

**THE WISCONSIN
AMERICAN LEGION
COLLEGE**



**PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM
JANUARY 2022**

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WALC Chancellor – Julie Muhle – juneapost15@yahoo.com

WALC Dean of Education – Bob Shappell – wilegioncollege@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Teaching our members to effectively execute the programs and mission of The American Legion is critical to our success. We must mentor new members, whether they are veterans of Korea, Vietnam, or fresh from current ops in Iraq or Afghanistan. They must know how and why the nation's largest wartime veterans' organization operates, and be able to lead us into the future.

Training should be one of the top priorities at all levels of the organization. From the top down and inside out, even the smallest pebbles of knowledge can create a ripple effect of energy and excitement throughout our ranks. There are countless Legionnaires ready to carry on our mission, waiting only to be taught how.

It is everyone's responsibility to carry on this vital mission, not just the top leadership. Every Legion Family member with the skills and knowledge to share should do so at every opportunity. The Wisconsin American Legion College curriculum provides the guidance and confidence to get started. Consider it your first pebble. Go out and make a few waves of your own.

OBJECTIVE OF THE WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE CURRICULUM

In a perfect American Legion world, every member would be thoroughly knowledgeable about all aspects of the Four Pillars of The American Legion: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation; National Security; Americanism; and Children and Youth. Members would know the programs offered under each pillar along with the details of each, how to run them, recruit participants, conduct public relations activities to support them and obtain community involvement. Legionnaires would know the legislative positions of the organization and be fully engaged in lobbying local, state and national elected officials to support this legislation.

In other words, a Legionnaire would be a walking encyclopedia of Legion history and knowledge, able to answer any and all questions that any potential new member might ask, be able to step directly into any chairmanship or officer position and hit the ground running, or speak to any community group with authority about The American Legion. Obviously, few members are quite there yet.

However, many would relish the opportunity to expand their leadership capabilities, general knowledge and potential in The American Legion. The Wisconsin American Legion College (WALC) is organized and operated to give all our members, and all Legion Family members, an opportunity to learn about this great organization, understand how and where they can contribute to Legion programs, and enhance their skills as a Legion leader, recruiter, and advocate.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The WALC courses provide a systematic and integrated approach to developing leadership within the Department of Wisconsin. The objectives of the curriculum are:

- 1) Enhance the quality of programs and post operations
- 2) Offer incentives for new members to learn and increase their skills
- 3) Provide new skill sets for long-time members
- 4) Improve personal leadership and motivational skills
- 5) Establish an effective mentoring mechanism
- 6) Improve the execution of post programs

- 7) Motivate members to increase their Legion knowledge
- 8) Motivate members to accept and assume leadership roles at all levels of the organization.
- 9) Provide a process that helps develop leaders at all levels of the Wisconsin American Legion
- 10) Contribute to better recruiting and increased retention of members as a result of the above-mentioned areas

WALC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The WALC is open to all Legion Family members. The curriculum is composed of four parts:

- 1) The American Legion Basic Training Course (3 hours) – Previously the ALEI Course
- 2) The WALC Basic Course (7 ½ hours)
- 3) The WALC Intermediate Course (7 ½ hours)
- 4) The WALC Advanced Course (7 ½ hours)

Each of the WALC courses has detailed lesson plans for each section of the course that include the learning objectives for the section and the specific sources of information used. **Basic Course objectives** are based on *Recognizing* or *Being Familiar With* the material. **Intermediate Course objectives** are based on *Understanding* or *Comprehending* the material. **Advanced Course objectives** are based on *Examining*, *Analyzing*, and *Applying* the material.

Specific details and content for each course are found later in this guide.

Individuals receive a Wisconsin American Legion College pin after completing the Basic Course, along with a key attachment with the letter “B” inscribed on it. Keys with an inscribed “I” and “A” are presented after completing the Intermediate and Advanced Courses. After completing all four courses, individuals are recognized as Wisconsin American Legion College graduates by receiving a diploma from the Department Commander at the annual Department Convention, or other appropriate ceremony.

The WALC operates under the direction and guidance of the Wisconsin American Legion College Alumni Association.

Administration of the WALC is the responsibility of the Chancellor, whose duties include planning and scheduling course offerings, coordinating requirements with hosting posts/counties/districts, and overseeing the overall operations of the College.

The Dean of Education is responsible for writing and updating the curriculum, training and evaluating all instructors, and creating a faculty of instructors who continually strive to increase their knowledge through research and experience within our organization.

WALC SUPPLEMENTAL COURSE OFFERINGS

The WALC will develop and present other courses to meet the needs of the Department of Wisconsin. The first of these courses is the *New Post Commander Course*, focused on helping new and aspiring post commanders prepare for successful terms of office in the position, and motivate them to continue contributing to the Legion in areas and positions outside the post. The second course is a *Post Adjutant Course* to assist new or aspiring adjutants in becoming quickly effective and skilled in their new role. The third course is the *Consolidated Post Report Course*, focused on providing in guidance in gathering and storing information, preparing and submitting the report, and using it a tool for training, public relations, and membership. In development for Spring of 2022 is a *County Commander Course*.

WALC FUNDAMENTALS OF TEACHING

The WALC training philosophy is based on discussion and interaction among all course participants. WALC trainers receive a preliminary 3-hour training class from the Dean of Education, and are mentored during their first two actual teaching assignments. Prior to teaching, the instructor is sent the specific lesson plan(s) and powerpoint slides they will be using for the course module they will be instructing.

The following training considerations help ensure success of the WALC program.

Establish a Good Environment: Creating a good training environment involves not only providing a physical space conducive to learning, but also providing the motivation and incentive for your members to learn about The American Legion Family and to become actively involved in our programs and activities.

Motivation/Rewards: Training Legionnaires at every level provides tremendous motivation – learning the skills that significantly increase their ability to be successful officers. While that is a tremendous motivator to listen and learn, there are a number of ways to motivate your members to actively participate in training.

Make it fun: In using the many multi-media resources available, group training provides an ideal platform for camaraderie and social interaction.

Recognition of Training Success: The WALC presents a pin and key to members when they complete each course of instruction. Individuals who complete all four courses in the curriculum receive a diploma recognizing them as WALC Graduates. Diplomas are presented at the Midwinter Conference and at the Department Convention.

Upward mobility and training: Discuss the advantages of learning as much as possible about The American Legion. District, Department, and National officers have extensive knowledge of the organization that they amassed from years of training and participation in various programs. Training today's new members could very well place them on the path to be future American Legion leaders at all levels.

TECHNIQUES USED IN WALC TRAINING

Brainstorming: Give participants a topic or a question. Ask them to think about as many items related to the topic or question that they can. Write down all their responses (no wrong answers). Guide learners to determine the best ideas presented.

Case Study: This technique provides participants with a description of an event, incident, or situation related to the subject under discussion. Participants analyze the case and report their findings to the entire group.

Demonstration (Role Play): Ask participants to practice a new skill by showing what they have learned to the rest of the group. Such demonstrations allow learners to “try out” new learning.

Group Feedback: After a demonstration or observation (role-playing, video), ask for feedback. Feedback should be constructive and not judgmental or negative about other participants’ performances. Feedback helps participants recognize their strengths as well as areas needing improvement.

Reflection: Give participants specific questions to consider, and have them write down their thoughts. Discuss what they have learned with other participants. Plan on how to apply the new skills or knowledge to post activities. Reflection helps participants synthesize new material and connect it to their own experiences.

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING AND PREPARATION

WALC Core and Supplemental Courses 3 hours

Prospective trainers are first identified and interviewed by the Dean or the Chancellor. While past instructor experience is a plus, the primary requirements are enthusiasm, passion for the American Legion, and a willingness to thoroughly prepare for their assignments. The course covers curricula for the three courses, and learning objectives for each. Individuals are given examples of lesson plans and slide formats to make them familiar with the tools they will have to prepare for instruction. The course covers specific methods and suggestions for teaching adult learners, with special emphasis on group participation and interaction between students. Other topics covered include preparation techniques, using (or not using) a podium/lectern, asking questions that encourage conversation, keeping control of the class, time management, and creating student engagement.

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING COURSE



AGENDA FOR DEPARTMENT LEGION COLLEGE

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING COURSE AGENDA

Time	Topic/Sub-topics
30 Min	HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Legion was formed • The Four Pillars of American Legion • Services and programs • Organization at National, District, and Post levels • The role members play in Legion success
20 Min	VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of this Pillar • The VA&R Commission - responsibilities • The Employment and Education Commission • The American Legion service officers • The American Legion's Regional Office Action Review (ROAR)
20 Min	NATIONAL SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of this Pillar • The National Security Commission • How the Legion supports US interests at home and abroad • The Foreign Relations Commission
20 Min	AMERICANISM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance and role of this Pillar • Programs and program support • Boy Scouts of America • How Posts can work to make their communities better places to live
20 Min	CHILDREN & YOUTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of this Pillar • Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) • The American Legion's Family Support Network • CWF • Child Safety
40 Min	COURSE CONCLUSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other committees and commissions • Final exam

The American Legion Basic Training Course

2 1/2 hours

The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veteran's service organization is on-line at mylegion.org. Individual members can also simply do a search on the legion.org site for "Basic Training Course". If requested, WI Legion College instructors can facilitate a face-to-face group training session, and help members complete the test individually after material is covered. The sections closely follow the Legion's Four Pillars of service. They include:

- History & Organization
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
- National Security
- Americanism
- Children & Youth

A student can expect to leave with a full grounding and understanding of the Legion's history, four pillars, goals and services. Upon successful completion of the course, each graduate may print a certificate of completion from the national commander, may order a lapel/cap pin and, retain full access to the online version of The American Legion Basic Training Course.

**THE WISCONSIN
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COLLEGE
BASIC COURSE**



WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

BASIC COURSE AGENDA

Time	Topic/Sub-topics
¼ hour	VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES - National and Department
1 hour	AMERICANISM, CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Service and Safety Activities • Service to God and Country • Education Activities • Flag Education • Immigration and Naturalization Activities • Youth Activities • Patriotic Holiday Programs • Counter-Subversive Activities • Children & Youth • Family Emphasis • Child Health & Wellness • Child Safety • American Legion Children's Charities
1 hour	PUBLIC RELATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Public Relations • Why do we need Public Relations • What is the American Legion Image in your Community • News Releases • Unfavorable Publicity
1 hour	MANUAL OF CEREMONIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of different types of ceremonies • American Legion Meetings & the proper way to perform them
1 ¾ hours	LEADERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership theory • Leadership Development • Team Building • Fostering and Supporting Initiative • Goal Setting
1 hour	LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Level • Department Level
1 ½ hours	POST OFFICERS AND POST OPERATIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing to take office • Basics of Post leadership • Running effective meetings

Vision, Mission, and Values – 15 minutes

Following an introductory explanation of the organization of the Wisconsin American Legion College, course overviews, and requirements for becoming a WALC graduate, the course begins with a discussion of the vision, mission, and values of our organization. First, students learn and discuss the National Vision statement, National Mission statement, and the Value Principles approved in Resolution #5 in May 2020, and amended by Resolution #38 in October 2020. The focus then shifts to the Department Vision and Mission statements

Americanism, Children & Youth Programs – 1 hour

One of The American Legion's four pillars, *Americanism* is, quite simply, love of America, loyalty to its ideals and institutions, allegiance to its flag, willingness to defend it against all enemies, foreign and domestic and a desire to pass on the blessings of liberty to future generations. The Americanism module covers the broad and objective multi-faceted Americanism programs featuring wide-range community service, better citizenship, youth development, and counter-subversive activities.

Another of The American Legion's four pillars, *Children & Youth* ensures “a square deal for every child.” This module will focus on TFA, Family Support Network, Troop Support (as it relates to C&Y) and CWF. This module, will share information on how Posts can actively get Americanism and Children & Youth programs engaged within their local communities.

- Community Service and Safety Activities
- Service to God and Country
- Education Activities
- Flag Education
- Immigration and Naturalization Activities
- Youth Activities
- Patriotic Holiday Programs
- Counter-Subversive Activities
- Children & Youth
- Family Emphasis
- Child Health & Wellness
- Child Safety
- American Legion Children's Charities

Public Relations – 1 hour

This module covers the basics of Public Relations as it applies to American Legion posts, Districts and Departments. Students learn how to break their communications requirements into internal and external audiences and use Community Relations to enhance their communications and marketing strategies. The module discusses how to develop relationships with local news media to enhance the possibility of getting your message broadcast or published. Students will discover how to find and use the many tools available to enhance their Public Relations efforts.

- What is Public Relations
- Why do we need Public Relations?
- What is the American Legion Image in your Community

- Develop a Plan
- News Release
- Unfavorable Publicity

Manual of Ceremonies - 1 hour

How other veterans and your community see you is a very important aspect of a local post. Knowing the proper way to conduct meetings, ceremonies, funerals, etc. takes the pressure off of you as a leader and allows you to focus more on the event. This module reviews Section 2 of the Officer's Guide to familiarize the student with the way The American Legion conducts business and what is available to the Legion leader.

- Review of different types of ceremonies
- American Legion Meetings & the proper way to perform them

Leadership – 1 3/4 hours

The development of new leaders is an important aspect of any organization to ensure its continuity, but where do leaders come from? This module covers the establishment of realistic goals for today, tomorrow, the short term and the long term and how to prioritize them. It discusses developing a strategy to meet with your committee and officers, as well as the importance of developing a plan to thank them. A strong focus is placed on team building and leadership.

- Basic leadership theories
- Leadership development
- Team building
- Fostering and supporting initiative
- Goal setting

Legislative Priorities – 1 hour

This module educates members on the process by which The American Legion affects national public policy. It examines the legislative process from the post level through the department and the national levels. The module then examines how the professional staff utilizes the resolutions to create policy mandates that are advocated in Congress. Lastly, it examines tools The American Legion uses to influence the process, which are the current legislative priorities for the American Legion.

- National Level
- Department Level

Post Officers and Post Operations – 1 1/2 hours

This module covers planning and organizing the duties of Post officers. Using the Post Officers Guide as a template, it walks through Section 1 and Section 3 for a better understanding of Legionnaire officer duties and responsibilities.

- Preparing to take office

- Basics of Post Leadership
- Running effective meetings

BASIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

Vision, Mission, and Values

1. Become familiar with the vision, mission, and values principles of The American Legion as approved in Resolution #5 in May 2020.
2. Understand the reasons and purposes of vision, mission, and values statements
3. Become familiar with the Department Vision and Mission statements

Americanism and Children and Youth

1. Understand the types of American Legion Americanism programs, their purposes, and the values they seek to foster and instill.
2. Become familiar with some of the programs and associated activities a Post can use to promote Americanism in their communities
3. Understand the types of American Legion Children and Youth programs, their purposes, and the values they seek to foster and instill.
4. Gain ideas and support material to help Posts organize and run effective children and youth activities throughout the year

Public Relations

1. Understand the importance of effective public relations for all Legion programs and activities
2. Become familiar with the various types of PR media and tools
3. Become familiar with the American Legion Public Relations Toolkit
4. Understand the critical role of local Posts in creating a favorable image of the American Legion

Manual of Ceremonies

1. Be familiar with the ceremonies and protocols described in Section 2 of the Officers Guide – Manual of Ceremonies
2. Understand the flexibility inherent in the Manual of Ceremonies due to differences between Legion and military service traditions, as well as traditions of local Posts
3. Be familiar with the recommended scripts for all ceremonies, and the ability to add, alter, and adapt them for specific situations
4. Understand the general agenda for a regular Post meeting, and the need to adhere to Legion customs such as Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, POW/MIA remembrance, and reciting the Preamble

Leadership

1. Understand basic leadership strategies applicable to the American Legion
2. Understand how to effectively create, guide, and motivate teams
3. Assess personal leadership skills and goals, including personal goals, identification of strengths, and identification of areas they need to develop

4. Understand how to effectively mentor and encourage legionnaires to assume leadership roles in the Post
5. Understand basic success skills in the areas of organization and time management
6. Understand basic problem solving and decision-making processes

Legislative

1. Understand the history of American Legion legislative efforts and successes
2. Understand the processes by which the American Legion develops its legislative policies
3. Understand the roles of the National Legislative Commission and the National Legislative Council
4. Understand the current American Legion Legislative Agenda
5. Understand methods of increasing individual member effectiveness in local politics and community affairs

Post Officers and Post Operations

1. Become familiar with the contents of Section 1 of the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
2. Understand the meaning of the Preamble to the Legion Constitution
3. Understand how to create and review a Post constitution and by-laws
4. Be familiar with available resources that support their roles as Legion officers

**THE WISCONSIN
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INTERMEDIATE COURSE**



WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

INTERMEDIATE COURSE AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic/Sub-topics</u>
2 hours	ADMINISTRATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidated Post Reports (CPR) (30 minutes)• Post Finance (25 minutes)• Post Fundraising (25 minutes)• Department Officers and Executive Committee (15 minutes)• National Officers and Executive Committee (15 minutes)• National Emblem Sales (10 minutes)
1 1/2 hours	MEMBERSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reactivating Struggling Posts (45 minutes)• Starting A New Post (15 minutes)• DMS and the 2930 list (30 minutes)
2 hours	PROCEDURES, CEREMONIES, AND TRADITIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discipline of Post Members (20 minutes)• Parliamentary Procedures & Roberts' Rules of Order (25 minutes)• Conducting Elections (10 minutes)• Resolutions (20 minutes)• Running District & County Conferences (20 minutes)• County and District Organization (15 minutes)• Saluting and traditions (10 minutes)
2 hours	AMERICAN LEGION PROGRAMS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Four Pillars of the American Legion (10 minutes)• VA&R Programs (20 minutes)• Americanism Programs (20 minutes)• National Defense Programs (20 minutes)• Children and Youth Programs (20 minutes)• Other programs (10 minutes)

Administration – 2 hours

This module covers ways of streamlining the collection of data needed to complete your consolidated post reports. This module also focuses on finances and fundraising, and the operations of Department and National officers and executive committees. Finally, it discusses National Emblem Sales.

- Consolidated Post Reports (CPR) (30 minutes)
- Post Finance (25 minutes)
- Post Fundraising (25 minutes)
- Department Officers and Executive Committee (15 minutes)
- National Officers and Executive Committee (15 minutes)
- National Emblem Sales (10 minutes)

Membership – 1 1/2 hours

We constantly strive to keep everyone up-to-date with the many recruiting and retention tools and methods that are available. This module covers revitalizing and reactivating struggling posts, and starting a new post. Although the topics are specific, the practices and procedures can be applied to evaluating posts, counties, and districts on a regular basis. Additionally, procedures and best practices for transferring members from the Department holding post are covered.

- Reactivating Struggling Posts (45 minutes)
- Starting A New Post (15 minutes)
- DMS and 2930 list (30 minutes)

Procedures, Ceremonies, and Traditions – 2 hours

Much of the information provided in the Manual of Ceremonies has its roots in long-time tradition and usage. The practices adopted by The American Legion may not be the same as those used by other organizations, but it does not mean the Legion is right and others are wrong. This module covers:

- Discipline of Post Members (20 minutes)
- Parliamentary Procedures & Roberts' Rules of Order (25 minutes)
- Conducting Elections (10 minutes)
- Motions/Resolutions (20 minutes)
- Running District & County Conferences (20 minutes)
- District Organization (15 minutes)
- Saluting and traditions (10 minutes)

American Legion Programs - 2 hours

Legionnaires should be familiar with the wide scope of programs The American Legion supports, and how those programs are aligned under the Four Pillars This module focuses on:

- The Four Pillars and their meaning (20 minutes)
- National defense and troop support programs (20 minutes)
- VA&R programs (20 minutes)
- Americanism programs (20 minutes)
- Children and Youth programs (20 minutes)
- Other programs and charities (10 minutes)

INTERMEDIATE COURSE OBJECTIVES

Administration

Consolidated Post Reports

1. Understand the importance of the Consolidated Post Report in reporting the activities and contributions of the American Legion
2. Understand report timing and deadlines
3. Become familiar with the sections of the CPR and the type of information that can and should be included

Finance

1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of the Finance Officer
2. Understand the importance of accurate and transparent financial management in a Post
3. Become familiar with the Legion resources available to assist with post financial management
4. Understand the importance of post budgets
5. Understand the importance of post financial audits

Fundraising

1. Recognize the need for both internal and external fundraising to carry out Legion programs at the post level
2. Become familiar with some of the businesses that have been supportive of veterans fundraising in the past
3. Share ideas about unique and successful fundraisers used by posts around Wisconsin

Department Officers and Executive Committee

1. Understand the role and functions of Department officers
2. Understand how Department officers are selected or appointed
3. Become familiar with the roles, functions, and operating procedures of the Department Executive Committee.

National Officers and Executive Committee

1. Understand the roles and functions of National officers of the American Legion
2. Understand how National officers are elected or appointed
2. Become familiar with the roles, functions, and operating procedures of the National Executive Committee.

National Emblem Sales

- 1) Become familiar with the Legion and Auxiliary merchandise sold by Emblem Sales, including official Legion caps
- 2) Understand the benefits derived by Legion programs from Emblem Sales purchases
- 3) Understand the procedures for obtaining permission to use the Legion emblem on manufactured goods

Membership

Reactivating Struggling Posts

1. Understand some of the causes of struggling posts, and initial actions to take after identifying a struggling post
2. Become familiar with the Post Responsibility Audit, and how to use it to identify ways to turn around a struggling post
3. Understand the help available from district and department sources to complete an internal reactivation of a post
4. Understand the steps included in a post revitalization, with or without national staff assistance
5. Become familiar with some of the membership tools available to help a struggling post

Starting a New Post

1. Understand the reasons and situations that support formation of a new post
2. Understand the process for identifying core members and recruiting charter members for a new post
3. Understand the paperwork process to request a temporary charter and a permanent charter
4. Recognize the importance of County, District, and Department leadership in establishing a new post

DMS and the 2930 List

1. Understand the Direct Mail Solicitation Program
2. Understand the purpose and use of the Department holding post (2930 list)
3. Become familiar with methods for using the 2930 list to transfer members into the post

Procedures and Ceremonies

Discipline of Post Members

1. Understand the procedures for suspending or expelling a member from your post
2. Become familiar with the procedures for suspension and expulsion, and the need to follow procedures in the National and Department Constitutions and By-laws
3. Understand the concept of member in good standing
4. Recognize the seriousness of suspension and expulsion, and the rarity of both

Parliamentary Procedures and Elections

1. Understand basic parliamentary procedure and its use for running effective meetings
2. Become familiar with the general order of business for a meeting
3. Understand how to make motions and amendments and the procedures used to consider and discuss both
4. Be familiar with general courtesies of the assembly
5. Understand basic method for nominating and electing officers

Resolutions

1. Understand the purposes of written resolutions
2. Become familiar with the approval processes at Department and national levels
3. Understand the unique and precise requirements for the writing and format of a resolution
4. Understand some of the reasons for rejected resolutions

Effective County/District Meetings and Conferences

1. Understand the importance of proper planning for a county or district conference
2. Understand some of the basic methods in running an effective meeting
3. Become familiar with the types of items that should be on a conference planning checklist
4. Understand the importance of a script in planning and running a conference

County and District Organization

1. Understand the role of the District Commander in the American Leadership
2. Become familiar with some of the actions necessary to organize a district staff, plan actions for the year, and establish effective committees to accomplish goals
3. Understand the district commander's role in reporting to the Department level, and the support available to help make the district successful
4. Understand the importance of performing training at the district level
5. Understand the importance of planning for the year, and establishing goals for the district

Saluting, Traditions, and Ceremonies

1. Understand the proper wearing of the Legion cap and Legion attire
2. Recognize that anytime a Legionnaire wears the Legion cap, he/she IS representing the Legion
3. Understand when to wear the cap, and when to remove it

Legion Programs

1. Become familiar with American Legion programs and how they relate to the Four Pillars of the American Legion
2. Understand some of the unique Wisconsin American Legion programs and their relation to the Four Pillars

**THE WISCONSIN
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ADVANCED COURSE**



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ADVANCED COURSE AGENDA

Time	Topic/Sub-topics
2 ¼ hours	ADVANCED LEADERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN LEGION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership theory evolution• Power and influence• Leadership/managerial roles• Generational and Gender difference in leadership perception• Conflict management and resolution• Organizational change process• Leadership development• Motivation and needs theories• Why volunteers volunteer• Leading and motivating volunteers• Scenario analysis and problem solving
1 hour	POST COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING AND SOCIAL MEDIA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a Post communications plan• Internal and external communications• Buddy checks• Social media planning• Tips for effective social media use
2 ¼ hours	ADVANCED RECRUITING AND RETENTION STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership program overview• Department statistics and penetration rates• Recruiting methods and lead databases• Retention methods• Post activities and retention• Retention ideas• Scenario analysis and problem solving
2 hours	WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION ISSUES AND OTHER TOPICS OF DISCUSSION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Camp American Legion• Fundraising• Changing veteran demographics in Wisconsin• Traditions vs. progress discussions• For God and Country discussion• Final exam – group problem solving and recommendations for the Department of Wisconsin

Advanced Leadership in the American Legion – 2 ¼ hours

This module examines leadership from a higher and more complex level than those discussed in the Basic Course. It covers leadership and motivation theories, as well as theories on power and influence, gender leadership differences, and generational differences. It addresses a number of leadership roles and applies them to the American Legion at both Post and higher levels. A special focus is placed on unique methods for motivating and leading volunteers. The module ends with a group exercise using three different scenarios involving Post-level leadership issues.

- Leadership theory evolution
- Power and influence
- Leadership/managerial roles
- Generational and Gender difference in leadership perception
- Conflict management and resolution
- Organizational change process
- Leadership development
- Motivation and needs theories
- Why volunteers volunteer
- Leading and motivating volunteers
- Scenario analysis and problem solving

Post Communications Planning and Social Media – 1 hour

This module covers the need for effectively planning and executing both internal and external communications through a combination of print and electronic media. It describes how Buddy Checks can be made an integral part of the Post's plan throughout the year. The role, benefits and use of social media are covered, as well as tips on how to effectively engage both Post members and the community.

- Developing a post communications plan
- Internal and external communications
- Buddy checks
- Social media planning
- Tips for effective social media use

Advanced Recruiting and Retention Strategies – 2 1/4 hours

This module covers membership issues from a leader's viewpoint. It covers the Department membership history, demographics, market penetration, and district penetration rates. Recruiting topics include event planning, building and using a lead database, setting recruiting goals, and a number of recruiting ideas. Retention topics include post activity analysis and suggestions, analyzing why members do and do not renew, and developing a retention team. The module ends with a group exercise using scenarios of two posts and one county with a variety of membership problems.

- Membership program overview
- Department statistics and penetration rates
- Recruiting methods and lead databases
- Retention methods
- Post activities and retention

- Retention ideas
- Scenario analysis and problem solving

Wisconsin American Legion Issues and Other topics of discussion - 2 hours

This module focuses on several Wisconsin-unique issues, which will be changed or updated as the situation requires. The module ends with a number of discussions that look at the future of the Legion. They include the World War I traditions upon which the Legion was founded and their applicability to today's veterans, post-level traditions, women and minority veterans, and other topics the class may bring up. The final topic is a discussion of our guiding motto *For God and Country* and its relevance in an age of a growing number of veteran non-believers and veterans of many different religions. The course ends with a group final exam where each group analyzes the three Wisconsin-unique issues and makes specific recommendations which are forwarded to the Department Commander for his/her review and possible action.

- Camp American Legion
- Fundraising
- Changing veteran demographics in Wisconsin
- Traditions vs. progress discussions
- For God and Country discussion
- Final exam – group problem solving and recommendations for the Department of Wisconsin

ADVANCED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Advanced Leadership

1. Comprehend the importance of Leadership in the American Legion to the continued support and advancement of the American Legion missions
2. Comprehend, analyze, and apply a variety of methods to lead Legion members, volunteers, and other teams toward successful goal accomplishment
3. Comprehend and apply basic gender and generational leadership issues and viewpoints
4. Understand, analyze, and apply basic conflict management principles
5. Understand, analyze, and apply basic change management principles
6. Comprehend, analyze, and apply a variety of leadership tools to solve common issues within the American Legion.

Post Communications Planning and Social Media

1. Understand how to develop and implement a Post communications plan
2. Understand methods of integrating both print and electronic media into the plan
3. Understand how to plan and execute a Buddy Check event, and to make Buddy Checks a continuing part of the communications plan.
4. Understand the benefits of effectively using social media in both internal and external communications.
5. Understand how to develop websites, Facebook pages, and other social media platforms to communicate Post purposes, events, and successes.

Advanced Recruiting and Retention

1. Comprehend the importance of membership to the continued support and advancement of the American Legion missions
2. Comprehend, analyze, and apply a variety of methods to improve retention of current members
3. Comprehend, analyze, and apply a variety of methods to recruit new members

Wisconsin American Legion Issues and Special Topics

1. Comprehend the potential effects of current issues on the successful mission success of the Wisconsin American Legion
2. Apply the concepts and material learned in the Wisconsin American Legion College courses to analyze and discuss current and future American Legion issues.
3. Analyze Wisconsin American Legion issues, and make specific recommendations for the Department of Wisconsin to approach these issues

**THE WISCONSIN
AMERICAN LEGION
COLLEGE
SUPPLEMENTAL
COURSES**



WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

NEW POST COMMANDER COURSE AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic/Sub-topics</u>
4 hours	Getting started as a new Post Commander Post Commander's roles Post Officers Finance Post management Public relations Post activities and membership Running effective meetings Leadership Setting and tracking goals Now what? Q&A with past post commanders

Course Description – New Post Commander Course (4 hours)

The course provides information and guidance to help new and aspiring post commanders prepare for a successful term in the position. The course curriculum provides guidance on the things a new commander needs to know or learn to be successful, and focuses particularly on the first year of command. Participants are encouraged to complete the American Legion Basic Training Course online, and the WALC Basic and Intermediate Courses during their first year as Commander, and the WALC Advanced Course in the second year in order to get the in-depth knowledge and understanding of Legion program management and volunteer leadership necessary to continue their roles as Legion leaders. The final 30 minutes of the course is a question-and-answer session with 2-3 past post commanders with diverse backgrounds. Following the session, **participants are given the opportunity to begin a trusted advisor/mentor relationship with one of the past post commanders.**

NEW POST COMMANDER COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Provide new and aspiring Post Commanders with the information needed to start them on a journey to success
2. Inspire new Post Commanders to provide leadership and a focus on the future in their posts
3. Provide the opportunity to create advisor/mentor relationships with successful past post commanders
4. Motivate new Post Commanders to consider seeking leadership roles beyond the Post level

WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

POST ADJUTANT COURSE AGENDA

Time	Topic/Sub-topics
3 hours	Getting started as a new Post Adjutant Post Adjutant's duties and roles Post Adjutant tools Adjutant's Guide Dept of WI Administrative Manual Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies Post Operations Manual District and County Commander Guide Four Pillars Booklet Post Adjutant Manual Duties, charters, consolidated post report, other reports, post officer certification, membership, NEF, resolutions, National Basic Training Course Administrative manual Using monthly schedules for events, awards, reports Meeting minutes Notetaking, tracking motions, minutes format, saving and storing minutes Mylegion.org Uses Demonstration Now what? Q&A

Course Description – Post Adjutant Course (3 hours)

The course provides information and guidance to help new, current and aspiring adjutants prepare for a successful term in the position. The course curriculum provides guidance on the things an adjutant needs to know or learn to be successful. Participants are encouraged to complete the American Legion Basic Training Course online, and the WALC Basic and Intermediate Courses as soon as possible, and the WALC Advanced Course later to get the in-depth knowledge and understanding of Legion program management necessary to continue their roles as Legion leaders. A number of important tools are reviewed, while the Post Adjutant Manual and the Department of Wisconsin Administrative Manual are covered in detail. The final topic of instruction is the use of mylegion.org, including demonstrations of the website.

POST ADJUTANT COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Provide Post Adjutants with the tools and information to effectively perform their duties in the local Post.
2. Ensure new adjutants understand the purposes, content, and uses of the Post Adjutant's Manual.
3. Examine the various roles of Post Adjutants in different posts around the Department.
4. Ensure that Post adjutants understand their critical role in post operations and their opportunities to contribute to Post successes
5. Ensure Post adjutants understand the capabilities and uses of mylegion.org

WISCONSIN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT COURSE AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic/Sub-topics</u>
2 hours	General description of the CPR Purposes of the CPR – National, Department, Post CPR timing requirements – Department and National Past history of reporting Goals Where to collect info for the CPR Methods for completing the CPR Online Paper Monthly or quarterly options Use of Department Administrative Manual What's in it for the Post? How to get members interested in the CPR

Course Description – Consolidated Post Report Course (3 hours)

The course provides information and guidance to help Posts understand the importance of completing the CPR in terms of both reporting their activities upward to Department and National levels, and how the completed CPR can be a vital tool for the Post for public relations, advertising, and recruiting and retention. The course covers methods of gathering information, completing the report both online and on paper, and some suggested methods for building the CPR throughout the year.

CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the importance of the Consolidated Post Report in reporting the activities and contributions of the American Legion
2. Understand report timing and deadlines
3. Become familiar with the sections of the CPR and the type of information that can and should be included
4. Become aware of the many sources of information to complete the CPR
5. Understand ways to make completing the CPR easier and more thorough
6. Understand how the CPR can be used by the Post in advertising, public relations, recruiting, and enhancing the Post's history reporting

VIRTUAL COURSES

VIRTUAL COURSE OFFERINGS

The Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Courses are offered online using the Zoom meeting platform. Courses are held on two consecutive days for 3 hours each day (a total of 6 hours). The second session of the Advanced Course runs for an extra 30 minutes. The curriculum and objectives remain the same as those for the classroom face-to-face courses. Courses are scheduled on weekday evenings from 6:00-9:00PM Central Time, and Saturday-Sunday mornings from 9:00AM to Noon.

The New Commanders Course, Adjutants Course, and Consolidated Post Report Course are also available virtually.

VIRTUAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendees must meet the following requirements:

1. Have a computer or device with a camera. Each attendee must have **both audio and video**. Simply calling in on a phone is not an option.
2. A commitment to fully attend the entire session.
3. Each class may be limited to the first 20 people who commit to the class.
4. Basic Course must be completed before the Intermediate Course unless a waiver is granted by the Dean. Both must be completed prior to the Advanced Course
5. For the Basic Course, obtain a copy of the Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies from your Post, if possible. If not, download it from the National website (www.legion.org) under the Publications area. We will refer to the Guide for much of this course.

VIRTUAL COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Core courses will be held virtually three times a year, or more often if a demand exists. Schedules will be announced on the Department website, through Department weekly announcements, and on the Department Legion Family Facebook page. Course sign-up is done on the Legion College page of the Department website. Email questions should be sent to the College email at wilegioncollege@gmail.com

APPENDIX A - RESOURCES

BASIC COURSE

2021 Officers Guide
2021 District/County Commanders Guide
2021 Public Relations Toolkit
2014 The American Legion Membership Public Relations Guide
2020 Legislative Handbook
2021 Legislative Priorities for the 117th Congress
2020-2021 The American Legion Positions and Programs Quick Reference Guide
Vision, Mission, Values Resolution #5 May 2020 and Resolution #38 October 2020
National American Legion website www.legion.org
Department of Wisconsin American Legion website www.wilegion.org
Organizational Behavior (9th Edition), by Robert Kreitner and Angelo Kinicki
Leadership: Theory and Practice, by Peter G. Northouse
Drucker on Leadership, by William A Cohen, PhD

INTERMEDIATE COURSE

2021 Officers Guide
2019 Consolidated Post Report Form
2021 Post Adjutant's Manual
2021 District/County Commanders Guide
Post Operations Manual and Building Guide
National Constitution and Bylaws
Department of Wisconsin Constitution and Bylaws
Department of Wisconsin Leadership Communications Guide (Revised 2019)
The American Legion Annual Report 2019
Emblem Sales website www.emblem.legion.org
Parliamentary Procedures and Roberts' Rules of Order
2015 Membership Training Manual
Post Revitalization and Development booklet
The Four Pillars of the American Legion booklet
Why You Should Belong pamphlet
The American Legion Americanism manual
Various American Legion program brochures
National American Legion website www.legion.org
Wisconsin American Legion website www.wilegion.org

ADVANCED COURSE

Wisconsin Strategic Plan for Sustained Membership growth
Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Developing a Communications Strategy (legion.org publication)
Social Media (legion.org publication)
Buddy Check Event Toolkit
Buddy Check Well Being Toolkit
Social Media for Non-Profits: How to Make an Impact With Little Budget, by Elise Dopson
Social Media for Non-Profits: 11 Essential Tips for Success, by Katie Sahl
12 Best Social Media Practices for Non-Profits, by Emily Patz
Department of Wisconsin Leadership Communications Guide (Revised 2019)
Membership Team Training Guide
Map of Districts in the Department of Wisconsin
The Art and Science of Leadership, by Afsaneh Nahavandi
Leadership: Theory and Practice, by Peter G. Northouse
Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge, by Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus
Leadership in a Volunteer Organization, The Navy League
Keeping Your Volunteers, by Harvey Smith (in *Leadership Today*)
Leadership Across Generations, by Goh Han Tek.
Four Major Roles in Making Major Changes, by Mark Fennell
Organizational Behavior (9th Edition), by Robert Kreitner and Angelo Kinicki
Developing Leadership Skills in Volunteers, by Landy Lockett and Courtney Dobbs
Department of Wisconsin Annual Budget
Wisconsin American Legion website – www.wilegion.org
Wisconsin’s Future Population, by David Egan-Robertson (UW-Madison Applied Population Laboratory)
Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs veteran demographics
US Census Bureau veteran demographics
US Department of Veterans Affairs veteran demographics
Atheists and Foxholes, by Ronit Y. Stahl (in *Religion and Politics*)

NEW POST COMMANDER COURSE

2021 Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
Post Operations Manual and Building Guide (Rescinded)
2021 District/County Commanders Guide
2021 Adjutant’s Manual
Public Relations Toolkit
Wisconsin American Legion Administrative Manual
Four Pillars booklet

POST ADJUTANT COURSE

2021 Post Adjutant’s Manual
2021 Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
Post Operations Manual and Building Guide
2021 District/County Commanders Guide
Public Relations Toolkit
Wisconsin American Legion Administrative Manual

Four Pillars booklet

Mylegion.org website

The balancecareers.com. (2017). How to take meeting minutes. From

www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-take-meeting-minutes-524780

California State University Long Beach. (2017).

How to take minutes. From

[web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/sld/student_organizations/officer_dev/documents/HOWTOTA
KEMINUTES.pdf](http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/sld/student_organizations/officer_dev/documents/HOWTOTA
KEMINUTES.pdf)