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THE AMERICAN LEGION
Dispatch
January 2022 Veterans Strengthening America

MYLEGION.ORG

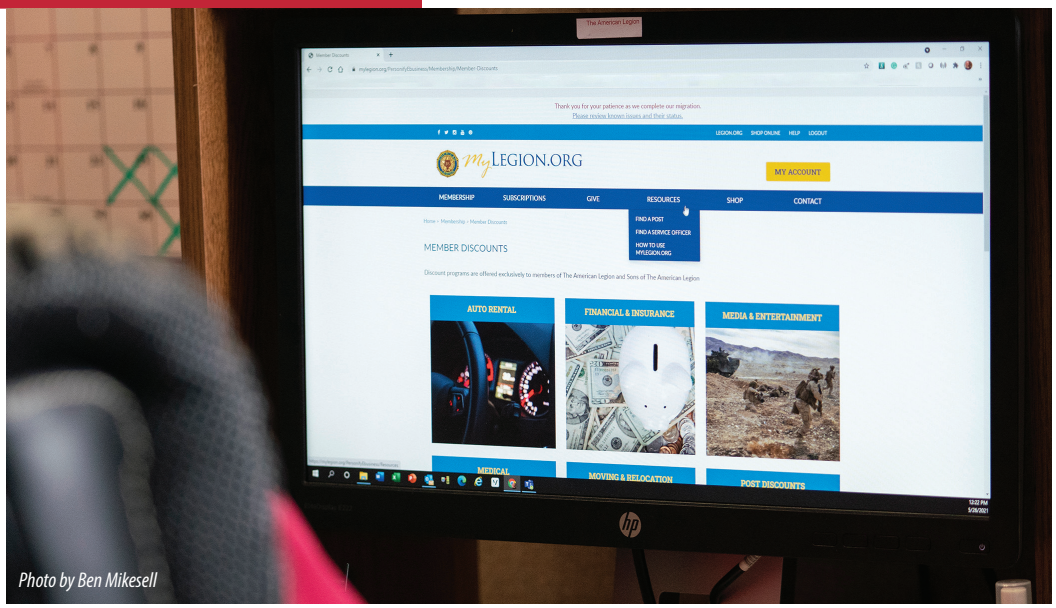


Photo by Ben Mikesell

MYLEGION.ORG REPORTS

Membership reports in MyLegion.org help with revitalization efforts, recruiting, transferring members and more. Access them now.

By The American Legion

Reports in MyLegion.org play a vital role with tracking membership. The Reports and Labels tab in the left-hand navigation menu is the primary location to create reports for membership rosters and revitalization efforts, as well as communication to post and squadron members. The reports are defined by officer position and permissions provided as a group administrator.

Return to the main group page any time by clicking Group Profile at the top of the screen.

ABOUT REPORTS

All reports include filtering options to modify reports based on last paid year, status, deliverable status and more. Steps to create a report are to 1) set filters; 2) view report; and 3) export to another application using the export icon.

In report view, a navigation menu allows you to go from page to page using the left and right arrow, or use the slide bar at the right.

The circle arrow icon refreshes your page, and the export icon is used to print and save reports. Reports are not saved within the report writer.

When viewing a report, you can search for a member to see if they are included. Enter a word or number and click Find.

MAILING LABELS

Mailing labels are only available for American Legion members. Labels for Sons of The American Legion members is in process.

American Legion 3x10 labels are created by selecting the group and last paid year, or multiple years. The last paid year of 2023

See MyLegion.org reports on Page 4

NEWS ALERT

Legion Baseball

Registration for the 2022 American Legion Baseball season is open. Register at *baseball.legion.org*.

Registration fees for senior teams are $50 for national registration and $35 for administrative fees. For junior teams, fees are $25 for national registration and $35 for administrative fees. Insurance premiums will be announced later.

Download the American Legion Baseball Risk Management Guidebook at *legion.org/publications*.

Legacy Scholarship

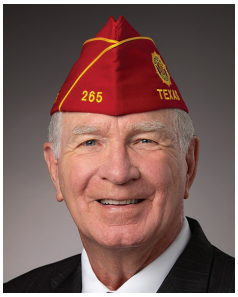
The American Legion Legacy Scholarship 2022 application is now online. The scholarship is available to children whose parents lost their lives while honorably serving on active military duty on or after 9/11, as well as children of post-9/11 veterans with a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or higher.

Eligible applicants can apply online at *legion.org/scholarships/legacy*. The application deadline is April 15.

The Legacy Scholarship provides financial aid for graduate or post-graduate tuition, books, room and board, meal plans and other supplies needed to achieve a higher education. It is a needs-based scholarship – the grant amount each scholarship recipient will receive will be based on his or her financial need after all federal and state aid is exhausted.

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Help right a wrong for WWII veterans



Paul E. Dillard
National Commander

More than 76 years have passed since World War II ended where more than 405,000 American military personnel did not survive, and the wounded accounted for more than 670,000 others.

Today, fewer than 250,000 veterans of the "greatest generation" remain among us. Of those still living, not all of them receive the VA health-care services they earned through their service.

A resolution passed at the 99th American Legion National Convention in Reno, Nev., in 2017 that calls for the unencumbered ability to use VA health-care facilities on the basis of honorable service alone in World War II. Veterans would be placed automatically into Category 5 among VA's priority groups and have access to hospital, clinical and long-term care, without means tests or other time-draining restrictions.

Rep. Josh Harder, D-Calif., introduced H.R. 5562, the WWII means test bill. The legislation would exempt World War II veterans from the means test needed to receive VA health-care services. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., has supported these efforts by introducing S.1040, the Senate companion to this bill.

However, as 2021 wound down, the bills had just over a dozen co-sponsors.

As a grateful nation, we must fulfill our promises to the greatest generation to ensure they receive all the benefits they deserve. Time is literally running out for these veterans. So I am calling upon the American Legion Family to reach out to your congressional delegations and ask them to co-sponsor the bills to do the same for our World War II veterans as the nation did for those who served in earlier war periods, before it is too late.

Contact your representative now. Go to ***votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Campaigns/87483/Respond***.

It is critically important that one of these bills is enacted into law as soon as possible.

MEMBERSHIP

100 percent American Legion Family ribbon

American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard will award his 100 percent American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by May 31, 2022. For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and any combination of an Auxiliary unit, Sons squadron or Legion Riders chapter. Each branch must achieve 100 percent membership to qualify for the award.

The department adjutant will transmit information as posts qualify to:

The American Legion
National Headquarters
Attn: Internal Affairs & Membership
P.O. Box 1055
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055

Download the 100 percent ribbon form: ***legion.org/commander/ribbon***

RECRUITING

"No Veteran Left Behind" pin awarded for recruiting

American Legion National Commander Paul E. Dillard will award his national commander "No Veteran Left Behind" membership excellence pin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2022 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2021 membership year. Transfers do not count as new members.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

Only one pin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.

Download the incentive pin form: ***legion.org/commander/pin***

NATIONAL ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

Legion's support for tornado victims 'really meaningful'

In the immediate aftermath of the tornadoes, storms that devastated communities last month in several states, the American Legion Family responded with relief efforts.

By Daniel S. Wheeler

The tornadoes and severe storms that moved across several central states in early December resulted in loss of life and devastating destruction in communities. A few of the states most impacted include Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.

American Legion Post 26 in Mayfield, Ky., stood in the direct path of the tornado. The downtown Mayfield building dates back to 1923, the same year Post 26 received its charter and moved in. Now the building is damaged, beyond repair.

"A building is a building," Post 26 Commander Wendell Gugu said. "The home is the family you have in it. The chairs, the tables, all that stuff can be replaced. But this kind of stuff (the original charter) can't be replaced."

In the immediate aftermath, American Legion posts across the country responded with aid that poured into Mayfield. "The support has been great," Gugu said.

A week after the disaster unfolded, relief showed up from American Legion Post 491 in McHenry County, Ill., 70 miles west of Chicago. American Legion Family members from Post 491 delivered two checks totaling $1,645, as well as $500 in individual gifts cards.

Geoff Lee, a post-9/11 Army veteran, drove an 18-foot trailer loaded with relief supplies 950 miles roundtrip from their post near the Illinois-Wisconsin border to Mayfield.

"We wanted to help brothers and sisters in need, and Americans in general," said Lee, who presented the checks and items. "If someone says they need help, we are ready to answer the call. That is what The American Legion is all about — veterans, families and communities."

The delivery included clothes, water, tools and 1,000 handmade fleece blankets. The Sons of The American Legion squadron sent along several boxes of American Legion shirts, socks and other clothes for Post 26 to distribute to those in need. "I've got Legion members who could use this right now. This is amazing," Gugu said. "It is really meaningful."

Donations from American Legion Family members continue to come in to support tornado victims. Legion Family members of Post 351 in Elberfeld, Ind., collected and transported food, clothes, clean-up gear and more to Kentucky to support tornado relief efforts; Post 82 in Campbellsville, Ky., donated $1,250 to the Department of Kentucky's relief fund aimed at helping those impacted by the tornado; and other relief donations came from Texas, Rhode Island and Alabama.

As a reminder, The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) is available to help American Legion members and posts, and Sons of The American Legion members, who have been impacted by natural disasters.

The NEF provides up to $3,000 for American Legion and Sons of The American Legion members with an active membership who have been displaced due to damages to their primary residence, and up to $10,000 for posts that have been damaged by a natural disaster and whose programs and activities within the community are impacted.

Apply for an NEF grant at ***legion.org/emergency***.

American Legion Post 26 Commander Wendell Gugu surveys the extensive damage to the movie theater located inside the post home in Mayfield, Ky. *Photo by Henry Howard*

Have a membership success story?

Share: ***legiontown.org***

Dispatch

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From MyLegion.org reports on Page 1

represents Paid Up for Life (PUFL) members who signed up and were already paid for 2022. The last paid year for PUFL members reflect the year posts are reimbursed for their PUFL allotment mailed annually. The last paid year filtering field for all reports will include 2023. To include all 2022 members, include 2023 to capture your PUFL members.

The third field sets the sort option. Designate if you want your labels sorted by last name or ZIP code. Then click View Report.

The label display is not in a 30-sheet format. Send the data to a PDF document by selecting the export icon. PDF is the only selection that applies for labels. Open the PDF. This open tab is generally located at the lower left of your window.

FIND MEMBERS IN MY AREA

To create a listing of headquarters post members, begin in Reports and Labels – Find Members in my Area.

This report is only available to post adjutants and commanders. Currently, access to this report is not included with group administrator's permissions.

Find Members in my Area provides contact information for members in your state headquarters post within a designated area defined by ZIP code. Click Find Members in my Area to set parameters and create a report.

For this report, the ZIP code must be entered first. Only ZIP codes within your group's state are included. This report is not to be used to locate members in other departments. You can select a few ZIP codes or all; it may take a few minutes to generate the ZIP code list. Then select last paid year and View Report.

The report generates and is sorted alphabetically. It includes contact information on file at National Headquarters. This listing can be exported to save or print using the export icon.

Contact these members and invite them to transfer into your post. An invitation letter to transfer is no longer available in reports, however, this is currently in review.

MEMBER ONLINE RENEWALS

Online American Legion renewals are identified through the Member Online Renewals Report. Currently, online renewal is available for American Legion membership only.

To begin, select your group and date range parameters. Using the small calendar icons, select the date range navigating from month to month using the left and right arrows. Click on the date in the calendar to set and View Report.

This report provides the total count with names, member ID, date and renewal year. The amount paid displays the total amount of dues collected by the member as reported on the annual post data report. If the post dues do not cover the minimum of national plus department, online renewal will not be available and will result in an error message if the member attempts online renewal.

POST/SQUADRON CURRENT ROSTER

Current rosters include current membership minus two years, and members who have paid to your post, even if they have transferred out. Select Post/Squadron Current Roster to begin.

When creating a roster, the membership included will be members of your group. District and county rosters will include members assigned to their area.

Filtering menus allow flexibility to the data included in the roster. The first field selected is Group. Using the pulldown menu, select the group and proceed to last paid year.

Notice that last paid year 2023 is available and identifies PUFL members who signed up in 2022 and were already paid. To create a roster for paid 2022, include 2023 to capture all PUFL members.

Status includes active and deceased. Deceased members will remain on the roster for three years based on last paid year. This allows you to include them in your current roster, if paid. Using filters, you can include or not deceased members in your report.

The next filter is mailing status. This status lets you know if the mailing address on file is good or flagged as undeliverable. Members with undeliverable status do not receive The American Legion Magazine, renewal notices, or any mailings from National Headquarters. Contact those members to collect a valid mailing address and update it. Updating an address marked as undeliverable will remove the flag. If a member states the address on file is good, contact Customer Service at National Headquarters to remove the flag.

After all data fields have been set, click View Report. The roster includes status, paid year, contact information, conflict, continuous years, branch of service and membership type. You can export to an Excel document.

ROSTER UPDATES

The most recent report is Roster Updates. This report helps identify members who have transferred in and out of your post or squadron, new members, and other updates on the member record. Start by selecting your group and date range. Then click on the calendar icons to set date parameters. Select View Report to generate and print, or save, using the export icon.

REPORTS

Squadron reports include Current Roster and Roster Update. Same as post reports, you can create listings based on data parameters.

The district report area also applies to county data. Only district and county administrators have access to this area to find headquarters members, create rosters, and view roster updates for all posts and squadrons in your area.

CONSOLIDATED REPORTS

Consolidated Post Reports and Consolidated Squadron Reports are restricted to adjutants only. Commanders and assigned administrators do not have access to consolidated reports. Phase 2 of MyLegion.org will extend access for reporting to all group administrators. If you are a commander or group administrator, your My Groups dashboard will not include the Consolidated Reports section.

There is only one open report for the reporting year. When available, you can edit an open report until finalized. Once it is finalized you can no longer edit the report and it is moved to closed. When the 2021-22 reporting is available, it will be located in Open. Completed reports will remain in closed status for reference to view, save or print.

ADVERTORIAL

Veterans Get Moving With Walkasins®

Introducing Walkasins®

With the introduction of Walkasins Lower Limb Sensory Prosthesis, persons struggling with peripheral neuropathy (PN) can resume activities they have avoided due to PN-related balance challenges. Walkasins is a wearable device that can help improve balance, reducing fall risk in patients who struggle with walking and standing due to PN. This device replaces damaged nerve function, restoring important sensory information to the nervous system, so patients can walk and stand with confidence.

Walkasins has been scientifically proven to improve walking balance and speed, while also decreasing the risk of falls. With improved balance, Walkasins wearers can return to the activities they stopped because of PN balance challenges, increasing their social engagements and improving their quality of life.

Peripheral Neuropathy – a threat to older populations, diabetics, Veterans

An estimated 20 million Americans suffer from PN - including hundreds of thousands of Veterans. By damaging nerves in the feet and hands, PN causes permanent numbness, weakness, and pain. Persons with PN often lose their sense of balance, which makes walking - or even standing – enormously challenging.

PN especially impacts older populations, affecting roughly a quarter of Americans aged 65-74 and half of those 85 and older. Roughly half of all diabetics develop PN. And people with a history of military service are at heightened risk due to traumatic injury and exposure to toxins, such as Agent Orange.

Impact of Peripheral Neuropathy

PN progressively damages nerves - beginning in the toes, moving through the feet, around the ankles, and up the lower legs. Persons with PN may experience numbness coupled with pin-like tingling, shooting pain, cramping, and muscle weakness. Many report being unable to sense where their feet are. These individuals face a far higher risk of falling due to their lost ability to maintain their balance while walking, turning, or even standing. Fall-related injuries, such as hip fracture, are 15 times more likely in patients with PN as compared to healthy individuals. Unfortunately, this results in persons with PN living each day in fear of falling.

Without the ability to move confidently, many persons with PN retreat from the activities they had most valued, such as golfing, dancing, or playing with grandchildren. Many with PN become less active, withdraw socially, and isolate within their homes. As balance challenges progress, persons with PN often struggle to perform daily activities, such as cooking, washing dishes, or even making the bed, making independent living no longer an option.

Few options for persons with Peripheral Neuropathy

Persons with PN have historically had few options to address their balance

challenges. Walking assistive devices – such as canes and walkers – are often prescribed to help mobility, but they cannot restore the lost feeling in the feet.

Walkasins now available for Veterans suffering from Peripheral Neuropathy

For Veterans diagnosed with lower limb sensory PN and who suffer with gait and balance impairments, Walkasins is now available for purchase at Veterans Administration Medical Centers. It is up to the Veteran and his/her healthcare provider to decide if Walkasins is the right decision.

Share this information about Walkasins with your post members. Veterans can learn more by calling 888-382-3518 or visiting walkasins.com.

Caution: Individual results and activity levels while using Walkasins may vary depending on many factors. There are risks associated with the use of this product and there are certain individuals who should not use the product. Only a qualified clinician can tell you if this product is appropriate for you and your individual circumstances. Please consult with your healthcare team for complete information regarding benefits, risks and possible outcomes.

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MEMBERSHIP

The value of the DMS program

Photo by Denise Henhoeffer

The COVID-19 pandemic has created membership recruiting challenges for many American Legion posts.

Faced with this challenge, the Eugene C. Yount Post 145 in Peoria, Ariz., utilized a membership tool that put them in direct contact with potential post members – the Direct Membership Solicitation (DMS) program. As a result, Post 145 grew membership from 127 to 400 members.

With The American Legion's DMS program – a national recruiting program that has brought in four million members since 1982 – Post 145 took a different approach than just calling DMS members and asking them to transfer.

"We used the DMS program as a Buddy Check," said Roberta Kimelton, Arizona District 11 commander and a chartering member of Post 145 who attended the 2021 National Legion College in Indianapolis last month. "We said, 'We understand you're a veteran in the area, is there anything that we can do for you? We're American Legion Post 145 and we're just calling to check in and see how you're doing.'"

About 15 members of Post 145 make monthly Buddy Check calls on members and veterans in the community. One Buddy Check resulted in a Post 145 member calling an ambulance to check on a veteran who was having a medical issue; other conversations have involved transportation, health care and food needs, as well as needed assistance from a veteran service officer.

"We've really worked to encourage people to focus not on give me your dues and get a member, but here is what we can do for you. And it's worked," Kimelton said.

Through DMS, American Legion posts are encouraged to reach out and transfer members into the local post.

"You have members waiting to be engaged. Contact them, engage them, bring them in to your post," said Matt Herndon, director of The American Legion Membership and Internal Affairs Division. "Show them the value (of transferring to a local post). What is the big selling point? Your dues stay local to support programs within the post and community."

American Legion post adjutants and commanders have access to DMS members in *mylegion.org/publications*. DMS members are in the "Find Members in my Area" report located in Reports/Labels on the left-hand navigation menu.

Create the report by entering a ZIP code (or multiple ZIP codes) and last paid year. Then select View Report. The report provides contact information, including member ID, name, address, phone number, email, war era and more.

Jeffrey Jewell of Vacaville, Calif., who also attended Legion College, shared that his Rago-Christopher Post 165 mails letters to DMS members that share what the post is doing for veterans, their families and the community. The letter allows the DMS member to transfer into Post 165 by signature.

Matt Jabaut, a 2021 Legion College facilitator and the alternate National Executive Committeeman for the Department of Maine, said that the department uses DMS as a way to leverage what they can't control – Legionnaires passing on to Post Everlasting. "We can't control how long people live, but we can control how much we go out and engage," Jabaut said. "If you lost five post members last year, go into your DMS and rebuild. It's not cold calling. They are looking for you to call them and engage. Don't hesitate to call and really use the DMS to help provide that gap."

Reminder

With National Commander Paul E. Dillard's focus on renewals, post leadership is encouraged to reach out to 2020 last paid members and offer them the ability to continue their continuous years of membership – despite not renewing in 2021 – if they renew for the 2022 membership year. For example, if an expired 2020 member had five continuous years prior to letting their membership lapse, and they were to pay for the 2022 membership year, their continuous years would be six years.

If the veteran would like to pay for 2021 as well so it's on their membership record, they can. If they only want to pay for 2022, then the adjustment on the continuous years must be made at the post by filling out a Member Data Form (MDF) to correct the years and processed at National Headquarters. Or the department can correct it within the member's record in Personify.

When transmitting dues, if the veteran is only paying for the 2022 membership year then select 2022 – do not select 2021 or payment will come out for that portion of the per capita and it will be deducted as part of the eCheck payment processing.

If the member wants both 2021 and 2022 membership years to be added to their continuous years, accept payment for 2021 and 2022 and the department will process through Personify.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership engagement, recruiting ideas

A part of membership engagement is showing members and potential members the value of membership, and where their dues are going. One way to do this is through the National American Legion's monthly Membership Impact Report. The report highlights the many ways The American Legion is making a difference in the lives of veterans, children and youth, and communities nationwide through legislation, scholarships, grants, programs and more.

See and download the impact reports at **legion.org/membership/impact**.

When a new member joins American Legion Post 145 in Peoria, Ariz., or is transferred in through the DMS program, post member and Arizona District 11 Commander Roberta Kimelton said they receive a personal phone call from the commander welcoming them to the post, as well as a survey asking what areas of interests they have. For example, if the member is interested in women veteran issues, the chairman of Post 145's women veterans committee then contacts the member about joining the committee and getting involved, to whatever extent they want. A mentor is then assigned to the new committee member "to walk with them, engage with them with what's going on at the post," Kimelton said. "Our new members are engaged immediately."

For four consecutive years, American Legion Post 371 in Valparaiso, Neb., has had an all-time membership high. The post currently has 221 members and has already met 85% of its membership goal for the year and is on track to break it, said Post 371 member Daniel Benes.

"The veterans are out there," Benes said. "Remember there are no boundaries for membership. It's all about telling the good things that we do in our post."

Photo by Josh Marshall

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Over $613,600 aids posts affected by COVID

In 2021, The American Legion Mission Blue Post Assistance program disbursed over $613,600 in grants to assist 423 local posts whose operations were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mission Blue program went into effect following the adoption of Resolution No. 36 by the National Executive Committee during the 2020 Fall Meetings. Since its adoption, more than $859,600 has been disbursed to 610 posts. The Mission Blue grants help pay current or past due rent, mortgage, utilities and insurance premiums.

American Legion posts that meet the following criteria for the Mission Blue Post Assistance grant are eligible to receive up to $2,000. Department commanders/adjutants must certify the post meets the criteria.

Qualifying criteria

Eligible American Legion posts must have:

- A Consolidated Post Report on file at National Headquarters.
- Filed an IRS 990 within the prescribed due date.
- Filed all other required forms and reports as prescribed by the department and National Headquarters.
- Actively participated in one or more American Legion programs within the last 18 months.
- A financial need.
- A certificate of insurance for all liability coverage naming The American Legion doing business as (dba) The American Legion National Headquarters and the post's department as an additional insured. (Submit declaration page showing coverage.)
- Documentation indicating that the post is properly incorporated.

Photo by Kathleen Flynn

Apply for a Mission Blue Post Assistance grant at **legion.org** under Programs at top of the page. Posts have until July 1 to apply.

American Legion posts that do not have a CPR and/or a current certificate of insurance listing The American Legion National Headquarters as an additional insured may still qualify for receiving up to $1,000 in grant funds.

Dispatch
January 2022 Veterans Strengthening America

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AWARD SUBMISSIONS

Law enforcement and firefighter of the year

On Feb. 1, American Legion department submissions are due for the National Law Enforcement Officer and National Firefighter of the Year awards. Submissions can be made online at *legion.org/security/officeraward* and *legion.org/security/firefighter*.

MEDIA

PR toolkit excerpt: Campaigns

While events are usually single occurrences, a campaign is a series of operations with a goal in mind. Public awareness and fundraising can be goals of both a campaign and an event.

Like an event, campaigns require planning.

The first task undertaken by the campaign committee should be the crafting of a mission statement. It needs to answer two questions: 1) What is the purpose of this campaign? 2). What do we want to accomplish?

When planning a campaign, remember to "start SMART." A SMART campaign objective is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

An example would be, Support veterans and their families by increasing District 4 donations to the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation by 20% over this calendar year.

The **specific** change in behavior that this objective addresses is an increase in District 4 donations to the Veterans and Children Foundation by 20% this year. It includes the 5 Ws: who, what, when, where and why.

The **measurable** aspect is the 20% objective. The final district fundraising results should be compared with the previous year to see if the objective was met.

Achievable objectives are important. Goals should be ambitious but realistic. It is unlikely that any district could raise $1 billion, but a 20% donation increase over the previous year is certainly achievable through awareness, hard work and the generosity of the community.

Increasing donations to the Veterans and Children Foundation is also **relevant**, because it supports veterans and their families – a founding pillar of The American Legion.

Finally, the campaign is **time-bound**, with a start point and end point – this calendar year.

Download The American Legion's Public Relations Toolkit at *legion.org/publications* under the Media & Communications tab for examples of news releases, media advisories and public service announcements, and information on networking, social media, podcasts, internal/external media, interviews and more.