AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

South Dakota District 3

November 2026

New eligibility resolution expands ALA membership

At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates adopted new membership eligibility language for the American Legion Auxiliary — expanding eligibility and allowing more family members to join the ALA. The Legion has authority over the ALA's membership eligibility; this gender-neutral language change allows more people into our organization — strengthening our ability to better serve our veterans, military, and their families. The eligibility changes are effective immediately. Check out the ALA blog to learn more.



Patrice Sorensen, Piedmont Unit# 311
2026-2027 South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary President.

Theme: FOCUS (Family, Organization for, Community, Unity and, Service)
Flowers: Blue Hydrangeas and Red Poppy
Colors: Blue & Green
Spoken Word: Ragged Old Flag by Johnny Cash
Songs: Black Sheep by Ben Fuller
Amazing Grace by Ani Defranco

The American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters is excited to announce a new partnership with SmileAssociate, a simple way for members and supporters to give back while shopping on Amazon. Through the ALA's dedicated SmileAssociate page, every eligible purchase generates a 1.5% donation to the Auxiliary, three times the rate of the former AmazonSmile program. There's no alternate login, no additional cost, and no extra steps. Shoppers simply click through the ALA's link, shop as usual on Amazon, and donations are automatically generated.

All proceeds from this partnership will benefit the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund, supporting deserving young leaders across the nation. Start making an impact with your everyday purchases. Visit the ALA SmileAssociate page today: https://www.smileassociate.com/alahq.

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REMINDERS:

DISTRICT DUES: Remain the same –$20 per unit. Due to the district having no banking account – you need to make out your checks directly to: Mary Jo Stier, PO Box 224, Onida, SD 57564. Please make sure to write in the memo line that the check is for your unit dues. Please remember that this dues money is spent toward poem / essay prizes, reimbursing for District 23 expenses; such as gifts,. rent (if needed) for meeting places, etc.

MEMBERSHIP: It is that time of year again to start your unit's membership drive. The October Progress Report is attached. Please look this over and if your unit has accumulated a membership credit with the department it will be on the report. Please use this credit amount toward new or renewing memberships in your unit.

UNIT OFFICERS and CHAIRMAN FORMS: (2026-2027) - please remember to submit your unit officers and chairmen form to me and to department headquarters if you have already done so.

Give 20 to Education

Every ALA member can get involved

LEARN MORE

The ALA's Give 20 to Education program collects needed items in multiples of 20 — 20 notebooks, 20 rulers, 20 glue sticks - or anything a school may need.



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Americanism Essay Contest

The American Legion Auxiliary's Americanism Essay Contest is for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs, divided into six classes. One award in each class will be presented in each division. Winners will receive a $50 check, and a $50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund.

Essay Title: "How can you be a beacon of light for our veterans?"

You can find the rules and cover sheet on the Americanism page of the National website: www.alaforveterans.org/americanism or on the department's Americanism page at

https://sdlegionaux.org/americanism

Think outside of the box for how you can form a good relationship with your local schools, home schools, onlineschools, churches, Boy Scout/Girl scouts, parents and grandparents. And let's not forget our Juniors.

DEADLINES:
March 1: To the Unit Chairman or local Auxiliary from school/student
March 15: To District President from Auxiliary Unit
April 1: To Department Americanism Chairman from District President
April 15: Department Chairs must submit entries to their Division Chairs

Americanism Poem Contest 2026-2027
THEME IS: "How can you be a beacan of light for our veterans?"

DEADLINES:
March 1: To the Unit Chairman or local Auxiliary from school/student
March 15: To District President from Auxiliary Unit
April 1: To Department Americanism Chairman from District President



From our National Security Chairman Rose - We would like to have at least one nomination per unit. This is any fireman, police, 911 operator, EMT and/or representatives from your local hospitals (details below). Thank you for all you do. Rose

Service Before Self: Heroes Among Us - Every uniform has a story. Every act of service has an impact. Help us recognize the heroes among us. Help us Spotlight those who serve in your hometown. The American Legion Auxiliary National Security Program wants to recognize the extraordinary people who serve our nation and our communities. We invite you to nominate a service member, military spouse, or first responder whose service, sacrifice, leadership, or commitment deserves to be celebrated. These include law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, and other public-safety
professionals.

Our Hero Spotlight will share these stories through American Legion Auxiliary social media, helping our members and followers see the people behind the service and recognize the many ways. Individuals make a difference every day.

Please share only information and photographs that you have permission to provide. Do not include classified, sensitive, operational, or personally identifying information that should not be made public.

To submit your hero go to: https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/hero_spotlight

Every community has a person they could nominate. Let SouthDakota flood Formstack with our Hometown Heroes. This nomination would fall under National Security for reporting purposes.

Membership Eligibility Change Verbiage:
At the 2026 American Legion National Convention, delegates adopted new membership eligibility language for the American Legion Auxiliary — expanding eligibility and allowing more family members to join the ALA.

The Legion has authority over the ALA's membership eligibility; the language change allows more people into our organization — strengthening our ability to better serve our veterans, military, and their families. At the 2026 American Legion National Convention in Louisville, Ky., Resolution 19 was approved by more than a two-thirds majority. The resolution expanded the ALA's eligibility criteria. For example, it changed "grandmother" and "mother" to "grandparents" and "parents," "sisters" to "siblings," "daughters" to "children," and "granddaughters" to "grandchildren." The change also allows persons such as Gold Star Families who did not directly serve in the armed forces an avenue to join the American Legion Auxiliary and honor their relatives within the original two degrees of consanguinity, as the IRS references under 501(c)(19) tax-exempt status for auxiliaries.

Here is the OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:
Section 2. Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to: (1)grandparents,parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of members of The American Legion; and

(2) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941, who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

(3) grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses, and direct or adopted descendants within two degrees of consanguinity of all servicemembers who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917, to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941, who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility period and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and

(4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion. The revisions to the ALA's eligibility mentioned above allow individuals the potential to be members of both the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary. The Legion's national judge advocate has confirmed that this dual membership does not constitute a conflict of interest with The American Legion.
Some Frequently addressed concerns from National :

Does this mean men can join the American Legion Auxiliary now?

The ALA ceased being an all-female patriotic service organization in 2019 when The American Legion voted at its 2019 National Convention to change “wife” to “spouse,” opening the doors for male spouses to join the ALA.

The new eligibility criteria does not address gender in any capacity. The objective of the new wording was to expand the relationship types eligible to join the ALA and honor our military and veterans.

Why aren’t great-grandchildren eligible for membership?
The IRS defines a 501(c)(19) veterans service organization auxiliary degrees of relationship. Currently, the IRS limits the relationship to within two degrees, which is why we are unable to expand our relationships further.

Why is membership limited to two degrees of consanguinity (relationship)?
The IRS regulation concerning auxiliaries to veteran organizations states in part: “At least 75 percent of its members are veterans, spouses of veterans, or related to a veteran within two degrees of consanguinity” this is where there is a bit of discrepancy and we can sneak in a few “greats”. The somewhat tolerable but also somewhat unpopular opinion is, is that if they don’t have any intensions of being an officer, nobody is going to check and if they want to help, we let them. Not everyone is ok with this. This would be for your Unit to discuss.

Are step-relatives eligible to join the ALA?
No., IRS regulations for 501(c)(19) organizations do not include stepchildren in their definition of an auxiliary organization.

Is there a way where the veteran does not need to be a member of The American Legion in orderfor their relativeto jointhe ALA?
Female veterans CAN join the ALA without being a member of The American Legion. If someone is eligible under a deceased veteran, they are also eligible to join the ALA without a Legion connection.

Does this mean trans women are now able to be Auxiliary members?
The ALA welcomes any and all persons who meet the established membership eligibility requirements to apply for membership. Gender identity, including transgender status, is not a factor in determining eligibility. All heartbeats fitting the eligibility criteria are welcome to apply for membership in the ALA.

Are ALA members eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion?
Only the eligibility criteria of the American Legion Auxiliary has been changed by The American Legion.

Eligibility criteria for the Sons of The American Legion remains the same. Eligibility information for membership in the Sons of The American Legion can be found here: https://www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family/sons-of-the-american-legion



This year's theme set by our National Department President Dr. Coral May Grout is,
"A Beacon for Veterans" featuring a lighthouse.
Which unit will hit that 100% beam first?



2027 Mid-Winter Conference
Dates:
February 19, 2027 – February 21, 2027
Location:
Arrowood Resort & Convention Center in Oacoma
500 Shoreline Drive
Oacoma, South Dakota 57365

Hotel Reservations: (605) 234-6376 When making reservations, please mention that you are with the American Legion Auxiliary. There is a block of hotel rooms reserved for our Convention that does not show on online reservation websites.



From my family to yours - Happy Thanksgiving