



Department of Wisconsin
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Programs Action Plan
2021-2022

MISSION STATEMENT

In the spirit of *Service Not Self*, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

PURPOSES

In fulfillment of our mission, the American Legion Auxiliary adheres to the following purposes.

- To support and advocate for veterans, military, and their families.
- To support the initiative and programs of The American Legion.
- To foster patriotism and responsible citizenship.
- To award scholarships and promote quality education and literacy.
- To provide educational and leadership opportunities that uphold the ideals of freedom and democracy and encourage good citizenship and patriotism in government.
- To increase our capacity to deliver our mission by providing meaningful volunteer opportunities within our communities.
- To empower our membership to achieve personal fulfillment through *Service Not Self*.

VALUES

Our statement of values is predicated on the founding purposes.

- Commitment to the four founding principles: Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty.
- Service to God, our country, its veterans and their families.
- Tradition of patriotism and citizenship.
- Personal integrity and family values.
- Respect for the uniqueness of individual members.
- Truthful open communication in dealing with the public and our members.
- Adherence to the adopted policies and rules.

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Section 1: Introduction

President Diane Weggen is a Gold Star sister and 38-year Paid-Up-For-Life American Legion Auxiliary member, joining through the service of her late brother Jerry, a Navy pilot who lost his life on a training mission during the Vietnam War. Coming from a family of veterans – late husband Donald served in the National Guard; brothers Bob, Army and Tom, Air Force; son James and daughter-in-law Jennifer, Navy; granddaughter Amanda, National Guard; and grandson Nick, Air Force – Diane has a vested interest in serving veterans. Her theme for this year is "Salute, Serve, Celebrate veterans, military, their families, and our communities."

President Weggen is an advocate for our veterans and their families and invites you to ***consider the following goals*** for this year as you work for our veterans, military, and their families.

- Build relationships (Relate, Communicate, Collaborate) within The American Legion Family
- Care for those who care for others
- Engage members and increase the times members attend The American Legion Family meetings, events, and activities outside their units.

Department President's Special Project - As you consider your donations this year, please keep the veterans at the Chippewa Veterans Home in mind. The Chippewa Veterans Home Courtyard will enhance the quality of life for members by providing an accessible outdoor lighted area with seating and tables, including electrical outlets and a sound system for visiting, group activities, programs. Poppy Funds, unit, and individual donations may be used to fund this project. Mail checks payable to "ALA-Wisconsin" to ALA-Wisconsin, PO Box 140, Portage, WI 53901 and write 'President's Special Project' in the memo field or send with a Poppy Fund Suggested Donation Form from the department website.

The Department Plan of Action along with contact information, can be found at; <https://www.amlegionauxwi.org/dept-chrm-action-plans>. The National Plan of Action is no longer published but is available as a historic document. Instead, it was replaced by individual webpages that link you directly to all information available for your committee. These links are available on the National website at <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees>. Check them out!

The following pages offer contacts, general information and ideas on the VA&R program, awards and their specifics, resources, volunteer opportunities, Mid-Year & Year-End reporting requirements, and two award cover sheets – one for Department and one for National. The appropriate cover sheet is required, along with a narrative!

As the new Auxiliary year begins, recharge, record, and report!

Keep in mind that the Wisconsin VA&R Team comprises four chairmen – each overseeing a particular part of the program and the Christmas Gift Shop Supervisor and Assistant. The next page provides an overview and contacts, which should make it easier to connect.

Section 2: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Team

National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee Chairman, Lisa Williamson
907-388-3264 / williamsonlisad@gmail.com

Central Division Chairman, Sue Hembrook, Department of Wisconsin
262-945-9791 / genesuehem@wi.rr.com

Department Chairman, Mike Rohan, Third District
631 Lone Oak Ln., Verona, WI 53593
608-837-9763 (c), mdnrohan@gmail.com

Director of Hospital Volunteers, Sue Hembrook, Fourth District
24215 60th Street, Salem, WI 53168
(262) 843-4791 (h) / 262-945-9791 (c), genesuehem@wi.rr.com

Homeless Women Veterans Grant Chairman, Pat Smith, Seventh District
800 West Ave. N #112, West Salem, WI 54669
608-786-4441, pms112ws@gmail.com

Service to Veterans Chairman, Linda Coppock, Ninth District
608 Division Street, New London, WI 54961
920-851-5811 (c), beatrice2554@gmail.com

Christmas Gift Shop Supervisor, Diana Sirovina, First District
9428 W Eden Place, Milwaukee WI 53228
414-321-1479 (h) / 414-881-9581 (c), dsirovina@icloud.com

Assistant Christmas Gift Shop Supervisor, Linda Bartell, Fifth District
4561 S Clearwater Place, New Berlin WI 53151
414-427-0238 / 414-899-7479 (c), bartelll@sbcglobal.net

Section 3: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

PURPOSE

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of veterans, the military, and their families.

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program strives:

- Inform members and the public of the dilemmas and the increasing number of homeless veterans.
- Support veteran caregivers, family members, and survivors.
- Enroll Auxiliary members as V.A. Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers at V.A. health care facilities.
- Help The American Legion, State Department of Veterans Affairs, and Chamber of Commerce promote job fairs for veterans and their families.
- There is not a V.A. hospital close to your community? Find opportunities for Auxiliary members to serve veterans in your area, such as serving the homeless.
- Support veteran rehab and healing through the National Creative Arts Festival (NCAF)
 - Familiarize yourself with the latest edition of ALA Guide for Volunteers – The guide can be purchased from the Legion's Flag & Emblem catalog <https://emblem.legion.org/Books-Pamphlets-CDs/products/40/> for \$1.95 or downloaded from the National website for free at https://www.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/VAR_Guide.pdf
 - Help your Unit or Department earn recognition at National Convention through monetary donations to the National Creative Arts Festival (NCAF)
 - If nearby, volunteer individually or with your Unit at a local Creative Arts Festival
 - Identify projects targeted to veterans (writing, oral history recording, visual and performing arts, quilting and gardening, etc.) or organize a project or introduce a Unit to what is already in place in the community – See Arts Deployed: Action Guide and Webinars to bring the arts to your community: www.alaforveterans.org/Programs/Veterans-Affairs--Rehabilitation
 - Donate supplies to supplement visual veteran artists' needs for their project
 - Donate funds to help local veterans attend state and national Wheelchair Games, Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, Paralympics, etc.
 - Host an informational table at a local job fair or support the Legion by helping host a local job fair at your Post or in the community
- Job Fairs and assistance for Veterans, Military, and Veteran Spouses
 - U.S. Chamber of Commerce - www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes :
 - Business and Professional Women's Foundation (BPW Foundation) is the first foundation and research center in America dedicated exclusively to the interests and advancement of working women. <https://bpwfoundation.org/>
 - eMentor leverages the internet to create a dynamic information sharing, learning, and support community that extends far beyond the veteran and military spouse network. www.ementorprogram.org/militaryspouse-ementor/

- ❑ Support veterans' caregivers.
 - Consider getting involved in the V.A. Caregiver Support Program, https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Publications_Resources_Topic.asp
 - Consider getting involved with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network, <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/military-families/services-for-veterans/military-veteran-caregiver-network.html>
 - Become a Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Trainer or volunteer, <https://www.taps.org/volunteerapply>
 - Become a Legacy Corps AmeriCorps member if the Legacy Corps is in your area
 - Check with the V.A. facility near you to see if it offers a V.A. Voluntary Service Volunteer Support Caregiver program and sign up
 - Invite a V.A. Caregiver Support Coordinator to do a presentation at a meeting or event
 - *Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center*, 5000 W. National Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53295, 414-384-2000, ext. 44571
 - *Tomah VA Medical Center*, 500 E. Veterans Street, Tomah, WI 54660, 608-372-3971 ext. 61103
 - *William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital*, 2500 Overlook Terrace, Madison, WI 53705, 608-256-1901 ext. 11576
 - Get involved in the Elizabeth Dole Foundation for Caregivers - <https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org/>

REPORTING

VA&R reports offer an overview of work carried out for our veterans' Reporting is mandatory for every Unit. If possible, include photos of special projects. If your Unit is not involved in this program, say so. That will serve as your report. **Note:** Submitting Mid-Year reports is optional.

- Mid-Year (Optional) Report Deadline: November 15, 2021
- Year-End Report Deadline: April 21, 2022

Mail or e-mail to Department Chairman, Mike Rohan, 631 Lone Oak Ln., Verona, WI 53593 or, mdnrohan@gmail.com

Each Unit will be furnished with a Year-End statistical report form from Headquarters. Fill this in as accurately as possible. As part of your narrative report, National would like the following information included:

- ❑ Did your Unit participate in the caregiver support program? Yes/No If so, how?
- ❑ Describe how members earned their Service to Veterans hours.
- ❑ Did your Unit assist/host a Stand Down? Yes/No What did the Unit learn about assisting/hosting? What went well? What could be done differently?

Section 4: Additional Resources

Additional Resources

- American Legion Auxiliary Programs Page: <https://www.legion-aux.org/programs>
- Homeless Veterans Coalition: www.nchv.org
- Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers
www.legion.org/homelessveterans/handbook
- The American Legion Family Support Network: www.legion.org/familysupport
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival: www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov or
www.alaforveterans.org/NVCAF/ or <https://www.facebook.com/NVCAF/>
- Quilts of Valor: <https://www.qovf.org/>
- VA Homeless Programs www.va.gov/homeless/
- HUD Homeless Assistance Program
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/veteranhomelessness
- Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers
www.Legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook
- The American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR/>
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers – download online at
<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/guides/volunteer-guide>
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation www.elizabethdolefoundation.org
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce – Hiring Our Heroes
<https://www.uschamber.com/program/us-chamber-foundation/hiring-our-heroes>
- The American Legion and Habitat for Humanity Volunteer involvement toolkit
<https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/habitat.pdf>
- VA Caregiver Support www.caregiver.va.gov
- Resource: V.A. Health Care Hotline for women veterans 1-855-829-6636 –
<https://www.va.gov/womenvet/>

Section 5: Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Opportunities to check out!

- Quilts of Valor began in the sewing room of a Delaware Blue Star mom. Her son's yearlong deployment to Iraq provided the inspiration, spurring her desire to see that returning warriors were welcomed home with love and gratitude. www.qovf.org
- Project CHALENG, or Community Homelessness Assessment, brings providers, advocates, veterans, and other concerned citizens together to identify the needs of homeless veterans and then work to meet those needs: www.va.gov/homeless/chaleng.asp
- V.A. Caregiver Support is a support program for the family caregiver, providing service for both the caregiver and veteran, in house or not: www.caregiver.va.gov/
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Legion Auxiliary. The annual event showcases the talents of veterans from across the U.S. through art, drama, dance, music, and creative writing. www.alaforveterans.org/NVCAF/
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation assists organizations and agencies serving caregivers responsible for an injured military member. www.elizabethdolefoundation.org/
- Camo Quilts is a Wisconsin-based program located at 439 Factory Street, Plymouth, WI 53073. The project provides handmade quilts free of charge to troops serving in the Middle East. <https://www.amlegionauxwi.org/program-info> Contact: Linda Wieck (920) 627-3460 – E-mail: linda@camoquilt.com
- Contact the American Legion Post Service Officer for information to assist veterans in accessing V.A. benefits for health care and other services. www.legion.org/serviceofficers
 - Help eligible veterans obtain benefits through referrals
 - Encourage eligible veterans to use the V.A. health care system and its services: hospitals, community-based outpatient clinics, centers, etc.
 - Participate in and encourage veterans and their families to participate in town hall meetings organized by The American Legion in advance of the Legion's System Worth Saving site visits to V.A. health care systems: www.legion.org/systemworthsaving
- Invite your County Veteran Service Officer to speak at an event <https://wicvso.org/locate-your-cvso/>
- National Salute to Veterans is an annual event the week of February 14th and is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women, the more than 9 million Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes. The activities and events include special ward visits and valentine distributions; photo opportunities; school essay contests; special recreation activities and Veteran recognition programs. <https://www.volunteer.va.gov/nationalSaluteVeteranPatients.asp>

Section 6: Awards

Criteria vary from award to award. To assure qualification, carefully read the requirements, use the necessary form if requested, meet the deadline, and mail/e-mail to the appropriate contact.

Department of WI Anchored in Service Award: WI Cover Sheet required with narrative to Dept. Chairman!

Outstanding Unit VA&R Program Award – National Cover Sheet Required

https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Awards/Award_Cover_Sheet_form.pdf

- A citation will be presented to one Unit VA&R Chairman per Division (5 awards), who conducted the best overall promotion of the VA&R Program
- Entries are required to include the award cover sheet from National, including the name of the award, name and contact information for the Department and Unit Chairman
- The entry must be typewritten in narrative format; not to exceed 1000 words (Note word count)
- Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc.

Outstanding Unit VA&R Program Award entries are to be sent to the Department VA&R Chairman, Mike Rohan (See contact info above) by May 15, 2022 – Department Chairman will send on to National Chairman

NVCAF Award: National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Support Recognition

- A verbal announcement will be made during VA&R Chairman's remarks at the 2022 ALA National Convention
- Awards will be presented to Departments, Units, and/or members who qualify for contribution levels noted below – Donations are made through the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation
- ALA National Headquarters will submit qualifying donations to NVCAF staff in July
- Donations are made to the NVCAF between August 1, 2021, and July 31, 2022 and must be received in the National office between those dates
Bronze: \$1,000-\$2,400 * Silver: \$2,500-\$4,999 * Gold: \$5,000-\$14,999

2021-2022 National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation VA&R Program Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements

Thank you for taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission! Your story may inspire another member into service. It also helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

Here are the national awards for this committee:

Unit Award: Most Outstanding VA&R Program (per division) – Deadline June 1

All department entries must be sent by the department chairman to their national division chairman postmarked by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above. Members should follow instructions from their department.

Department Award: Best Department VA&R Program (per division) – Deadline June 1

All department entries must be sent by the department chairman to their national division chairman postmarked by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above. Members should follow instructions from their department. Please note – when applicable, unit and department deadlines differ.

Just follow these simple steps to submit your award entry:

Fill out the form on the next page as completely as possible. Send your form to the department VA&R chairman Mike Rohan by June 1. Please email a copy to Lisa Williamson at williamsonlisad@gmail.com and include any photos that aid in your storytelling. If you have questions, please contact VA&R@ALAforVeterans.org

Section 7: Forms



American Legion Auxiliary National VA&R Report and Award Cover Sheet

Please note, your report will also be viewed as an award entry if this cover sheet is attached.
Complete the following if you are applying for a member award.

Unit #: _____ Full official unit name: _____

Name of state where you are a member: _____

Member's Full Name: _____ ALA member ID#: _____

Nominating Member (if different from above): _____

Nominator's Phone number: (____) _____

Nominator's Email address: _____

National committee sponsoring award: _____

Name of the award you are applying for: _____

For a unit award or to submit a year-end unit narrative report, please complete this section.
Be sure to give the complete name of your unit. The award certificate will be prepared using the information you include below.

Unit #: _____ Full official unit name: _____

Name of department: _____

Unit president/chairman (**circle one**) name: _____

Above listed person's ALA member ID#: _____ Phone number: (____) _____

Email address: _____

For a department award or to submit a year-end department narrative report, please complete this section:

Name of department: _____

Name of department chairman: _____

Chairman's phone number: (____) _____ ALA member ID#: _____

Chairman's email address: _____

Please see instructions on previous page about where to send this form.