



2025–2026  
ALA National  
Book of Reports



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Cover photo: Jeorgia Clucky

## The Best of 2025-2026 *Celebrations, Milestones, and Memories*

Much was achieved during the 106th year of the American Legion Auxiliary — from a national ALA-sponsored Honor Flight to the first National Poppy Day® Virtual 5K to celebrating America's 250th birthday.



Female veterans from the Korean and Vietnam wars traveled to Washington, D.C. for a day of remembrance and honor for their service.



The American Legion Family and community members across the country participated in our inaugural Virtual 5K to spread awareness of the poppy and its significance. We are already looking forward to 2027!



ALA members engaged in The American Legion Family's USA 250 Challenge, taking part in physical fitness, mental wellness, and community service activities. In addition, members spent the year celebrating America's milestone 250th birthday, promoting patriotism throughout the United States.

The American Legion Auxiliary will continue celebrating and highlighting this administrative year in the 2025-2026 ALA Corporate Report, available this fall at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

# Impact report 2025–2026

## Total impact numbers

|                                                                              | REPORTED             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total Volunteer Hours x \$36.14*                                             | \$234,545,305        |
| Dollars Raised/Spent for Veterans, Military, and Families                    | \$13,396,760         |
| Dollars Raised/Spent for Youth, Scholarships, and Communities                | \$21,639,121         |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                                                              | <b>\$269,581,186</b> |
|                                                                              |                      |
|                                                                              | ADDITIONAL ASSETS    |
| ALA budget net expenses including gifts in kind/contributed services to ALAF | \$11,830,429         |
| ALA net assets without donor restrictions                                    | \$55,777,385         |
| ALA Foundation budget net expenses less GIK                                  | \$532,676            |
| ALA Foundation net assets with and without donor restrictions                | \$21,373             |
| <b>TOTAL IMPACT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE &amp; CONTRIBUTIONS</b>                 | <b>\$337,743,049</b> |

\*<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

### Service for Veterans/Military/Families

|                                                        | REPORTED |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Number of veterans/active duty/reserve military served | 960,259  |
| Number of military families served                     | 185,028  |
| Number of youth served                                 | 351,361  |

### Volunteer Hours

|                                 | REPORTED         |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Hours serving veterans/military | 3,306,949        |
| Hours served in VA facilities   | 81,664           |
| Hours serving family support    | 775,244          |
| Hours serving youth development | 329,364          |
| Hours for ALA Girls State       | 248,124          |
| Hours for community             | 2,000,400        |
| <b>Total Volunteer Hours</b>    | <b>6,741,745</b> |

### Dollars Raised/Spent on Youth, Scholarships, Community

|                                                    | REPORTED            |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Youth Support</b>                               |                     |
| Dollars spent on goods for youth activities        | \$3,483,904         |
| Dollars of direct aid to needy children (cash aid) | \$381,422           |
| All other C&Y expenses                             | \$509,246           |
| Contributions to other child charities             | \$811,087           |
| ALA Girls State                                    | \$10,353,744        |
| <b>Scholarships</b>                                | <b>\$1,500,557</b>  |
| <b>Community</b>                                   | <b>\$4,599,161</b>  |
| <b>Total Youth, Scholarships, &amp; Community</b>  | <b>\$21,639,121</b> |

### Dollars Raised/Spent on Veterans, Military, and Their Families

|                                                   | REPORTED            |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Veterans/active duty/reserve                      | \$6,209,966         |
| In-kind donations                                 | \$1,899,441         |
| \$ raised from poppies or poppy items distributed | \$3,126,143         |
| Total amount paid to veterans who made poppies    | \$172,365           |
| Military families                                 | \$1,988,845         |
| <b>Total Dollars Raised/Spent</b>                 | <b>\$13,396,760</b> |



## Report: National President

**Mission Driven:** It is who we are, it is what we do, and it is why we were organized. As I traveled to departments this year, it was clear that we all work the mission. What program that mission falls under is different for everyone. For many, mission means volunteering at our local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and state veterans homes. It may be supporting our veterans as they go on an Honor Flight. For others, it is supporting our military and their families. For some units, it is supporting the youth of our country, both military and non-military. Some places I visited, it was clear the community knew who they could go to if they needed anything. That might be donations of food or clothing for the homeless. It might mean organizing and volunteering at the community food pantry. All of these things are part of our mission.

**Family Focused:** Being a family is what keeps us grounded and focused. My family was so supportive this past year as I fulfilled my dream of serving as your national president. My American Legion Family back in Illinois was so supportive as I traveled and shared the importance of working together as a family. My many visits to posts, units, squadrons, and chapters only made my belief of working together as a family even stronger — from taking a motorcycle ride with the judge advocate of Maine to visiting a small post in Arkansas that truly does everything as a Legion Family. It took the entire village to dress me to ride on the back of a motorcycle! I had the ride from a female veteran Legionnaire, a coat from an SAL Rider, and gloves

from an ALA member! I enjoyed an evening of tacos and fellowship in Arkansas and watched as they worked together to cook, serve, and clean up that meal. They are open to their community for “Taco Tuesday” as well.

A highlight for me was attending the Chapel of Four Chaplains ceremony in Philadelphia. The opportunity to remember four heroes who willingly gave up their lives for others reminded me that bravery and honor truly personify our United States military.

Our ALA sponsored-Honor Flight for female

veterans made me so grateful to our female veterans. They served silently, but with so much purpose. Hearing and sharing their stories warmed my heart and gave some ALA National Headquarters staff some really strong emotions. Watching as school groups from around the country lined up to clap for these amazing women

and thanked them for their service and welcomed them home renewed my belief in the future leaders of our country.

Thank you to all members of the American Legion Auxiliary for your support and courtesies this year. You gave me a lifetime of memories, as well as a lifetime of friends all over this great country we call home. Please remember: By fulfilling our obligation, we are truly Mission Driven, Family Focused — making us better together.



*To complement the ALA's sponsorship with Honor Flight, a bus wrap was created to highlight the Auxiliary and Honor Flight collaboration. The bus transported veterans during their tour of the memorials around Washington, D.C. It will remain on the road for 365 days.*



**Pam Ray**  
National President



## Report: National Vice President

The national vice president works collaboratively with the national president to meet the needs of our organization's members. While National President Pam Ray was traveling across the nation, I was responsible for keeping the home fires burning.

Attending the many Zoom meetings involved a huge amount of time. Seventeen committees held Zoom calls, generally four per year. I brought greetings from President Pam and remained to listen to all that was happening within each committee. These meetings were so valuable! They provided updates to keep departments informed about specific events and program activities. Participants really appreciated having a chance to share what they are doing within their divisions during the breakout sessions. The sharing allowed departments to undertake new activities, based upon what they learned.

I attended all National Executive Committee meetings. I also served as a member of the national team evaluating the performance of our executive director.

The national vice president's other major task involves the evaluation process for our program committees. National chairs are responsible for ensuring their quarterly evaluations are completed by the deadline and inclusive of information about accomplishments by division chairs. This identifies the levels of communication with department chairs (phone calls, emails, monthly bulletins, and responses to issues that may arise). National chairs did an excellent job with these reports this year!

Upon receipt of the reports, my responsibility included reading all of the information provided and preparing a report for President Pam. Based upon this information, changes to membership on a few committees took place.

It was my honor to participate in the Washington Conference, and more information will be available with my platform remarks. Also, I was excited to serve as moderator and presenter at three Mission Trainings: Minneapolis, Indianapolis, and Atlanta. My co-presenters were knowledgeable, and the audiences were appreciative. Comments were very supportive of this method of reaching unit members, as well as department leaders.

We restarted the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee, thanks to your vote at the last National Convention. I attended an onsite meeting in Indianapolis. What enthusiasm, commitment, and forward thinking took place. The meeting included many staff from National Headquarters, as well as the appointed committee. The first steps really set the tone for the direction of this committee to move our organization ahead!

I enjoyed working with the NEC, national officers and chairs, and many departments throughout the year. Thank you for electing me as your national vice president!



*ALA Mission Training: Indianapolis presenters (from left) Michele DeGenarro, Dr. Coral May Grout, and Melanie Taylor.*



**Dr. Coral May Grout**  
National Vice President



## Report: National Secretary

The national president appoints the national secretary annually. This volunteer position is unpaid and does not require work from the Indianapolis office. According to the ALA national governing documents, the secretary is responsible for recording proceedings and submitting official minutes for conventions and NEC meetings, including regular and executive sessions.

The secretary also serves as the official liaison between the NEC and any departments under disciplinary actions. The secretary does not get involved in appeals until the NEC votes to impose disciplinary action. National Headquarters' governance staff manage all aspects of the appeals. Once the NEC votes to put a department on probation, the secretary's role is to update the NEC on a regular basis regarding the status of such departments. The role includes tracking the progress of stated requirements and making sure these requirements are met. Though the secretary is the liaison between the departments, the role is strictly to monitor the progress of the disciplinary actions imposed. If a department has questions regarding the probation requirements, it is forwarded back to National Headquarters' governance staff for clarification or answers.

The national secretary also fields emails received through the national secretary inbox. Many of these emails are from The American Legion membership staff and pertain to paying of Auxiliary dues or eligibility questions. Some of the emails are forwarded to our fantastic ALA National Headquarters' membership team, who gra-

ciously and efficiently handle them. If it is clear where the sender is from, the email is forwarded to the appropriate department as a potential new member or potentially a rejoin. This year, over 100 emails of this type were forwarded to department secretaries for consideration.

Each month, the department secretaries meet via Zoom for an informal information session.

These Zoom meetings have proven to be a great forum for the secretaries to ask questions, discuss procedures, and, in many cases, discover new ways to do things. The meetings are also a wonderful way for newer secretaries to connect with the other secretaries. Sometimes, we even have special guests. The first month, Executive Director Ben Hendricks joined to in-

troduce himself and answer any questions. Other guests included National President Pam Ray, National Headquarters' Director of Programs Chrystal Daulton, and National Treasurer Marybeth Revoir.

The department secretaries are rockstars! They work hard, spend many hours getting things done, and are always willing to assist when needed. Each month, I learn something new. I am in awe of their talents; I appreciate what they do for their departments, and I love how they all step in to help each other when needed.



*The national secretary fields emails received through the national secretary inbox.*



Kathy Daudistel  
National Secretary



# Report: National Treasurer

See the full financial statements this fall in the ALA Annual Report

Our National Convention brings us together each year to celebrate. This year's Mission Driven, Family Focused activities continued our proud history of service to veterans, military, their families, and

our communities.

Although our administrative year does not officially end until Sept. 30, I would like to share our progress to date in mission delivery and the financial resources that support it.

The Spirit of Youth Fund has received \$32,000 in donations to date. We anticipate awarding 15 Children of Warriors, 10 Member Loyalty, five Non-Traditional, and 23 Spirit of Youth scholarships, totaling \$153,000.

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund has received \$140,000 in donations to date, and grants to Auxiliary members in need total \$135,000.

To support our status as co-presenter of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, we received \$39,000 in donations and logged hundreds of volunteer hours to help make this year's Festival a success.

Under the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, the Mission Endowment Fund has received \$52,000 in individual donations, and the Veteran Projects Fund has received \$26,000. The Foundation awards Veteran Projects Fund grants that make a meaningful difference in veteran communities nationwide, with more than \$77,000 awarded this year.

This administrative year's Mission Training conferences achieved record-high attendance. In addition, five national Junior meetings were held, with more than 130 engaged Juniors participating.

At the national level, we have established partnerships with both Wreaths Across America and Honor Flight Network. This past December, units and members placed memorial wreaths across all 50 states.

The American Legion Auxiliary-sponsored Lone Eagle Honor Flight for women veterans in April was an enormous success. It also included the inaugural run of the ALA-branded bus, which will travel throughout Washington, D.C. for the next year to help transport additional veterans during their Honor Flight visits.

The American Legion Auxiliary promotes and participates in dozens of veteran-centered activities and observances, including National Poppy Day®, the USA 250 Challenge, Wear R.E.D. (Remember Everyone Deployed) Fridays, Be the One Day (the first Friday of each month), American Legion Family Day, Purple Up! for Military Kids, Gold Star Spouses Day, Military Spouse Appreciation Day, Month of the Military Child, Teacher Appreciation Week, Give 10 to Education, and many more. A \$10,000 donation was presented by National President Pam Ray to The American Legion for their Veterans & Children Foundation.

Communication is the core of what assists in our success. Information shared through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube keeps us all engaged with important and timely issues. The online ALA Academy has numerous interesting and instructional webinars developed to share knowledge key to improving our mission of better service to veterans, military, and their families.

The proverb "It takes a village" reflects the heart of the American Legion Auxiliary and the catalyst behind our Mission Driven spirit. Our more than 7,200 units and their members — led by their departments and supported by the talented, professional, and dedicated staff at National Headquarters — make up our village. It is remarkable what we have accomplished and will continue to accomplish as we are the American Legion Auxiliary.



Marybeth Revoir  
National Treasurer



## Report: National Chaplain

As your American Legion Auxiliary national chaplain, I had many opportunities this year and I am grateful for what you — members of the American Legion Auxiliary — have given me through this office. The year started with installation in Tampa, Fla., where following the installation, an Illinois American Legion member gave me an “attitude” pin. The following morning, it was the National Executive Committee meeting and my first opportunity to pray for our organization and new National President Pam Ray.

As the year moved ahead, there were additional NEC meetings, a Zoom meeting with the department chaplains, and attending The American Legion’s chaplain workshop where I met my counterparts in The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion. Working with the Legion Family department chaplains in attendance gave me the opportunity to learn from each of them and how they planned to carry out our duties.

Then came a trip to Springfield, Ill., for National President Pam’s homecoming. This included visiting Casey, Ill., where everything is “big” — from a 42-foot wind chime, 56-foot wooden rocking chair to a 32-foot mailbox, and many more “world’s largest attractions.” That evening, we enjoyed Springfield’s popular horseshoe sandwich. On Saturday, we attended a special service at the World War II monument to honor Pam’s father for his military service. Other sites included a trip to Lincoln’s Tomb and the Lincoln Museum, plus a night to pay tribute to National President Pam.

From there, I was beginning to write the various chaplain articles for the national *Auxiliary* magazine and writing prayers for the upcoming Junior meetings. At the Indianapolis Mission Training, I had the opportunity to lead the opening and closing prayers.

**“Please know that as your national chaplain and the department chaplains throughout the nation, we have been praying for you.”**

The special highlight was the opportunity to attend the Chapel of Four Chaplains’ 75th Anniversary Banquet with National President Pam. Also in attendance were Past National President Trish Ward and National Community Service Chair John Tester. I also met two of the granddaughters of the Rev. George Fox. They shared wonderful stories with us.

There are many more memories from the year; however, I would like all of you to know if you had any doubts or fears throughout this past ALA year, please know that as your national chaplain and the department chaplains throughout the nation, we have been praying for you. Our service to you is best expressed in Don Moen’s song, *Somebody’s Praying For Me*.

“Now I know that friend was you  
You were the gift God gave me  
'Cuz when you prayed His love broke through  
It was your prayer that saved me

Thank you for praying for me  
Now I can clearly see  
That you were the one on your knees  
So thank you for praying for me

Somebody’s praying for me  
Somebody’s knocking on Heaven’s door  
Somebody’s praying for me  
Somebody’s lifting me up to the Lord  
Well I knew it had to be  
Somebody down on their knees  
Somebody praying for me.”

Yes, we have been praying for you. Even when we didn’t know what you needed, God allowed us to pray for you.



Nancy Magginnis  
National Chaplain



## Report: National Historian

“History is more than a record of where we have been. It is the story of who we are, who we serve, and the legacy we leave behind.”

The 2025-2026 ALA administrative year was defined by a shared commitment to being Mission Driven, Family Focused. Throughout the American Legion Auxiliary, members honored veterans, supported military families, mentored children and youth, and strengthened communities through service. As national historian, I had the honor and privilege of observing how each department brought that mission to life in its own way while remaining connected by our shared values and purpose.

This year presented numerous opportunities to document significant moments in our organization's history. We joined the nation in celebrating America's 250th birthday, reflecting on the sacrifices, service, and patriotism that shaped our country. We also proudly supported an all-female Honor Flight, recognizing the courage and contributions of women veterans whose stories have often been overlooked. These experiences reinforced that history is not solely preserved in archives or books; it is created daily through those we honor, the programs we support, and the service we provide.

Throughout the year, department historians were encouraged to preserve their stories in ways that were both meaningful and accessible. While written histories remain an important part of our record,

photographs, videos, interviews, social media, and digital archives also help capture the full scope of our impact. Pictorial histories were accepted for archival purposes, and Junior members were invited to document the Auxiliary's work from their perspectives. Involving members of all ages ensures our history remains dynamic, personal, and relevant to the future.

Strengthening communication among histori-

ans and providing opportunities to exchange ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another were also priorities. Through online meetings, regular updates, and direct contact, we continued to develop a network of members dedicated to preserving the Auxiliary's legacy. I am deeply grateful to every department, unit, and member who contributed to our organization's history, shared a photograph, recorded a story, or helped safeguard an important aspect of our past.

Serving as your 2025-2026 national historian

has been an extraordinary honor. Thank you for electing me and trusting me to help document this year of service, patriotism, and connection. May we continue to preserve our history with purpose, celebrate those who came before us, and inspire those who will carry our mission forward.



*2025-2026 National Historian Hilary Ott (right) with 2024-2025 National Historian Dara Oliver at the ALA's 104th National Convention in Tampa, Fla.*



**Hilary Ott**  
National Historian



## Report: Executive Director

The work of the American Legion Auxiliary is both simple and complex. The simple part is our mission. We exist to honor those who serve and have served by supporting veterans, military, their families, and our communities. The complex part is everything it takes to fulfill the mission every day, in every department, every unit, and with every interaction.

As I reflect on this administrative year, I am grateful for the people who keep moving the ALA forward. At National Headquarters, we have roughly one staff member for every 15,000 members. The fact that we continue to deliver national programs, member services, events, communications, training, and operational support at that ratio speaks volumes about the commitment and effectiveness of the NHQ team. Some of that work is visible, but the majority occurs behind the scenes — often unnoticed, but essential to our success.

This year, we continued to strengthen member service through ALAMIS (the ALA's management information system/member database) training, phone renewals, member communications, and support for departments and units. We saw new and rechartered units, and strong engagement with renewal outreach. None of those numbers happen by accident — they represent staff answering questions, volunteers making calls, leaders encouraging participation, and members choosing to stay connected to an organization they believe in.

We also invested in leadership. The Department Leadership National Conference brought incoming leaders together in Indianapolis to learn, share ideas, and prepare for the year ahead. Mission Training continued to build momentum, recording our highest numbers ever. We've even added additional joint trainings with The American Legion Family for next year. These gatherings matter because leadership is not just about holding a title — it is about understanding the mission, supporting members, and helping the next person succeed.

Our programs continued to show the heart of the ALA. National Poppy Day® was a highlight, from

local events to social media engagement to the first National Poppy Day Virtual 5K. The Poppy Program remains one of the clearest ways we connect remembrance, education, and action. We also continued important work through ALA Girls State, Junior Activities, caregiver training, VAVS education, scholarships, Wreaths Across America, and planning for mission-centered partnerships, including Honor Flight efforts.

This was also a year of strengthening our foundation for the future. The Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee began work that will help guide the organization in the years ahead. The process brought together volunteers and staff to examine where we are today, where we want to go, and how we can best position the Auxiliary for continued success. More importantly, this work is intended to be an ongoing process that supports thoughtful decision-making and continuous improvement, rather than a plan that is developed and then set aside.

Operationally, National Headquarters continued to modernize and improve. We enhanced our technology infrastructure through improvements to ALAMIS and member support systems while expanding digital learning opportunities. Work also began to modernize key training resources, including the Department Operations Guide, making information more accessible for leaders across the organization. Combined with payroll and banking transitions, audit work, investment planning for the Auxiliary Emergency Fund, and expanded communications, these efforts help build stronger systems that better support our members and protect the future of the organization.

The American Legion Auxiliary is resilient. It is Mission Driven. It is full of people who care deeply, serve faithfully, and keep showing up.

That is the real story of this year: progress made together, in service to something bigger than ourselves.



Ben Hendricks  
Executive Director



## Committee: Risk & Compliance

Effective risk management is fundamental to safeguarding the American Legion Auxiliary — ensuring the protection of its reputation, legacy, financial health, and dedicated volunteers. Throughout this administrative year, the Risk & Compliance Committee worked diligently to mitigate liabilities, implement best practices, and insulate the National Organization from risk, ensuring that minor oversights did not escalate into major operational obstacles.

A primary focus this year was ensuring organizational governance aligned with modern realities. The committee confirmed that recent updates to the national Constitution & Bylaws accurately defined authority and maintained strict alignment with current Standing Rules and policies. In support of this effort, the national committee conducted a comprehensive review of nine operational policies, ultimately recommending revisions for five and affirming the remaining four. All nine policy recommendations were subsequently approved at the February 2026 National Executive Committee Mid-Year Meeting.

Financial integrity and strict regulatory compliance remained central to our oversight duties. The committee rigorously reviewed the organization's financial statements and disclosures while monitor-

ing internal controls and risk management procedures. Given the current risk landscape and exposures facing both the National Organization and the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, these systems were determined to be entirely satisfactory.

To validate these findings, the committee met with Mike Staton of Blue & Co. LLC to review and approve the individual and consolidated audit reports for the American Legion Auxiliary and the ALA Foundation. The independent audit concluded that all financial records were in excellent order, with zero errors or deficiencies noted in the management letters for either entity. In coordination with Blue & Co. LLC, the committee also reviewed and approved the Form 990 tax filings for both organizations.

While the year presented unique challenges, the steadfast dedication of our committee members — coupled with the exceptional coopera-

tion and assistance of the National Headquarters Finance Division — ensured the American Legion Auxiliary can continue to move forward with strategic confidence.



*Financial integrity and strict regulatory compliance remained central to the Risk & Compliance Committee's oversight duties in 2025-2026.*



**Carrie A. Davenport, National Chair  
Risk & Compliance Committee**



## Committee: Finance

Your American Legion Auxiliary national Finance Committee's No. 1 priority this past year was to remain Mission Driven, Family Focused while funding our mission at the highest level possible through enhancing the programs that have kept us vibrant, vital, and relevant for nearly 107 years. Five appointed members comprise the committee, each serving a five-year term. The membership for fiscal year 2025–2026 was Past National Presidents. Three members represent the committee as liaisons to the Risk & Compliance Committee, the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation, and the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee.

The primary role of the Finance Committee is to work in conjunction with ALA National Treasurer Marybeth Revoir and National Headquarters staff to develop the annual operating and reserve budget. Then present the recommended budget to the National Executive Committee (NEC) for adoption. The fiduciary responsibility of the Finance Committee does not end at the Post-Convention NEC meeting. Monthly reviews of the financial statements occur to keep a watchful eye on all ALA programs and activities.

Throughout the year, the American Legion Auxiliary Finance Committee met to make any adjustments that may have been necessary to reflect new or changing goals. The Finance Committee oversees the established investment funding streams. For example, when Valeo Financial Advisors had an investment opportunity to present to the committee due to the time-sensitive nature, a virtual Zoom meeting was warranted.

Additionally, the Finance Committee oversees the organization's financial policies and procedures of the American Legion Auxiliary. The committee ensures that all financial policies are reviewed

or revised and sent for approval by the NEC on an annual basis. This was the second year all 20+ financial related policies and procedures were discussed via a Zoom meeting during a marathon Sunday afternoon. This was quite an undertaking since several of the documents needed revisions as the financial climate in which the American Legion Auxiliary functions is an everchanging landscape. A great deal of time and energy was spent drafting the sponsorship policy as an innovative marketing and revenue stream for the ALA. Having the virtual technology to meet has saved the organization considerable dollars over the past several years.

At the end of the fiscal year, the Finance Committee serves as a secondary review, while the Risk & Compliance Committee does the primary review of the annual ALA and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation audits. These collective actions help ensure the ALA is meeting nonprofit benchmarks and governmental mandates.

The Finance Committee continued to be strong advocates for good fiscal planning. The balancing act for the American Legion Auxiliary national Finance Committee continues to focus on the fiscal needs while being considerate of future fiduciary requirements. However, the financial health of the organization is the responsibility of all members, not just your appointed national Finance Committee. As grassroots members first, we all need to represent our Mission Driven, Family Focused purpose with dedicated support for the American Legion Auxiliary programs to impact our veterans, military, their families, and the communities we serve.

**"The Finance Committee serves as a secondary review, while the Risk & Compliance Committee does the primary review of the annual ALA and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation audits."**



Nicole Clapp, National Chair  
Finance Committee



# Report: American Legion Auxiliary Foundation

The mission of the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation is to positively impact the lives of our veterans, military, and their families by funding programs of the American Legion Auxiliary today and for future generations.

The ALA Foundation has worked hard this year to achieve success in working our mission! We began the year by welcoming new board of directors members Joan A. Hernandez (Idaho) and Dr. Teresa M. Lugo-Nunez (California), and welcoming back former board member Laura E. Santino (Connecticut). They went right to work, as the board adopted revised bylaws and ratified the appointment of Ann Fournier and Diane Duscheck as chairs of the Donor Recruitment and Stewardship committees, respectively.

Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival (VCAF) grants will be discontinued at the end of this administrative year. Only three departments applied for local VCAF grants during this year, with \$7,500 awarded. With the changes the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs made to the entry requirements for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, the local contests are no longer mandatory.

To continue to provide support for units, departments, and other ALA entities as they serve veterans participating in non-medical health and wellness programs and events, the Veteran Projects Fund grant opportunities have been expanded to include supplies for these types of programs.

Seventeen Veteran Projects Fund grants were approved for units and departments across the nation. Veteran Projects Fund grants were approved

for ALA entities in 13 departments, with a total of \$119,329 to be used to enhance the lives of veterans, both in facilities and in their communities.

Nineteen donations totaling \$141,298 were received and were sub-granted to units, departments, and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. The board has established a minimum threshold of \$2,500 for subgrants; this will allow the ALA Foundation to balance supporting local units with managing the administrative workload and ensuring alignment of these grants with the ALA's mission.

**"The ALA Foundation fiscal year 2025 financial audit was a positive one. With direct mail solicitations ended, the Foundation focused on only three fundraising campaigns throughout the year: Wall of Heroes at National Convention, Veterans Day of Giving in November, and Celebrating Women of Service in the spring. We benefit from the nationwide Giving Tuesday opportunity as well. These campaigns raised \$92,889 for the ALA Mission Endowment Fund and \$43,086 for the Veteran Projects Fund."**

The ALA Foundation fiscal year 2025 financial audit was a positive one, with no significant issues noted in the management letter. With direct mail solicitations ended, the Foundation focused on only three fundraising campaigns throughout the year: Wall of Heroes at National Convention, Veterans Day of Giving in November, and Celebrating Women of

Service in the spring. We benefit from the nationwide Giving Tuesday opportunity as well. These campaigns raised \$92,889 for the ALA Mission Endowment Fund and \$43,086 for the Veteran Projects Fund.

My thanks to each of the ALA Foundation Board of Directors, our donors, ALA National President Pam, and the ALA membership for your dedication, donations, and interest in the ALA Foundation as we work to ensure the future of the American Legion Auxiliary.



**Cathe F. MacInnes**  
American Legion Auxiliary Foundation  
Board of Directors President



## Report: Central Division

A new website for ALA Illini Girls State was developed and allowed participants to register and get needed information. The Children & Youth Program included Special Olympics. Children from institutional homes were presented gifts at Christmas, and members of the National Guard were given turkeys and gift cards for Christmas. Juniors attended the national Junior meeting in Indianapolis.

In Indiana, members worked with veterans in their communities along with The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion. ALA Hoosier Girls State was a primary program for the department. Many of Indiana's members are employed as our national staff and Legion staff.

Iowa worked with their members and communities on Americanism programs. All meetings opened with proper flag etiquette, and courses were taught on proper flag folding, including ALA Girls State and Junior Camp. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation had members working at VA hospitals and the Iowa Veterans Home, giving 9,000 hours at facilities and 40,000 hours in service to veterans.

Kansas worked with the Legion and SAL to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for servicemembers and their families at Fort Riley. The servicemember and their family went through grocery aisles set up with food donated by ALA, TAL, and SAL. The department adopted an Army company of 120 service personnel. Christmas Gift Shops were held at the five VA facilities.

In Michigan, two units donated \$932 to Quilts of Valor. Blood drives found 255 members participating and 53 members working the blood drives, while 30 members donated food. Two units explained wearing R.E.D. on Friday with 733 members participating. Units prepared and served meals to fire, police, and EMT departments.

Missouri districts were very involved with membership. At the fall meeting, a program fair was held and each chair had a display showing the how and why of their program. Members assisted at the 10 military bases located in the state.

Ohio supported their VAMC facilities and the many local clinics. Gifts for Yanks is a program for hospitalized veterans at Christmas. ALA Buckeye Girls State is a well-known program of the department.

West Virginia served veterans through their four VA hospitals, one assisted living facility, one Fisher House, and the West Virginia Veterans Home. ALA Rhododendron Girls State collected donations for the two special projects and Wreaths Across America. At each VA hospital, a Gift Shop was held so patients could pick gifts for their family at no cost. Leadership training was provided at Mid-Winter Conference in February.

In Wisconsin, Camp American Legion celebrated 100 years in 2025 — the entire Legion Family joined together to honor its legacy and help maintain its many buildings and grounds. A food drive with a goal of 250 cans of food for the food bank was delivered on Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service. The department raised awareness of POW/MIA issues by recognizing and remembering these heroes at each unit meeting, made communities aware by mentioning them at events, presented Blue Star Banners, recognized high school students entering the military, and submitted a Salute to Servicemember who dedicates themselves to the military and their community.

**“Iowa worked with their members and communities on Americanism programs. All meetings opened with proper flag etiquette, and courses were taught on proper flag folding.”**



Ann Buchanan  
Central Division National Vice President



## Report: Eastern Division

From one end of the Eastern Division to the other, our American Legion Auxiliary members worked the mission and stayed Family Focused. What a wonderful experience I had this year being Eastern Division national vice president.

Connecticut, with their seven districts, held Christmas Gift Shops, participated in Honor Flight CT, had stand downs, held Spotlight Monday saluting a member, and Spotlight Tuesday spotlighting a veteran, active duty, or outstanding Auxiliary volunteer.

Washington, D.C. gave 50 hours for their Children & Youth Program, presenting programs to students where they participated. Leadership was a main focus for this department, providing 140 hours and an in-kind donation of \$560.

Delaware held Constitution & Bylaws workshops where they talked to students on the various programs. They held VAVS carnivals and donated items to the National Guard. One Junior proudly boasted over 70 hours working in the kitchen of her post.

Maine members diligently worked and promoted their programs. President Linda Jack picked Honor Flight as her project this year. Everyone stepped up to the plate, and Linda was able to present a whopping \$61,000 to Honor Flight Maine at their convention. She had already presented one for \$20,000.

Maryland held many fundraisers for veterans. Juniors packed care packages, and one unit sponsored a Youth Leadership Academy. They had as their theme "Sweets for Our Veterans" and dressed up as candy bars.

Massachusetts held membership challenges to reach their membership goals and worked the programs to get the word out to all of their membership.

New Hampshire districts held a murder mystery

theatre, placed flags on cemeteries, provided backpacks for students, donated to many worthy causes, and participated in parades to continue the mission.

New Jersey honored their Past Department Presidents with a luncheon and honored those who had passed away with a ringing of the bell and reading of their names. They continued to work the programs and spread the ALA word.

New York held Zoom meetings and included their Juniors. Honor Flight was held with the department president being one of those honored. They held blood drives, promoted membership with dinners, shopped for the elderly, and their list goes on and on.

Pennsylvania held leadership classes throughout the state. Units provided many opportunities for the growth of their youth. Department President Jackie installed the newly elected Juniors at their Spring Conference.

Rhode Island actively engaged in all of their programs. They held an impressive Wreaths Across America ceremony in December at the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery. A team called "Rolling Thunder" provided a very moving tribute to the fallen. The Gold Star Family was invited to participate. Rolling Thunder participated in the RI Wreaths Across America program with a moving tribute to the fallen.

Vermont put together a Quilts of Valor group and gave some to veterans in their communities. A Gift Shop was held at the veterans home. Memorial Day was observed. Birthday dinners and early bird dinners were also held.

**"Rhode Island held an impressive Wreaths Across America ceremony in December at the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery. A team called 'Rolling Thunder' provided a very moving tribute to the fallen."**



Ree Ross  
Eastern Division National Vice President



## Report: Northwestern Division

Departments in the Northwestern Division were Mission Driven, Family Focused during the 2025-2026 year.

In Colorado, one of the highlights of this year was participating in the Honor Flight program. In their own words, witnessing firsthand the impact this program had on our veterans was both humbling and inspiring. It reinforced why we do what we do and reminded us that our mission is always greater than ourselves. They raised more than \$20,000 — an achievement that speaks volumes about the generosity, dedication, and passion of their members.

The Department of Minnesota spent the year “Promoting Our Mission by Working Our Programs”. Their main fundraiser for the year was the Honor Flight program with a goal of \$35,000.

In Montana, funds were raised for their ALA Girls State program, supporting the Auxiliary’s goal to invest in our youth. They already raised over \$3,000 through a drawing for a guided 47-mile, two-day, White Cliffs float trip on the Missouri River. In addition, the department is collecting hygiene items for “Bags of Love” for women veterans.

In the Department of Nebraska, a new unit was formed in Gretna — Leonard Conley Unit 216. This milestone was celebrated on April 25 — American Legion Family Day — with a history display followed by patriotic music by the Offutt Air Force Heartland of America Band, as well as recitations of the POW/MIA table and the Military Child’s Table honoring April as Military

Child Month.

In the Department of North Dakota, an American Legion Family Day was held in the York community. On April 25, approximately 100 people were in attendance to support The American Legion Family. The day included a large raffle to raise funds for the department president’s projects, a free meal, a great band, and shared fellowship between the York post and unit, as well as members of the community. They also honored local veterans with presentations, which included “Welcome Home” coins for Vietnam-era veterans and “Thank You for Your Service” coins being presented to all veterans

in attendance. The president’s projects were Honor Flight Network for Eastern/Western North Dakota and the NDSU Bison Strides Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies Program for Veterans and their Families.

In South Dakota, one of their fundraising projects was for raised garden beds so veterans could grow their own vegetables at the Hot Springs Veterans Home, with over \$4,000 raised.

In the Department of Wyoming, the mission they focused on was fighting food insecurity. Throughout the state, over \$7,100 was raised and donated to local food banks, school lunch programs, senior centers via Meals On Wheels, and anywhere else the members saw a need.

“In Colorado, one of the highlights of this year was participating in the Honor Flight program. In their own words, witnessing firsthand the impact this program had on our veterans was both humbling and inspiring. It reinforced why we do what we do and reminded us that our mission is always greater than ourselves. They raised more than \$20,000 — an achievement that speaks volumes about the generosity, dedication, and passion of their members.”



Shareen Johnson  
Northwestern Division National Vice President



## Report: Southern Division

Florida was “fla-mazing” and No. 1 in the nation for membership to reach 106.3% and helping our division to be No. 1 in membership. There were 110 units that reached 100% (as of press time).

Alabama recognized our female veterans during National President Pam Ray’s visit and focused on Be the One to stop veteran suicide. At their Junior leadership event, they had 80 children, celebrated America’s 250th anniversary with fireworks, and presented 516 patches to Juniors and Sons of The American Legion members.

Arkansas Unit 100 held a special tea for female veterans with 60 people in attendance. Unit members volunteered at VA hospitals and distributed poppies, etc. They worked as an American Legion Family, celebrated 250 anniversary celebrations, and other events.

The Department of Georgia carried out the legacy of Moina Michael through their work with

poppies. The 10th District carried out the tradition of covering an anchor in poppies and carrying it out to sea on Memorial Day to honor the veterans who died at sea. This has been a tradition since 1942.

Tennessee celebrated by rounding up membership, Western style. The American Legion Family worked together on holding America 250th anniversary programs across the state.

Texas members worked the mission with The American Legion Family. Leadership training at their Spring Conference focused on female veterans and received a grant for transitional female veterans and purchased a washer and dryer for their facility.

The Department of Puerto Rico hosted National President Pam where they held an America 250th anniversary event at Unit 84. Seventy-six female veterans were honored and given gifts carrying out the mission of taking care of our female veterans.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival took place in Columbia, S.C., where 106 veterans

participated. They raised over \$13,000 for this event and had three hospitality rooms to provide food and beverages to the participants with over 25 volunteers. Their department raised \$10,000 for a tiny village for homeless veterans.

Oklahoma American Legion Family worked hand in hand supporting one another. They received a grant to provide games, computers, models, board games, etc., for Sallisaw Veterans Center. They reached 100% in membership.

Virginia held leadership workshops, program presentations, gave out fact sheets for veterans services, and the Poppy Poster Contest. They collected 200 thank-you cards for Honor Flight hubs in Virginia.

Louisiana was committed to serving active-duty military personnel, veterans, military families, children and youth, and communities throughout the state.

Kentucky supported veterans homes and hospitals with volunteers, raised funds for veterans programs and supported schools, scholarships, children and youth, and communities across the state.

Mississippi raised over \$6,000 to benefit tiny homes for homeless veterans. During National President Pam’s visit, they held an event at Oxford Veterans Home honoring our veterans and celebrating America’s 250th anniversary.

North Carolina held their 85th session of ALA Tar Heel Girls State, and it was a great success. They supported the Americanism Program, Americanism Essay Contest, patriotism, educating children on the flag program, and teaching respect. They encouraged all units to support the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.

**“Florida was ‘fla-mazing’ and No. 1 in the nation for membership to reach 106.3%.”**



Vickie Thrower-Mills  
Southern Division National Vice President



## Report: Western Division

The Western Division thrived in Mission Driven, Family Focused this year. The American Legion's Be the One mission to reduce veteran suicide and eliminate the stigma of mental health treatment was embraced in the Department of Alaska. At their Fall Conference in Fairbanks, the Columbia Lighthouse Project Suicide Prevention Training was held at C. Russell Huber Post/Unit 57.

Department of Arizona units ordered 24,500 poppies, but an additional 32,150 poppies were handcrafted in collaboration. Seventy-eight members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, and American Legion Auxiliary worked together to ensure all units could share poppies with their communities.

Leadership Chair Rebecca from the Department of California created a leadership podcast. Rebecca developed a series titled

*Auxiliary Horizons*, which covered topics ranging from cultivating a sense of belonging for new members to sharing useful tips for all members.

The entire Legion Family across the nation can access the podcast through YouTube.

Auxiliary members from nearly every unit across Hawaii worked together for months creating over 1,000 braided red, white, and blue ribbon leis for veterans visiting "The Wall That Heals," a Vietnam veterans traveling Memorial Wall. Community members, veteran organizations, neighbors, friends, and civic groups joined the effort, which resulted in 2,000 leis being donated to honor veterans and foster community unity.

The Department of Idaho volunteers at four veterans homes, providing birthday cakes each month (Pocatello), doughnuts once a week (Post Fall Home), and gift bags to hand out to visitors (Boise). One unit provided Christmas cards to four elementary school third-graders. A special mes-

sage was written on each Christmas card. They had enough cards to send to VA homes in Idaho and share with Oregon, Washington, Montana, Arizona, and Nevada.

The Department of New Mexico proudly embraced the theme "ALA Gives Some H.E.A.R.T." Guided by the principles of Hear, show Empathy, Advocate, Respect, and Thank, members across the state demonstrated their commitment to serving veterans, military personnel, their families, and local communities.

Department of Oregon volunteered in their communities as The American Legion Family to enable their communities to know who we are and how we support our veterans and their families. They worked as a team supporting veterans outreach programs and fundraising.

Several national presidents during their visits share the importance of following your governing documents. In Department President Peggy's words, "Members under-

standing our governing documents has been our biggest success this year."

The American Legion Family showed honor and love to 9/11 responders in the Department of Washington. American Legion Riders traveled 200 miles, stopping at little towns on their way to the far northeast to join 9/11 ceremonies providing certificates and showing lots of love. Riders will continue through small towns, finishing their ride of honor and love for responders and those who were lost. The Western Division working together with The American Legion Family will continue to decide, act, and succeed.

**"Department of Oregon volunteered in their communities as The American Legion Family to enable their communities to know who we are..."**



Joan Cannon  
Western Division National Vice President



## Committee: Americanism

The American Legion Auxiliary has a long and proud history promoting Americanism in many ways. We have always taken part in patriotic holidays by participating in parades and ceremonies. We educate our young people on respecting our flag, and we advocate for the amendment to protect our flag. Through the Americanism Program, we teach love of this great country and honor for the men and women who fought to give us the freedoms we enjoy today.

In addition to the usual Memorial Day and Veterans Day observances, many units hosted activities for other patriotic days. Unit 38 in Colorado and Unit 174 in West Virginia observed Vietnam Veterans Day by working together with their posts to host special ceremonies to recognize those who served during the Vietnam War.

Constitution Day is Sept. 17. In Florida, Unit 351 celebrated by having a “Take a Quiz, Win a Prize” at a local middle school. Over 400 sixth- to eighth-grade students took a quiz, and after review with the instructors, the kids got to pick out food and candy prizes. In South Dakota, Spearfish Unit 164 prepared interactive learning activities for grades seven to 12, and their unit president spoke on her citizenship journey coming from Belgium to the U.S. In Ohio, members joined other organizations in ringing bells and distributing booklets with the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Many units came up with interesting and creative ways to share important patriotic information with our young people. Iowa Unit 129 held flag etiquette programs not only at school but also to organizations such as the Kiwanis and 4-H clubs. Florida Unit 351 hosted an Americanism scavenger

hunt during its family carnival. Children received a flag-themed bag and searched the grounds for patriotic items. After collecting all the items, they returned, recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and received another prize.

West Virginia Unit 137 started a new program for all homeschool students with the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance and had veterans dressed in uniform teaching the 13 folds of the flag. Each homeschool student received gift bags with all types of patriotic information and flags. Unit 54 in Florida held an after-school program at the local library where veterans read to children and spoke about the flag and the Constitution.

Hundreds of students participated in the Americanism Essay Contest with this year’s theme, “Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday and the Veterans Who Fought for Our Freedom.” Units also supported programs of The American Legion by being involved in the Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, and Junior Shooting Sports.”

of The American Legion by being involved in the Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, and Junior Shooting Sports.

Community involvement is also an important part of the Americanism Program. A unit in New Hampshire created a contest in their community called “Spy the Flag.” It is a one-day event for Veterans Day where individuals search and take pictures of respectfully displayed U.S. flags throughout the community. Photos are judged and certificates awarded for the best displays. Unit 34 in Iowa sent postcards to businesses/individuals in their community, thanking them for flying the American flag.



Diana Sirovina, National Chair  
Americanism Committee



## Committee: Children & Youth

The Children & Youth Committee works with The American Legion to promote programs that protect, care for, and support children and youth, particularly those of our veterans and military.

Field-Allen Windham Unit 148, Department of Maine, supported military families by sponsoring two military kids to attend summer camp, thereby creating memories these kids will have for a lifetime.

Spearfish Unit 164, Department of South Dakota, collected and distributed over \$1,700 worth of school supplies, gloves, socks, and sweatpants to five schools, helping 1,145 children.

Unit 144, Department of North Dakota, donated milk for snack breaks for four schools in a 40-mile area of Belfield, N.D., for eight days. Members were invited to the schools during snack breaks.

In New York, Children & Youth activities began in late September and October with fall festivals and Halloween celebrations that included carnival games, face painting, pumpkin carving, and apple bobbing. Every child was rewarded with a prize, which boosted participation. Apple bobbing was encouraged before face painting.

Unit 374, Department of Iowa, had an amazing turnout for their Trunk-or-Treat event with over 150 kids and their families attending. The unit served 374 hot dogs! There were 15 cars with candy and three tables with ALA coloring books and temporary tattoos for the kids. The entire American Legion Family was there to help out, including many Juniors.

Walter Graham Unit 332, Department of Illinois, got their angel wings while helping 16 military families during Christmas, with \$60 gift cards for food and 26 Christmas gifts for their children who needed

that little extra help during the holiday season. Urbana Unit 71 bought gifts for six children at the Cunningham Children's Home. Sewing and knitted items were taken to the local hospital NICU unit.

Santa's Castle at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the Department of Washington supported back-to-school events with backpacks filled with school supplies. There were 243 families with 522 children who were provided with these needed items before school started.

During the holiday season, Santa's Castle assisted 2,422 families with 5,396 children to shop for special toys, books, games, bikes, and other items. The distribution was made for the families who were financially challenged. They had the opportunity to shop for free for each child.

Departments were asked to be on the lookout for youth performing

Good Deeds within their communities and Youth Hero Awards for youth performing acts of bravery, whether performing CPR, saving a drowning victim, or pulling a coach and fellow team members from a horrific bus crash. This year, the ALA presented 172 Good Deed Awards and 62 Youth Hero Awards.

Units all across our nation held fundraising events, dinners, dances, bingo, and Independence Day barbecues to help raise money to assist and care for our children and youth.

I am so amazed by all the great work that has been accomplished by our Auxiliary members. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen!



Melanie Taylor, National Chair  
Children & Youth Committee



## Committee: Community Service

The American Legion Auxiliary shined throughout the year, providing countless acts of community service during the 9/11 Day of Remembrance ceremonies, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service projects, and outstanding American Legion Family Day events. Additionally, there were thousands of local fundraisers and outreach programs where our units continued to give back to our communities.

Units and departments across the country hosted blood drives, donated clothes and toiletries to homeless shelters, provided assistance to domestic violence shelters, donated hundreds of pounds of food for local food pantries, and participated in community fundraisers and events including cancer awareness walks, community park clean-ups, and scouting for food.

Then there are the meals — thousands of breakfasts, lunches, and dinners served to communities. Some were served at local community centers, others at parks and outdoor events, but most were prepared and shared at their local post home.

Here are just a few examples of the outstanding community service events our units participated in:

Maryland Gold Star Unit 191 hosted a Stitches of Love Club where they had a crochet group and made scarves, hats, and blankets for babies born prematurely.

New Jersey Unit 63 had a Junior playing the flute at several nursing homes, raising the spirits of those in attendance.

Ohio Unit 120 made 143 blankets to be donated to local hospitals, and 15 blankets were donated to new babies in the community.

Department of Michigan members participated in community beautification projects by planting flowers and trees, raking leaves, and shoveling and plowing snow.

**“The American Legion Auxiliary shined throughout the year, providing countless acts of community service. Additionally, there were thousands of fundraisers and programs where our units continued to give back to our communities.”**

In the Northwestern Division, two members extended their service beyond state borders by participating in a mission trip to Juarez, Mexico, where they helped build homes for families in need. Their combined efforts totaled 1,478 volunteer hours and \$6,627 in community service contributions.

In California, units helped with decorating the Rose Parade floats, and there was continuing support for the horrific wildfires of last year.

Idaho Unit 60 assisted the Red Cross with blood drives every three months. They were diligent in calling community members to participate, which provides an average of 68 pints of blood per drive.

Oklahoma Unit 1776 partnered with Post 1 and

Post 308 families to host a Red, White, and Blue Fair in Tulsa for American Legion Family Day.

Puerto Rico's Unit and Post 7 hosted a Community Health Fair that provided preventive health

orientations, blood pressure screenings, basic health evaluations, educational materials, and wellness resources.

Florida Post 57, Lake City, held a community event with bands, a car show, dunk tank, “Touch the Truck” first responder displays, and informational booths.

At the Pennsylvania Department Convention, Hershey Food Bank was presented with a check for \$3,085 and 624 pounds of food!

These represent just a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of volunteer service hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars donated back into our communities by American Legion Auxiliary units and departments.



John R. Tester, National Chair  
Community Service Committee



## Committee: Education

There is no doubt that our members are dedicated to the Education Committee’s mission, as evidenced by the year-end reports from all 52 departments.

The year-end reports contained heartwarming stories of support for the mission, beginning with Give 10 to Education. Nearly every report described how school supplies were gathered for students. Boxes were placed at businesses, backpacks were filled with supplies, and gift cards were presented to teachers. An incredible \$363,000 in donated school supplies was reported! Pennsylvania’s Honorary Junior President Aleah Rinker chose Give 10 for her project and presented over \$2,500 in gift cards for school supplies to 15 schools serving students at or below the poverty line. The Department of Connecticut supported military families by participating in the Connecticut National Guard Annual Back-to-School Bash, donating over \$5,000 in school supplies.

Veterans in Community Schools was alive and well with nearly 500 veterans visiting classrooms, sharing their stories, and providing flag etiquette and flag-folding presentations. Veterans read patriotic stories to students in many schools. Students asked questions and learned about the importance of serving our country. As a show of appreciation, students presented veterans with thank-you notes and goodie bags. In Georgia during a Veterans Day program, one school honored the veterans by presenting “Walk the Halls of Heroes.” Students waved flags and cheered as veterans walked through the school.

Teachers and school staff members were recognized during American Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week. Gift bags with lotions, inspirational notes, cookies, pizza, snacks, and a potato bar are just a few examples of how apprecia-

tion was shown. Windsor, Colo., Unit 109 launched an Adopt-A-Teacher program and provided \$600 of wish list items to that teacher’s classroom. Around the country, members volunteered in classrooms during Read Across America Day, provided mentoring help to students, and donated books on patriotic topics to libraries.

ALA education in the classroom included explaining the meaning of the poppy and reading *The Poppy Lady*, sharing the meaning of the Month of the Military Child and Purple Up! Day, and distributing ALA coloring books, Pledge of Allegiance bookmarks, and flag pins. The Department of Illinois lived out its department’s theme of “Believe!” by playing Santa throughout the year, actively promot-

ing the many facets of the ALA Education Program.

Members in Connecticut, North Dakota, and other departments reported contacting state and federal legisla-

tors regarding initiatives affecting educators.

Support for local and state scholarships was evident, with approximately \$340,000 awarded to 600 students. Unit 231, Mount Carmel, Pa., presented a unique scholarship to the senior finishing 31st in their class! Multiple units reported starting new scholarships, several of which were in conjunction with The American Legion Family. National received 1,086 scholarship applications, with \$153,000 being awarded to scholarship winners.

Spaghetti suppers, tailgate suppers, Taco Tuesdays, flea markets, and raffles were some of the creative ways units used as fundraisers for their scholarships.

George Washington said it best: “Education is the key to unlock the door to freedom.”

“Spaghetti suppers, tailgate suppers, Taco Tuesdays, flea markets, and raffles were some of the creative ways units used as fundraisers for their scholarships.”



Barb Washburn, National Chair  
Education Committee



## Committee: ALA Girls Nation

The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and ALA Girls Nation sessions work in perfect concert with so many of the Auxiliary's programs. Americanism, Education, Poppy, Legislative, Leadership, and Community Service are all touched upon through the ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation programs.

The Auxiliary preamble states, "To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism," and fits in perfectly with the patriotic teachings featured at our ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation sessions. Developing patriotism is the focus of our program. Flag etiquette is practiced every day, with posting of the colors and retreat by color guards. The playing of *Taps* is observed each evening. Patriotic readings and music round

out programs to promote Americanism. The National Anthem is heard and sung by the delegates.

Poppies become the decoration of choice at ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation. Some departments hold poppy making sessions using the traditional paper method. Others use fabric. Wreaths are made by individual cities or counties and placed in positions of honor on stages. *The Poppy Lady* book about Moina Michael explains the poppy's significance as our national flower of remembrance. ALA Girls Nation creates and lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown in Arlington National Cemetery.

Government education dominates the majority of time at ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation sessions, providing a basic understanding of how our state-level and federal-level governmental systems operate. Most importantly, it gives the young women the knowledge they need to become engaged citizens.

Mock legislative sessions require the students to write and debate bills or resolutions. Parlia-

mentary procedure is used, and the senators or representatives polish their leadership skills. They receive instruction on how to find and communicate with their elected officials. It is pointed out that the Auxiliary supports the legislative agenda of The American Legion and how to participate in that support. All 50 departments award various scholarships to the attendees. Each department selects a winner of the department-level Samsung Scholarship, which is then submitted for the divisional awards. Finally, national winners are selected. Our ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation programs help fund the higher education of these young women.

"Inviting veterans to speak at sessions is always a highlight. Many of our departments like to feature female veterans for these programs. It is a wakeup call for the majority of the young women — an appreciation for veterans and their sacrifice is instilled."

Community Service projects are selected by each department. They range from local projects like food pantries and toy drives, to national-level projects such as Honor Flight and Wreaths Across America. The del-

egates might be asked to bring canned food items, donate a toy, donate cash through activities like penny wars, or write letters to veterans for mail call on Honor Flights.

Inviting veterans to speak at sessions is always a highlight. Many of our departments like to feature female veterans for these programs. It runs the gamut from humorous to very somber and is a wakeup call for the majority of the young women — an appreciation for veterans and their sacrifice is instilled.

As you can see, ALA Girls State and ALA Girls Nation sessions promote the aims and goals of the American Legion Auxiliary in numerous ways!



Jane Thurston, National Chair  
ALA Girls Nation Committee



## Committee: Junior Activities

The joy of Juniors! American Legion Auxiliary Junior members were extremely busy this year, performing many community service projects, holding fundraisers, and supporting veterans, military, and their families. From department to department, there were common themes, service to veterans, and community outreach. Departments reported Juniors participated in patriotic parades, Wreaths Across America, Honor Flights, placing flags, serving meals, distributing poppies, and so much more. A growing, successful trend was to invite young Sons of The American Legion to Junior meetings and activities.

“The partnership between Juniors and young Sons will lead to expanding their impact and strengthen their programs,” said the Department of Virginia Junior Activities Committee chair.

The Juniors and Sons focused on service to veterans and military families by providing school supplies, backpacks, and supplies for U.S. Navy baby showers.

The Department of Wyoming defines itself as small but mighty and proud, and their Juniors and young Sons do the same. Members were challenged to help eradicate hunger by making a cake kit for each year of their age. A cake kit has all the ingredients necessary to make a cake without needing to bake it. This successful project allowed them to donate 115 cake kits to a local food bank.

Imagine adding a Junior volunteer position that focuses on Junior recruitment to the department membership team — this is what Indiana accomplished, which could be a huge opportunity for Auxiliary member growth.

Illinois members worked together as a Legion Family to mentor Juniors and young Sons with an annual weekend Joint Youth Conference. The department commander, detachment commander, department president, and senior officers were in attendance to teach

the curriculum, including flag folding and conducting memorial services.

The Department of Maryland Juniors used an acronym — S.M.A.R.T.I.E.S (Serving, Motivated, Ambitious, Responsible, Talented, Individual, Empowering, Service) — the candy represented the Juniors’ take on the department president’s focus, “Sweet on Our Veterans.” These energetic Juniors doubled their goal of \$2,500 by fundraising over \$5,000 to purchase durable medical equipment for low-income, uninsured children. Another project was for Casey Cares Foundation. They collected Kammie Jammies, over 1,200 pairs of pajamas to donate to terminally ill children.

The department reports proved that Juniors continued to amaze us all with their new ideas. In Tennessee, a Junior member organized “The Great Kindness Challenge” for the month of February. Each week, they completed a different service project beginning the first week with “Valentines for Veterans.”

Juniors and young Sons nationwide had the opportunity to meet and greet National President Pam Ray during her visits to departments. Having been a Junior member, President Pam motivated many of the Juniors and young Sons as she shared her message of Mission Driven, Family Focused.

Juniors and young Sons earned over 2,000 patches while participating in American Legion Auxiliary programs, especially Americanism and Poppy. Juniors also participated in fundraising to earn the Spirit of Youth patch.

As the California Junior chair stated, “Juniors are our greatest promise, and they will shape what is to come.”



Anita Biggs, National Chair  
Junior Activities Committee



## Committee: Legislative

Action! The power word that comes to mind when ALA members are advocating for veterans, military, their families, and communities.

Auxiliary members nationwide embraced National President Pam's Mission Driven, Family Focused as their foundation to engage members and get involved.

The American Legion listed several priorities during both the first and second session; the American Legion Auxiliary follows the Legion's agenda when advocating, and members were eager to advocate on behalf of our veterans. Priorities included winning the war within, veteran homelessness, and the Major Richard Star Act.

Members engaged in advocating in various ways: town hall meetings, rallies, letter writing campaigns, calling legislators, and staying nonpartisan when hosting meet-and-greet events for candidates, as well as Get Out the Vote events. In Massachusetts, several members reported attending a first-ever virtual meeting with their congressional leadership.

Departments reported conducting training sessions to assist with how to work the ALA Legislative Program and navigating the Grassroots Action Center; some created QR codes to help members. Tennessee reported that one member went into the classroom to help with studying the Constitution.

Sarah Tobin, Department of Colorado, stated, "ALA members are enthusiastic about getting involved; however, what may seem basic for some is quite daunting for others." Tobin created a step-by-step PowerPoint on how to sign up and participate using Grassroots Action Center.

In Michigan, ALA members felt attending local community events was a great way to develop relationships with legislators and share both Legion legislative priorities and state priorities. Michigan

Chair Anita Mennel stated, "We are amazing at working the ALA programs; however, we do not do a great job tooting our horns when reporting." Mennel expressed the importance of reporting and how the numbers are eventually shared with Congress, which, she states, "is where the biggest impact happens."

At The American Legion's Washington Conference in March, American Legion National Commander Dan K. Wiley's testimony was exhilarating and impactful. Wiley spoke on priorities, focusing on the Major Richard Star Act, paying our Coast Guard, and Be the One, just to name a few. The full testimony can be viewed by visiting [www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative](http://www.legion.org/advocacy/legislative).

**"When the Legion Family stands together advocating as one voice, what may appear to be a small gesture is a powerful and impactful action toward movement in Congress."**

Several Auxiliary departments reported members attending the Washington Conference; members were equipped with the Legion Legislative Agenda in hand and

comfy walking shoes, ready to meet their elected officials to advocate for our veterans.

Your voices and actions don't stop at the end of each administrative year, nor do they stop after the national commander's testimony — your voices and actions continue long after. Simple actions go far. Take, for instance, District of Columbia department members wearing "VOTE" buttons to raise awareness and encourage others to vote and first-timers to register to vote. It's the simple things that make an impact.

When the Legion Family stands together advocating as one voice, what may appear to be a small gesture is a powerful and impactful action toward movement in Congress.



April Sinclair, National Chair  
Legislative Committee



## Committee: National Security

The focus of the National Security Committee is strengthening and supporting military servicemembers and their families.

National Security Central Division Chair April Kollmorgen spoke from experience when she shared an article in the January newsletter concerning troop safety: “Troop safety, when talking about social media, put simply, is this: not posting any information about military deployments or movements, or even saying where they are and for how long they may be there.” This article was taken to heart by Department of Vermont National Security Chair Kelly Donaldson. She reminded members how important it is to not communicate the who, what, where, when, or why of our deployed service-members.

Jennifer Turner, Department of California National Security chair, shared one of the most meaningful stories centered around military family recognition.

A request came through our national email for 70 Blue Star Banners. The Department of California purchased 30 Blue Star Banners to assist with the request. The banners symbolized sacrifice, strength, honor, and pride within military homes.

Wray-McKinstry Unit 13 of Colorado attended Shipper Ceremonies, which are community organizations coming together to send recruits off to boot camp. Unit 13 gave pocket flags to the recruits, and Post 13 gave the family Blue Star Banners. Each recruit had a banner hanging on Main Street in Cañon City with the branch of service and picture.

To recognize and honor Blue Star and Gold Star Families, the Department of Arkansas challenged units throughout the state to identify Blue Star and Gold Star Families in their communities. Unit 74 in Sherwood embraced the challenge by identify-

ing four Blue and Gold Star Families, including the family of the post’s namesake. They had a reception and presented the banners. There were more than 50 guests in attendance. The event strengthened community ties and provided an opportunity for families to connect with others who share similar military experiences.

Nebraska has one of the two Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency headquarters. To bring awareness to the community, Craig Unit 127 holds an annual “Silent Lap” on POW/MIA Remembrance Day each year. They invite members of the community to come and walk the local track or run a lap to remember those who are still missing. Each person who walks carries a small POW/MIA flag.

In Oklahoma, the Chandler Library continues to partner with the ALA by allowing members to place a display table in the library window in recognition of POW/MIA Day.

The Black Hills Chapter of the American Legion Riders of South Dakota placed a POW/MIA Remembrance Table in the lunchroom at Creekside Elementary School on Sept. 19, 2025. One of the Riders was an Auxiliary member and the leader who directed the ceremony.

In Cleburne, Texas, in addition to receiving a POW/MIA city proclamation, the Johnson County Judge granted Unit 50 permission to place yellow ribbons around large trees at four intersections around the downtown courthouse during the weekend of POW/MIA Day.

Units throughout the country provided for our military and their families.

“National Security Central Division Chair April Kollmorgen shared: ‘Troop safety, when talking about social media, put simply, is this: not posting any information about military deployments or movements, or even saying where they are and for how long they may be there.’”



Norma Tramm, National Chair  
National Security Committee



## Committee: Poppy

Poppies are used in many holiday decorations, on floats for Labor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day parades, and are nearly always used for table decorations at unit events.

We wear them proudly to funerals. Poppies are displayed and worn year-round to remind us of our veterans constantly.

This year, many units made donations to and supported Honor Flights with their Poppy Funds.

Several units across the country, including Ohio Unit 181, held a “Purse Bingo.” They decorated the hall with poppies, of course! Winners of special games won designer purses. There were several poppy games, raffles, and sale items. They raised over \$4,600 for their Poppy Program.

The Department of New York held a Poppy Fund Tea Party. The homemade poppy decorations were beautiful!

National Poppy Day® is certainly a special day every year, but this year ... WOW! There were city proclamations, wreath-making contests, crazy hat contests, and so much more!

We held our very first National Poppy Day Virtual 5K!

This was an absolute THRILL! All who completed a 5K of some sort and sent a picture to ALA National Headquarters received a certificate they could complete and print. The first 700 to sign up received a beautiful medal (shout-out to the Juniors of Speedway, Ind., Unit 500 for packing all the

medals for shipping)! Members ran, walked, rowed, biked, swam, skated, and submitted amazing photos, having fun, and promoting poppies and veteran awareness in their communities.

Memorial Day was flooded with parades, floats, memorials, speeches, and a lot of remembrance and praise.

In South Carolina, poppies were a major focus for ALA Palmetto Girls State. The Poppy Lady visited the girls in attendance and spoke about the significance of the poppy and guided the girls in making their first poppies. The flowers were later used to decorate wreaths in a remembrance ceremony for those who courageously served our country.

The national Poppy Committee appreciated all of the entries for the Poppy Poster Contest and Little Miss Poppy.

To quote the report from Mason County/Point Pleasant Unit 23 in West Virginia, “Poppy is

more than a program; it is a promise — a promise to remember those who sacrificed, to educate those who follow, and to honor the legacy of service that defines our nation.”

To an American Legion Auxiliary member, every day is Poppy Day!



*Members nationwide participated in this year's inaugural National Poppy Day Virtual 5K.*



**Karen Toll, National Chair  
Poppy Committee**



## Committee: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Across our great nation, a wide variety of activities were directed toward our VA&R mission. All departments reported their involvement with this program, engaging in both traditional and innovative endeavors. Many reported involving Junior members and Sons of The American Legion youth whenever possible.

Traditional means of Service to Veterans included hosting bingo at VAMCs, hospitality carts at CBOCs, providing Christmas Gift Shops and gift wrap events, and providing tray favors for those hospitalized. Several units had programs to “Adopt a Vet” in the community or a facility or “Adopt a Ward” in a VAMC, veterans home, or hospice.

Members continued providing Buddy Baskets for formerly homeless and transitioning veterans moving to more permanent housing, access to laundry services for those who needed them, participating in stand downs, hosting Salute to Veterans Week events with other VSOs, and participating as part of the Honor Guard at veterans’ memorial services.

Volunteers also were involved with food pantries serving veterans and their families who have or are at risk for food insecurity. Hosting breakfasts, lunches, and dinners for veterans in local communities and assisting with day-trip fishing excursions for veterans in rehabilitation centers continued to be well received.

Some innovative activities reported were hosting socials and teas, providing gift bags created exclusively for women veterans, and special recognition events for Women Veterans Day. One department reported the unique activity of adapting Buddy Checks to a “Buddy Checks for Caregivers” initiative, which was much appreciated.

Collaboration with the organizations with whom we have memoranda of understanding was repre-

sented throughout the reports. Engagement with Wreaths Across America included not only wreath laying and clean-up, but also promotion to other local organizations to enhance the impact. Quilts of Valor was supported through our members participating in donating fabric, as well as quilt-making. Honor Flight was supported with volunteer guardians, writing cards and letters for mail call, and hosting welcome-home events.

Some units collaborated with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Network to offer support and even provided respite care so that caregivers could have free time for themselves. Support for Veterans Creative Arts was provided locally through donations of supplies, assistance with events, fundraising, and mon-

etary donations, and members volunteered at the 2026 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Involvement with the Be the One suicide prevention mission was widely noted, as was participating in Buddy Checks with The American Legion.

Collaboration with like-minded organizations such as Semper K9 and Project Bravo dedicated to training service dogs for veterans, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (T.A.P.S.), Flying Flags for Heroes, and participation at 9/11 remembrance events to honor and remember heroes of the Global War on Terror continued to be avenues of engagement. Successful fundraisers for projects serving veterans included hosting casino nights, raffles, and silent auctions, as well as acquiring donations from local businesses and civic organizations, which enhanced the impact to those we serve.

It was awe-inspiring to hear of all the great work undertaken by our members.

“Successful fundraisers for projects serving veterans included hosting casino nights, raffles, and silent auctions, as well as acquiring donations, which enhanced the impact to those we serve.”



Dr. Lisa Chaplin, National Chair  
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee



## Committee: Auxiliary Emergency Fund

The American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) was established in 1969 with a bequest by American Legion Auxiliary member Helen Colby Small of Burlington, Wis. As a national grant program, AEF is the only program that directly assists our members. Through your generosity, this program continues to exist — 57 years later — embodying the spirit of Members Helping Members!

Members in every department assisted in fundraising efforts to help raise funds for AEF. In the Department of Minnesota, The American Legion Family was called to support the AEF along with a Members Helping Members initiative at the 2025-2026 Fall Conference held in St. Cloud.

The call for action items was announced in The American Legion department newsletter and district newsletters requesting items and baked

goods for a silent auction. Donations were collected on Thursday afternoon, and by Friday morning, the bidding began. The total raised for that day was \$6,906.35 for AEF. Great job, Minnesota!

The Department of California took a new approach with their fundraising efforts by partnering with Double Good Popcorn and See's Candy for online fundraising. The digital approach helped California reach members all the way to the Department of Florida willing to donate to the worthy cause. Members in California didn't stop there; they held bake sales, lunches, car washes, Jeopardy games, and of course, "the good old jar at the bar" to help raise funds for the AEF program. Awesome job, California!

One eligibility requirement when applying for an AEF grant is that a member must have maintained ALA membership annually by Dec. 31 for the membership year, for three consecutive years (current and immediate past two years) according to

the ALA national membership database at the time of applying. While many units reported donating monetarily to their departments and the national AEF Program, many units also reported assisting members in need by paying their membership dues to keep the members eligible for the AEF grants — a true sign of Members Helping Members!

Awareness was also a theme throughout the departments, focusing on keeping our members informed about the AEF Program and assistance grants available to eligible members. Auxiliary members volunteered long hours raising awareness of the program through newsletter articles, AEF

brochures, in-person training, and word of mouth. The Department of New Mexico gave their members handouts with an explanation of the basic criteria and qualifications for natu-

ral disaster or hardship assistance. These informational handouts also included an application, as well as the checklist of items needed before sending in the application.

The Department of Illinois' theme this year was "Believe." To help promote AEF, Chair Julie Schuppner asked members to "Give the Gift of Hope" and believe their donations make a difference to the recipients of AEF assistance. Thank you, Department of Illinois Chair Julie, and to all the members of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through your hard work, dedication, support, and monetary donations, you continue to "Give the Gift of Hope."

On behalf of the entire AEF Committee, thank you for all your continued support for the AEF Program and Members Helping Members!

**"The American Legion Auxiliary Emergency Fund was established in 1969. As a national grant program, AEF is the only program that directly assists our members. Through your generosity, this program continues to exist — 57 years later — embodying the spirit of Members Helping Members!"**



Michele DeGennaro, National Chair  
Auxiliary Emergency Fund Committee



## Committee: Constitution & Bylaws

The national Constitution & Bylaws Committee worked with departments to provide tools and resources to support grassroots leaders in training to instill confidence in their leaders and department chairs. This way, they were prepared to provide direction during the review and creation of amendments required to update the Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules. This support helped members feel appreciated and motivated, fostering a sense of purpose and confidence that their contributions assisted in the successful growth of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Through calls, emails, and Zoom meetings, the national committee stressed that review and revision of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules are necessary to maintain proper functions within the organization. The training this year reinforced the idea that governing documents are living documents that evolve with the organization, and that laws underscore their ongoing importance and need for regular attention.

Department leaders and the C&B chairs found that incorporating group interaction into training achieves the end goal more effectively than either a PowerPoint presentation or one with no interaction. During Vermont's Fall Conference, members participated at the C&B table testing on their Unit C&B and Standing Rules. This exercise offered valuable insights into potential updates and additions to their governing documents. The session concluded with a discussion of answers and further discussion.

New Hampshire used their Fall Conference to display a Constitution & Bylaws with Standing

Rules from unit to national, along with Robert's Rules of Order and Robert's Rules of Order in Brief. However, members were surprised to learn that Robert's Rules of Order in Brief was available and in a book they could understand.

Auxiliary leaders know that our members love challenges and used them to their advantage to jumpstart the year. Maine's C&B Committee organized a challenge. The challenge first fell to the units and districts to locate their governing documents. If the unit located its governing documents, the second step was to review and update the Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules. If the unit could not locate its documents, the challenge required writing a new Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules with the committee's guidance. Michigan challenged units to take a few minutes at meetings to review aloud and discuss a section of their governing documents. Georgia Unit 121 chal-

lenged their knowledgeable, long-standing members to work with newer members to review and update their C&B. Their members worked together and achieved a sense of accomplishment. Through these challenges, members learned the key to accomplishing the challenge was communication; therefore, all were winners. Departments and units achieved their mission of reviewing and updating their Constitution & Bylaws and Standing Rules which provided transparency and accountability.



*Auxiliary members with their unit Constitution & Bylaws.*



**Sallie Rossman, National Chair  
Constitution & Bylaws Committee**



## Committee: Leadership

The Leadership Committee stayed Mission Driven, Family Focused this year by providing tools to help members become better mentors and leaders.

Department Leadership chairs showcased their leadership abilities by bringing out the best in their departments through end-of-the-year reporting. All 52 departments were eager to share their leadership skills in their reports. Many departments promoted Mission Training and the ALA Academy by offering incentives to members who participated in them.

Departments also reported creativity in enhancing member participation with more hands-on training tools. Games, quizzes, and audience participation were in-

corporated into leadership trainings. Nebraska leadership utilized the online trivia game Kahoot to make learning fun. Milam-Stanley Unit 60 in Oklahoma held skits and included their Junior members in presentations for best practices.

Texas held a training workshop focusing on mentoring vs. bullying during their Mid-Winter Conference where they interacted with members to gain insight into unintentional bullying. The Department of Rhode Island created a leadership booklet and a handout called “The ABCs for Members,” each letter of the alphabet representing hints on how to be a good leader.

Technology was a very useful tool in leadership across the nation. Zoom meetings, webinars, and even podcasts were utilized as training tools. Online leadership tools are a great way to strengthen our mission, as many of them remain online for future use and can be accessed by all members.

New Jersey conducted seven Zoom meetings called “Mentoring Monday” to focus on three programs at each meeting. The national Leader-

ship Committee offered a webinar on the different styles of personalities and how to identify those styles in oneself and others. Members were able to identify their own leadership styles, recognize the strengths in others, and use these insights to build stronger teams and ease challenges. More than 160 members tuned in to watch the webinar, and it has been viewed on the ALA Academy website numerous times.

A quarterly newsletter was initiated by our National President Pam Ray, with a goal to get important information to the units and keep our grassroots members informed. Each newsletter issue

was crafted with a simple, clear message on what was happening in the national ALA programs and contained information on what members can do to work the mission within each program. The quarterly newsletter is sent to over 7,000 unit presidents

to share with their members.

Forty-five departments submitted a Unit Member of the Year for national recognition. Many departments reported that Member of the Year recognition is held in their department to honor all members who were nominated for the prestigious title.

Leadership was clearly Mission Driven this year. Through every program and project, our commitment to the American Legion Auxiliary mission was evident. Auxiliary members at every level led through service, compassion, and dedication, proving that leadership is woven into every facet of what we do.



Donna Dillard, National Chair  
Leadership Committee



## Committee: Membership

Members across the nation not only embraced the 250th birthday theme, they went above and beyond — thinking outside the box, creating an exciting atmosphere for membership.

Department of Nebraska was “Stirring up Members,” a skit put on by Membership Chair Deb Albers, alongside Department President Ruth Hietbrink and district presidents — adding ingredients like 1 cup ideas, 2 cups teamwork, 2 pounds of leadership, a heap of hard work, and more, as they stirred the ingredients vigorously, poured into a container, and mentioned not to be afraid to overflow the bowl into a membership soup.

Department of Indiana brought in “ALA Membership Madness,” inspired by March Madness basketball competitions. Friendly competition between units created encouragement to recruit, rejoin, and renew members with leadership, mentoring, and strategic outreach.

Department of Kansas kicked off the year with baby Kirby, a bald eagle soaring above the skies who grew alongside Kansas membership.

Department of California Unit 180 Canyon City had 100% membership by Sept. 2, 2025. Amazing!

Department of Florida showed just how much fun The American Legion Family can have, with Legion Gators, Sons of The American Legion Cabana Boys, and the ALA Flamingos. They raised the bar with a friendly family competition. Way to go, ALA Flamingos, for coming in strong.

Department of Pennsylvania, kudos to you — you showed teamwork pays off in hard times. With over 5,000 members down, you pulled through to get membership caught up, helping to lead the Eastern Division

into second place (as of press time). Great job!

With the work of The American Legion judge advocate, ALA National Headquarters, and your national membership team, we worked to remove barriers from new member applications by voting to change Standing Rule XI, Units, Section 6, allowing units to certify eligibility and sign the new member applications. ALAMIS (the ALA’s management information system/member database) upgrade brought a new streamlined process to users, with a new user interface and intuitive thinking, making it user friendly with less steps for membership processing.

Your stories of membership competitions, challenges, and fun brought a year of excitement to your national membership team, and we could not be prouder of the work you all accomplished this year. I would have loved to add each department and their accomplishments; however, they won’t allow me more words!

A HUGE shout-out

and thank-you to our Headquarters team and your national Membership Committee: Vice Chair Jill Puett (N.C.), committee members Cherill Threte (Ind.), Dara Oliver (Fla.), Central Division Chair Janet Bacon (Ill.), Eastern Division Chair Corrinna Colson (Vt.), Western Division Chair DeDe Theal (Nev.), Northwestern Division Chair Tamara Martin (Minn.), and Southern Division Chair Holly Heatly Perkins (Texas). Your work and dedication kept the team moving forward with Mission Driven, Family Focused! Thank you!



*Members across the nation not only embraced the 250th birthday theme, they went above and beyond — thinking outside the box, creating an exciting atmosphere for membership.*



Tracy Kinnick, National Chair  
Membership Committee



## Committee: Public Relations

Every act of service has a story worth sharing.  
*How* that story is shared is Public Relations.

That simple idea inspired this year's national Public Relations Committee's focus, "The Season of How."

The American Legion Auxiliary has always been rich with inspiring stories. This year, we expanded the conversation beyond the message of public relations to explore *how* we share that message. How does an idea become action? How do members build community partnerships? How do volunteers strengthen communities?

How do lives change because we choose to serve?

Those questions inspired members to tell stories that are richer and more personal. The result was greater visibility, fresh ideas, and meaningful connections that introduced more communities to the American Legion Auxiliary's mission.

Departments and units across the nation embraced the *season of how* with creativity, authenticity, and purpose. Facebook continued to lead the way as the most popular platform for spreading the message. The Department of Washington described Facebook as "The King" of social media, with nearly 60 percent of its units maintaining active pages. Wisconsin expanded participation in its public relations chats through district newsletters and social media, while Texas united members statewide through the #ALATexas campaign, strengthening collaboration and visibility.

Traditional media continued to tell our story in powerful ways. Kansas received statewide television coverage highlighting interactive gaming systems for veterans. South Dakota published more than 350

newspaper articles, while Minnesota reported 791 print stories, 278 radio mentions, and 169 television features. Way to go, Minnesota!

Creativity flourished in communities nationwide. Colorado Unit 2008 (Falcon) partnered with its Chamber of Commerce, TV stations, and social media to promote ALA Girls State, while Louisville Unit 111 expanded visibility through farmer's markets, parades, and Wreaths Across America events.

North Carolina Unit 290 and Hawaii Units 11 and 56 increased message reach through partnering with The Moving Wall where Hawaii braided over 650 leis for veterans. Innovation continued while New Mexico Unit 33 transformed history into an experience with its "Red, White & Stew."

One message echoed from every corner of the nation. As Alaska PR Chair and Past National President Lisa Williamson shared, "Public Relations isn't just a program of the ALA; it's included in all that we do."

From handmade scarves in Colorado to Community

Poppy Gardens in South Dakota, members found countless ways to answer one simple question: *How do we tell and share our story?* The answers were as unique as each member, each unit, and each community we serve. Together, these stories celebrated our volunteers, honored veterans, strengthened the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary, and inspired others to write the next chapter.



Florida ALA Unit 259 members at their booth during the 40th Annual Strawberry Festival with great branding and community visibility.



Brister Thomas, National Chair  
Public Relations Committee



## Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee

At the 2025 National Convention, the convention body approved making strategic planning an annual and continuous process. This was an important step in helping ensure the future strength of the American Legion Auxiliary. Rather than treating strategic planning as a document created every few years, this process allows the organization to regularly evaluate strategies, measure results, and make adjustments when needed.

The purpose of the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee is to develop and support that process. The committee is charged with overseeing implementation, monitoring organizational performance, recommending adjustments, and providing regular reports to the National Executive Committee.

National President Pam Ray appointed a committee of five members, with representation from each division. The Finance Committee also provided a representative. The executive director and deputy executive director completed the committee, ensuring both volunteer and staff perspectives were included.

The budget allowed for one in-person meeting, which was held over two days in November 2025. Staff directors and volunteer leaders participated, bringing a variety of experiences, perspectives, and ideas to the conversation. It was helpful to have a new executive director with a professional marketing background who could offer fresh perspective as the group looked at how the ALA communicates its purpose and plans for the future.

The committee began by reviewing the ALA mission statement and comparing it with mission statements from other organizations. This helped guide discussion about whether changes were needed. Volunteers and staff agreed that simplified wording should be developed so the mission would be clear, meaningful, and easier for members to connect with and use.

Much of the two-day meeting was spent

developing a SWOT analysis of the organization. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were discussed in mixed breakout groups of staff and volunteers. Each group reported back to all participants, and it was encouraging to see how much common ground existed. The next step was to prioritize the items that should be addressed first.

Following the meeting, staff prepared a draft strategic plan document. The committee and meeting participants endorsed the draft as a starting point for further discussion. The draft was then used in NEC focus groups to gather additional input before a final version was considered. Five focus groups were held in March and April, with 24 departments represented. The committee met in late May to review the revised draft and voted to present it to convention delegates for endorsement and to the NEC for adoption.

The draft plan includes revised mission and vision statements and three strategic priority areas: Mission, who we are and why we exist; Members, how we strengthen individuals and engagement; and Means, the resources that make mission delivery possible.

A key part of this plan is the acknowledgement that units must remain a central priority. Units are the foundation of the Auxiliary and the place where our mission is carried out every day. This plan is simpler than previous plans and is designed to be practical, useful, and adaptable for units as they serve their communities.

Staff and volunteers will continue working together to support units through the adopted strategic priorities, developing resources, tools, and support that make it easier for units to serve veterans, military and their families, and communities.



Linda Boone, National Chair  
Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee



## 2025–2026 National Executive Committee Members



Leslie Ginther  
Alabama



Penelope Mazonna  
Alaska



Stacey Mayberry  
Arizona



Pearl Gordon  
Arkansas



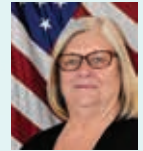
DeeAnn Graham  
California



Tracy Trujillo  
Colorado



Rita Barylki  
Connecticut



Donna DiFrancis  
Delaware



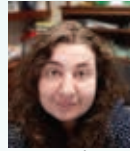
Teresa Hamilton  
District of Columbia



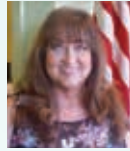
Charlotte Bass  
Florida



Susan Hall  
Georgia



Toni Difante  
Hawaii



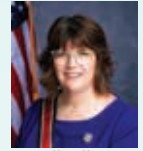
Kristal Tighe  
Idaho



Debra Lewis  
Illinois



Roxy Stoner  
Indiana



Kelly Elliott  
Iowa



Sharon Spiker  
Kansas



Bonita Robey  
Kentucky



Amy Watts  
Louisiana



Debra Rumery  
Maine



Carmin Brittain  
Maryland



Debra Lyons  
Massachusetts



Jean Walker  
Minnesota



Elizabeth Belue  
Mississippi



Shanna Jelinek  
Missouri



Cassie Johnson  
Montana



Vicki Ozenbaugh  
Nebraska



Dr. Courtenay  
Burns  
Nevada



Donna Bryant  
New Hampshire



Maggie McMahon  
New Jersey



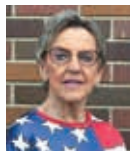
Dorothy Hazen  
New Mexico



Nancy Babis  
New York



Julie Smith  
North Carolina



Judy Twete  
North Dakota



Louise Smerk  
Ohio



Tracey Smith  
Oklahoma



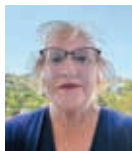
Pam Seelye  
Oregon



Tracie Seiders  
Pennsylvania



Hilda Soto-Nazario  
Puerto Rico



Cathleen Camire  
Rhode Island



Allyson Boone  
South Carolina



Mary Jo Stier  
South Dakota



Patricia Wallace  
Tennessee



Teresa Simmons-  
Copeland  
Texas



Judy Daybell  
Utah



Jacqui Hood  
Vermont



Ethel Carson  
Virginia



Lorna Ledoschuk  
Washington



Lisa Cadwallader  
West Virginia



Maggie Geiger  
Wisconsin



Vicki Paddock  
Wyoming

*Not pictured:  
Julie Becker,  
Michigan*



In the spirit of *Service Not Self*,  
the mission of the American  
Legion Auxiliary is to support The  
American Legion and honor the  
sacrifice of those who serve by  
enhancing the lives of our veterans,  
military, and their families, both at  
home and abroad. For God and  
country, we advocate for veterans,  
educate our citizens, mentor youth,  
and promote patriotism, good  
citizenship, peace, and security.