2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Education

The Education Program promotes the American Legion Auxiliary’s role in providing quality education for children and adults through classroom activities, literacy programs, scholarship promotion and support of education beyond high school, with a special emphasis on children of veterans and servicemembers.

Committee Contact Information
education@ALAforVeterans.org

What Can You Do?

1. Enhance respect for the sacrifices of our military heroes among schoolchildren by scheduling Veterans in Community Schools programs at local schools. See enclosed how to sheet.

Ideas:
Member
• Locate a veteran willing to share his/her experience with school children. Attend a post meeting or ask around the clubroom for a volunteer.
• Contact your local schoolteachers or principals to see if they would be interested in hosting a Veterans in Community Schools event.
• Volunteer to provide transportation to and from the school for the veteran speaking in community schools.
• Wear your American Legion Auxiliary apparel when you visit schools.

Unit
• Collaborate with your local American Legion post to present Veterans in Community Schools within your local schools.
• Promote your Veterans in Community Schools event through local media and on your own social media accounts.

Department
• Encourage units to collaborate with their American Legion post to present Veterans in Community Schools programs in their communities.

2. Promote American Legion Auxiliary scholarships, and award local scholarships at the department and unit levels.

Ideas:
Member
• Contact the person at your local high school who handles scholarship opportunities. It will typically be a guidance or career counselor. Ask if you can send them information about national, department and unit American Legion Auxiliary scholarship opportunities.
• Make copies of any scholarship applications (found at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships), and provide them to schools that request them.
• Volunteer to be on the scholarship selection committee.
• Make a donation to American Legion Auxiliary education national scholarship funds:
  o Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship Fund
  o Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund
  o ALA Foundation at www.ALAFoundation.org
  o Department, district or unit scholarships

Unit
• Assign a member to communicate with schools regarding scholarship applications.
• Create a Unit Scholarship Fund to award scholarships to local students.
  o Refer to “How to Create a Unit Scholarship Fund” following this program Plan.
• Prepare a news release with scholarship information for local media and your post/unit newsletter.
• Form a committee to select scholarship winners.
• Publicize the winners of ALA scholarships at a school presentation and in the media.
• Please keep track of the total number of applications received for any national scholarship, and pass that information on to your department Education chairman.

Department
• Promote scholarship information. National scholarship applications are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships.
  o Post these applications to your department website (linking them back to the national website) along with your department scholarships.
• Please keep track of the total number of applications received for any national scholarship, and pass that information on to your division Education chairman.


Ideas:
Member
• Participate in the Give 10 to Education program by purchasing items to distribute to schools.
  o Place a poster with a collection box at local sites (i.e., grocery stores, banks, senior centers, post office), and invite local residents to donate.
  o Save Box Tops for Education and send them to local schools. Most schools participate in this program.
  o A downloadable certificate may be found on the Education page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
• Promote Teacher Appreciation Week, the first full week in May.
  o Send cards to your local school’s teachers.
  o Donate resources that teachers or needy children may need.
• Promote American Education Week, celebrated the week prior to Thanksgiving.
  o Send a card to all local school staff thanking them for the work they do. Include all school personnel with whom children interact (i.e., bus drivers, custodians, etc.).
A sample card may be found on the Education page of the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Unit
- Participate in the Give 10 to Education program by soliciting items from members to distribute to the schools in your district. Contribute supplies to local classrooms.
  - Recognition certificates are available to download and print at www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Education Committee page.
- Promote Teacher Appreciation Week (first full week of May) by reaching out to teachers, and ask how your unit can enhance their school curriculum.
  - Find out if there are any needy children, and figure out what resources your unit can provide to the student.
- Participate in American Education Week (week prior to Thanksgiving). Remember to recognize all school personnel, not just teachers.
- Educate school administrators on how the American Legion Auxiliary can have a positive impact on students.

Department
- Endorse the Give 10 to Education program, an Auxiliary program that promotes the collection of school supplies for local schools in increments of 10.
- Promote Teacher Appreciation Week (first full week of May).
  - Encourage units to plan teacher recognition events at local schools.
- Encourage participation in American Education Week (week prior to Thanksgiving).

4. Assist and support veterans pursuing higher education and vocational education.

Ideas:
Member
- Contact a campus student veterans group at colleges and universities in your community to see what kind of help they might need. The VA counselor at the college can assist you in locating the veterans groups.
- Sign up to receive The American Legion’s Legislative Action Alerts, and support the alerts regarding the GI Bill.

Unit
- Collaborate with a campus student veterans group at colleges and universities in your community.
  - Arrive for your post home to be available for off-campus events/chapter meetings.
- Provide information/handouts to members on organizing and delivering presentations on career and life skills topics to student veterans.
- Promote events through local media and your own social media accounts.
- Encourage members to sign up to receive The American Legion’s Legislative Action Alerts, and support the alerts regarding the GI Bill.

Department
- Give suggestions on how a unit can collaborate with a campus student veterans group at colleges and universities in your department.
• Provide information/handouts to units on organizing and delivering presentations on career and life skills topics to student veterans.
• Promote the American Legion Auxiliary Non-Traditional Student Scholarship, available for students who are returning to the classroom after some period of time.
• Share and support The American Legion’s Legislative Action Alerts, particularly the alerts regarding the GI Bill.

5. Assist and support military children with educational opportunities.

Ideas:
Member/Unit
• Provide your local school with a copy of the Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment: www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefront.pdf
• Encourage junior members to contact their school guidance counselor and volunteer to be a mentor to new military children at their school.
• Use some of your Give 10 to Education supplies to make backpacks welcoming military children at school.
• Inform schools of a free tutoring website for military children: www.tutor.com/military
• Provide information on the ALA Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship

Department
• Provide units with resource tools/guidelines to assist schools in working with military children at their local level. Resources are available at www.militarychild.org/parents-and-students/resources.

Education 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 Education chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Education chairman, plus copy the national Education 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 Education chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Education chairman, plus copy the national Education 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 Education Committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

As part of your Narrative Report, please include answers to the following questions:
• How was Give 10 participation recognized in your department?
• Describe how Veterans in Community Schools programs were presented.
• If units actively support veterans associations on campus, describe their activities.
Scholarships

All ALA scholarships should be submitted by March 1 to a local American Legion Auxiliary unit. Scholarship applications are available for download on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org/scholarships.

A. **Children of Warriors National Presidents’ Scholarship**
   - Awarded to children of veterans who served in the armed forces during the eligibility dates for The American Legion.
   - Three $5,000 scholarships will be awarded in each division.
   - Fifteen outstanding students will be awarded a total of $75,000 to further their higher education.
   - The applicant must complete 50 hours of community service during his/her high school years to be eligible for one of these scholarships.

B. **The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship**
   - One scholarship in the amount of $2,000 will be awarded in each American Legion Auxiliary division.
   - Applicant must be a member of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion and shall have paid dues for the two preceding years and for the calendar year in which the application is made.

C. **Spirit of Youth Scholarship**
   - One Junior member in each division will receive a $5,000 scholarship.
   - Applicant must have held membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the immediate past three years, hold a current membership card and continue her membership in the American Legion Auxiliary during the four-year scholarship period.

Education Awards

**Education 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 Education committee contact information may be found on the Education committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.
D. **Member Award**: Give 10 to Education
   - Award: Printable citation
   - Presented to: Participants of Give 10 to Education
   - Materials and Guidelines:
     - Recognition certificates are available to download and print at www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Education Committee page.

E. **Unit Award**: Most Outstanding Unit Education Program
   - Award: Citation plaque
   - Presented to: One unit in each division (5)
   - Materials and guidelines:
     - Awarded to the unit in each division with the most outstanding Education program.
     - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your unit worked the Education program, including Veterans in Community Schools.
     - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

F. **Department Award**: Best Department Education 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 Education program.
     - Narrative not to exceed 1,000 words. Include specific examples of how your department worked the Education program, including Veterans in Community Schools.
     - May include pictures, news articles, news releases, etc.

How To Sheets
   - How to Organize a Veterans in Community Schools Event
   - How to Create a Unit Scholarship Fund

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. American Legion Auxiliary scholarship applications: www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships
2. Educational resources through the Americanism and Children & Youth Commission of The American Legion: www.legion.org/education
3. Free online tutoring for military children: www.tutor.com/military
4. Student Veterans of America: www.studentveterans.org
5. Your national Education committee members (see Education program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information).
6. The national Education Committee Facebook group, search ALA Education
HOW TO ORGANIZE A VETERANS IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS EVENT

Committee:
Education

Contact Information for Questions: education@ALAforVeterans.org

Background Information on Veterans in Community Schools:

Veterans in Community Schools is an activity endorsed by The American Legion that brings history to life by connecting military veterans with students in classrooms or at school assemblies in conjunction with history lessons about World War II, The Korean War, The Vietnam War or Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. The ever-decreasing numbers of healthy veterans from World War II points to the fleeting nature of the opportunity to pass on these important lessons.

Veterans are important pieces of American history. The American Legion Family believes accounts of their experiences while in uniform and as a result of their military service should be preserved and shared with others. Veterans have witnessed monumental events in history. They can help students learn from and appreciate the sacrifices individuals and their families have made.

In addition to sharing their experiences, veterans may also discuss a wide range of topics including how to help a family who has a deployed military service member, how to show support for the troops, proper respect for the flag, or why The American Legion Family was formed and what it stands for. Also, veterans’ sharing of their military experience with an appreciative audience can help them heal psychological wounds from combat, deployment or family separation. Veterans who have spoken to students generally describe the experience as a rewarding and personally satisfying experience.

Steps for Organizing a Veterans in Community Schools Activity:

Participation in The American Legion’s Veterans in Community Schools program is a suggested activity in the American Legion Auxiliary’s Education Programs Action Plan. It can be reported for either the Education or VA&R program. Please only report each program one time.

Follow these steps to organize a Veterans in Community Schools event at a school(s) in your community.

1) Identify and Contact School(s)
   a. Contact a school or schools in your local community and offer to organize a Veterans in Community Schools event for a classroom, grade level, or student-body assembly. Reach out to the school principal first, either by an in-person visit,
telephone or email. You may choose to select an elementary, middle or high school; you can alter your activities to accommodate a wide range of age groups. The most effective way is to have someone connected to the school (a parent or friend of a teacher,) make the approach.

2) **Propose an Activity Plan**
   a. The school official may refer you to a classroom teacher or to a department chair. If so, work with the teacher or chair to develop the activity into an educational program for students. Discuss with them how veterans can contribute to the students’ understanding of military service and/or U.S. history. Provide additional resources (found below) for teachers, as they may want to introduce key concepts to students in their lesson plans in preparation for the activity.
   b. Work with the school to identify the most suitable time, venue, and format of the activity. You could host the event in a classroom, cafeteria, auditorium, or gymnasium. The size of the venue will depend on the number of veterans and the size of the audience.
   c. Propose to hold the Veterans in Community Schools activity on or around Veterans Day (November 11 each year) or Memorial Day, but do not limit yourself to those time periods if that time frame does not suit the school calendar.
   d. Depending on the average age of the audience, you may want to develop a set of guidelines for the event. In addition to hearing about veteran experiences, different age groups may be interested in other information as well. Elementary/middle school students may be interested in flag education and citizenship; high school students may be interested in the role of the military in today’s society, a more in-depth exploration of the veteran’s experience, the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress, and volunteer service opportunities that are offered by the Legion Family.
   e. Offer to create handouts or supplemental materials about veterans for students to take home for themselves and their family members. Note that the school official will likely need to review and approve the materials being proposed for distribution to students or family members. Materials can contain information about the Legion Family (such as a web address), but should not overtly promote membership since that is not the purpose of this activity.
   f. Identify and assign roles to participants, such as greeter, ALA or Legion representative and moderator. While servicemembers don’t necessarily expect civilians to address them by their military title, it is a nice courtesy to know the proper address.

3) **Identify Veterans for Speaking Roles**
   a. Once the possible dates have been selected with the school, identify one veteran or group of veterans from the appropriate war era who would be willing to speak about their experiences, or other topics suggested by the school. Note that some veterans may prefer to speak to older or younger audiences depending on how the activity is structured.
b. There are many ways to find veterans who may be willing to participate. First, ask the family member(s) of those who belong to the American Legion Auxiliary. Second, contact the commander or a commission chairman of the Legion post. Third, ask the school if a staff member is a veteran and wishes to speak, or if they are aware of a parent or family member with military experience.

c. Try to connect specific historical incidents with those veterans who may have served in that theater or at that time in history.

d. Try to invite veterans from more than one branch of the armed forces and different periods of conflict. A wide array of speakers will give students an opportunity to hear many kinds of experiences.

4) **Prepare the Veteran(s) and Audience**

   a. Ask each veteran if there are topics they wish to discuss or not discuss. Work with the teachers to develop guidelines for students to respect the veterans’ wishes.

   b. It is common for young people to want to ask a military service member if they have killed anyone. Teachers should discuss this in advance, requesting that students refrain from asking this question out of respect for the servicemember.

   c. Below is a list of potential questions and talking points to review with your veteran(s) in advance. It may even be helpful to assign questions to students at the event.
      - When and where did you serve?
      - Why did you join the service? What branch?
      - Why did you pick the branch that you were in?
      - What did it feel like to be in the service?
      - Would you demonstrate a proper salute?
      - What was boot camp like?
      - What were your job assignments?
      - What are some of your memorable experiences?
      - What did you do for entertainment?
      - Where did you travel during service?
      - Any humorous or unusual events?
      - What did you do in the days and weeks after you returned?
      - Did you form any close friendships, and do you still stay in touch?
      - Are you a part of any veterans’ organizations?
      - Did your military experience influence your views on today’s military and war?
      - How did the service affect your life?
      - What values did you learn from your experience?

5) **Implement the Activity Plan**

   a. Follow the agenda you have laid out through careful planning and consultation with the school official and staff.
b. If time, space and resources allow, consider hosting a small reception for the veterans, school officials, key faculty, and a representative or a few of the student body to continue their conversations and exchange information.

Sample Agenda

1. Assemble the students and veterans.
2. Welcome students and veterans to the activity. Give a brief overview of the project’s purpose and introduce the veterans.
3. Say the Pledge of Allegiance and/or have a local ROTC display the U.S. flag.
4. Allow for a few remarks from any distinguished or notable guests you may have invited (e.g. Mayor, member of Congress, etc.)
5. Allow the veterans to introduce themselves. After they have given brief introductory remarks, begin the Q&A session.
6. Thank each veteran for participating and allow for individual remarks if they have any. If you wish to present each veteran with a gift, now would be the best time to do so.
7. Consider saying the Pledge of Allegiance again to see if you hear the words differently in light of the presentation.
8. Close out the project or event with a culminating ‘Thank You’ to all participants.

6) Follow-up with Veteran(s) and School(s)
   a. Send thank-you notes to the school leader and faculty. Ask if they would like to continue with the program in the future.
   b. Provide the school leader with information about the Legion Family and Legion Family programs and resources for veterans, veteran and military families, and the general community, so that he/she may make referrals of students and their families to Legion Family programs and services.
   c. Send thank-you notes to veteran speakers. Ask the veterans if they would be willing to be added to a list of willing speakers for future Veterans in Community Schools activities.

Promote ALA and Report Your Impact:

The ALA encourages members to identify themselves as such. When interacting with teachers, parents and veterans, however, it is important that members not push ALA membership aggressively, as that is not the primary purpose of this activity. Please, do feel free to wear ALA apparel and mention why you value association with The American Legion Family. Please also be sure to report your volunteer activities and hours to your unit’s Education or VA&R committee chairman.
Additional Ideas:
Assign a unit member to take pictures or video during the activity, provided the school and the veterans consent to this documentation.

- Assign a unit member to prepare an article or blog post of the event for the unit and post publications.
- Gather publicity generated by students and schools themselves, such as news articles in the school newspaper or online postings, student essays written for class assignments, or thank you notes from students. Re-publicize this material, with the authors’ permissions, in your unit or department communications.
- Be sure to report your Veterans in Community Schools activities in your individual or unit impact report to the unit’s Education or VA&R Committee chairman.

Resources:

- America’s Veterans Teacher Guide, The American Legion

- Promoting Historic Preservation in Community Schools, The History Channel
  http://www.history.com/images/media/interactives/promote_historic_preservation.pdf

- Our Veterans: Sharing Their Stories, The History Channel
  http://www.history.com/images/media/pdf/OurVeteransOurStories.pdf

- Veterans History Project, U.S. Library of Congress
  http://www.loc.gov/vets/
HOW TO CREATE A UNIT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Committee:
Education

Contact Information for Questions: education@ALAforVeterans.org

Promote American Legion Auxiliary scholarships, and award local scholarships at the department and unit levels.

Though examples of criteria are provided, the units must formulate criteria that work for them.

Provide a designated fund for scholarship monies.

- **Set dollar amount for scholarship**
  - Determine a funding source for the scholarship

- **Set criteria for applicants:**
  - Relationship to a veteran and/or Auxiliary member (child, spouse, widow/widower, grandchild, great-grandchild, etc.)
  - Membership in American Legion Auxiliary, The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion
  - Residency (applicant must reside in state and/or be a state resident; applicant must be a member of the department American Legion Family)
  - Is financial need a criterion (applicant must show financial need to continue higher education), or not?
  - Is there a GPA requirement?
  - Does the applicant need to be a senior in high school, or can they be a returning student?
  - What institution of higher learning does the applicant intend to attend (the school selected needs to be/does not need to be in state; it is an accredited school)?
  - Due date for application

- **Determine the information needed/wanted on the scholarship application:**
  - Completed application (name, address, city, state, zip, telephone number, date of birth, membership number, name of veteran through which eligibility is gained, relationship to veteran)
  - Essay and criteria/topic/word length, typed and double-spaced
  - Signature of the sponsoring American Legion Auxiliary unit president
  - Is community service a requirement (receive verification of service)?
    - If so, determine the number of hours needed and when they can be performed (during high school career, during last 12 months)
  - Verification of the relative’s or applicant’s military service

- **Information from a high school applicant:**
• **Information from a college applicant:**
  - Letters of recommendation (from school faculty, administrators, guidance counselor, pastor, community members, not from relatives)
  - Education information (cumulative GPA, rank in class, transcript, scores from SAT/PSAT/ACT)

• **Judging:**
  - The judges’ decision is final
  - The judges determine the scholarship to be awarded
  - Determine judging criteria and rubric prior to judging applications

• **How many scholarships may the applicant receive in a year and over a lifetime?**
  - Scholarships are made on a one-time-only basis (one scholarship in the applicant’s lifetime)
  - Scholarships are nonrenewable

• **Awarded scholarship:**
  - How/when will applicant be notified of scholarship decisions?
  - Will scholarship be awarded to student or to the school’s financial aid office?
  - Will the scholarship be awarded prior to the first college semester, after the first semester, or split between the two semesters?
  - Does the scholarship need to be used within a certain period of time?