

The American Legion Department of Texas



2008 – 2012
Membership Plan

YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESS & REWARDS



Revised May 2009

Every Post/Department has a “Membership Plan”

There are two Types of Plans.

PASSIVE PLAN – Relying on the direct renewals to get our members and hoping new members find us.

ACTIVE PLAN – A Plan that calls for “Membership Teams” to make personal contact with our members to renew and reaches out to eligible veterans in our community. A plan that calls for **“Action”** and gets results!!

We, as Legionnaires, must take a look at what type of plan we have for MEMBERSHIP in the past. Keep the things that have worked and try things to build for the future! The Department Membership Awards Program can provide the rewards for the Posts and Legionnaires that make an **“Action”** plan and work that plan.

Membership Teams are a key part of any successful “Action” plan!

Membership Teams are needed at every level!!

A group of Legionnaires that will:

RECRUIT: We must make every effort to reach all veterans that qualify for this great organization. Recruiting drives and simply asking our friends, our family and all veterans to join us, as members of The American Legion.

RETAIN: Veterans join The American Legion with the intention of remaining a member, because they believe in what the organization stands for. **Personal contact is the key** to renewing all your Post members, **just ask** them to renew.

RE-SIGN: We must keep our new members interested in what we do and who we are. Give them some responsibility to help out in their Post. How many members would re-sign if we **“just asked”** them? They joined because they believed in our mission. So why haven't they re-signed? Care enough to ask them and help them work through whatever that problem may be. There is **STRENGTH IN NUMBERS** --- and we need them.

MEMBERSHIP PLAN 2008 – 2012

The Department Membership Awards program can provide the rewards for the Posts, Districts and Divisions that make those personal contacts and give that extra effort to keep our organization strong.

The Department can assist you at all levels in forming your membership plan and can provide training for your membership teams. Now is the time to take that first step!

OVERVIEW:

Increasing membership is the goal of any organization, to accomplish this; the Department of Texas will begin a 5-year plan consisting of four main elements:

- 1) Education of the general Legion membership and the community at large of The American Legion's purpose and programs.
- 2) Increase use of public relations/exposure in the media and to government at all levels.
- 3) Target training of selected Legion leadership in membership training, public relations, sales techniques and Legion administrative requirements, then utilizing these Legionnaires as trainers from the Department through Post level.
- 4) Creation and publication of job descriptions, training aids, media guides and award categories for distribution to membership.

FIRST YEAR:

Appoint a membership team, create job descriptions, develop training aids and guides and begin training of team. Provide continual analyzes and update plan as needed.

Membership Team Job Descriptions

The "Department Membership Team" will consist of the Department Commander, Dept Vice Commander (Dept Membership Chairman), Department Adjutant, Director of Internal Affairs, Dept M&O Chairman, Dept M&O Commission members, Division Commanders, District Commanders, District Vice Commanders, a Training Chairman, a "New Post Chairman, a Post Revitalization Chairman, a DMS Chairman, and the Division and District Membership Chairman from each Division and District will serve on the "Department Membership Team."

The Department Commander will be responsible for appointing The Membership and Organization Commission Chairman, 1 Member to the Commission (each year), the sub-committee Chairman, Training Chairman, the DMS Chairman, the New Post Chairman and the Post Revitalization Chairman; overseeing of the membership training program and the membership program.

The Awards Committee will be responsible for setting the membership goals for the Divisions, Districts and all Posts; creation/revising of an awards/incentives program each year.

The Department Adjutant will be responsible for processing and reporting of Post transmittals, providing weekly membership reports (National and Department) to the Department Membership Team members, assisting with creating/revising of an awards/incentives program, ordering of the awards/incentives, and distribution of information from National and Department, and any other duties as warranted by the Department Commander. Make serve as the Dept DMS Chairman.

The M&O Commission and Membership Chairman (reporting to the Department Commander) will be responsible for: Development and delivery of the membership training program assist with the creating/revising of an awards/incentives program, distribution of information from National and Department, and any other duties as warranted by the Department Commander.

The Training Chairman will be responsible for: development of a training program covering all programs of The American Legion; distribution to team members any new program information received from National or Department. Individual must be knowledgeable in all The American Legion Programs.

The Dept Vice Commander and Division Commanders will be responsible for: setting up of training, sending out information and follow-ups for their Districts. The Dept Vice Commander and Division Commanders will assist the Districts with membership drives and perform performance analysis of each District and assist any District that needs help.

The District Commanders, District Vice Commander & District Membership Chairman will be responsible for: delivery of training, information and follow-ups for Posts in their District. The District Membership Chairmen will assist Posts with membership, coordinate membership drives, perform performance analysis of Post, and assist any Post that needs help.

The New Post Chairman and Post Revitalization Chairman will be responsible for identifying potential areas for new posts, revitalization projects in each district and to follow-up with newly created posts identifying any needs/training the new Post requires.

Each Post will appoint a Post Coordinator (Post Commander, 1st Vice Commander, and Membership Chairman) who will be responsible for: training, information, membership drives, performs Post analysis and follow-up for their Post.

Training Aids

The Training Chairman will develop training aids - utilizing available information from the National and Department organization, other veteran/non veteran organizations, government and private sector agencies. These aids will be available to the Department Membership Team for training and distribution to each level.

Team Training

Team training will begin with a 1 -2 hour training session to be held at the Department Mid-Winter, or Department Convention or other prescribed time frame, followed up with more training sessions for the Membership Team members. A "Membership Training Manual" will be completed and distributed to all members of the Membership Team and Post Coordinators with more training on membership fundamentals.

The current year membership theme will be discussed and possible team uniform or pin and theme for that year selected.

Follow-up at each level will be on a regular basis and each District Commander is expected to conduct a membership workshop in their area and each Post is encouraged to conduct a workshop within their Post.

The Department Vice Commander and Division Commanders will check with each District Commander a minimum of once a month to get status of programs, offer encouragement and assistance, review plan for need changes, assess if any additional training is needed. In turn each District Commander shall check with the Post Coordinator in their District each month.

Each member of the membership team will keep a log and develop a package to assist whoever replaces the team member the following year. The each member of the Membership Team is urged to mentor a Legionnaire to replace them.

Analyzes

In addition to the monthly contacts, each member of the Membership Team will evaluate the entire membership program and assemble a report for the M&O Commission Chairman before the Department Convention. The M&O Chairman will assemble these reports and review with appropriate Department Officers and will report the outcome to the DEC or Convention Body. The M&O Chairman will also work with National Membership Team to develop new programs and publications.

SECOND YEAR:

Appoint membership team, adjusts job descriptions as needed, evaluate training aids and guides and train new membership team members at or before convention meeting (convention meeting being open to all members) to evaluate year's performance and to suggest needed changes to the Membership Chairman. Returning team members to mentor new members, Post Coordinators to mentor newly elected/appointed Post Coordinators. All findings and program changes (including yearly membership theme, uniform and pins) will be announced, first to Department Officers and then (pending Commander's approval) to the membership at the convention membership workshop. All other first year instructions and timelines are to be followed.

THIRD & FOURTH YEAR

Continuation of years one, two or three with a full Department audit by the Membership Team and Department Officers.

LEADERSHIP FOR MEMBERSHIP TEAMS

POST:

At the Post level, the Commander and Membership Chairman should establish a Membership Team whose responsibility is the Post Membership Program. The team should divide the Post's membership into equal parts making each member of the team responsible for contacting and renewing their Post Membership.

The more team members working in a Post, the smaller the member's share. If an individual team member has too many members to contact, the job won't get done! The team members should contact each member on their list during the membership campaign. (Even though a member has already paid their dues, contact from the Post members, merely making follow-up calls to the members will have a long-range impact on that individual member's retention).

The Post Commander and Membership Chairman should receive a status report from each member of their Membership Team indicating how many members were contacted and which ones have renewed. The Post Commander will share this information with the District Commander on a monthly basis.

DISTRICT COMMANDERS:

District Commanders are encouraged to contact each of the Post Commanders in their District each month. The District Commanders should look at any weak spots in their District and report this to the District Membership Chairman by the end of each month.

Personal contact on a monthly basis with the Post Commander or Post Membership Chairman will make this team strong and keep information flowing throughout the Department.

The District Commander should communicate the progress in the membership program from each of their Posts to their Division Commander and Dept Vice Commander (Membership Chairman) on a monthly basis.

DIVISIONS & DEPARTMENT:

Weak spots should be immediately identified and assistance rendered by the Department Membership Team early on to keep Posts from getting behind. The Department Vice Commander (Membership Chairman) should make contact with the Department Commander, Adjutant, Division Commanders and M&O Chairman on a regular basis.

The Department Commander should make contact with the Department Membership Chairman and have strategy sessions with the Department Membership Team to resolve problems and work toward meeting the Department & National Membership Goals.

DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP

COMMITMENT – The Division and District membership goals were researched, evaluated and determined to best comply with the requirements of the National Organization and the required growth of our Department.

The 2010 Department Goal – set by the National Organization will be based on the 2009 Delegate Strength Target Date membership number, plus the DMS members acquired this year and one new member per Post.

The 2010 Post Membership Goal – The 2010 Membership Goals for each Post will be set by the number of Regular and PUFL cards issued to the Post on the 2010 Membership Roster (found on the last page of the green bar printout that is issued with the membership cards.

National Target Dates

<u>Target Date</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Dept</u>	<u>National</u>
	45%	July 31, 2009	
EARLY BIRD CONTEST	50%	Aug 8, 2009	Sept 9, 2009
FALL MEETINGS	55%	Sept 25, 2009	Oct 14, 2009
VETERANS DAY	65%	Oct 20, 2009	Nov 17, 2009
PEARL HARBOR DAY	75%	Nov 27, 2009	Dec 9, 2009
MID-WINTER	80%	Dec 31, 2009	Jan 13, 2010
PRESIDENT'S DAY	85%	Jan 29, 2010	Feb 10, 2010
LEGION BIRTHDAY	90%	Feb 26, 2010	Mar 10, 2010
CHILDREN & YOUTH	95%	Mar 26, 2010	Apr 14, 2010
ARMED FORCES DAY	100%	Apr 30, 2010	May 12, 2010
DELEGATE STRENGTH (Dept Level Only)			30 days prior to beginning of National Convention

National Target Dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of the week. In those situations the target date will be moved to Thursday. The November target date falls on the third Wednesday of the month.

The Direct renewal notices schedule is listed below for the 2010 Membership Year; National will begin mailing in July 2009.

Direct Renewal Dates

<u>Renewal Notice</u>	<u>Cutoff Date</u>	<u>Mailing Date</u>
First	5/1/09	7/1/09
Second	9/9/09	10/1/09
Third	12/9/09	1/4/10
Fourth	2/10/10	3/1/10
Fifth	4/4/10	5/3/10

HOWEVER, ALL POSTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO SEND OUT THEIR OWN RENEWAL NOTICES AND/OR PERSONALLY CONTACT THEIR MEMBERS!

There are five important avenues that must be covered for a successful membership year in each Post.

- 1) **Attitude** – The most important aspect of any program! Find members within your Post with a **POSITIVE ATTITUDE**, get them on your team, train them, have fun and you will be successful in any endeavor that you undertake.
- 2) **Retention/Renewal** – The Post Membership Team should commit to obtaining a 100% retention/renewal rate.
- 3) **New Member Enrollment** – The Post Team should obtain a commitment from every member to enroll all eligible veterans into this great organization.
- 4) **Transfer of Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) Members and Post 345 Members** – The Post should institute a plan with a coordinated team effort in transferring these members into local Posts. (Let's commit to a 100% effort on this.)
- 5) **Expired Legion Members:** Previous Legion Members, who have not renewed their dues for 2008, or prior to that, are considered “expired” members. Renewing these members should be done by phoning or visiting each expired member at home. Posts can acquire an expired list upon request to the Department Adjutant.

MEMBERSHIP NEVER TAKES A BREAK!!

MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

The 2010 membership drive for Department Awards will run until 30 days before Department Convention (unless otherwise noted). It is imperative that we promote membership throughout the Department as often as possible. Posts should be encouraged to have a major membership turn-in at the Department Target Dates. Department will give special recognition to those Post who meet or exceed the target date percentage.

Monthly recognition should be given to Post Commanders, Post Adjutants and Membership Chairman as well as the Post Membership Team Members upon meeting or exceeding membership target.

To keep the Department membership teams heading in the right direction, each Post should encourage its Membership Team and measure its progress with some sort of competition.

Individual Post membership recruiters should be recognized often. Pictures in the Post Newsletter or other special recognition should be awarded monthly. The membership drive should be fun and exciting.

Membership should be encouraged and talked about at **every** meeting.

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Every member of the Post should be encouraged to participate in the awards program. It is the responsibility of the Post Adjutant to verify their Post Members awards and submit the request to the Department Adjutant by the proper deadline date for all awards earned.

Consult the Department Administrative Manual for this year's awards and for the certification forms.