

New
Post
Start-Up
&
Revitalization
Procedures



Determine the area in which you wish to start a new Post or revitalize an existing, but struggling or stagnate, Post.

New Posts:

- a) Departments of The American Legion would consider placing Posts in:
 - i) Communities without a Post and a population that is growing
 - ii) Location where a Post Charter has been canceled, if warranted
 - iii) Communities with a Post that has closed its membership (i.e., does not want any new members)
 - iv) Town or city with a high school and a population that is growing
 - v) County that does not have a Post

Areas that do not have a Post:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Revitalized Posts:

- b) If a Post is already in place, look for these indicators to revitalize a Post:
 - i) Post does not have any active programs
 - ii) Post is not holding scheduled or regular meetings
 - iii) Post's membership has declined at an alarming rate
 - iv) Post where leadership has lost vision/interest
 - v) The community is growing but Post membership is declining
 - vi) Post membership is declining

Posts that need revitalizing:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Timing: 4 – 6 weeks prior to your membership effort

Assigned to: _____

Date Completed: _____

Leads Listing Reports:

- 2) Contact Department Adjutant and request, by zip code, a list of American Legion members who currently belong to the Department's "holding" or Headquarters Post in the area where you wish to start or revitalize a Post. Also request a list of expired members from all Posts that reside in those zip codes. List to include Member ID Number, Name, Address, Phone Number, War Era and Continuous Years. (Some Departments may keep a record of expired members covering a few years prior.) This may also be provided to you on CD or floppy disc. Be sure to request two (2) sets of mailing labels for: (a) Invite Letter, (b) Notice of Organizational Meeting.

Timing: 4 – 6 weeks prior to your membership effort

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 3) Review the membership lists with the New/Revitalization Post Team. Decide if a new or revitalized Post is needed. Locate a place to be used as a Headquarters while you are conducting the recruiting drive -- usually two or three days. Prime places to use are: existing Post home, municipal building, fire/rescue station, library, bank building, community activities center, township building, church, fraternal organizations such as Elks, Moose, Eagles, Masons, Lions, and Union Halls. (This place can also be used as organizational and monthly meeting place.)

Location with street address: _____

Timing: 4 – 6 weeks prior to your membership effort

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 4) Build a "sales kit" for use while recruiting. Items you will need for recruiting event are:
- a) "Why You Should Belong to The American Legion" brochure
 - b) "Know Your Benefits" brochure
 - c) Member Benefits brochure
 - d) Sourcebook, Gulf War and Agent Orange brochures
 - e) Membership Applications (Auxiliary, Legion & SAL)
 - f) Member Data Forms
 - g) Other pamphlets/literature that sells the Legion Family (Legion Magazine, Department/Post Newsletter)

Other tools needed:

- h) Four (4) to Eight (8) Legion members to make up the recruiting team
- i) Leads Listing Report from Department listing all current and expired members with addresses and phone numbers
- j) Map of area
- k) Phone books
- l) Access to telephone

Timing: 2 – 4 weeks prior

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 5) Send Invite Letter (see samples) to all individuals on Leads Listing Reports in the zip code(s) where you are planning a new or revitalized Post. Inform them of the time and place that you will be available to talk to them about membership in the new or revitalized Post. If possible, try to have a Department, District or Post Service Officer on hand to answer questions about Veterans, Dependents and Survivor Benefits; this information should be included in the Invite Letter. Give name and phone number of a contact person in the area who can answer questions about organizing the new or revitalized Post.

Timing: 2 – 4 weeks prior

Local contact person: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 6) News release and recruiting flyers/posters. Prepare a news release announcing recruiting drive (see sample). For best results the press releases should be hand delivered to all area newspapers and radio stations by a member of the New/Revitalization Post Team. Make sure it is delivered well in advance of the recruiting drive. Flyers/posters will be developed announcing the recruiting drive and both should be provided to the local contact person. Placement in the community should be one week prior to the event.

News Releases:

- i) For use in local newspapers and neighborhood bulletins
- ii) For broadcast use (radio or cable access stations)
- iii) Use in community bulletins (church, recreations centers, home owner publications)
- iv) Use in newsletters of other community-based organizations/corporations (i.e. employers, fraternal organizations)

Timing: 2 – 4 weeks prior

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Flyers/Posters:

Place recruiting posters/flyers on bulletin boards making announcement of recruiting activity - giving time, place and contact name. Use posters/flyers anywhere there is a high traffic flow of people – mini-mart, gas station, grocery store, hardware store, dry cleaner, city utility payment office, barber shop, bowling alley, etc...

Timing: 1 – 3 weeks prior

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 7) Locate a place for organizational and subsequent monthly meetings. Can be same location used during the recruiting effort: (existing Post home, municipal building, fire/rescue station, library, bank building, community activities center, township building, church, fraternal organizations such as Elks, Moose, Eagles, Masons, Lions, and Union Halls).

Timing: 1 – 3 weeks prior

Location with street address: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 8) During the recruiting event there are a number of things that need to be accomplished in order to make your drive successful. One way a membership drive is considered a successful event is by the number of recruited members. A second, *and as important*, way to measure the success of a membership drive is the number of community leaders that have been informed. Whereas numbers are important, the community leaders also need to be educated about what The American Legion and its' family can do for their neighborhood.

Membership Focus

- a) Use leads for making personal contact with all prospects, informing them of The American Legion Family’s goals, utilizing the tools from your sales kit to assist you in this effort.
- b) Station recruiting teams at high traffic areas to sign up new members.
- c) Call all past and Holding/Headquarters Post members on the Leads Listing Report asking them to stop in at local recruiting headquarters to join the new or revitalized Post. If it is not convenient for them to come by, offer to have one of the recruiters stop by their home.
- d) Have all members complete a membership application and pay their annual dues.
- e) Complete a Member Data Form for all members wishing to transfer from another Post.
- f) Determine with the Membership Team, and the recruited members, when to hold the Organizational Meeting and set the date, time, and place. Organizational Meeting should be held within thirty (30) days to ensure that the enthusiasm of building the Post membership is not diminished.
- g) Quiz the new member(s) for leads. Utilize any and all leads developed by these individuals.

Timing: 2 weeks to 1 day prior to and during membership effort/ongoing

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Date accomplished: _____

Community Focus (your time to brag)

Brief the following Key Community agencies on The American Legion Families’ programs and its service to veterans. Also, from Community agencies may come possible members and leaders for the New or Revitalized Post.

- a) School superintendents and administrators
- b) Other civic organizations
- c) Chamber of Commerce
- d) Police and Fire Departments
- e) Mayor/City Managers
- f) Unions or other Employee organizations

Timing: 2 weeks to 1 day prior to and during membership effort/ongoing

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Date accomplished: _____

Before you move on, thank the new member(s) and provide information on time, purpose, and the location of the first/next meeting. Inform the new member(s) that their membership card will be issued at this meeting.

9) When the recruiting Event is over:

a) Make a roster of all members of the new or revitalized Post, to include:

- i) Name
- ii) Address
- iii) Phone number
- iv) Designate if member is new or transfer
- v) How paid for membership; cash or check

b) Complete a dues remittance form.

c) Deliver all paperwork including ALL money to one of the following:
the Department Headquarters, Post Adjutant or Post Mentor.

Keep a copy of ALL paperwork for your files.

Timing: 2 weeks to 1 day prior to and during membership effort/ongoing

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

10) Prior to the Organizational Meeting:

- a) About 2 weeks prior to the meeting send a notice to all members of new or revitalized Post informing them of the meeting.
- b) Send Organizational Meeting notice to everyone on the Leads Listing Report even if they have not joined prior. This will act as a second invitation to join the new or revitalized Post.
- c) Invite Department and District Officers to Organizational Meeting.

- d) Prepare a news release stating a new or revitalized Post has been formed in the area and inviting all interested parties to join you at that meeting. Again, it is very important that news releases **are hand carried** to the newspapers and radio stations.
- e) Designate one or two mentors for the new/revitalized Post.
- f) The Mentor(s) should be knowledgeable of The American Legion customs and able to attend the meetings of the new or revitalized Post as an advisor the first 4-8 months.

Timing: 2 weeks to 1 day prior to and during membership effort/ongoing

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Mentors Assigned: _____

Date accomplished: _____

11) The Organizational Meeting is typically held within 30 days after the Recruiting Event. Items needing to be accomplished at this meeting are:

- a) Prepare a written agenda for the meeting.
- b) Have everyone in attendance stand and introduce themselves. This is your opportunity to determine if all present have either joined or transferred. Have those who have not signed up meet with a member of the Recruiting Team to complete the paperwork.
- c) Conduct initiation of all new members and, if practical, present each with a lapel pin.
- d) Explain how meetings are conducted then open and conduct the meeting.
- e) Explain the duties of all Officers and ask for Officer volunteers.
- f) Hold an election and installation of all officers.
- g) Issue new membership cards (supplied from Department) to all members.
- h) Cover information pertaining to projects the Post can be involved with.
- i) Try to have a Service Officer on hand to explain their duties and answer any questions they may have about Veterans, Dependents and Survivor Benefits.
- j) Never close the Organizational Meeting until the decision is made when and where the next meeting will take place.
- k) Have members develop a list of leads for current Membership Team or Mentor to follow up with before next meeting.

Timing: 2 weeks to 1 day prior to and during membership effort/ongoing

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

(Sample Letter – Delinquent/Expired Member)

(These letters work hand in hand with follow-up visit. Helps get us “in the door” upon personal visit.)

(date)

Dear Legionnaire,

Are you proud to be a veteran? Do you feel current members of the military should be paid more than a youngster working at McDonalds? Do you feel it is important to have a strong national defense? And do you feel our children should grow up with a sense of patriotism and respect for veterans?

If your answer to all these questions is “yes” then The American Legion would like to have you in our corner again.

American Legion Post (name of post and #) here in the (name of the town or area) is expanding it’s services to our veterans, their families and their communities. Your support and your inputs will be vital to our success as we continue to serve our veterans. But more important, it gives us an opportunity to fulfill our service to you, our most important customer. Did you know that:

By being a veteran, you have free access to the Department and/or post American Legion Service Officer who can run interference for you with the VA and assist you with filing claims.

By being a Legion member, you and your spouse and children (up to age 18) can save From up to 30 to 40% off on eyewear (frames and lenses).

By being a Legion member you could receive up to \$1,500 dollars in the event your home is damaged by a natural disaster (payable within one week to you after applying).

By being a Legion member you have the opportunity to join other Legionnaires in providing assistance and service to other veterans.

If you were not aware of these programs, and many more like these, then you might want to consider renewing your membership with us immediately. There are many more Legion benefits available that you will find in the enclosed brochure. Through your membership in The American Legion, we can keep you informed of everything that you have earned for you and your family. More importantly, together, we can continue to serve America.

You are invited to come by and visit with Legion officers from Post (name of post and number) located at (address of the Post). And don’t be surprised if we stop by your home sometime to visit with you. We are always interested in hearing about your ideas on how we can serve our veterans, their families and our community.

Please consider rejoining the greatest veterans’ service organization in the world. If I can assist you in any way with a Legion or VA matter, please do not hesitate to call (phone number).

Sincerely,

(Sample Letter –Headquarters Post Member)

(These letters work hand in hand with follow-up visit. Helps get us “in the door” upon personal visit.)

(date)

Dear Legionnaire,

Are you proud to be a veteran? Do you feel current members of the military should be paid more than a youngster working at McDonalds? Do you feel it is important to have a strong national defense? And do you feel our children should grow up with a sense of patriotism and respect for veterans?

If your answer to all these questions is “yes” then The American Legion would like to have your support in the local American Legion Post.

American Legion Post (name of post and #) here in the (name of the town or area) is expanding it’s services to our veterans, their families and their communities. Your support and your inputs will be vital to our success as we continue to serve our veterans. But more important, it gives us an opportunity to fulfill our service to you, our most important customer. Did you know that:

By being a veteran, you have free access to the Department and/or Post American Legion Service Officer who can run interference for you with the VA and assist you with filing claims.

By being a Legion member, you and your spouse and children (up to age 18) can save from up to 30 to 40% off on eyewear (frames and lenses).

By being a Legion member you could receive up to \$1,500 dollars in the event your home is damaged by a natural disaster (payable within one week to you after applying).

By being a Legion member you have the opportunity to join other Legionnaires in providing assistance and service to other veterans.

If you were not aware of these programs, and many more like these, then you might want to consider transferring your membership to this immediately. There are many more Legion benefits available that you will find in the enclosed brochure. Through your membership in The American Legion, we can keep you informed of everything that you have earned for you and your family. More importantly, together, we can continue to serve America.

You are invited to come by and visit with Legion officers from Post (name of post and number) located at (address of the Post). And don’t be surprised if we stop by your home sometime to visit with you. We are always interested in hearing about your ideas on how we can serve our veterans, their families and our community.

Please consider transferring your membership into Post # _____. If I can assist you in any way with a Legion or VA matter, please do not hesitate to call (phone number).

Sincerely,

The American Legion



For God and country

(Sample Press Release – New Post)

★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ P.O. BOX 1055 ★ INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-1055
★ (317) 630-1321 ★ Fax (317) 630-1413

For Immediate Release

American Legion Post to Help Community

INDIANAPOLIS (_____, 200_) -- Wartime veterans of _____ have a new outlet through which to serve the community. The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans organization, is inviting all wartime era veterans in the area to join them in starting a new American Legion post to provide service to the community and veterans of _____.

Members of the Indianapolis-based American Legion National and _____-based State Headquarters staff will be in town to help organize the post and to initiate its new members.

Wartime veterans can visit with Legion representatives at the _____ located at _____ in _____ on (dates and times listed here).

At least ___ veterans are required to form a post, according to American Legion by-laws.

The new post will focus on community service and assistance to veterans, in keeping with the 80-year tradition of The American Legion. The scope and nature of the post's community service will be determined by its members and inputs from local, civic, and community officials.

"Service! That's what The American Legion is all about," said _____, Commander of The American Legion for the Department of _____. "We exist to help each and every veteran, their families and the communities they live in. _____ is an ideal place to start a partnership between The American Legion and the community. The people here care about their community and practice good citizenship every day. Now, wartime veterans have a special place from which they can make a difference."

Since its inception in 1919, The American Legion has been an outspoken advocate for veteran's benefits, children & youth, patriotic American values, a strong national defense and quality-of-life issues for those serving in today's armed forces.

The organization, which spearheaded the original GI Bill, has been advocating reform of the veterans health care system under its GI Bill of Health. Creation of the federal forerunner of the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the agency's ascent to cabinet-level status is due in part to The American Legion's advocacy. The American Legion also was instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans Home Loan, veterans hiring preference and just compensation to veterans suffering from illnesses related to their military service, including those whose ailments stem from exposure to Agent Orange and mysterious Persian Gulf origins.

Equally aggressive are The American Legion's efforts to instill values in young people through numerous programs, including American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, the National High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, Teenage Suicide Prevention, Child Health and a McGruff Safe Kids Program. The American Legion has supported Scouting since 1919. Many American Legion posts also support Junior ROTC high school units, fund-raising for handicapped children, and partnerships with other nonprofit organizations such as the Children's Miracle Network.

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Contact: _____

The American Legion



For God and country

(Sample Press Release-Revitalization)

★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ P.O. BOX 1055 ★ INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-1055
★ (317) 630-1321 ★ Fax (317) 630-1413

For Immediate Release

American Legion Post Expands Service to the _____ Community

INDIANAPOLIS (_____, 200_) -- Wartime veterans of the _____ area have an opportunity to join in on a partnership that will increase community service in the area. The American Legion, the nation's largest veterans organization, is inviting all wartime era veterans in the area to join them in providing service to all veterans and their families.

Members of the Indianapolis-based American Legion National Headquarters and _____-based State Headquarters staff and members of American Legion Post # ___ will be in town _____ through the _____ to kick off this community and veteran service campaign.

Wartime veterans can visit with Legion representatives (dates, times and locations to go here).

Post # _____ will focus on community service and assistance to veterans, in keeping with the over-80-year tradition of The American Legion. The scope and nature of the post's community service will be determined by its members and inputs from local civic and community officials.

"Service! That's what The American Legion is all about," said _____, Commander of The American Legion for the Department of _____. "We exist to help each and every veteran, their families and the communities they live in. _____ is an ideal place to strengthen partnerships with the veterans and the community. The people here care about their community and practice good citizenship every day. Now, wartime veterans have a special place from which they can make a difference."

Since its inception in 1919, The American Legion has been an outspoken advocate for veterans' benefits, children & youth, patriotic American values, a strong national defense and quality-of-life issues for those serving in today's armed forces.

The organization, which spearheaded the original GI Bill, has been advocating reform of the veterans health care system under its GI Bill of Health. Creation of the federal forerunner of the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the agency's ascent to cabinet-level status is due in part to The American Legion's advocacy. The American Legion also was instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans Home Loan, veterans hiring preference and just compensation to veterans suffering from illnesses related to their military service, including those whose ailments stem from exposure to Agent Orange and mysterious Persian Gulf origins.

Equally aggressive are The American Legion's efforts to instill values in young people through numerous programs, including American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, the National High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, Teenage Suicide Prevention, Child Health and a McGruff Safe Kids Program. The American Legion has supported Scouting since 1919. Many American Legion posts also support Junior ROTC high school units, fund-raising for handicapped children, the Children's Miracle Network and partnerships with other nonprofit organizations such as Special Olympics.

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Contact: For more information, please call

- **Follow-Up Timeline for New Post of Post Revitalization Activities:**

- Who is Responsible?
 - It is critical that there is constant mentoring from the Department and District so this post does not “fall through the cracks.”
- When Should Follow-Up Start?
 - A representative should attend the Post meetings for at least a year, or until such time as the Post dictates that they are capable of surviving in their community.
- Why do we Follow-Up?
 - No newly formed or revitalized post should be expected to be able to jump right in and “make it on their own” the first 8 months to 1 year.
- The following document is provided as a guideline to assist you in determining how/when/where/what, etc., so that the follow-up effort is a success.

“Follow-up Timeline for Post Charter/Revitalization Activities”

Internal Affairs/Membership

Follow-up Time Line for Post Charter/Revitalization Activities

Department Headquarters and District, 7-day action plan:

7 to 10 days after the Post members complete the signing of the Temporary Charter the District Commander or Department Headquarters should send a letter, with information as follows, to all new members and prospects not signed up during the initial recruiting campaign:

- Provide date, time, and location of first meeting and include a proposed activity agenda. Example of information as follows: all new members will receive their membership card, fill out a form for free AD&D insurance and meet other veterans with similar interests and a common goal.
- Welcome all new/reinstated/transferred members to The American Legion Post.
- Inform members of the current status of the Post, to include the total number of members and names of those newly acquired Legionnaires on the Temporary Charter or revitalized Post.

Department Headquarters and District, 14-21 day response plan.

- Conduct the 1st Post meeting. The Post meeting should be held within two to three weeks after the completion of the Charter/Revitalization fieldwork.
- Department/District officers should help conduct the first meeting for a newly chartered Post and assist as required for a Revitalized Post.
- The mentoring process begins at the first Post meeting. Introduce Department and District Officers; allow them to give a brief description (3 minutes or less) of the elected or appointed duties of the office they hold.
- Have the Post members introduce themselves to one another. Allow a 2-minute time frame for the member to give a brief background of their interests, family, and military service.
- Introduce members to the responsibilities and activities required of the Post Officers.

- Provide a brief highlighted history of the accomplishments of The American Legion.
- Before closing the meeting set the date, time, and place for the next Post meeting.
- Involve as many new members as possible in the activities that will lead up to the next meeting, i.e., press releases, telephone trees, volunteers to do mailing of notices and what is planned for future meetings.
- Exchange names and telephone numbers with all interested members. Contact and communication is very important and should be developed between the new Post members.

District and Department 5 to 6 weeks 2nd meeting

- Department/District officers should help conduct Post meeting.
- If the Temporary Charter has been approved, signed and returned completed from National Headquarters, present to post membership.
- To ensure that a post makes progress, explain the importance of having post officers, as outlined in the Constitution and By-laws. Once you have completed the explanation, elect or appoint a slate of Post officers.
- Assist and mentor the new officers and appointees working with them to ensure they are successful. This will make you a success. Make certain the new Post Officers and Appointees understand the mentoring process is an on-going Department/District activity.
- Complete Post Officers Data Form to be submitted to Department Headquarters.
- Assist the Post in filing for their non-profit tax ID Number.
- Give a very brief overview of two or three basic Legion Programs they may wish to get involved with.
- Ask membership for their input on what they feel may be a good Post program or community activity.
- **Recommend three committees be formed as soon as the mentor feels the time is right, or in the time-frame of the 2nd or 3rd meeting:**

1. **Financial** Provides plans and ideas for fundraisers and other activities designed to develop monies for planned Post activities and programs.
 2. **Membership** Develop ideas to increase membership and activities focused on the retention of the member. Develop teams within the post membership to make contact with new member prospects. Supports developing public relations campaigns, newsletters, welcoming committees, and all activities promoting membership of the post.
 3. **Programs** Develops Post activities and programs that benefit the majority of the members, create good public relations, co-sponsor community activities, and provide the public with information on Americanism, Children & Youth programs. Remain open to ideas as they are presented from the floor.
- District/Area/Department must continue to work with the Post, be available to them, and provide support and mentoring as required. Plan on attending the posts meetings until you feel they are comfortable in conducting their meetings and required business.

- **Recognition:**

People will work harder for you if you let them know how much you appreciate their help. While there are many ways you can thank your volunteers, we have included in this lesson plan a sample of two certificates for those who have assisted in a Post Development or Revitalization effort.

- **Awards:**

- Most Departments have their own individual membership awards.
- The National Headquarters has membership awards, and in your packet is a brochure that outlines these awards:
 - Race-To-The-Top for District Commanders
 - Gold Brigade Award
 - Silver Brigade Award
 - Other Membership Awards
- Become familiar with these awards and ensure you let others in your District and Post know that they could be eligible for them.
- National Commander's Membership Initiative Award.
- Other Post or Department programs.