

American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan National Security

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The National Security Program promotes a strong national defense by supporting service members and their families.

What is this program, and why do we have it?

The National Security program maintains and promotes a strong national defense by strengthening and supporting military service members and their families. The National Security program and the 2014-2019 ALA Centennial Strategic Plan: Maintaining and promoting a strong national defense by supporting service members and their families helps us build brand loyalty (Goal 5) among a target membership population (Goal 1) while keeping us focused on our mission.

National Security 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 National Security committee contact information may be found on the National Security committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

National Security Reporting:

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department and are intended to be an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each unit National Security chairman is asked to submit a narrative report by **December 31, 2018** to the department National Security chairman, for her report to the national 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 unit National Security chairman is asked to submit a narrative report by **April 15, 2019** to the department National Security chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

The National President's Award for Excellence (NPAE) will be awarded to those who emphasize the national president's focus through the American Legion Auxilliary's programs.

See criteria and guidelines in the NPAE cover sheet located under "General Information" in the 2018-2019 Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit National Security Program

- Deadline: April 15, 2019
- Send to department postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

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

- Did members organize Welcome To Our Hometown events? If so, what was most successful? Did they have any challenges?
- What types of national security activities and/or projects were done at units in your department that weren't near a military installation?

National Security Awards

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:

What can you do?

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

Ideas:

Member

- Let your unit know of any military families or businesses that should receive a Blue Star or Gold Star Banner in recognition of a servicemember's service.
- Provide support on a spouse-to-spouse or family-to-family basis, such as to a family member, neighbor or another military family. Refer to the *ALA Military Family Readiness Action Guide* 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 Legion Service Officer, they may be able to help you in your efforts.
- Become more informed about issues affecting a military family's home life and the resources available to help, such as PTSD, TBI, domestic violence, financial literacy and other issues.

- Refer service members with financial assistance needs to the American Red Cross Armed Forces Call Center at 1 (877) 272-7337.

Unit

- Support active-duty military families by working with an installation Family Readiness Group (FRG). Contact the Family Readiness Center on your nearby military installation for more information.
- Support reserve and transitioning service members and families by working with a returning National Guard or Reserve unit or an individual transitioning servicemember or family.

o *Note:* Units may find service members and families independently or by working with the service member transition programs of the U.S. Department of Defense, the military service branches or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Members may provide support on a spouse-to-spouse or family-to-family basis, such as to a family member, neighbor or another military family to which they come in contact. Refer to the *ALA Military Family Readiness Action Guide* for additional information and specific steps.

- When a service member or military family you're working with is relocating to a different community, help identify an ALA unit in the new community and make introductions.
- Greet service members and families as they deploy and/or return from a deployment.
- Work with a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program office of a local military unit (Reserve or National Guard) or a state National Guard Joint Force Headquarters to show patriotic and moral support at Yellow Ribbon events; offering hospitality, refreshments or children and youth activities; or making presentations on Auxiliary resources and services to family members of returning service members.
- Organize a Welcome To Our Hometown event to welcome military families that are moving or transitioning out of the military to your community. Refer to the *Welcome To Our Hometown Action Guide* for additional information and specific steps.
- Coordinate for community donations and assemble service member care packages and family member support packages.
- Work with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and refer a survivor or caregiver for specialized support. Refer to *How to Collaborate with the Tragedy assistance Program for Survivors* for information and specific steps.

B. Assist military spouses in getting and maintaining employment.

Ideas:

Member

- 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 counselor in your local area and offer to be "on call" for assistance with military children.

Unit

- Support military spouse job fairs organized by U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation or The American Legion, or host one in your own community. Encourage local business 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.
- Create a scholarship fund for military spouses learning a new skill.

C. Support the National Security programs of The American Legion.

Ideas:

Member

- Complete a Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) course. Refer to *How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams* for information and specific steps.
- Build and/or help a neighbor build an emergency preparedness kit and plan.
 - o Remember, new military families in your community may not be familiar with the types of emergencies that affect your area. As needed, help them update their emergency kit and plan.
- Sign up for the 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 and their families.
- Donate blood.

Unit

- Get involved in the Citizen Corps Council (www.ready.gov) to ensure citizens are prepared to respond to natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, blizzards and manmade disasters and emergencies.
 - o Junior members can get involved in and/or start a Youth Preparedness Program in their community.
- Collect supplies for emergency preparedness kits and distribute them in your community.
 - o Remember: new military families in your community may not be familiar with the types of emergencies that affect your area. As needed, help them update their emergency preparedness kit and plan.
- Encourage members to complete Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). Refer to *How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams* for information and specific steps.
- Have a training exercise in your post home to give training in first aid, CPR or other types of emergency skills.
- Join with your Legion post to host a POW/MIA ceremony on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, commemorated annually on 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 event for any MIA service members who have been identified from your area.

- Work with Legion posts to honor ROTC and JROTC cadets by having dinners and recognizing their accomplishments.
- Support future military by presenting ROTC and JROTC recognition awards.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. www.ALAforVeterans.org resources on the National Security program page:
 - *American Legion Auxiliary Military Family Readiness Action Guide* § A training package is also online for departments and units. It includes an instruction sheet, PowerPoint presentation and script, sample agenda, learning exercises, pre- and post-session survey, satisfaction survey and sample marketing text.
 - *Welcome To Our Hometown Action Guide*
 - *ALA-Operation Homefront Action Guide*
 - *ALA-USO Action Guide*
2. Instructional How To sheets found on the National Security program page on the national website:
 - How to Welcome Home Separating Service members
 - How to Identify Veteran and Servicemember Families who are In Need of Assistance
 - How to Support Troops and their Families on Military Installations
 - How to Train for FEMA's Community Emergency Response Teams
 - Planning a POW/MIA Remembrance Service
 - How to Collaborate with the American Red Cross' Service to the Armed Forces
 - How to Collaborate with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
 - How to Collaborate with the Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse eMentor Program
3. Legion Resources:
 - Blue Star and Gold Star Banner: www.legion.org/troops/bluestar
 - Disaster Preparedness and Response for American Legion Posts: www.legion.org/documents/pdf/talarc_disaster_preparedness.pdf
 - Family Support Network: www.legion.org/familysupport
 - Operation Comfort Warriors: www.legion.org/troops/operationcomfort
 - POW/MIA: www.legion.org/powmia
 - Legislative Action Alerts: <http://capwiz.com/legion/home/>
4. Follow Us on Facebook:
 - ALA National Headquarters: www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans
 - The national National Security Committee Facebook group, search "ALA National Security"