

PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRENTS



SOCIAL WORKER MONTH: THANK YOUR VA WORKERS

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

Each year, the National Association of Social Workers recognizes March as Social Work Month, and few impact our American Legion Family community more than our local VA social workers. Driven by empathy, the social workers within our local Veterans Affairs offices use their expertise to impact local veterans in profound ways, often connecting them to key resources and providing them with needed benefits to improve their quality of life. Daily, these men and women are on the frontline for our soldiers.

This March, we encourage American Legion Auxiliary units to take a moment to thank your local V.A. office team for the work that they do! Arrive with donuts and coffee one morning. Send a thank you card signed by your members. Deliver a plant or flowerers. The gift will not only be unexpected, but it will be appreciated.

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YEAR END COMMITTEE REPORTS

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

As Unit Public Relations Chair, you can help your fellow Unit Committee Chairs with their end-of-year reports in a way that you may not realize.

By now, your leadership team is likely talking about unit reports. Each year (usually around the first of April), unit Committee Reports are due to their respective District Committee Chairs, who then use that information to submit a District Report to Department Committee Chairs. Department Committee Chairs use this information to determine awards, and in some cases, report to National.

Too often, we can get so busy “doing” that we forget to look back at the impactful work we did. But these end-of-year committee reports always give your units an opportunity to reflect!

As Unit PR Chairs, your report serves as a larger “look back” at all of your unit’s accomplishments - because you likely made posts on social media, captured photos and videos or shared news in media releases. While the cover sheet for your PR report collects a lot of numbers, the key is in writing the narrative! Take a moment to scroll through social media and describe all of the events and activities that you assisted with promoting. Include images in addition to text. Think of this as a way to look back and share out all of the positive work accomplished!

Once your report is completed, share with your unit leadership and other committee chairs. The information you collect may be very useful to them as they complete their reports! It also serves as a reminder of your unit’s successes.



RECRUITING OFFICERS & INTEREST IN BEING A COMMITTEE CHAIR

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC



Now is the ideal time to launch a Leadership Recruitment Campaign for your local American Legion Auxiliary unit, as nominations and voting will take place soon.

Typically, units begin taking nominations in April and May with a final vote required 30 days prior to the annual American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Florida Convention - which will take place on June 12-15, 2025 at the Hilton Orlando in Lake Buena Vista.

Here are some general tips on recruiting new officers and committee chairs:

- **Offer Information on Duties & Responsibilities.** Volunteers want to know what they will be doing. Make sure your members are aware of the duties and responsibilities of each leadership position, no matter if it is First Vice or Americanism Unit Chair. The duties and responsibilities are outlined in the [Unit Guide on the Department's website](#).
- **Be Honest About the Time Commitment.** No one wants to commit to a volunteer role without first understanding how much actual time is involved. To obtain this, ask members who once served in a position to estimate how much time each month was spent on their role. Sometimes, hearing that serving as the Unit Treasurer report takes a maximum of 10 hours a month is less intimidating than taking on the role of Unit Treasurer without that information.
- **Pair People's Interest with Roles.** If someone is a "people person" who loves to engage in conversation, they might make a better Membership Chair than someone more introverted. Try to recruit people based on their own interest - and support their interest. Give them the leeway to take the reins and run with it - even if it is a new idea that might not be the way it was always done. You will find people will be more engaged and enjoy volunteering more if they are doing something they are passionate about.
- **Plan for the Future.** Leadership succession should always be in the forefront of your mind as your unit recruits new volunteers into leadership positions. Have a plan for members to work their way up to one day being unit presidents. Perhaps there is a new, younger member who has an interest in serving for the first time. A committee chair might be a perfect gateway with intentions the following year to ask that member to become an officer. Everyone might have a different path based on their interest, but, overall, this will help your unit thrive long term



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Looking for strategies for your Leadership Recruitment Campaign? Here are some ideas:

- **Mention it at the meetings!** Be sure to pass around the Unit Guide while your unit President brings it up during both new business (first time it's mentioned) and old business (the following month).
- **Post reminders on social media!** Make posts about open leadership positions on social media to keep the topic "top of mind" in between meetings.
- **Personal "Asks" can go a long way!** If you see someone in your unit who you think would make a great officer or committee chair, bring it up in conversation with them and gauge their interest. They might be thinking about volunteering and just need a little encouragement or nudge.

We wish you the best of luck as your unit formulates its new team for next year!





STARTING A UNIT NEWSLETTER

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

Starting a newsletter for your Unit can be a great way to keep your members engaged and informed. Here are some quick tips to get started:

Choose a delivery method. Will you be emailing, mailing with stamps, posting on social media or posting on a website? You might even decide to just print and post on a bulletin board at your Post. Be sure to choose a delivery method that you know your audience will engage with (for instance, if your members are not all on Facebook but do check their emails, then emailing may be a better choice.)

Choose the right tool. For e-mailed newsletters, both [Mailchimp](#) and [Constant Contact](#) are two industry standard options that make creating a newsletter extremely easy. [Canva](#) and [Adobe Express](#) offer the option to design a newsletter that you can download as a PDF that you can print and mail, share on social media or post to a website.

Create engaging content. Mix it up with photos and articles. Highlight volunteer stories, upcoming events and recent accomplishments. Make it visually appealing and be sure to [brand the American Legion Auxiliary](#) properly.

Keep it consistent. Decide how often you want to send out your newsletter. Consistency helps build trust and anticipation among your readers. But don't overexert yourself. If you find yourself overwhelmed, consider distributing a newsletter every two months instead of every month.

Review and improve. Analyze the performance of each newsletter. Track readership rates and gain member feedback on ways to improve.

With these tips, you'll be well on your way to creating a successful newsletter for your Unit that keeps your members connected and informed.





PURPLE UP! DAY - MILITARY CHILD MONTH

By Erin Hoffer, APR, CPRC

Each April, American Legions across the country recognize the Month of the Military Child and wear purple on "Purple Up! Day," which will be April 23, 2025.

This is a good time for units to show support for military children, who have made the ultimate sacrifice as their parents serve or have been lost serving. Will your Unit host an event or activity?

Consider encouraging your Unit members and those in your Post Family to wear purple on April 23, 2025. Take a group photo for social media and join the national campaign to support our military children's strength and resilience.

Be sure to use the hashtags: #PurpleUp4MilitaryKids #PurpleUpDay2025

