

# AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

## Poppy Program Guide

Expanded ways  
to use the poppy  
to raise funds  
and awareness



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





# **American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program Guide**

**Expanded ways to use the poppy  
to raise funds and awareness**

**Revised 2024**

## ***IN FLANDERS FIELDS***

*In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders Fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields.*

—Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae  
December 8, 1915

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## PREFACE

The Poppy Program has been a cornerstone of the American Legion Auxiliary for close to a century and has continually evolved since its inception. With the 2013 expansion of The American Legion's rules governing the Poppy Program, Auxiliary members have the opportunity to further expand the Poppy Program like never before. The following guide is intended to assist every American Legion Auxiliary member in their efforts to promote awareness about the poppy's significance as a patriotic symbol of the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families. This guide offers answers to questions members often ask about the program and its intricacies.

## INTRODUCTION

The American Legion Auxiliary adopted the poppy as its memorial flower in 1921, and, in 1924, in conjunction with The American Legion, instituted the national Poppy Program to protect the memorial poppy from becoming commercialized by outside interests. Each year, American Legion Auxiliary volunteers distribute millions of poppies, most handmade, in exchange for contributions to assist active-duty military, veterans, and their families. The Auxiliary's more than 8,000 units distribute poppies throughout the year, especially on veteran-related holidays. Auxiliary members promote the memorial poppy flower in other ways as well, such as the Miss Poppy Contest, Poppy Poster Contest, and poppy craft projects.

## HISTORY

In order to effectively implement the Poppy Program, it is important to understand the history behind the program. At the end of World War I, The American Legion adopted the poppy as a symbol of freedom and the blood sacrificed by troops in wartimes. The use of the poppy symbolical comes from the poem *In Flanders Fields*, which movingly begins, "In Flanders Fields the poppies blow, between the crosses, row on row," referring to the poppies that sprang up in the churned-up earth of newly dug soldiers' graves over parts of Belgium and France. The poem was written by Lt. Col. John McCrae in 1915 after witnessing the death of his friend, a fellow soldier.

Shortly after *In Flanders Fields* was written, a teacher from Georgia by the name of Moina (pronounced Mo-ee-na) Michaels read the famous poem published in a *Ladies' Home Journal* while attending the annual YMCA Overseas Conference. Moina was struck by the last stanza:

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders Fields*

On the back of an envelope, Moina quickly penned her response to McCrae's verse, with her own poem titled, *We Shall Keep the Faith*. The last stanza captures her idea to wear a poppy in honor of the war dead:

*And now the Torch and Poppy Red  
We wear in honor of our dead.  
Fear not that ye have died for naught;  
We'll teach the lesson that ye wrought  
In Flanders Fields.*

After jotting down her poem, Moina excitedly declared, "I shall buy red poppies...I shall always wear red poppies — poppies of Flanders Fields!" She showed *We Shall Keep the Faith* to gentlemen at the conference and shared her idea with them. The gentlemen were so excited about the idea that they gave her \$10 (a lot of money back then!) and asked for poppies to wear. Moina rushed out to the Wanamaker's department store that sold silk poppies and bought 25 to distribute to conference attendees.

Moina wore a poppy on her collar until she returned home to Georgia in 1919. She became known as "The Poppy Lady." She continued her teaching career by instructing a group of disabled veterans. She noted their need for The American Legion to have veterans assemble poppies for the American Legion Auxiliary in 1921. The ALA Poppy Program became one of our national programs in 1924.

## **FUNDS COLLECTED BEFORE/AFTER AMERICAN LEGION RESOLUTIONS OF 2013 AND 2014**

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

- ★ The rehabilitation of veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917.
- ★ The welfare of the families of veterans of the above-named period.
- ★ The rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals.
- ★ The welfare of veterans, active military personnel, and the families of veterans and active military personnel of the above-named period where financial and medical need is evident.
- ★ For the purpose of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy Fund.

All funds collected prior to the passage of this resolution be solely used for the intent and purpose of prior resolutions and not for active-duty



servicemembers or families. New funds collected after approval of this resolution may be used for active-duty military and families as outlined.

All efforts be made to manufacture the poppies or poppy symbol items by veterans first, but in the event that demand is greater than this supply source, use of a commercial vendor which conforms with the restrictions on the use of The American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary name and emblem may be used.

### **Updated rules offer new ways to increase donations**

We now have much greater flexibility to use the symbolic red poppy in many ways, shapes, and forms to raise money to support veterans, military, and their families. We're no longer limited to using crepe paper poppies, and poppy labels no longer need to include the calendar year.

### **How do these updated rules affect public awareness of the poppy?**

Auxiliary members can now distribute the poppy symbol in non-traditional displays — think poppy buttons, balloons, stickers, pencils, temporary tattoos, T-shirts, cookies, cupcakes, wreaths, Christmas decorations, notecards — all fun ways to share the poppy story and significance so that nonmembers can show their support for our military and veterans too. Many of these items are popular, inexpensive options to produce, and they give members flexibility to link the poppy item to the occasion.

### **What about those who make the traditional artificial/paper poppies? How do the Legion's revised rules affect production?**

The new rules still state a preference that poppies or poppy items be handmade by veterans. But since many parts of the country have a shortage of veterans available to make the traditional paper poppies, artificial poppies can now be assembled by unit members and volunteers. Consider holding a poppy-making event for your Junior members! *Remember: Only veterans or those serving in the military can be paid to make the traditional poppies.*



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q: Why did The American Legion adopt its May 2013 and May 2014 Poppy Resolutions? What's the background and rationale?**

**A:** Over the years, Auxiliary National Headquarters staff have researched and explored using different vendors and materials for poppy kits, but the options available had always been very limited given the restrictions of the

previous Auxiliary Poppy Program resolutions and the limited number of vendors offering solutions.

Departments have long been reporting that fewer veterans are available to make poppies, and that younger veterans generally are not interested in making poppies. Other departments have reported that veterans are willing to make poppies, but that they did not reside in areas where the Auxiliary has poppy production. As of 2013, only half of ALA departments had programs in place to coordinate the production of veteran-made poppies. See inside this booklet for an ALA national Poppy Program how-to sheet that was developed for Legion Family members willing to take on the responsibility of poppy production manager for their department.

The American Legion Internal Affairs Commission submitted Resolution No. 20, adopted in May 2013, in response to a reported shortage of veteran-made paper poppies which the Legion buys from departments or units and sells through Emblem Sales to other members for distribution. Other significant obstacles facing departments include a) quality issues with poppy kits — from limited availability of the red crepe paper produced in China that the kitmaker imports; b) that fewer veterans are able and willing to make the crepe paper poppies; c) that departments have trouble getting Legion Family members to commit the time needed to oversee poppy production for their department; and d) fewer members participate in distributing the paper poppies. In 2014, American Legion Resolution No. 3 was passed to allow American Legion Family members to use Poppy Funds to purchase poppy kits and supplies for making symbolic poppies and poppy items.

**Q: How do The American Legion's updated Poppy Program rules affect the American Legion Auxiliary, and what is the Auxiliary doing to address the updated rules?**

**A:** The new Legion Poppy Program rules still require that poppies or poppy items be made by veterans when possible, but when veterans are not available or willing to make poppies, poppies or poppy items can be commercially made or made by volunteers. Poppy flowers can now be made from any material, and other poppy items can now also be produced for distribution to raise funds for the Poppy Program.

**Q: How do the American Legion Poppy Program rules impact existing Auxiliary or department poppy resolutions?**

**A:** The American Legion Auxiliary exists to support the Legion, so any Auxiliary poppy resolutions that are in conflict with the Legion's 2013 and 2014 poppy resolutions are no longer valid. The new Legion resolutions supersede all previous Legion and Auxiliary Poppy Program resolutions. The national organization also officially removed all obsolete Auxiliary poppy resolutions.

**Q: Do the updated Legion Poppy Program rules change who can make poppies?**

**A:** Yes, the new rules broaden who can make poppies; however, the resolution clearly states all efforts [should] be made to manufacture the poppies or poppy symbol items by veterans first, but in the event demand is greater than this supply source, use of a commercial vendor who conforms with the restrictions on the use of The American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary name and emblem may be used. It is now an option for volunteers to make poppies, or for commercial vendors to make poppies or poppy items that conform with the proper use of the names and emblems of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary.

**Q: Can American Legion Auxiliary members make poppies?**

**A:** Yes, Auxiliary volunteers may now make poppies if it is necessary due to a shortage of veteran poppy makers, but Auxiliary volunteers are not to be paid. If poppies are not made by veterans, the label should not state “Handmade by Veterans.”

Members have also sent photos of iced cookies and tiny red spritz cookies with a chocolate chip in the center. The possibilities are endless.

**Q: What types of material in addition to the traditional red crepe paper can be used to make poppies?**

**A:** For many years, the Illinois American Legion has used a fabric poppy manufactured by a veteran-owned business. This poppy looks different than the traditional Auxiliary red crepe paper poppy, but it is attractive, conforms to the Legion’s specifications, and it is easy to assemble.

The Legion Poppy Program rules also state that items other than the crepe paper poppy can be made for distribution to promote and raise funds for the Poppy Program. Do a search for “poppy” at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) for information on poppy craft ideas.

**Q: Can Auxiliary departments print their own poppy labels?**

**A:** Yes, but only if the labels conform to emblem use guidelines and standards. The labels pictured at right are available through Emblem Sales.



**Q: Will we have to get approval each year from ALA National Headquarters for poppy items we distribute?**

**A:** It depends. There are two types of poppy items — branded and non-branded:

**Branded** items are those that include the ALA emblem. The graphic shown on this page is copyrighted by The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. Use of this image and any other poppy graphic design that incorporates the ALA emblem requires approval from the national secretary, the same as any other permission needed to use the ALA emblem.

Any graphic of the poppy should be used respectfully for the purpose of raising Poppy Funds through distribution by Legion Family members and friends. If using the copyrighted graphic on this page, the quality of the image must be maintained, and there should be no alteration of the image, other than size.

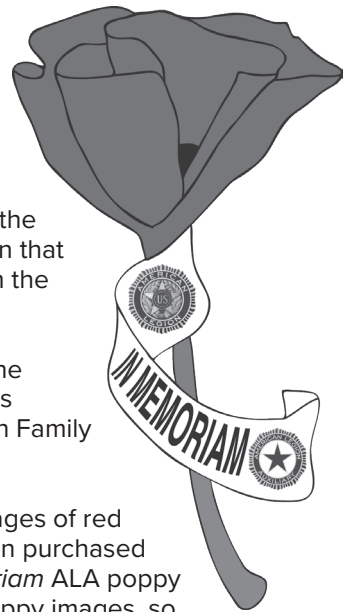
Note: Using poppies created from the crepe paper poppy kits sold by Emblem Sales does not require prior approval from the national organization. Use of the copyrighted image or any other poppy graphic design that incorporates the ALA emblem requires approval from the national secretary.

Special orders placed through Emblem Sales using the Auxiliary’s emblem do not require special approval, as Emblem Sales has responsibility for protecting Legion Family trademarks.

**Non-branded** items are simply those that include images of red poppies, whether a license to use the image has been purchased or the image is offered free. Other than the *In Memoriam* ALA poppy image, the Auxiliary does not own other particular poppy images, so approval from National Headquarters is not necessary. The poppy image should always be red since it symbolizes the blood sacrificed for our freedom, but previous rules governing the number of petals and leaves no longer apply.

**Q: Who is considered part of “a veteran’s family”? Can Poppy Funds be spent to assist family members who do not live with the veteran? What if the veteran is deceased?**

**A:** When reference is made to “veterans and their family,” it means immediate family and dependents. Immediate family consists of wife, husband, daughter, and son who live with the veteran. If a grandchild lives



with the veteran, that child could be considered immediate family. A case can be made for a sibling or parent who lives with and is caring for the veteran. Remember: Poppy Funds are to help veterans and their families and active-duty military and their families where financial and medical need is evident.

If the veteran is deceased, then Poppy Funds cannot be used for his/her family. In such circumstances, other avenues to pursue include department funds, special Auxiliary or Legion Family fundraising projects, or, if applicable, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Poppy money cannot be used for a family member who does not live with the veteran.

**Q: Can Poppy money be used for scholarships?**

**A:** The Legion set forth five criteria for the use of poppy funds:

1. For the rehabilitation of veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917;
2. For the welfare of the families of veterans of the above named period;
3. For the rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals;
4. For the welfare of veterans, active military personnel, and the families of veterans and active military personnel of the above named period where financial and medical need is evident or;
5. For the purpose of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy Fund.

Therefore, scholarships (or funds to aid with higher education) would have to be for a veteran or their immediate family member who demonstrates an immediate financial need. For example, if a unit is met with a situation in which a student meets Poppy Fund eligibility and demonstrates a financial need (e.g., delay in delivery of post 9/11 GI Bill funding impacting their academics), the unit may decide to use Poppy Funds to assist the student.

If units wish to create their own scholarship(s) as a way to use their Poppy Funds, please keep in mind the criteria that must be met by recipients in order to stay within the guidelines for proper usage.

**Q: Are there commonly requested examples of how the money cannot be used?**

**A:** Poppy Funds CANNOT be used for:

1. Any general operating fund of a department, unit, or post.
2. Any community service project that does not strictly benefit the welfare of an individual veteran/military servicemember or the welfare of his/her family.

3. General maintenance, beautification, or improvement projects of American Legion or Auxiliary facilities, including adding ramp(s) to a post home.
4. Investments, even those that would bring profit to the unit or post.
5. POW/MIA programs.
6. Memberships, including other veteran support organizations such as Gold Star Mothers.
7. Contributions to, or payouts from, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.
8. ALA Girls State/ALA Girls Nation fees.
9. Flags or flagpoles.
10. Scholarships which do not restrict eligibility solely to military servicemembers or their children, or where financial need is not evident.
11. Mileage, travel, or lodging expenses; registration of conference fees; or costs incurred by a person – including ALA members, volunteers, and staff – to attend any meeting, conference or event, even if it is about veterans, military, or any other topic.
12. Attire or uniforms used by volunteers or staff in promoting or conducting ALA program activity or business.

Use of Poppy Funds is allowable for care packages only when it is for a welfare need (such as first aid topical treatment or vital hygiene items), as opposed to a comfort need, and not comfort/leisure items (such as baked goods or books).

**Q: Who distributes the poppy money collected? Does it get mailed to the district or department to distribute, or do individual units collect the money and distribute it to their local veterans in need?**

**A:** Unless a department imposes restrictions, each unit can decide where they want their Poppy Funds used, as long as it follows the national Poppy guidelines. Poppy Funds must be used only for the welfare of veterans and their families and active-duty military and their families when a financial or medical necessity exists. Poppy Funds may also be used for some aspects of local Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, since the purpose of this U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs program is to provide rehabilitative therapy to veterans through various forms of art therapy. Units may also send their poppy money to their department headquarters earmarked for a state veterans creative arts festival, or units may send their poppy money to the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters earmarked for the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

**Q: How do we purchase poppy kits and labels from Emblem Sales?**

**A:** Orders may be placed online: [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org).

Auxiliary departments may now purchase items “on account” with Emblem Sales, which means your department will be billed via an account they

already have with Emblem Sales. The department then can buy and pay for poppy kits upon ordering and being invoiced or billed by Emblem Sales. Emblem Sales makes no profit on poppy kits; pricing will reflect actual cost.

**Q: Can The American Legion be involved in poppy distribution?**

**A:** Yes! All Legion Family members are welcomed to join in poppy distribution. The American Legion's Poppy Fund rules have always encouraged posts and Sons of The American Legion squadrons to be involved with their Auxiliary units in the publicity and distribution of poppies within the procedures established by their department.

Whether on Veterans Day, Memorial Day, National Poppy Day®, Independence Day, or any other patriotic opportunity, invite all members of The American Legion Family to participate. Legionnaires in their uniform caps are a very visible symbol of our veterans' sacrifices and service to our nation. With our collective presence in our communities, we show strength for our mission of assisting our veterans and their families.

**Q: Are we allowed to consolidate Poppy Funds with other groups (VFW, for example)?**

**A:** No. While working with like-minded groups for the benefit of veterans is a good thing since we share a common mission, funds donated to the ALA for poppies are "restricted use" funds. Auxiliary members who collect funds for another organization are simply doing so as a good member of the community. If the funds collected are not going to the ALA Poppy Program, then members should not represent themselves as Auxiliary members, which is misleading to donors. If you are working beside a VFW member and the money dropped in your container will go to the ALA Poppy Program, then you are encouraged to wear your ALA shirts. Or, if the local VFW plans to donate their Buddy Poppy funds to the Auxiliary knowing how we use the funds, then certainly you may accept their donations. If your VFW friends are helping you raise money for the ALA Poppy Program, then you may dress in your ALA attire.

**Q: Allowable use of Poppy Funds seems to be open for interpretation. Who has the authority to decide what is allowable and what is not?**

**A:** National Headquarters issues guidelines for the use of Poppy Funds, and the allowable uses must clearly fall within The American Legion's Poppy Fund rules. Departments and units are responsible for following the rules and making expenditure decisions that comply with the national guidelines. Sometimes, decisions are impacted by state laws which differ for each department. It is up to each department or unit to use Poppy Funds appropriately, in keeping with the wording and intent of the Legion's Poppy Fund rules.

**Q: Can Poppy Funds collected after May 9, 2013 (when the first Legion resolution passed) be “co-mingled” with funds collected prior to this date?**

**A:** No. All Poppy Funds collected prior to this date must be used in keeping with the intent and purpose of the previous Legion resolution. Only Poppy Funds collected after May 9, 2013, may be used for the welfare of U.S. active-duty military, personnel, and their families, where financial and medical need is evident.

**Q: Does my unit need to spend all of the accumulated Poppy Funds each year?**

**A:** Unless stipulated by your department, Poppy Funds may carry over from year to year.

**Q: If I suspect misuse of Poppy Funds, who should I notify?**

**A:** If you suspect an Auxiliary unit is misusing Poppy Funds, then a written allegation report should be submitted to the department secretary and a copy sent to the department Poppy chairman. If you suspect a Legion post is misusing Poppy Funds, then you should provide a written report to the post adjutant who can consult the Legion department judge advocate or the Legion’s national Internal Affairs Division if necessary.



## HOW TO MAKE THE TRADITIONAL ALA RED CREPE PAPER POPPY

### Materials needed for each paper poppy:

- ★ Stem: One 7” green coated wire
- ★ Center: One piece each of 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ ” wide layered black and green crepe paper, divided
- ★ Petals: Four red crepe paper petals
- ★ Label: American Legion Auxiliary  
*In Memoriam*



### Poppy assembly:

Steps 1a, 1b, and 1c: Cut black and green crepe paper into 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ ” wide sections; each will be further divided into four smaller pieces, with each piece serving as the center of one poppy flower. Fold the section of green and black crepe paper in half lengthwise, and then snip the edges about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way down with scissors, fringing the edges. Now divide the section into four pieces; each piece will have black on one side and green on the other. Holding each end of one green and black piece in each hand, bunch it together in a fan-like manner.

Step 1b: Bend your 7” green wire so that approximately 3” of wire is on one side and 4” on the other. Place the fanned center piece of green and black crepe paper under the wire.

Step 1c: Fold up the two sides of the crepe paper center and securely twist the wire at the bottom. “Fluff” slightly. You have completed the center of your poppy and are ready to add the petals.



Step 1a



Step 1b



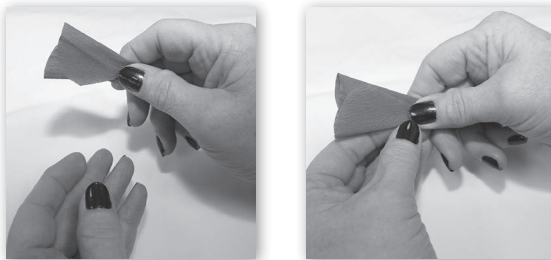
Step 1c

Steps 2a and 2b: Holding the stem of your poppy with the green and black center upright, add one red petal, the wide part at top, by wrapping it around the center base where the wire is twisted. Approximately 5/8" of the wire stem should be in the petal.



**Steps 2a and 2b**

Step 2c: With the first petal folded around the poppy center, add a second petal, allowing a slight overlap, so the petals will unfurl more naturally in a later stage. Repeat step 2b with the third and fourth petals.



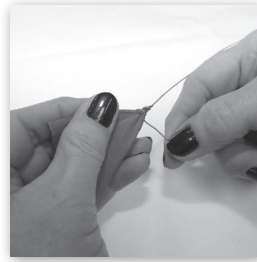
**Step 2c**

Step 3a: With all four petals wrapped around the center, take the 3” length of stem and wind upward, starting from the bottom point of the poppy, and securing the petals to the center wire.

Step 3b: Wind the wire tightly and evenly so that the petals are held securely. The 3” wire will wind approximately 3/8” or more up from the bottom tip of the poppy, securing the petals, but not binding the flower itself.



**Step 3a**



**Step 3b**

Steps 4a and 4b: To shape the poppy, cup the edges of each petal. Do this by gently stretching the edges starting at the base of each petal. When shaping the petals, slightly cup them to make the flower appear natural, full and open. Once each petal has been cupped, you will hold in your hand a completed poppy ready to have its stem threaded through the label! Note: Sometimes this step is left for those distributing poppies in order to save packing space when shipping and storing completed poppies.



**Step 4a**



**Step 4b**

Step 4c: Add an official American Legion Auxiliary *In Memoriam* label on the poppy stem. Labels for the crepe-paper poppies have holes for threading the poppy stem through the side of the label. Also, the labels are not dated. You now have a finished American Legion Auxiliary poppy.



**Step 4c:**  
**Completed Poppy**

## HOW TO BE AN ALA POPPY PRODUCTION MANAGER

Some departments have well-established programs for managing large volumes of the artificial poppies assembled — “produced” — by veterans. These large-volume poppy “production” (assembly) programs are overseen by an ALA member serving in a voluntary role of “poppy production manager.”

Not every department handles poppy production the same way; the following information serves as an example based upon the way the Department of California does it. Once the poppy production manager position has been established with the state veterans home, VA medical center, nursing home, etc., the poppy production manager can organize their time in various ways to accomplish overseeing the assembly of large volumes of poppies.

### **Option A. Working directly with veterans at a state veterans home who are paid per poppy:**

★ A poppy contract should be established between the American Legion Auxiliary department and the facility where veterans will be paid to assemble large volumes of artificial poppies for the department that will be distributing them for donations. The contract is an agreement that clarifies to the facility administrator, department president, department Poppy chairman and the facility poppy production manager how many poppies will be made at that facility. The contract agreement is generally executed at the beginning of a new department president’s term.

★ The poppy production manager will already have had their poppy supplies ordered by their department for delivery by the time they make an appointment with all poppymakers to discuss schedules. The poppy program manager should contact the veterans and facility staff personally, introduce themselves, and establish a time and place when they will return each month to the facility for poppy assembly activities. They should consider inviting a facility representative.

★ Depending on the number of poppymakers, the poppy production manager may need to ask fellow Auxiliary members to assist with the project. There must be enough Auxiliary members on site who know how to make poppies in order to teach the veterans how to make them.

★ The poppy production manager on their first visit will issue a certain number of poppy kits to each veteran. They should have a poppy contract form for each veteran that lists the number of poppy kits issued to that veteran. They should sign and date it and have the veteran sign and date it, providing the veteran a copy to keep, and asking him/her to bring it back

the next time the poppy production manager returns. They would then ask for the veteran's copy of the contract and sign and date both their copy and the referrals copy, thus documenting that they have received the same amount of assembled poppies provided.

★ The production manager will then send to the ALA department treasurer a poppy payroll form listing all veterans by name and the exact amount to be paid to each. The department treasurer will then issue checks made payable to each veteran in the amount shown on the form. The treasurer will then send the checks to the poppy production manager to distribute at their next visit to the facility. *NOTE: It is a federal law that W-9 tax forms be issued to persons earning more than \$600 each year assembling artificial poppies.*

★ Every employer is required to send a 1099 to individuals who receive income over a certain amount. The affected 1099 recipients need to determine what the rules are in their state to receive subsidized housing. Rules can vary by state and by federally funded entities providing subsidized housing. 1099 recipients also need to determine what the maximum income threshold is for Social Security and other government subsidies or pensions. If the veterans live in VA housing, you may offer to be helpful to them if you wish and call your state's VA information officer to obtain these answers.

★ Once the poppy production manager has received the assembled poppies, they can then issue more poppy kits to each veteran and ask the veteran to return on the scheduled day to resume production. The routine will repeat. They will distribute checks for the poppies previously made at this time to each veteran who was on the poppy payroll.

★ The poppy production manager must inspect the handmade poppies to make sure they are correctly constructed and not falling apart or missing anything. If the poppy production manager does find something amiss, they should take that veteran aside and work with him/her and help them hone their assembly skills. Perhaps the veteran needs a little more one-on-one time with the production manager to get a clearer picture of how the Auxiliary poppy is to be assembled.

★ Once all units in the department have submitted their poppy orders to either the department Poppy chair or the department secretary, this person then would assign each production manager the ALA units to which they will be sending poppies, keeping in mind the location of each poppy production manager, and trying to keep the units/districts/counties in their area assigned to them. Organizing geographically will save the department money in shipping costs.

★ After all units have received their assembled poppies, the production manager will prepare an end-of-year inventory and submit the report to the department president and department secretary/treasurer.

★ Any out-of-pocket expenses (mileage, snacks, etc.) for which the poppy production manager seeks to be reimbursed for should be submitted to the department office for reimbursement consideration and processing.

NOTE: Completed crepe paper poppies are shipped in their rolled form. They must be “fluffed” before they are distributed.

**Option B. Working with poppymakers indirectly by working with physical therapists, occupational therapists, and/or recreational therapists at a VA medical center, nursing home, group home, or outpatient clinic:**

Once the poppy production position has been established with the VA medical center, nursing home, group home, outpatient clinics, etc., the poppy production manager can organize their time in various ways to optimize poppy assembly efficiency.

★ A poppy contract should be established between the American Legion Auxiliary department and the facility where veterans will be paid to assemble large volumes of artificial poppies for the department that will be distributing them for donations. The contract is an agreement that clarifies to the facility administrator, department president, department Poppy chair and the facility poppy production manager how many poppies will be made at that facility. The contract agreement is generally executed at the beginning of a new department president’s term.

★ The poppy production manager will already have had their poppy supplies ordered by their department for delivery by the time they make an appointment with all poppymakers to discuss schedules.

★ Depending on the number of poppymakers, the poppy production manager may need to ask fellow Auxiliary members to assist with this project. There must be enough Auxiliary members on site who know how to make poppies in order to teach veterans how to make them. The production manager can alternate days of the week with other ALA members, at their discretion.

★ The poppy production manager will be working with the physical therapist, occupational therapist, or recreation therapist of each facility and the volunteer services department. They will need to establish specific days of the week and times during the day to work with residents/veterans to make poppies.

★ Some veterans may not be able to do more than put stems together, while some may only be able to add petals, while some will be able to complete assembling the whole poppy. These types of facilities lend themselves to establishing a production line for the poppymaking process.

★ The payroll report will be generated based on the total number of poppies made that day, multiplied by the cost paid for each poppy and divided by the total number of veterans/residents making poppies in order to determine exactly how much money is to be paid to each veteran. Example: 15,000 Poppies (x) .18 per poppy/10 veterans = \$270.00.

★ Every employer is required to send a 1099 to individuals who receive income over a certain amount. The affected 1099 recipients need to determine what the rules are in their state to receive subsidized housing. Rules can vary by state and by federally funded entities providing subsidized housing. 1099 recipients also need to determine what the maximum income threshold is for Social Security and other government subsidies or pensions. If the veterans live in VA housing, you may offer to be helpful to them if you wish and call your state's VA information officer to obtain these answers.

★ Some production managers make arrangements with the department secretary/treasurer to issue a check made payable to them each month, and then in turn pays the veterans in cash what they have earned that day instead of their waiting until the next time the manager is scheduled to come back to the facility. This method can work well because the veterans come and go from these types of facilities with more liberty than those in a state veterans home environment.

★ Once all units in the department have submitted their poppy orders to either the department Poppy chair or the department secretary, each production manager is then assigned the units to which they will be sending poppies, keeping in mind the location of each poppy production manager and trying to keep the units/districts/counties in their area assigned to them. Organizing geographically will save the department money in shipping costs.

★ After all units have received their assembled poppies, the production manager will prepare an end-of-year inventory and submit the report to the department president and department secretary/treasurer.

★ Any out-of-pocket expenses (mileage, snacks, drinks, etc.) for which the poppy production manager seeks to be reimbursed should be submitted to the department office for reimbursement consideration and processing.



## NATIONAL POPPY DAY® AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED

In 2017, The American Legion brought National Poppy Day® to the United States by asking Congress to designate the Friday before Memorial Day, as National Poppy Day.

### **How can ALA departments and units support National Poppy Day?**

Honor the fallen. Support the living.

National Poppy Day is the Friday before Memorial Day! Remember: Poppies are not sold by volunteers — they are “distributed.”

The person acquiring the poppy is invited to make a donation at his or her discretion, but we should be suggesting at least a dollar per poppy. The average donation per poppy is about 15 cents. Clearly, there is room for an increase in poppy donations.



★ **Identify a specific purpose for which you are collecting your poppy money.** For example, your goal is \$3,500 because you want to provide a needy military family in your area with a used car so they can get to work. Contact local schools to translate your donation request into other languages commonly used in your area.

★ **Make arrangements to set up a card table in a busy area.** If distributing in front of a business, please make sure you have permission or permits to do so.

★ **When you are distributing poppies, have fun; be joyful!** Don't forget to wear your ALA branded apparel. Remember that you are representing The American Legion Family when you are out in public.

★ **Get creative!** You can bake spritz cookies or make felt poppies. You don't have to limit yourself to traditional crepe paper poppies.

★ **In the weeks leading up to National Poppy Day,** ask local dentists, doctors, and hairstylists you know if they would be willing to display poppies. If they are amenable, provide them with a bouquet of poppies and sealed poppy donation can from Emblem Sales. Designed to impress and inform, our ALA poppy donation cans are brightly covered with images of the storied memorial poppy plus pertinent information for donors on how their funds support the American Legion Auxiliary's Poppy Program. Be sure to put your name and phone number on the bottom of the can, and pick it up at an agreed-upon time.

★ **Have support materials to share.** These include poppy bookmarks and poppy cans for collection of donations. Both the bookmarks and do-it-yourself labels for poppy cans are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

★ **Be aware!** Know where the other units in your area will be distributing poppies, and on which days, leading up to National Poppy Day to see what areas are being missed.

★ **Invite local servicemembers (active duty, reservist, or National Guardsmen) to help in your distribution.** Although it would be wonderful if they were members of the Legion Family, it is not necessary. Ask if they will wear their duty uniform.

★ **Partner with local JROTC/ROTC programs and military schools to help distribute poppies.** These students often need community service hours in order to graduate.

★ **Bring along American Legion Family membership brochures in case you meet someone who wants to join.**

★ **Promote the ALA Poppy Poster Contest in local schools.** Students who participate, and their parents, will then spread the word about the program. The unit can use some of these posters as advertisement in local stores (hang a color copy one week prior to the event, as to stay fresh in customers' minds). The rules are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

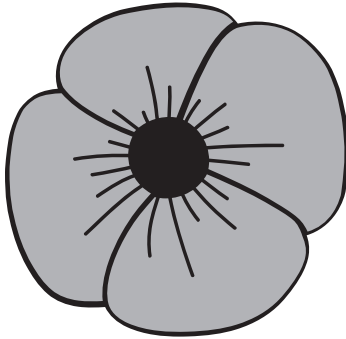
★ **Repurposed paper poppies:** Many units with leftover, dated paper poppies from their past Poppy Days can get creative in putting them to appropriate good use. Old stock paper poppies can be used in church centerpieces, wreaths for The Chapel of Four Chaplains services, Christmas decorations, room decorations for veterans in assisted living facilities, wreaths for veterans' headstones in a cemetery, and corsages for unit and officers' installations as well as new unit member initiation ceremonies.

★ Request donations for and offer paper poppy cutouts for a memorial wall during an event, and invite members of your community to write the name of a military servicemember for the local memorial wall.

★ **Write your thank-you notes on poppy cards,** available through Emblem Sales.

★ **Be sure to document your activities and share with ALA National Headquarters.** Tell us about your plans! Email [pr@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:pr@ALAforVeterans.org). You may be featured in ALA media. Tag us on social media [@ALAforVeterans](https://www.instagram.com/ALAforVeterans).

★ **Plan now for next year.** Remember that National Poppy Day isn't a one-time event. Don't wait until the last minute to find poppies. Supplies are always limited.



## **EFFECTIVE MARKETING PRACTICES: PUTTING ALA POPPIES IN THE PUBLIC EYE**

Think about all of the places you go on a daily or weekly basis. Think of them as great prospective poppy promotion sites. Public interest in helping veterans is high, and National Headquarters receives many calls from businesses wanting to “buy” poppies. Your bank, grocery store, post office, and nail salon are great spots to offer poppy items to show your support for our veterans and military.

★ Look for places with veteran-preferred hiring practices. Many big stores employ thousands of veterans. And since they support veterans, they most likely will support you! Ask to speak to the store manager, then ask permission to set up a table to offer poppy items for donations to support veterans in your community. It’s hard to say no to that!

★ Ask store managers to have employees wear a poppy on their uniform or nametag. You could even make buttons or stickers that feature a flag graphic and the ALA emblem, and read “I served our country and am proud to work for a company that supports U.S. veterans.”

★ **Work with your unit’s Public Relations program chair.** Teamwork is key. Work together to approach local officials and media personalities to ask them to wear a poppy. Express to them the significance of the poppy and see if they would consider making a proclamation or endorsement about the poppy and National Poppy Day.

Here is what you can write in a note with the enclosed poppy:

*Enclosed you will find a memorial poppy. The American Legion Family distributes these symbolic flowers to honor our veterans, raise awareness of the needs and sacrifices of our military families, and raise money to help those families.*

*As a [FILL IN THEIR ROLE HERE], it would be such a powerful statement if you would wear the enclosed poppy this month to honor all those who have given so much for our freedom. The awareness you could bring to the memorial poppy will help all of us provide more services to our veterans.*

★ Ask your Public Relations chair to write a news release announcing National Poppy Day, and submit it to local media. A template is available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

★ **Billboards:** Consider showing your unit’s support of the Poppy Program for veterans by purchasing advertisement space on a billboard. Text could include “Forever Honoring Their Service,” accompanied by an image of the American Legion Auxiliary poppy.

# POPPY RESOURCES

## ★ Emblem Sales

- Poppy-themed clothing and accessories such as scarves, T-shirts, pins, hats, and more.
- Poppy kits – small or large: order your poppy kits to make your own poppies for distribution.
- Pre-made crepe and fabric poppies for distribution.
- Poppy donation cans: Your unit is sure to secure larger donations for veterans with Auxiliary-branded containers.
- “Sew-on” poppy labels

Order today through Emblem Sales:  
[www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

## ★ The ALA website: [www.ALAforVeterans.org/](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/) poppy

- Poppy coloring books
- “Get Involved” ideas on promoting the Poppy Program and increasing donation revenue
- National Poppy Poster Contest and Little Miss Poppy Contest instructions
- Details for ALA units and members on Poppy Program reporting and awards
- Ideas for alternative poppy items to distribute
- Poppy bookmarks, donation can labels, and other related templates

## ★ Social media

- @ALAforVeterans



## **FUN FACT: BOTANICAL VARIETY OF THE ALA POPPY**

The Corn Poppy, Field Poppy, Flanders Poppy, Shirley Poppy, or Red Poppy is the wild poppy of agricultural cultivation whose bright, red petals are memorialized each year in the traditional red crepe paper poppy or other ALA poppies. Its Latin name is *papaver rhoeas*. The four petals are vivid red, most commonly with a black spot at their base. In the northern hemisphere, it generally flowers in late spring. These plants are true annuals.



Most poppies are very easy to grow. They are a favorite of gardeners in every state for rock gardens, flower beds, containers, and most any place that you want color. Since poppies are self-sowing, if you allow them to go to seed, you may need to plant them only once. Sow in fall or early spring.

***Questions about the American Legion Auxiliary's Poppy Program? Contact [poppy@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:poppy@ALAforVeterans.org).***



# American Legion Auxiliary Mission:

*In the spirit of Service Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.*

*For God and country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace, and security.*



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