

# 2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

## Junior Activities

The Junior Activities program inspires active participation in members age 17 and under so that they will become engaging, productive members who will want to continue their American Legion Auxiliary membership into adulthood.

### Committee Contact Information

junioractivities@ALAforVeterans.org

### What can you do?

1. **Build your Junior Activities program one member at a time by giving Junior members a voice and an opportunity to participate.**

#### Ideas:

##### Members

- Ask to speak at your post's monthly meeting. Bring Junior members and membership applications with you. Personally invite Legion members to sign up their daughter, granddaughters and great-granddaughters. Older Junior members could speak about the value of their membership to the post.
- Sign up your own eligible daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters.
- "Like" the national Junior Activities Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/alajuniors/>). Share the posts to your friends and encourage them to sign up their eligible Juniors.
- Teach your Juniors about The American Legion Family's eligibility requirements.
- Encourage your Juniors to invite their friends to attend ALA functions and volunteering opportunities, even if they are not eligible to join.
- If you don't have Junior members of your own, be sure to support them anyway. Offer to help the Junior Activities chairman and participate in their fundraisers.
- If you are a unit officer or chairman, offer to mentor one of your unit's Juniors. Teach her about your role with the ALA.

##### Unit or Department

- Organize an active Juniors group. Give the Junior Activities chairman a budget to work with and space to hold meetings and fundraisers.
- Continually ask members to sign up their eligible daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters.
- Even if you only have one junior member, encourage her to organize a service project that your unit will participate in; it may attract other juniors to join.
- Include information on Junior membership and activities in monthly newsletters.
- Include information on Junior membership in renewal notices.

## **2. Engage Juniors in programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.**

### **Ideas:**

#### **Members**

- Bring your Junior(s) to a meeting with you. Ask your unit president if the Junior(s) can lead the Pledge.
- Mentor a Junior in your unit. Teach them about your role as an officer and chairman. Help them understand what we do and why it matters.
- Present any patches your Junior(s) earn at a unit meeting. They will be proud of their achievement and your fellow members will see what great work their Juniors are doing.
- Bring your Junior(s) to all appropriate ALA activities in which you participate. They can help distribute poppies, clean tables after dinners, etc.
- Older Junior members can mentor younger members by encouraging them to participate in Junior meetings, teaching them what they have learned about the ALA and our mission, and helping them earn their patches.

#### **Unit or Department**

- Support and assist your Junior Activities chairman. Give her a budget to work with, space for meetings and fundraisers and be flexible with your activities so that Juniors can be involved. Provide her with an updated copy of the Junior Activities Handbook, which can be purchased from Emblem Sales or downloaded from the Junior Member Activities page in the Members Only section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Post Junior activities on your unit or department Facebook page with approval from parents and Junior member.
- Encourage older Juniors to become mentors to younger Juniors.

## **3. Make Junior meetings fun and informative.**

### **Ideas:**

#### **Members**

- Junior members can help plan and lead the meeting to make it more fun and informative to their age group.
- Be flexible during your meetings. *Robert's Rules* can be intimidating and boring for Juniors; there will be plenty of time for them to learn. Keep an orderly meeting, but don't put too much emphasis on protocol.
- Plan activities that are fun, yet teach about the mission of the ALA. Remember, they are kids with short attention spans. Activities that involve light exercise are helpful to burn off their youthful energy. If you need ideas, ask a teacher; it might end up being a great win/win as you share ideas.
- Crafts are another good activity for Juniors. They can make poppy crafts for a fundraiser, patriotic decorations for your post or local veterans home, handmade cards to send to veterans at your local VA, etc.
- Have snacks and drinks on hand. Juniors could even make poppy cookies to snack on.

#### **Unit or Department**

- Give your Juniors a place to display their crafts or artwork.
- Help your Junior Activities Chairman find places to distribute the cards and crafts made by Juniors.
- Offer to help during Junior meetings.

#### **4. Promote and encourage Junior participation in the Patch Program.**

##### **Ideas:**

##### **Members**

- Mentor Juniors and help them to acquire patches. The Patch Program activities can be found on the Junior Member Activities page in the Members Only section at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Hold a special meeting to help Juniors earn patches.
- Older Juniors can help the younger Juniors earn patches.

##### **Unit**

- Encourage Juniors to participate in the Patch Program.
- Encourage use of electronic patches on Juniors' social media sites.
- Give Junior members the opportunity to work on requirements for patches at unit functions.

##### **Department**

- Include information on the patch program in each department chairman's pack.
- Give Juniors opportunities to work on patch requirements at department functions.
- Host a Juniors meeting to encourage and increase interest in the Patch Program.
- Host a special meeting to present earned patches to Juniors with senior members in attendance.
  - Mentor Juniors and help them acquire patches.
  - Set up and attend a special meeting to help Juniors earn patches.

#### **Junior Activities Reporting\***

##### Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Junior Activities chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Junior Activities chairman, plus copy the national Junior Activities chairman.

##### Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Junior Activities chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Junior Activities chairman, plus copy the national Junior Activities chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

*\*For deadlines and contact information, please consult the Annual Supplement to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan or visit the Junior Activities Committee page on the national website, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)*

#### **As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:**

- How has participation in the Patch Program increased enthusiasm among the Juniors?
- What are the various service projects in which Juniors were involved? Has participation in the service projects increased as the year has progressed?
- What type of volunteer hours did Junior members perform?
- What ways did your senior members mentor the Junior members?

- How does your unit plan to increase Junior member participation in meetings and activities?
- Please include pictures and news articles showing Juniors involved in their activities.

### **Junior Activities Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:**

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Junior Activities committee contact information may be found on the Junior Activities committee page on the national website, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

#### **A. Member Award: Junior Member of the Year**

- Award: Engraved Plaque, invitation to National Convention
- Presented to: One Junior member, in recognition of her dedicated service, efforts, and talents
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Entries must be typed and include the following information:
    - Consideration of only Junior members in good standing for the current year.
    - Outstanding contribution the Junior has made through an ALA program or project.
    - Length of membership is not a criterion.
    - Name, email address, and complete mailing address of nominee must accompany nomination.
    - A narrative, typed essay not to exceed 500 words summarizing the nominee's accomplishments during the current administrative year.
    - Please include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc., either electronically or via postal mail. Nomination must be signed by the candidate's unit Junior Activities advisor.
    - On the National Report and Award Cover Sheet, include the name and contact information of the department Junior Activities chairman.

#### **B. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Junior Activities Program**

- Award: Citation Plaque
- Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your Juniors worked the ALA mission.
  - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

### **C. Department Award: Best Department Junior Activities Program**

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5)
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Awarded to the department in each division that conducted the best overall Junior Activities program.
  - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your department Juniors worked the ALA mission.
  - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

### **D. National Award: Best Media Coverage of Activity or Project**

- Award: Engraved Plaque
- Presented to: One Junior group (department, district or unit)
- Materials and guidelines:
  - Awarded to the Junior group with the best media coverage of their activities or a project.
  - Narrative not to exceed 500 words. Include specific examples of media coverage, including news articles, news releases, newsletters, pictures of displays, ALA events, speeches, website address, social media activity, etc.

### **Programs and Activities:**

- Requirements, instructions, and patch forms for the Junior Patch Program are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- National Junior meetings will be held at the same time as Mission Training. Dates and meeting sites can be found at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/meetings](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/meetings).
- Juniors who attend one of the national Junior meetings will be eligible to vote and run for Honorary National Junior Division Vice President (HNJDVP). Each of the elected HNJDVPs will help conduct the national Junior meetings and will receive a \$2,000 scholarship.
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship for Junior members: Five scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 each are awarded; one scholarship in each division. Requirements and applications are available at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Junior Projects:
  - Veterans History Project: [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)
  - VA Student Volunteer Program: [www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp](http://www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp) ; [www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp](http://www.volunteer.va.gov/ParkeScholarship.asp)

### **Additional Resources You Can Use**

1. *ALA Junior Activities Handbook* – available for free at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), printed copies can be purchased through Emblem Sales at [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)
2. The national American Legion Auxiliary Junior Activities Facebook page: [www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors](http://www.Facebook.com/ALAJuniors)
3. Junior Patch Program - information by level at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
4. *ALA Unit Handbook* – available for free at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org), printed copies can be purchased through Emblem Sales at [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)
5. Junior Leadership Course on [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
6. *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers* on [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)

7. Protect Youth Sports – recommended by The American Legion to provide background screenings on adult volunteers who work with youth, [www.protectyouthsports.com](http://www.protectyouthsports.com).
8. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs information on student volunteers: [www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp](http://www.volunteer.va.gov/StudentProgram.asp)
9. Your national Junior Activities Committee members (see Junior Activities program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).