

American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Florida
District President Guidebook



Bells in *S.E.R.V.I.C.E.*
for our Veterans, Military families,
Communities and Children & Youth

Dee Bell
Department President

Welcome to the 2023-2024 American Legion Auxiliary year. My theme this year is ***“Bells in S.E.R.V.I.C.E. for our Veterans, Military families, Community and Children & Youth.”*** The department colors this year will be purple and gold.

Thank you for your membership and your service to our amazing organization. Congratulations on your election as District President, you are now also a member of the Department Executive Committee. It is your responsibility to promote our programs as well as our principles, ideals, and values of the American Legion Auxiliary. As District President, you will mentor, inspire, and lead your District and its members.

With the 4 pillars in mind, VA&R, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth, I encourage you to motivate district members to pledge themselves to our MISSION of “Service not self.” With your motivation and guidance, the members have the ability to touch the lives and to Be the One to make a difference to our veterans, military families, communities and children.

The ringing of bells has been a symbol and used for centuries in celebration, announcement, triumph, and joy. As auxiliary members, your SERVICE to those we serve, and your membership will be heard throughout your district with the ringing of bells.

#ringyourbell This hash tag is about you, the members, your District, your Units, the programs, your accomplishments, your events, your volunteering, and your S.E.R.V.I.C.E. Speaking of your service, General Peggy Combs, who was an American Legion Auxiliary Woman of the Year recipient, explained it like this.

S-Selflessness
E-Expectations
R-Respect
V-Values
I-Ideals
C-Commitment
E-Excellence

The District Presidents book has been compiled to help you fulfill the duties of your Office and lead to the success of your District. Do not hesitate to contact Department Officers, Department Chairmen, Past Department Presidents, Staff or mentors for guidance or assistance. You are an amazing leader and a valuable member of the Department of Florida. Congratulations again, have Fun, and Ring Your Bell!

Thank You for your SERVICE!

Dee Bell

Department President 2023-2024

NEW THIS YEAR

It is said "What is old is new again."! Therefore, as we enter a new year, let us start by getting back to basics. For the last 100 years, the Auxiliary MISSION has been emphasized through our programs and will continue this year. We will concentrate on the Selflessness, Expectations, Respect, Values, Ideals, Commitment, and Excellence of each member and thank them for it. My special focus this year will be our auxiliary members. Each of us has personally known or knows someone that has been devastated by a disaster. Our members will be **"saved by the bell"** as we increase awareness and raise funds for the Department of Florida, Auxiliary Emergency Fund Disaster Relief with **"Bells in Service."**

The membership theme is **"Ring in Membership"**! The District Presidents will be the **Bell-Ringers**, guaranteeing that the bells will make a beautiful sound throughout the District. Each District will be given a special bell. Incorporate your bell into your District meetings and events. Have fun and embrace it.

Our National President Lisa Williamson is from the state of Alaska, the 49th state to join the Union. Her special focus this year will be to increase awareness about the veteran and military suicide epidemic while embracing The American Legions' **Be the One!** Initiative. It's as clear as a **Bell**, If each of us can save one life, It will be worth it!

DRESS CODE

The American Legion Auxiliary does not have an official uniform; however, it is important to look your best when representing our organization. Some Districts establish a uniform for the district staff; however, it is not required. It does look nice when doing installations if the district staff is dressed alike. Feel free to incorporate the department colors.

When presenting yourself as District President, you should always wear your District President pin and name tag. Your Officers ribbon is only worn while presiding in your official capacity as District President and during the formal processional at Convention.

Make-up and clothes should be conservative and in good taste. Auxiliary meetings, Fall Conference, Convention are official meetings, not social gatherings, business attire is expected. **Jeans, shorts, or capris are never acceptable when performing district duties.** If you would like to create district shirts, you must follow the guidelines for National Emblem Usage before ordering or making your own..

BUILD YOUR TEAM

You are the leader of the district, but it is not a one-person job. It is vital to establish a leadership team and work together. You should appoint the best members (not necessarily your friends) who will support and assist you and strengthen the team. This will probably be the most challenging and rewarding year as an auxiliary member. Enjoy and *Ring Your Bell!*

No two Districts are the same and each has their own needs. It is important to give careful consideration when appointing the Officers and Chairmen. This is your first responsibility and will set the tone and should be accomplished as soon as possible. Even though the district has never had a particular Office or Committee before, does not mean you can't appoint one now. Make every effort to appoint at least one member from every Unit in the District.

We must caution you, if you appoint a Vice President, they do not have the same authority as a Department or Unit Vice President. They cannot act in your absence. Because they are appointed, they have no authority to preside at District meetings or take your place at installations; only a Past District President may do so.

Appointed Officers and Chairmen serve at the District President's request. If at any time, they are not living up to their obligation as an Officer or Chairman you can relieve them of their position and ask someone else, you appointed them, and yes, you can unappoint them.

As District President it will be extremely important to strive to have a working relationship with the Unit Officers and Chairmen. By showing interest in them and the Unit members, your visits will be more productive. It is strongly encouraged to establish a District newsletter or bulletin distributed to District staff, Chairmen, and the Units. Use email, when possible, but keep in mind not everyone has email or checks it regularly, you can also consider social media such as creating a District Facebook page. Communication will be key to the Bells in SERVICE and everyone's success.

Your job can be carried out successfully only if you are enthusiastic and start with the idea that the District will have the **Best Year Ever** under your guidance and with the support of the team.

CHAIRMEN

The Chairmen you appoint should be familiar with and passionate about the program. It is important for District staff and chairmen to attend Department workshop. The Department Chairmen will present their programs and goals and outline for 2023-2024. The District Chairmen will gain knowledge about the programs and what should be covered at the School of Instruction.

This is your opportunity to inspire and excite Unit members with your knowledge of the programs. Be creative and enthusiastic about your presentations. The goal is to inspire Unit Chairmen and members about working the programs.

After Unit Presidents complete and submit the Unit Chairmen form, prepare a roster for each District Chairman. Require Unit President to complete this form as soon as possible. This will enable open communication between the District and Unit Chairmen. Make sure the Chairmen understand what is expected of them. You must communicate with them on a regular basis. Encourage District officers and chairmen to prepare articles for you to include in your monthly bulletin. Encourage Unit Presidents to submit flyers and articles pertaining to upcoming events with the Units.

YOU MUST NOTIFY DEPARTMENT OF YOUR OFFICERS AND CHAIRMEN AND PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION USING THE OFFICER & CHAIRMEN FORM.

Make Headquarters aware of any changes throughout the year.

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

The *Florida Liberty Bell* is the Department Newsletter. I encourage you to submit photos that highlight social events and showcase "Bells in SERVICE"! with your Units. Email submissions to alafnews@ala.org

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Donation Remittance Form lists charities and projects sponsored and approved by the Department Executive Committee. Donations to these organizations are to be made through Department. For example, Child Welfare and Special Olympics donations are to be made through Department using the remittance form and mailed to Headquarters. Mail completed form and check to Department headquarters. Donations made to charities or projects not listed on the form must be made directly to that organization. Please remember to report these donations on the Units year-end report form.

Encourage the Units to support the approved charities and projects, however, be mindful that Units have been supporting local organizations in their community for years. Remember, we are a non-profit, we have fun raising money and we enjoy giving it away and Making a Difference. *Ring your Bell!*

QUARTERLY REPORTING AND REIMBURSEMENT

As District President you are required to submit a quarterly report to the Department President by September 1st, December 1st, March 1st, and Jun 1st. These reports are on **YOUR** activity in the district during the quarter. Keep track of your Unit visits and the purpose of the visit. Your report is to be emailed to the Department President at president@alaf1.org or hard copy mailed directly to her home address located in the Department Unit Guide. Do not mail your report to Headquarters. **This report is NOT about Unit activity! It is on YOUR activity during the quarter.**

Along with your narrative report you are to complete and submit a Quarterly District President Expenses Report found on the website under forms and resources. Complete the form listing your District #, each unit visited, and proof of mileage from map source i.e. (maps, google, etc.) for each trip. It is not necessary to attach any receipts to this form. Quarterly allowance is based strictly on mileage with up-to 700 miles at .25 per mile. **DO NOT FILL ANY INFORMATION IN THE OFFICE USE ONLY BOX.**

DISTRICT DUES

Standing Rule VII, NO 5 states that District dues, payable to President, shall not exceed twenty dollars (\$20) per Unit and are to be used for operating expenses (i.e. bulletins, postage etc.) not for personal use of any Officer or Chairman. A financial report must be given at the Constitutional Conference. Any remaining money should be turned over to the newly elected District President.

All checks must be made payable to the District President only! **NO DISTRICT CAN HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT.**

The District President may use this money to offset the cost of paper, printing, toners, and postage. If the District correspondence is done electronically to a Unit, they do not have to pay District dues, nor should you expect them to. Remember, to give a full accounting of this money in a report at your Constitutional Conference.

DISTRICT FUNDRAISING

Per Department Finance Rules, there is no fundraising allowed by a District President or any District Chairman. However, **Units can sponsor District events.**

EMBLEM USAGE

Rules governing the use of the Auxiliary Emblem and Name

The American Legion Auxiliary emblem is fully copyrighted and patented in the name of the National Organization. The use of the emblem by an individual Auxiliary member is limited to the wearing of the official insignia and to the possession of authorized jewelry or merchandise bearing the insignia. Units are confined to using the emblem or reproduction of the emblem on stationary, Unit publications notices, posters, place cards or items of similar character used in the ordinary routine and conduct of legitimate Unit business. Any other use of the name "American Legion Auxiliary" or the emblem shall be subject to the approval of the Department Secretary and the National Secretary.

Any Officer, Unit or member placing our emblem or brand on an article of clothing must submit a drawing of the clothing indicating everything that will be on it along with the following:

1. Name and address of the person printing or embroidering the name or emblem.
2. The quantity being made.
3. Email the request to Department Secretary for approval.
4. Department Secretary will then submit the form to National for final approval.

Once the final approval is granted, the National Organization will then send an email to the vendor authorizing permission for one-time usage. All renewal orders are subject to the same approval process. There is no exception to this rule.

In your District travels, should you see articles of clothing with the emblem on them, ask what procedure was used to receive permission for the use of the emblem. Contact the Department if you need assistance with emblem usage in the district.

UNIT QUOTAS

Units will receive invoices at the beginning of the Auxiliary year for the required quotas and bonding fee. These invoices are payable upon receipt. The list of quotas for each Unit is in the Unit Guide each year. These figures are based on the close of books senior membership at the rate for each quota approved in the Department Standing Rules.

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

At Department Convention you are installed and given your Oath of Office as District President. Installation is a "ceremony" and it is a "custom" in Florida to wait until after the Installation Ceremony to take office. Your installation is the only one that the Department sets the time and place. Remember your duties as District President do not

begin until after you are installed. Please give every courtesy to the outgoing District President during the Convention and realize this is their Convention.

Awards received at Convention are presented to the out-going District President to present to the Units. The awards were won during their year, and they should be given the opportunity to present them at Unit Installations. We suggest that the awards go with you. If the out-going District President attends the Unit's Installation, bring them forward to present the awards earned during their year. If the out-going District President does not attend, then it is your responsibility to present the awards to the out-going President. The out-going District President will appreciate the courtesy extended and it will make for a smooth transition between the two of you.

Once installed you are now a member of the Department of Florida Executive Committee. It is suggested that you attend the Pre-Convention Executive Meeting so you can get a feel for the procedure. You are required to attend the Post-Executive committee Meeting and as a member you will answer roll call and vote on matters brought before the meeting. Always vote with certainty i.e., know what the subject is and if unsure, ask questions. This is the time to ask questions and you will get answers.

You may be asked to vote on a matter in between Executive Committee Meetings. If so, you will receive an email outlining the reason for the vote and the Department Secretary is to receive your electronic vote within fifteen (15) days.

Department 2023-2024 Convention will be held June 13-16, 2024, Hilton Orlando, Lake Buena Vista

You are required to turn in your District President's book at the Convention when you arrive. Failure to do so will result in you not being reimbursed for attending the Convention. Do not remove any contents prior to returning the book.

DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP

Department workshop is scheduled for July 21-23, 2023 at the Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs, 350 S. Northlake Blvd., Altamonte Springs 32701. General Session will start on Friday July 21, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m. and conclude on Sunday July 23, 2023 @ noon.

The purpose of Workshop is to prepare you and the District Chairmen to hold the District School of Instruction. Department Workshop is open to all members in good standing of the American Legion Auxiliary. District Presidents will receive travel and room allowance based on the approved budget. You are expected to attend.

FALL CONFERENCE

Fall Conference will be held November 17-19, 2023, at the Caribe Royale Orlando.

You will receive a call-in from Department Headquarters as directed by the Department President, instructing you to attend the conference. The budget determines the maximum allowance for the meeting. The Department President decides the number of days your call-in is for.

You will be expected to give an oral report at this meeting. It may be during the general session. Your call-in will state the length of time you will have to give your report. **This report, unlike your quarterly reports, is about the activities of the Units in your District.** Ring your bell, highlighting any special accomplishments, outstanding programs, or projects they participated in. Time your report so you are not stopped in the middle. Time is limited at this meeting.

When mentioning a Unit in your report, give the location and the Unit number. Giving the location and Unit number helps the listener know what Unit you are referring to.

Please turn in one copy of your report to the Department Secretary when you take the podium. Remember to complete an expense worksheet found on the Department website and mail to the Department Treasurer along with a hotel receipt in your name and proof of mileage from a printed map source.

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENTS' DISTRICT VISIT

During Boot Camp the Department President will schedule the official visit to your District.

Have a planning meeting with the Units in your District to decide what events will be planned during the visit. If you have places in your District unique to the state, you may want to plan a tour or visit. Be creative with the visit. Keep in mind, meeting the members is important. Try to plan large events in the district that many members can attend. If your district is spread out in distance, plan more than one event, so members can have the opportunity to attend without extensive travel.

Units participating jointly in a large event can share the expense of the event. Each Unit can share in the responsibilities i.e. corsage, guest book, gift, table decorations opening and closing prayer and introduction of guests. If one Unit is hosting the event, they would be responsible for the amenities.

The hostess Unit President presides for the function, handling all introductions except the Department President. The District President would be presented who then

introduces the Department President. The Department President is the last to speak except for the presentation of gifts, guest book and closing prayer.

A written itinerary of the visit should be sent to the President in advance to plan the visit regarding her packing. Make sure to address attire for the visit, i.e. business, casual, dressy or formal. The itinerary should include time for the events, especially arrival in the district. The details about housing should be included.

Housing is your responsibility. If you are able to have the President stay with you at your home, that is the preferred option. If you cannot house the President, possibly a Past Department President in your District is able to. If all else fails, make reservations at a convenient centralized hotel in the area. Please consider safety when selecting the location of the hotel. **The expense of the hotel is your responsibility.** You may ask the Units in the District to help share the cost. **They are not required to do so, and you cannot mandate it.** If the Department Presidents' spouse is traveling also, the hotel expense is their responsibility. As a courtesy, the District should comp the spouses' meals if possible.

You are the official hostess during the Department President's visit and are to accompany her to every event. The Presidents' car should be used for traveling throughout the District, however you should drive, as you are familiar with your area.

Have a plan for each meal during the visit. Do not leave the President to fend for themselves for meals. Meals are also at your expense, so you are encouraged to get the Units to entertain with appetizers, breakfasts, lunches, or dinners. Be sure to inquire about food allergies and let the Units know. Find out about interests or collections for gift suggestions from the Units.

Make sure to invite The Legion, S.A.L. and Rider members to attend the events in the District. The Department president is eager to meet the entire Legion family during the visit.

This is to be a special time for you and the President. You both committed a year of your life to serve this wonderful organization during the same year, so you have much in common. This is an opportunity to build a lasting friendship so enjoy your time together.

UNIT INSTALLATIONS

After Convention, you will be called upon to perform the Unit Installations in your District. It is suggested that you study very carefully the Installation Ceremony on your District President's flash drive.

The District Installation schedule is set by the District Commander, sometimes with and sometimes without consulting the Auxiliary. The Unit has the right to either agree to join

the Legion for a joint installation or set their own date and time. Check with each Unit President as to their preference.

In the ceremony, there are charges for the Officers of the Unit. Occasionally additional officers are elected by the Unit, in which it would be necessary for you to deliver a charge consistent with the duties of that office. This may require a little maneuvering on your part. Be flexible, creative, and prepared. **You never allow a stand-in at an installation.** If the Officer is not there, skip that charge. When you arrive at the Unit, ask the President to furnish you a list of Officers that are present.

Space for the installation will vary from Post to Post, so survey the room when you arrive for the best way to set-up for the installation. The Installation team is there to help you, so work closely with them for best results.

It is customary that all Officers being installed should have their dues paid, for the year they are serving. Remember, they are a member in good standing even if they have not paid for the new year, so they can be installed, but it is important to impress upon the President to make sure their dues are remitted as soon as possible to avoid problems later. The Officers paying their dues is also an incentive for the membership to pay theirs. There is a long and a short ceremony for installation. Some Units may have a preference and their wishes should be granted. Regardless of which form you use, personalize it and make it as nice as possible. The Installation is the first interaction with the Units in the District, and you want to make an impression and make each Unit feel special and important.

PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT PLANS

Program Engagement Plans will be posted on the Department website www.alafl.org after Department Boot Camp for anyone to download. It is recommended that you place a complete copy of all the Program Action Plans on your flash drive for your reference. Printed copies of these will also be made available for anyone that does not have a computer at a nominal charge.

The Program Engagement Plans will include the Year-end Unit report forms and the Year-end District report forms. Encourage the Units in your District to read the Program Action Plans before planning their activities for the year.

DISTRICT SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

1. A School of Instruction for Unit Officers, Chairmen and members must be held within thirty (30) days after Department Workshop. See Unit Guide, Standing Rule No. VII, item 9.
2. Set the date, place, and time, making sure the meeting room facility is large enough to conduct the school.

3. Send information regarding the school to Department Headquarters using the form provided in your book.
4. Send a bulletin to Unit Presidents, District Officers and chairmen notifying them of the date, time, and place for the school. If lunch is provided, state the cost. Make it clear the cost is for lunch only. **There is no charge for attending the School of Instruction.**
5. It is nice to invite Department Officers and Chairmen and any Past Department Presidents in your District. The Department does not allow expenses for Department Chairmen and Committee members to attend district meetings.
6. The District team you assembled should conduct instructions for all Officers and Chairmanships. Do not be afraid to utilize the Department Officers and Chairmen's knowledge and guidance whenever needed.
7. The Welcome should be given by the President of the hostess Unit and the Response to the Welcome can be from either the Unit that traveled the furthest or that has the highest membership at the time.
8. If the Department President is present, ask how long she will be there so she can speak last, if possible. If attending more than one School that day, please make accommodations by allowing her to speak early in the program.
9. Thank everyone for a job well done.
10. Write a personal Thank You note to the hostess Unit.

Be creative when planning your School of Instruction. Don't be afraid to try something different or use a format that has never been used before. Make it a fun, pleasurable experience, but most of all make it a learning experience and **Teach the Programs. ROCK THE BELLS!**

DISTRICT SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. Call to Order – rap gavel once for attention.
2. “Sgt-at-Arms you will see that the doors are closed and allow no one to enter until the opening ceremonies have been completed.”
3. Rap gavel three times for member to stand.
4. Advance the Colors or Pre-post.
5. Invocation (Prayer) – Moment of Silence
6. POW/MIA
Resolution 288 calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIA's still unaccounted for from all war and conflicts involving the United States. In accordance with that, the Auxiliary also recognizes and remembers our POW/MIA's. Lest we never forget.
7. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
8. Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary.
9. Rap the gavel once to seat the members. This _____ District School of Instruction is now convened.

“Sgt.-at-Arms, you will see if there is anyone wishing to enter”.

If there is a printed program, state, “the Chair requests consent to deviate from the printed program” (The response is consent)

10. Welcome
11. Response to the Welcome
12. Introduction of Distinguished Guests, District Officers, and Chairmen
13. Roll Call of Units by District Secretary
 - a. Presentations of the Plan of Action by the District chairmen
 - b. Instructions from the District Officers (President, Secretary etc)

In the event a presenter is unable to attend an outline should be provided in advance for the District President or Secretary to read.

14. Question and answer period if time permits.
15. Remarks by distinguished guests.
16. District Presidents’ remarks
17. Announcements
18. Thank hostess Unit for all courtesies extended.
19. Closing Prayer

UNIT VISITS

In addition to your visit to the Unit to install the Officers, you are required to make an official visit to each Unit in the District during the year.

Notify the Unit President that you will be visiting prior to the night of the Unit meeting. Often the Units like to have refreshments on the meeting night you visit, and a surprise visit would not allow them the privilege.

When you visit the Unit, it is permissible to bring staff or Chairmen with you, however, verify it is all right with the Unit President, as space is often an issue. Please do not overpower them with a large group traveling with you.

It is important to make your visit very personal. When you are given the opportunity to speak, keep your remarks upbeat and positive. Do not reprimand the Unit for something that isn’t done or done incorrectly at their meeting. If there is a problem that needs addressing, do so one on one with the President and do not embarrass anyone publicly.

All Units do their meetings differently. What works well in one Unit may not work in another, so be open to the different meeting styles within your District. Don’t be afraid to make suggestions but be sensitive to the Unit members’ feelings.

Give the Unit a brief overview of how the district is doing and where the Unit stands in membership and donations. Congratulate them on their accomplishments. Encourage

them to ask questions. Ask if there is anything you or the district staff can help them with.

Listen to their concerns and if you don't have an answer or a resolution to their problem, make sure you get the answer for them. Do not get involved with differences in personalities. Encourage everyone to respect each other's position on a subject and try to resolve things diplomatically. If the problems are serious, contact the Department President and ask for help. Provide as much detail as possible and a course of action will be recommended.

It is important to personally speak and shake hands with all members in attendance. Getting to the meeting a little early allows time for this. If you are not able to get there early, try to speak to each member before they leave.

If time permits, it would be nice to visit with the officers and Executive Committee. There are items you can discuss with this group that would be helpful, not only to the operation of the Unit, but to the operation of the district as well.

Avoid visiting any one Unit too often. Remember, your job is to keep All Units active and on track. If you have units doing an outstanding job it is not necessary to revisit them., however, it would be to your advantage to visit the Units lagging in membership to get them motivated. Newly chartered Units and Units that are internally reorganizing will need more attention. Plan on visiting them more often and be prepared to answer questions, provide brochures, and help with procedures.

Unit Visitation forms are included on the District President's flash drive and the Guidebook. They can also be found on the website under Forms and Resources titled District President Visit Form. You are required to use these forms at each Unit visit and mail the completed form to Headquarters.

It is your responsibility to verify that the Unit is in compliance with the State and Federal Laws. Ask politely to receive a copy the Units documents and you are to complete the Visitation Form and have the Unit President sign it and electronically mail or via USPS the following items to Department..

The following is a list of items to verify:

1. IRS 990
2. Annual incorporation
3. Current Constitution & Bylaws
4. Dept. of Agriculture Solicitation Permit
5. Sales Tax Exempt Certificate.

ORGANIZING A NEW UNIT

The basic organization of the American Legion Auxiliary is the local Unit. All Auxiliary members must hold membership in a Unit or the Department holding Unit. Local Units carry into action the Department and National programs, and through the local Unit the Auxiliary mobilizes its energy for service to the American Legion, their local communities, their State and the Nation.

The Unit is an Auxiliary to the American Legion Post, although the Unit may continue to exist after the Post to which it is attached has ceased to function.

The first step in the organization of a Unit is to arouse interest in the community residents who are eligible for membership and to secure authorization for the creation of the Unit from the Post. Once a Post has requested the Unit, contact Department Headquarters for membership supplies and cover letter to be sent to the Post.

A Unit can be started with one or two meetings. The first meeting is usually an informational meeting, where you and other leaders meet with those interested and explain what the Auxiliary is all about and what responsibilities exist as a result of starting a Unit.

The 2nd meeting is the organizational meeting, where Officers are elected, meeting date, time and place are decided, dues amount is set, and the charter application is signed by the Post Commander or Adjutant. These meetings can be combined; however, the organizational meeting requires that all applications be completed, and dues paid. All chartering fees are paid at this meeting.

Because of the importance of all paperwork being properly completed and submitted to Department, it is recommended that you contact the Department President and the Department Secretary before the final organizational meeting.

Charter Fees are as follows:

Charter Application Fee	\$10.00
Charter Roll	\$10.00
Additional Names of Roll	\$.50 each
Membership per capita per senior:	\$30.00
per junior:	\$ 4.25
Bonding Fee	\$ 6.00

These fees are due at the time the charter application is signed. More information on starting a Unit can be found in the Unit Guide.

UNIT DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION

The Department of Florida is here to assist all Units with development and revitalization. Under the direction of the President, mentors will assist units that are struggling and to mentor both new and existing Units.

These mentors work in conjunction with the Department Membership and Leadership Chairman, and District Presidents under the direction of the Department President.

If you have a Unit that needs help in organization, struggling to find Officers, hold meetings, etc. and you have exhausted all efforts helping them, contact the Department President or Secretary. They will set up a special meeting if needed, especially if you have a Unit at risk of losing their charter or one that has become inactive.

SURRENDERING A CHARTER

The loss of a charter is a serious matter. Any Unit with less than ten(10) paid senior members paid at Department "close of books" will automatically have their charter suspended at the Department Executive Committee Meeting at Convention. It will be determined at that meeting if the Department will recommend Revocation of the Charter to the national Organization, or if UD&R will be sent in to try to revitalize the Unit.

Units may contact you to say the Unit wants to surrender the charter due to poor participation. If you are contacted, notify the President or Secretary immediately. Before a Unit can surrender the charter, certain procedures must take place. Every member must be notified in writing of a special meeting called specifically to decide the future of the Unit. It requires a vote of the general membership to surrender a charter. It is not the decision of a few. Department representation will attend the special meeting to determine if other options are available. Surrendering a charter is a last resort. There are suggestions that can be made to solve the problems the unit is having. **The Department will make every effort to salvage the Unit.** If all else fails, as District President, you will recommend to the Executive Committee Meeting that we accept the charter.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

The Constitutional Conference is an important event in any district – it is the culmination of the year's work. It is important for everyone involved to prepare for it and to make it a success.

1. Contact the District Commander to “get together” for planning and setting up the conference. In accordance with Departments Standing Rule Article VII, Section 10, this conference is to be held not more than 60 days prior to Department Convention. This coincides with the dates of The American Legion, while you should try to have the conference at the same time and at the same place as The American Legion, it is not required. (You will probably have better attendance if it is together.)
2. Set the date. If it is not possible to have it coincide with The American Legion, then set your own place and date. Do it early, and let the date be known early.
3. Check the meeting hall to be sure the space is large enough to hold the conference. Find out about housing in the area for out-of-town guests.
4. Send your Conference information to Department HQ. as soon as possible using the form provided on your flash drive or on the website under Forms and Resources.
5. In the Call to Conference Notice to the Unit Presidents, Department officers and Department chairmen, give the meeting date, time and place, along with housing information. Also include directions to the hotel and meeting place for those who are not familiar with the area. If lunch is provided, state it along with the menu and cost. Remember, make it clear the cost is for lunch only. There is NO CHARGE OR FEE for the conference. The Units should be notified as early as possible of this conference.
6. Invite your guests, remember...
 - a. Date and Time
 - b. Place... Hotel and Meeting
 - c. Any additional activities planned
7. You also will receive invitations to other District Conferences, try to attend. Each District is unique and you can see how other District Conferences are run. This also lends your support to the other President.
8. Appoint and notify Conference Committees
 - a. Credentials (District Secretary may be responsible)
 - b. Rules (District Parliamentarian may be responsible)
 - c. Courtesy Resolutions (see sample in guidebook)
 - d. Notify speakers of any time limit. This includes District Chairmen who will be giving reports and all Unit Presidents in your District.
9. Caution those who are to give the Welcome and Response to keep it short and to the subject of welcoming and responding. It is suggested that the President of the Hostess Unit give the Welcome and the President of the first 100% unit give the Response.

10. Ask Department Officers and Chairmen in attendance if they prefer to speak early in the program. If the Department President will be attending for the entire Conference, they will speak last.
11. Openly give Thanks and praise for any and all jobs well done.
12. Write a Thank You note to the host Unit.
13. Other preparations needed: be sure to have ballots prepared for your elections
14. Are you having printed programs.
15. Door prizes
16. Something unique for your Conference Music? Decorations? Memorial Service?
17. Establish a committee and make sure they are there early to set up and break down the room. All of these things need to be planned well in advance. Have a great Conference!

BASIC SEATING

1. The presiding officer is always seated in the center.
2. The distinguished guest is always on the right of the presiding officer, regardless of who else is present.
3. The highest-ranking group of guests is usually seated to the right of the presiding officer, the lesser ranking group to the left.
4. At a business meeting, no matter who is thrown out of line, the Parliamentarian is always seated to the right of the President during the business part of the meeting.

INTRODUCTIONS OR PRESENTATIONS

1. INTRODUCE one not known to the group.
2. Present one already known to the group.
3. When one introduces or presents a guest of honor, who will "rise and bow" (not speak), you would introduce the highest-ranking guest first and go down the list. If guests are each to say a few words of greetings or congratulations, you would start with the lowest rank and go up the list; thus the last speaker would be the highest ranking officer or guest.
4. Introduction or presentation of honored guests should be gracious, but short.
5. The membership always rises in recognition of the Department or District President.
6. When there are distinguished guests present, Chairmen and Officers making reports address the chair only. "Madam or Mister President." The only exception given by Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised is that the speaker may address the chair, Madam or Mister President, Ladies and Gentlemen.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE

SUGGESTED AGENDA

1. Call to Order – rap gavel once for attention
2. “Sgt.-at-Arms, you will see that the doors are closed and allow no one to enter until the Opening Ceremonies have been completed.”
3. Rap gavel three times for members to stand.
4. Advance the Colors
5. Invocation (Prayer) – moment of Silence
6. POW/MIA
Resolution 288 calls for designating an POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a symbol of the thousands of Americans still unaccounted for from all wars and conflict involving the United States. In accordance with that, the American legion Auxiliary also recognizes and remembers our POW/MIA’s. Lest we never forget.
7. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
8. National Anthem
9. Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary.
10. Rap gavel once to seat members.
11. This _____ District Constitutional Conference is now convened.
‘Sgt.-at-Arms, you will see if there is anyone wishing to enter.’ If there is a printed program, state, “the Chair requests consent to deviate from the printed program.” (Response is “Consent”)
12. Welcome – President of the Host Unit
13. Response to the Welcome – Unit President with the highest percentage in membership or any special recognition.
14. Introduction of distinguished guests, District officers, and Chairmen.
15. Roll call of Units by District Secretary.
16. Announce appointment of courtesy Resolution Committee
17. Unit President’s reports.
18. District chairmen’s reports.
19. District Officers reports.
20. District President’s report, including financial report of District dues and expenses. (Ask the immediate Past President if in attendance, to assume the chair while you give your report.) **Note:** any remaining funds are to be turned over to the incoming District President
21. Election of District President
 - a. State that an endorsement has been received from Unit # _____ and the Chair recognizes _____ for the purpose of a nomination. (This is done for each endorsed candidate.) Ask if there are any nominations from the floor

If there is only one candidate for this office, you state: “There being only one _____ candidate for the office of District President, the Chair

declares _____ the newly elected District President.

- b. Ask the Sgt.-at-Arms to escort the President-elect to the podium for remarks.

22. In the event there are two or more candidates for the office of District President:

- a. The District Secretary will read the voting strength of the Units as per their Certification of Delegates presented to prior to the opening of the Conference. (this Certificate of Delegates should be compared with the delegate strength furnished by Department HQ which indicates the maximum number of delegates each Unit is allowed.) **Each Unit shall have as many votes as it is entitled to registered delegates. The vote of any delegate not present shall be cast by the majority of delegates present from that Unit. Note: It is not necessary for all registered delegates to be in attendance.** The delegates from the Unit may cast the ballots in accordance with the majority of their delegates decision.

- b. The Sgt.-at-Arms of Pages will then pass out the same number of ballots to the Chairman of each Unit delegation as called out by the District Secretary.

(Only the District President has their own vote at the Conference. Department Officers and Past Department Presidents do not have their own vote at a Constitutional Conference. They must be registered delegates of their own Unit to vote.)

- c. Each candidate selects a ballot observer to oversee the counting of the ballots.
- d. After the votes are cast, the Chairmen of the tellers collect all ballots and the committee (all appointed by you prior to the election) retire to count the ballots. When they return you ask for the report of the tellers committee. The Chairmen tells the President the vote count, President declares the election winner.
- e. Chairmen of Tellers can move that the ballots be destroyed. Motion needs to be seconded, ask for any discussion and then call for the vote. State the declaration of fact and announce the result of the vote. "The motion has passed or failed."

23. If there is no endorsed candidate for District President, state, "there being no endorsed candidate for the office of District President, nominations are now open for the office of district president. "

- a. If more than one candidate nominated from the floor, proceed with election by ballot as outlined above # 22.
- b. The district President-elect to submit a statement to Department HQ prior to Department Convention, indicating her willingness to serve as District President.

24. The District's delegate and alternate to National convention are elected at the constitutional Conference. However, before opening nominations state that anyone being nominated must be planning to attend National Convention. Chairman of Tellers handles ballots in the same manner as above.

If there is no alternate delegate willing to attend the national convention, do not put a member's name on the form.

25. You should state that nominations are now open for delegate and alternate to national Convention. **Regardless of how many names are place in nomination, the members will vote for one – the member with the highest number of votes is the delegate and the member with the nest highest number of votes is the alternate. It may be the custom in the District to send the outgoing President or incoming President, but they must be elected.**

26. Remarks by the distinguished guests. If the Department President is in attendance they are the last to speak.

27. Announcements

28. Report of Resolutions Committee

29. Thank Hostess Unit for all courtesies extended.

30. Closing prayer

31. Retirement of Colors and adjournment of meeting

32. Memorial Service – Time of service varies.

Note:

1. You must have 30% of the units from the district present at the Conference for it to be a legal meeting. If there is no quorum, reports can be given, however there can be no election for District President or Delegate to National Convention.
2. If you either do not have a quorum or simply fail to elect a President at the Conference, a District Caucus will be called by the Department President at Convention for the purpose of electing a President. Filling the vacancy of President is the only business that can be conducted at the caucus. The vacancy of delegate to National Convention will be filled by an alternate elected on the Convention floor.
3. You must complete the Quorum Report mailed to you with the Conference Material. A copy of one is included on the next page for your reference.

Other than the elections of District President, and Delegate and Alternate to National Convention. No other business shall be conducted at the District Constitutional Conference.

**CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE
QUORUM REPORT**

Each district must establish it had a quorum at its conference and report such to Department HQ immediately following the close of the conference using this form.

District # _____

Number of Units in the District _____

Number of Units Registered at the Conference _____

Attach the registration forms turned in during the registration period prior to the opening of the conference to this form and mail to Department HQ along with the results of the District President election

Signature of District President

Department Office Use Only		
Quorum was met	Yes	No
Election was Valid	Yes	No
Did District elect a President	Yes	No
Did District elect a Delegate	Yes	No
Does District Require a Caucus	Yes	No

DISTRICT CAUCUS OUTLINE

This caucus of the _____ District, Department of Florida will please come to order.

The Parliamentarian for the caucus _____ was appointed by the Department President. (Introduce the Parliamentarian.

May I have your consent to appoint _____ as Secretary and _____ as Chaplain? (Ask these people ahead of time so they can be prepared.)

The Chaplain will offer prayer.

The only purpose for this meeting is to elect a District President. There should be no other business.

“The Chair calls for nominations from the floor.”

Recognize the first person standing.

(They will nominate someone)

“Are there any other nominations?”

If there are more than one person standing you must recognize them.

If no one else stands... repeat “are there any other nominations?”

If no other nominations... state

“All in favor of electing _____ for the Office of District President please say aye, those opposed say nay.”

Will the newly elected President _____ come forward for remarks.

Close with prayer

This meeting is now adjourned, Thank You for your cooperation.

Complete the Caucus Form by both the District President and the newly elected District President and turn in immediately to the Department Secretary.

**DISTRICT CAUCUS FORM
2023-2024**

I _____ District President for District # _____ do hereby
validate that; _____ a member in good standing of
Unit # _____ was elected District President at the District Caucus held at the Annual
Department Convention.

Signature of District President

Having been elected District President for District # _____ at the District Caucus, I am
willing to serve and will do so to the best of my ability.

Signature of newly elected District President

Contact information for the Unit guide is as follows:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone

(home)

(cell)

Please circle home or cell indicating which # you wish to be in the Unit Guide.

Email Address _____

