

## 2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Program Action Plan

### NATIONAL SECURITY

The American Legion Auxiliary National Security program has great value to our organization, our members, and all those we serve; however, I feel it is probably one of the least understood program and is most often poof-poo'd as a non-critical item of business. I hope to begin to adjust those perceptions. I could easily have a 100-page Program Action Plan to delve into all the things that members and Units can do under the umbrella of National Security. I am not going to do that, BUT, if you are interested in getting MORE information and you ask me for it, I will be glad to give you more details.

#### What can you do?

#### A. Support the emotional and social needs of active, reserve and transitioning military service members and their families.

##### Ideas:

##### Members:

- Share with your Unit knowledge of military families or businesses that should receive a Blue Star or Gold Star Banner in recognition of a service member's service. Do you know what a Blue Star Mother/family is? Do you know what a Gold Star Mother/family is? These banners can be purchased from [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org) or from [www.Serviceflags.com](http://www.Serviceflags.com) – in fact you can personalize banners purchased through Service Flags.
- Provide support on a spouse-to-spouse or family-to-family basis, such as a family member, neighbor or another military family. Refer to the *ALA Military Family Readiness Action Guide* ([www.ALAforveterans.org](http://www.ALAforveterans.org)) for specific suggestions of the type of support military families may value.
- Provide assistance to service members and their families directly affected by current conflicts. Get to know your local Service Officers and how they can help these families.
- Become more informed about issues affecting a military family's home life and the resources available to help, such as PTSD, TBI, domestic violence, suicide prevention, financial literacy and other issues.

##### Unit:

- Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG). Contact the Family Readiness Center nearest you to learn of the opportunities available to assist service members who work out of that Center. At each Readiness Center, there is an FRG leader assigned to liaison between the service members and local volunteers.
- Oklahoma has a Yellow Ribbon program through the Oklahoma National Guard. Through that program, ALA members and Units can actively support reserve and transitioning service members. This program also operates events for children and youth of the service members to help them cope with the stress of having a parent deployed or reintegrating. You can offer refreshments, childcare services, make presentations about resources the ALA has available for them.
- When a military member/family you are working with relocates to another base, help identify an Auxiliary Unit near their new location and help introduce the family to Auxiliary members at the new location.
- Greet service members when they deploy or return from a deployment.

- If your Unit is located near a military installation, the U.S. Department of Defense policy makes it easier for you to get and provide information about our services and programs to service members and their families. Refer to the ***How to Support Troops and their Families on Military Installations*** ([www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org))
- Organize a Welcome to Our Hometown event to welcome military families that are moving or transitioning to your community. Refer to ***Welcome to Our Hometown Action Guide*** ([www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org)) for additional information and specific steps to follow.
- Coordinate community-wide collections of care package goods. Have a set schedule of dates, times, and location to pack care packages for service members and family members. If you have a local Blue Star Mothers of America Chapter near your Unit, they are an excellent resource and group to work with.
- Work with the ***Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)*** and refer to a survivor caregiver for specialized support. Refer to ***How to Collaborate with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors*** ([www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org)) for information and specific steps to follow.

**Department:**

- Include information about military spouse job fairs in your social media, e-mails, website and newsletters.
- Provide information about what Legion Service Officers do and sign members up to assist them.

**B. Assist military spouses in getting and maintaining employment**

**Ideas:**

**Members:**

- Serve as a mentor in the career e-mentoring network through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Employment Program and Academy Women. Current military spouses will be virtually paired with more experienced spouses and/or corporate and career mentors for guidance and support.
- Promote military spouse job fairs in your community and volunteer to help.
- Help staff an information booth about the ALA at a job fair for military spouses.
- Write an editorial about why military spouses make good employees.
- Contact school guidance counselors in your local area and offer to "be on all" for assistance to military children.

**Units:**

- Support military spouse job fairs organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation or The American Legion, or host one in your own community. Encourage local businesses to participate and hire veterans and military spouses.
- Help to implement a Legion-sponsored job fair and/or co-host a Legion Family information table at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation-sponsored job fair.
- Seek grant funds to help military spouses start small businesses. Promote participation among military spouses at [www.theveteranmarket.com](http://www.theveteranmarket.com)
- Create a scholarship fund for military spouses learning a new skill.

**Department:**

- Assist Units and members with specific idea plans outline in this PAP.

**C. Support the National Security Program of The American Legion**

**Ideas:**

**Members:**

- Complete a Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) course. Refer to **How to Train for FEMA'S Emergency Response Teams** ([www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org)) for information and specific steps to follow.
- Make and train others how to build an emergency preparedness kit and plan. Remember that new families in your community may not be familiar with the types of emergencies that are common to your area or the resources available. If they already have an emergency preparedness and plan, help them to review and update them.
- Sign up for The American Legion's Legislative Action Alerts, and be sure to act on the ones regarding a strong national defense and affecting current and transitioning service members / families.
- Donate blood.

**Units:**

- Get involved in the Citizen Corps Council ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)) to ensure citizens are prepared to respond to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, manmade disasters and emergencies. Junior members can get involved and/or start a Youth Preparedness Program in their community.
- Collect supplies for emergency preparedness kits and distribute them in your community.
- Encourage members to complete the CERT training course.
- Host a training exercise in your post home to give training in First Aid, CPR or other types of emergency skills.
- Join with your Legion to host a POW/MIA ceremony on or near the National POW/MIA Recognition Day. This is always the third Friday of September.
- Follow the Legion's POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288 for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings.
- Host a Remembrance Ceremony for any MIA service members who have been identified from your area.
- Work with your Legion to honor ROTC and JROTC cadets by having dinners and recognizing their accomplishments.

**Department:**

- Follow the Legion's POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288 for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings.
- Work with your ALA and Legion Legislative Committees on topics to ensure a strong national defense and flag etiquette.

**REPORTING**

**Mid-Year Reports:** Please submit a narrative report to me no later than December 15, 2017.

**Year End Reports:** Please submit a narrative report to me no later than April 30, 2018. If you wish to be considered for a National Award you MUST submit the National Report and Award Cover Sheet.

Your narrative should include answers to these questions:

- Did members organize a Welcome To Our Hometown Event? If so, what was most successful? What were the challenges?
- What types of National Security activities and/or projects were done if your Unit isn't near a military installation?

Taking time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is valuable investment. It helps us tell our WHY, it tells the world who we are, what we do. In just three simple steps, you can add YOUR story to our national success story:

1. Complete the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet.
2. Provide details/examples about the activity performed in narrative format
  - pictures and newspaper articles may be included
  - the narrative must be typewritten
3. Submit all documents to me by the deadline dates stated above.

The Unit reporting the most outstanding National Security Program will be recognized at the 2018 Oklahoma Department Convention.

National will recognize the Unit with the most outstanding National Security program, the Department with the best National Security Program, and the Department with the best National Security Program. National will recognize the Department with the highest percentage of members actively participating in the military spouse eMentoring and connected to military spouse program.

I continue to operate with an open-door policy and am available to assist you with your National Security program.

Patsy S. Chinn  
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