



American Legion Auxiliary

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November 2018

LEADERSHIP

National Five-Year Programs Action Plan

In an effort to ensure consistency and help Departments and Units focus on serving the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary, the ALA Programs Action Plan was transformed into a five-year plan (2017-2022) with an Annual Supplement published each year containing updates on committee members plus reporting and award deadlines.

The 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan contains information that will be consistent for the next five years. The full Plan, plus each individual committee's Plans can be found on the National website, in the Members Only Area at: www.alaforveterans.org/members/programs-action-plan

Annual Supplement to the Five-Year Programs Action Plan

Information that changes each year, like national committee members and their contact information, award deadlines, and contest themes can be found in the Annual Supplement to the action plan. The full Annual Supplement, can be found on the National website. Please visit each national program's page on the National website for individual program Annual Supplements.

How to Guides

The 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan also contains "How to" Guides for each national program. There are 4 "How to" guides included under the Leadership Program:

- How to Utilize a Member Data Survey Form
- How to Conduct a Unit Meeting
- How to Lead a Small Unit
- How to Grow Leadership Capacity, Nurturing a Culture of Goodwill

"How to Conduct a Meeting" and "How to Grow Leadership Capacity, Nurturing a Culture of Goodwill" Guides are included in this November Unit Mailing.

Dee Dee Buckley
Department Leadership Chairman

How to Conduct a Unit Meeting

The manner in which a unit meeting is conducted has a great bearing on its success or failure. Unless a meeting is well planned, intelligently conducted, and subjects are presented and discussed interestingly, members cannot be expected to be faithful in attendance. Routine business should be transacted in an efficient manner, yet the opportunity should be presented for active participation of members in the program.

It is most important that unit elections and all unit business be conducted in accordance with unit bylaws, the current edition of “Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised,” and Department and National Constitution and Bylaws.

All unit presidents must remember to be impartial while presiding and not participate in discussion. The majority vote rules, but the minority has the right to be heard.

Committee members and officers may transact detailed business and should only bring important matters before the unit for decision. Special monthly activities should be stressed, and district and department officers, as well as local speakers, should be asked to add interest to the programs. Variety should be introduced in music and entertainment.

The President as Presiding Officer

- Calls the meeting to order at the designated time and, if a quorum is present, proceeds with necessary business.
- Preserves order throughout the meeting.
- Follows the accepted order of business.
- Refers to herself as “the Chair.”
- Decides parliamentary questions. The president states the motion clearly after it has been seconded and before allowing discussion.
- Takes no part in any discussion while presiding; refrains from expressing a personal opinion on questions before the house; avoids all personal bias when giving information to the organization.
- Calls upon the vice president to preside if she wishes to speak on a motion or leave the chair. Remains out of chair until the vote on the pending motion is taken.
- May vote according to local bylaws.
- Recognizes a member who has not spoken previously on the question in preference to one who has spoken.

Suggested Order of Business

While this suggested order of business for unit meetings includes items that will not be used at every meeting throughout the year, this may be of some assistance to presidents of new units and to others who are not entirely familiar with the business to be transacted. The order should be modified to fit the circumstances of the particular occasion.

1. Call to Order
2. Advancement of Colors (optional); Salute to the colors if colors are not advanced
3. Prayer
4. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
5. National Anthem or other patriotic song
6. Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary
7. Roll call of officers
8. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
9. Treasurer's Financial Report
10. Initiation of candidates (quarterly, biannually or annually as is the unit custom)
11. Reports of: president, secretary, unit officers, executive committee, Membership committee, standing committees, special committees
12. Reading of communications, including those from national, department and district officers
13. Unfinished business
14. New business
15. Election and installation of officers
16. Announcements
17. Program - educational and entertaining (optional)
18. Adjournment of business meeting
19. Closing prayer
20. Retirement of Colors (optional). The American flag and the banner of the American Legion Auxiliary in miniature and in a small stand should not be used for the advancement or retirement of colors, as the stand of colors was not intended to be used for this purpose.

Unit Meeting Terminology

Call to Order: The presiding officer first calls the meeting to order.

Reading of the Minutes: The president asks the secretary to read the minutes of the previous regular meeting. If special meetings have been held, these minutes should be acted upon after the regular ones. The presiding officer asks for any corrections or additions to the minutes, she then declares the minutes “approved as read” or “approved as corrected” if any corrections have been made. The minutes can also be distributed ahead of time and adopted without a full reading.

Statement of the Treasurer: After the reading of the report by the treasurer, the report is entered into the minutes and filed for audit. At the annual meeting the annual report is read, and the auditor’s report is read. The report of the auditor including the treasurer’s report is accepted.

Reading of Communications: The secretary reads all communications from the department and national headquarters, local organization notices and matters of general interest. Any action, which may arise from the reading, is deferred until unfinished business or new business is considered.

Unfinished Business: Any business postponed from the previous meeting or any matter introduced at the meeting on which action of the unit was deferred is unfinished business. The secretary from the minutes of the last meeting prepares a list of such unfinished business for the presiding officer. Only when the unfinished business has been disposed of, may new business be brought forward, unless the regular order of business has been modified by vote of the members present.

New Business: Any business brought forward for the first time.

Announcements: The date of the next meeting or special event is announced. If a social hour is to follow, this should be announced at this time.

Program: The president asks the program chairman to take charge.

Closing Prayer: The president asks the chaplain to offer the closing prayer.

Charge: The president states, “Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our country can be fulfilled only by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the American Legion Auxiliary and its members. Let us ever be watchful of our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy.”

Adjournment: The president states, “If there is no further business to come before this meeting, the meeting is adjourned.”

Retirement of the Colors: The color bearers will retire the Colors (Optional). If colors are not retired the president should say, “Colors in place, hand salute.”

HOW TO GROW LEADERSHIP CAPACITY, NURTURING A CULTURE OF GOODWILL

“The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership.”

If we fail in our efforts to cultivate leadership ability, our leadership will deteriorate and ultimately disappear. So where do we begin?

Build confidence in those you lead

- Help people learn and develop. To increase members’ confidence, you should encourage them to utilize the Auxiliary Basics course (www.ALAforVeterans.org) and the ALA Leadership Academy; and to attend ALA Mission Training or conferences held in their departments.
- A great way to build up members’ competence—and thereby their confidence—is to delegate specific tasks that will help them grow in an area they’re interested in. Just be careful that you don’t delegate too soon or too quickly. Your job is to help members set reachable goals and, if necessary, to break difficult tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.
- Focus on member’s strengths. Their confidence (and motivation) will generally grow when they’re given the chance to put their skills or expertise into practice.
- Be supportive. One of the most fundamental ways to boost people’s confidence is to actively support them and build them up emotionally. When you get to know people on a more personal level (e.g., what motivates them; what really matters to them) you’ll intuitively know how to best support them.

Treat all members with dignity and respect

- Treat everyone with respect. Each of us has a direct impact on developing future leaders by setting an example for others to emulate.
- Actively praise a member and provide positive feedback when someone does something well. We all like to feel appreciated and it takes so little to say, “Thanks, that was an awesome job you did!”
- Build members up and let them know that it’s OK to make mistakes. When you remove the fear of failure, people will be more likely to take good risks.

Challenge them

- Including others in projects or programs helps build emotional and creative capacity.
- Leaders should inspire, challenge, enable and encourage members. They should mobilize others toward transforming our values into action, our vision into reality, and potential obstacles into innovations.
- Empower members.
- Empowerment begins by painting the big-picture for those you lead. Empowerment also is all about trust.

- Leaders should give opportunities to those they lead, and then hold them accountable.
- Share with them past insecurities or challenges you faced when you first assumed a leadership role. Your openness will only make them feel more confident and inspired by your example.
- Acknowledge past mistakes. People want to work with someone who is human.

Listen and listen more

- When building a member's confidence, listening to them is crucial. Allow them to communicate openly and honestly about their strengths, weakness, fears, accomplishments, and ultimate goals.
- Actively listen to what others have to say before giving your viewpoint. Demonstrate, by your actions, that their thoughts and ideas are important to you. Remember your reaction and body language is an important indicator that you are truly listening.

Connect with your members

- Connection doesn't happen unless you invest the time to learn about someone's unique personality, perspective and motivations. Ask questions of members to uncover their interests, while observing them in action to find out their leadership strengths and potential.
- Demonstrate your commitment to their success by consistently adding value to them, providing ongoing encouragement, and making yourself available.

Be a model they can emulate

- Effective leaders should seize every opportunity to express, by their own example, their deep commitment to our organization. Leading by example makes our vision and our values tangible.
- Effective leaders do what they say they will. This builds credibility and trust among members, who realize that their leaders' promises are not empty words.
- Effective leaders are able to regroup and determine a new course when faced with adversity or an unexpected obstacle. They understand that needs and goals change over time and they must adapt to meet them.
- Leaders take initiative and responsibility for their actions.

"It takes a village to raise a child," is a popular African proverb. By the same token, it takes an organization to raise a leader. Developing leadership is a serious endeavor, but it's worth the time and effort because leaders are necessary for our organization to thrive into the future.