MEMBERSHIP

Membership for The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin at the conclusion of the 2017 membership year was 54,860 and for the 2018 membership year stood at 54,413.

Activities of The American Legion for this report reflect the functional programs conducted by the Department Headquarters, Veteran Service Office and Camp American Legion as well as those carried out in local communities across Wisconsin by over 500 local posts.

FOUNDED ON FOUR PILLARS

The American Legion is a not-for-profit Veteran Service Organization (VSO) chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919. The American Legion is the nation’s largest wartime veterans’ service organization, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating Americanism and honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service-members and veterans.

The American Legion was founded on four pillars:
1. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
2. National Security
3. Americanism
4. Children & Youth

Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation’s veterans, its service members, their families, the youth of America and ordinary citizens. These programs make a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

“In 2018, The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin stood at 54,413 members strong; serving veterans, their families and their communities.”

OPERATIONS

Day-to-day operations of the Department are overseen by the Department Adjutant who is a full-time employee reporting directly to The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin’s Executive Committee. The Department Adjutant acts as the Executive Director / Chief of Operations with direct oversight of:

⇒ Fiscal Services, Administrative & Major Events Manager, Membership Coordinator, and (2) Program Coordinators.

⇒ 2018 Department Operations Budget: ~3.2 Million Dollars
  • This does not include any capital improvements
  • The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin is reliant upon membership and fundraising as our source of revenue
Camp American Legion, Lake Tomahawk

Camp American Legion has been operated by The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin since 1925 in conjunction with the State of Wisconsin - Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. Located on 300 acres of pristine lakefront property in Oneida County, Camp American Legion is nestled within the heart of The American Legion State Forest. Comprised of 19 cabins, a main lodge, a women quarters, recreational building, and main chapel providing an ideal setting for veterans, those still serving and their families to rest, recover and reconnect in a safe place.

In 2018, The American Legion Family, along with other generous supporters of Camp American Legion, identified a need for cabin dedicated to helping Gold Star Families who have endured unimaginable loss and hardship heal. Funds for the American Legion Family Cabin have been raised and building is tentatively scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2020.

Camp American Legion has and continues to serve and support patients of Veterans Administration hospitals, clinics; PTSD groups, long term care groups, community support programs, mental health intensive care management groups, spinal cord groups and more.

Camp has also built collaborative working relationships with many programs whose sole focus is helping our "High-Risk, Suicide Ideation" veterans by creating supportive, "Battle Buddy" type programs to help these veterans and their families heal in a Northwoods environment. Camp American Legion is taking an active role in stopping the high number of veterans and active duty military from taking their own lives.

In 2018, approximately 1,171 Veterans, their families, caregivers and service providers served by Camp.

2014 to 2018: Camp attendance increased by approximately 38%.

2014 to 2018: Camp operational budget increased ~45%.

2018 Camp Operational budget is approximately $400,000, not including:

- Capital Improvement Plans
- Infrastructural Improvement
- Program Development

Camp Operations

Operated by a Camp Director, 6 support staff and volunteers.

Free to veterans, those still serving and their families.

Operational May through the end of September.

In 2018, hosted over (30) specialized programs to include:
- Camp Serenity (helping families who lost a loved one in service heal).
- Woman Veterans Week
- Vietnam Veterans Week
- Korean Veterans Week
- Post 911 Veterans Week
- WI Army National Guard Suicide Prevention Week
- Recovery, Risk, Reduction Week (Homeless & Substance Recovery)

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Department Annual Events

The Department conducts an annual Convention, Spring and Fall business meetings and an annual Midwinter Conference. Each year a delegation of Wisconsin Legionnaires travels to Washington DC to lobby elected representatives on issues affecting Wisconsin Veterans. In addition, Wisconsin Legionnaires participate in the annual National convention of The American Legion and various national workshops.

VETERANS REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Veteran Service Office

The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin, Veterans Service Officer and seven support staff work tirelessly to assist veterans and their families with VA disability benefits, provide referrals, resources on education, employment, business, death benefits and other important topics. The Department Service Office annual operating budget is approximately $400,000.

The economic impact of The American Legion, Dept. of WI, Service Office is extraordinary. From 6/1/17 to 5/31/18 our Service Office has performed over 27,000 client services and completed over 45,000 transactions totaling over 268 million dollars in earned benefits.

Benefits include:

- Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Burial
- Compensation
- Pension
- Death Pension
- Automobile Allowances
- Dependent Indemnity Compensation

We also assist veterans with obtaining awards, decorations, as well as applying for discharge upgrades.

“From 6/1/17 to 5/31/18 Wisconsin’s American Legion Service Office has performed over 27,000 client services and completed over 45,000 transactions totaling over 268 million dollars in earned benefits.”

VA Hospital—Veteran Home Support/Volunteerism

The Department coordinates volunteer activities at US Department of Veterans Affairs and Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs facilities through the Department Hospital Committee.

The Department maintains representatives at eight (8) VA and WDVA facilities, 14 VA Clinics, 4 Vet Centers, 1 Health Care Center and 1 Outstation facility. Department volunteers from the entire American Legion Family are very active at each of these facilities.
Veteran Home Support/Volunteerism

In addition to volunteers on site to visit and assist patients, notable among activities are the following:

Zablocki VAMC  Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Poppy and Gift Shop maintained by The American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Wisconsin which hires disabled veterans and American Legion members to construct poppies for distribution. The Gift Shop provides hospitalized veterans who are bedridden with gifts to share with their family members during the holiday season.

Tomah VAMC  Tomah, Wisconsin

The Annual Fishing Derby was held on the Hospital grounds at the fishing pond constructed by The American Legion in 1959. Meal service were provided by the local American Legion Posts.

Coordination of visits by patients from Tomah VAMC Chemical Dependency Unit to Camp American Legion.

Wisconsin Veterans Home  King, Wisconsin

The Department of Wisconsin has sponsored "American Legion Day" at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King on Fathers' Day since 1955. On Father’s Day (2018) members of the King Veterans home were treated to lunch featuring barbeque chicken, potato salad and ice cream. Live music was provided as volunteers and staff at the facility assisted the residents who enjoyed the meal in a park like setting. The program featured Department Commander Frank Kostka as well as other American Legion District and Department officers from around the state to include representatives from “The American Legion Family” (Auxiliary, Sons of The American and Legion Riders). The Legion Riders Association of Wisconsin led the annual parade. Funding to support the activities was provided by The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin.
AMERICANISM & YOUTH PROGRAMS

American Legion Baseball
In 2018, there were 220 registered American Legion Baseball teams impacting, 3,500 youth, ages 13-18, a $1,000 scholarship winner and 48 youth selected to play at Miller Park as part of The American Legion Baseball All-Star Weekend.

Americanism & Government Test
High School students are given the opportunity to receive recognition and scholarships by taking an on-line test comprised of 50 multiple choice, true and false questions followed by an essay question of 300 words or less.

Badger Boys State (BBS)
June 9-16th, 2018, the 77th session of BBS was held at Ripon College impacting over 862 young men from across the state of WI.

County Youth Government Day
Held throughout the state to give students a practical study of how county government works.

Oratorical Scholarship Contest
Helps high school students develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution. Winners are awarded scholarships at several levels throughout the competition.

Boy Scouts
Scout Posts throughout the state sponsor scouting programs. The Department annually awards a $1,000 Eagle Scout of the Year award.

Scholarships
In 2018, thousands of dollars in various scholarships were awarded to deserving youth across the state of WI.

Shooting Sports Program
A gun safety education and marksmanship program which encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment and competition. This program awards scholarships at the department to national level of the competition.

Sons of The American Legion
Supports the aims and purposes of The American Legion.

Wisconsin American Legion Law Enforcement Academy (WALLECA) - June 18-22, 2018, was held at the Wisconsin State Patrol Academy at Ft. McCoy impacting 32 junior HS students from across the state of WI.
Members of the American Legion Family throughout the state have adopted Wisconsin National Guard units and work with the Family Readiness teams to make sure military families are taken care of here at home while their service members are deployed. We believe that by taking care of the families, our heroes have one less worry on the battlefield and are able to concentrate on their mission overseas knowing that we have their backs here at home.

Our Son’s of The American Legion have a G I Josh program which give the children of deployed military families a stuffed dog and a book entitled “I Will Be OK” which brings the child comfort while they are missing their mom or dad.