HOW TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT OR UNIT WEBSITE

A well-designed, user-friendly website can help you attract new members, and serve as a powerful education, resource, and communication tool in identifying your ALA organization as the “go-to” authority on all things related to veterans, military, and their families in your community.

Accessibility: Responsive web design
1. Your site should be compatible and flexible with difference devices, operating systems, and browsers that visitors are using.
2. Determine the type of web presence you will have, what information you want to make available to your audiences (ALA members and those outside the organization), how you will maintain it, and how you’ll pay for it. Examples of a web presence for a business include a corporate website, a wiki page, or a social media point of presence (e.g., a LinkedIn company page and/or group, a Facebook business/brand/product page, or a Twitter account).
3. Decide on a domain name. Examples include:
   - ALAUnitSTexas.org
   - ALAIndiana.org
4. Determine a hosting site (service that connects your site to the Internet). You will probably have to pay a nominal fee for the domain name. You may be able to find a host for free. Two affordable and highly reputable domain registrars:
   - NameCheap (http://www.namecheap.com)
   - GoDaddy (http://www.godaddy.com)

Consistency: The overall look and feel from the homepage to the inside landing pages
1. Use the ALA Branding Guide, available at www.ALAforVeterans.org under PR/Marketing Resources, to help you design your website with a professional appearance, including design, choice of colors, graphics, and layout.

   - Your site should feature the appropriate visual brand-aligned identifiers such as brand awareness and credibility.
   - Consider patriotic colors, keeping with red, white, and blue.
   - The ALA emblem should be included on your website, especially on the homepage.
   - Typefaces should be easy to read. It’s important not to mix too many of them within your website.
• Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org, the ALA national website, for examples of color, graphics, news and resource content.

2. Make the ALA mission matter. You want the mission to be immediately obvious to your site visitor.
   • Point toward the mission in action with words and photos.

3. Include general information about the American Legion Auxiliary. Think about those visiting your site for the first time and the types of information they are looking for.
   • Provide accurate and current information on the unit/department.
   • Include the name and email address of a contact person, or use a general account (example: webmaster@ALAUnit5Texas.org) if multiple people will be maintaining your site.
   • Provide a list of upcoming unit/department events and who to contact for more information.

   • Scholarship and program information should be included.
   • Post public relations material such as the latest mission outreach activity that recently happened or will soon take place.

4. Establish a system for monitoring and oversight, including the appointment of personnel who are entrusted with the responsibility for managing the website and its content. Make sure at least two people are trained on how to manage your website and have access in the event that one person is unexpectedly unable to monitor the website.
   • Time-sensitive information should be updated regularly. People visiting your website will be more likely to keep checking it if the content is current and fresh.
   • Monitor your website regularly to ensure it is live and the links are working properly. Non-functioning sites and broken links will frustrate users, and they may stop checking your site.

Conventionality: Where the main navigation resides

1. Include at least one link to www.ALAforVeterans.org on your homepage. When including content like PDFs or other documents on your website from www.ALAforVeterans.org, include links to the information rather than posting files directly to your site. If material changes at the national level, the link will ensure your website visitors receive the latest information.

2. Carefully consider your placement of the ALA emblem and your link appearance throughout.

3. Include clear navigation tabs in the header and footer for easy movement throughout.

User experience: How enjoyable the site is for users to interact

5. Be sure to include contact information for your department or unit in an easy-to-find location on your site.

6. Create your site with media friendliness in mind. Receiving media attention raises awareness of who you are and what you do in your community.
   • Journalists should be able to find information easily, such as event dates and addresses, social media pages for your unit/department, press releases, etc. Display contact information (email and phone) clearly, especially for an upcoming event.
7. Avoid language on your website that contains internal references, acronyms, and jargon that may confuse users. Examples include NEC, PNP, PDP. Spell them out on first reference and then abbreviate as appropriate.

8. Carefully select content and make sure it is approved for public access.
   • Don’t share personal information without written consent (e.g., phone numbers, addresses, health conditions).
   • Don’t post information that can jeopardize the safety of members. For example, you wouldn’t want to include an update on the website about someone being out of town or their travel arrangements.

9. Avoid sharing copyrighted material from other sources or trademarks owned by third parties unless written authorization has been obtained.
   • Don’t endorse products, political candidates, services, or businesses.