be used for this project. Just think of the many different art projects or other opportunities that veterans can work on because of the veterans home receiving funding.

Department Office has Poppy Items to purchase

The Poppy order form was in the September Unit Mailing. Remember to order early. Orders are due by December 1st, 2026. Units can purchase the small Poppy Making Kit and keep it at their unit; cost is \$250 for 1,000 poppies.

- Small Poppies - \$25 sold per 100 + Shipping & Handling
- Large Poppies - \$18 sold per dozen + Shipping & Handling
- Poppy Patch Magnet - \$7.00 each + Shipping & Handling (See image below)

There are many resources that pertain to the Poppy Program on the national website under the Poppy Program page. Please check out www.alaforveterans.org for more information.



Past President's Parley

Darlene Wandra ~ Chairman



The Past President Parley is a program that brings together the experience of our former presidents and utilizes their expertise in active service to the American Legion Auxiliary. Members who have served as Unit, District and Department Presidents of the ALA are encouraged to contribute to the Auxiliary as members of the Past President Parley. These leaders are encouraged to “Keep Us Grounded” by share their wisdom and provide ongoing mentorship, to empower and booster the Auxiliary’s present leaders, ensuring the continuity and strength of the organization and help us with “Growth Through Renewal and New Members”

- November is **Past Presidents Parley month**
Plan on a way to recognize your Past Presidents.
- Recognize and honor your communities **Female Veterans**
Recognize the women veterans by sending greeting cards on special occasions.
Assist women veterans in securing medical assistance.
- Keep your **Honorary Past Junior Presidents** active
- **The Past President Parley Health Care Scholarship**
Consider a donation towards Past Presidents Parley Healthcare Scholarship it is for any course of study in the medical field. It is open to any American Legion Auxiliary member who has been a member for three years and their current dues are paid. It is a \$1,000 scholarship and up to 10 are given each year, if the donations received from units to the Department Office have enough funds to do so, last year we only had funds for 2 scholarships. More information and applications are in the September unit mailing and will be sent out to units with the 2026-2027 Plaques and Awards material.

As Past Presidents you can be ambassadors for the organization knowing there is much information to share to each level of the organization and maintain its growth with positive actions.

Public Relations

Lorinda Kies ~ Chairman



Purpose: The purpose of the Public Relations Committee is to establish and maintain a positive public image of the organization by encouraging ALA members to be visible in their communities through branding and informing the public about the mission of the organization. *Standing Rules #6, National Committees – Member/Organizational Support*

Key Program Statements:

- Spread the word about the American Legion Auxiliary: *A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.*
- Encourage ALA members to be visible in their communities through valuable, distinct branding.
- Share the latest news from ALA volunteer national leadership and ALA National Headquarters.
- Maintain a social media account for your units.
- Build relationships with local media.
- Send press releases and letters to the editor to local media.
- Have a elevator speech you never know when you will have a place where people are interested in the American Legion Auxiliary.
- Familiarize yourself and use the PR toolkit.

Be visible with distinct Branding:

- Wear branded clothing, pins to all events.
- Ask to have a branded table at community events.
- Have American Legion Family brochures available at events.
- Info the public on the differences between being branded and using the emblem.

The ALA Brand:

- Why it matters to all of us.
- Why is Branding Important?
- Who owns the Brand?

One way to do this is to play the American Legion Auxiliary Branding Game.

- Do this at a Unit meeting
- District function-be ready in case of a stall in the program.

The ALA Brand: “Branding “is more than the proper use of our emblem and logos. It is our reputation based on our behavior while serving our mission. Remember when out in the community and you are branded what you do, say and ack reflects on how community members see us. Think am I relaying a positive view of the ALA

ALA Committee Facebook Groups are spaces on the social media network for ALA members to discuss or share about broad or narrow topics related to each committee.

Groups provide an arena for organic discussion about your local programs or services and present the opportunity to cultivate brand awareness.

Visit the Public Relations Facebook Group for templates, how-to sheets, ideas, and more.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAPublicRelations/>

Contact Public Relations Committee: PR@ALAforVeterans.org

Risk and Compliance ~
Sandy Fredrickson, Chairman
Sharon Voltz, Committee Member
Roberta Elvecrog, Committee Member

WHY is THIS COMMITTEE IMPORTANT?? WHAT DOES IT OVERSEE??

As the Department of Minnesota ALA has roles/duties of the organization, the Department Executive Committee and Officers are to Protect our legacy, monitor finances, and oversee duties of volunteers. Members of our organization include the Department, the 10 Districts, and all Units of MINNESOTA. This is YOU, the member!

A conscious **REMINDER** always, ***“money belongs to your American Legion Auxiliary unit, district, or Department. Monies must be managed properly.”*** People and lax procedures are the biggest risks for fraud. **FRAUD is THEFT. THEFT is a CRIME.** Safeguarding ALA funds requires having and following proper procedures for oversight, internal controls, and checks and balances. **IMPORTANCE**—Because nonprofit organizations, by their very nature of existing to “do good things” are too trusting and too lax about business practices. Nonprofits, therefore have the highest rates of fraud and theft. Reports of more than 1.6 million nonprofits have experienced fraud in recent years, per M Alerding of Alerding CPA group (the external ALA Nat Headquarters audit firm from 2018). Numbers are probably much higher today. FRAUD is damaging to the ALA’s reputation!

Financial integrity is vital to protect Auxiliary funds! The “POWER of TWO”--means:

- A) never allow one person to handle finances in isolation
 - B) require 2 (two) signatures on every check
 - C) ensure a non-signing officer review bank statements monthly
- 1) if digital---link them to the account
 - 2) share login credentials between 2 officers to prevent lockout during leadership transitions

Operational Safety protects our reputation, meaning reducing liability.

- A) verify insurance coverage from a 3rd party vendor
- B) when working with youth---always “two-deep leadership” is non-negotiable. No adult should ever be alone with a minor, and background checks are mandatory.
- C) Maintain meticulous meeting minutes for all votes and expenditures.

Governance and Continuity---insulate operations from conflict of interest.

- A. Crosstrain
- B. Digital presence

Modernize CONSTITUTION and By Laws---Constitution and By-Laws are your best insurance policies.█

A. Review every 2-3 years. Sooner if changes at National/Department level occur. Outdated documents leave the ALA vulnerable to chaos and legal challenges█

B. Have CLEAR by-laws (standing rules) define authority, prevent power struggles, and ensure alignment with the National, Department, and District.█

The Department of Minnesota ALA has formed this committee and is following the National's lead for roles and responsibilities of this committee. The Department strongly encourages and recommends every district and every unit to follow these guidelines█ The Department President shall appoint the chairman from among those ALA members who are not liaison members. (District and Units also) █

The Risk & Compliance Committee responsibilities with regard to the ALA and ALA Foundation are to: █

1. review the integrity of financial statements and financial disclosures; █
2. ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements; █
3. engage the independent auditor and review and approve the annual financial audit and IRS Form 990; █
4. oversee the organization's internal controls and risk management procedures; █
5. meet periodically with respective management and auditors to gain an understanding of the potential significant risks and exposures facing the organization; and propose needed internal controls to reduce risks. █

One final note---Has your unit filed your 990 report with the IRS? This is required annually. If questions please contact any of us on the committee. █
We are "grounded in our roots!"█

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Jody Hassing ~ Chairman



Service in VA Facilities

Minnesota is fortunate to have eight Veterans Homes and four VA Hospitals to serve our Veterans. Each of these homes has an American Legion Auxiliary Representative and we are always looking for more volunteers to work with our Veterans who live in the Veterans homes or are hospitalized. We are also looking for donations for the Gift Shop, which provides a Christmas Gift to our Veterans in the Homes and Hospitals, and the Five-Dollar Bill Shower which provides a cash gift to the Veterans in the Homes and Hospitals around Valentines Day.

Partner organizations and service opportunities

Units are encouraged to collaborate with outside organizations such as Wreaths Across America, Honor Flight Inc., the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network, Quilts of Valor, the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, and the VA Center for Development and Community Engagement. Opportunities include sponsoring wreaths, welcoming Honor Flight participants, connecting caregivers with resources, supporting quilt presentations, donating supplies or funds, organizing local creative arts activities, and recruiting volunteers for VA events.

Serving veterans, caregivers, and families; Service beyond VA facilities

American Legion Auxiliary members can make a meaningful difference by serving veterans, caregivers, families, and survivors in their communities. Service may include supporting therapeutic arts and hobbies, assisting caregivers and homebound veterans, or promoting veteran-centered events. Members can also serve locally by providing meals, running errands, offering transportation, supporting families after a loss, promoting veteran job fairs, collecting school supplies, and reaching out to older or homebound veterans who may be isolated. Units should identify unmet community needs, promote volunteer opportunities through newsletters and local media, and report Service to Veterans hours to their unit VA&R chair.

Support The American Legion's Be the One mission

The Be the One mission calls on us to help end veteran suicide by increasing awareness, encouraging conversations, and connecting veterans to help. Any veteran in suicidal crisis may receive free emergency care at any VA or non-VA health care facility, even if not enrolled in the VA system. The Veterans Crisis Line is available by calling 988 and pressing 1, texting 838255, or visiting www.veteranscrisisline.net. Members can also support Buddy Checks through local American Legion posts and learn the VA S.A.V.E. approach: recognize signs, ask directly, validate the veteran's experience, and expedite help.