

MEMBERSHIP 2025-2026
MARGE CHRISTIANSON, DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

Arizona's framework for its "Membership" program is a large part of its growth success.

1. **Generate focus and enthusiasm-** Arizona holds a rally at their June Convention which promotes the National and Department President's Special project as applicable:
 - In 2026, members came back from lunch to find an American Flag and the words to "Why ALA?" on their chairs— we sang the new words to the karaoke version of the Village People's "YMCA". District Presidents had on patriotic hard hats and held signs with the qualifying relationships for membership (e.g., mothers, daughters, spouses etc).
 - Membership challenges were issued between Districts, Units and even members (e.g., highest percent on Veteran's Day, 5 New Junior members by year end; first Family Three form). Department membership chairman issued a "One for All and All for One" challenge whereby every Unit membership chairman would get a "Poppy Bling" pin if their overall District met the 85% National goal by March 15.
2. **Set thoughtful goals-** Recognizing that Units have different circumstances, the Department developed 2 different philosophies for setting goals:
 - For Units that had suffered a loss of membership from 2025 to 2026, we asked them simply to "stop the slide". If their kitchen had a fire and they were closed for a time, or their Unit President ran off members or whatever the circumstances—we recognized turnaround takes time. Just stopping the slide is a challenge for them.
 - For Units that grew, the goals asked them to carry the overall goal. Internal goals were a bit higher than our 1% commitment to National so that they Units that could not stop the slide would be covered by the Units who could grow.
3. **Reinforce the goals and provide tools**
 - Every District was given a theme to participate and compete within. In line with the America 250 theme, Districts started a road trip in their class of vehicle (e.g., hippy bus, rich and famous, pick-up trucks, Barbie Pink) and wore the appropriate clothing to Fall conference. District group photos were taken with them holding their District sign. The Department Membership Chair wore an amalgamation of all the vehicles.
 - Every Fall Conference attendee received a membership application in a plastic sleeve along with a promotional flyer.
 - Every Unit received 5 "America 250" postcards urging renewal or rejoin via the National phone number-- along with an order sheet to order more.
 - Incredibly important, Department's support for membership training, questions and issues is timely, accurate and friendly. 50 Units who have demonstrated membership processing competence are authorized to use full access ALAMIS.
4. **Provide consistent and meaningful feedback** using email, Facebook and website:
 - Department tracked challenges and congratulated winners/consolated losers on all media.
 - Provided weekly "Unit within District" reports to District Presidents and Membership chairs-- including last week's performance for weekly comparison. Highlighted changes (who hit the next goal, who's leading, who made big progress etc). Posted on the Department website in its own "Membership" section.
 - Offered suggestions for processing, engaging members, when notices were going out from National., etc.

- Asked Units to remember Juniors! While Arizona senior renewals were in the 90's; Junior renewals were at 65%. Consequently, Arizona has started a new direct mail program to engage its 400 Junior members. Juniors are divided into age groups and will be sent age-appropriate patriotic activity packages every other month. The first was poppy focused. Younger kids received the ALA Poppy Coloring book, a poppy and age-appropriate Junior poppy patch form. Older kids received material and instructions on how to make and share poppies. They received ribbons and a blank barrette to make a Memorial Day poppy barrette. Next mailing will be America 250 focused, with Presidential rulers, coloring books, stickers, flag and Americanism patch forms-- and for older kids, a pocket flag and instructions to fold and share. Can't wait for August to focus on Education and scholarships available to older Junior members.

5. Spotlight successes:

- Nearly 50 Facebook Posts for big wins on popular Facebook page were posted (e.g., every Unit hitting 100% was recognized).
- "One for all and All for One" prizes were delivered at District meetings by the Department Chair. The prizes included the poppy pin, a 3 Musketeers bar (we all know their theme) and 2 applications in sleeves (since the job is not done!). Some Districts had fun dressing in theme and singing the "Why ALA" theme song.
- Recognized Units that were consistently processing applications.
- At the Department Convention, Districts, Units and Members will receive a variety of awards highlighting successes.

6. Ask for Unit Feedback:

- The most consistent recruitment technique noted by Units was plain old personal interactions. While recruitment at public events was tried, the most effective events were those directly related to the Legion Family. Having knowledgeable members available to chat with people about why they should join was the most successful at open-to-the-public (and guest) events like Bingo, Fish Fry, craft sales. Unit 62 in Peoria gave members paper "event" bracelets at these types of events so Legion Family recruiters could identify who was NOT a member.
- Attaining renewals was simply persistence. Can't reach them by phone? Text them. No answer? Try email. No response, try the Post Card. The order did not seem to matter—if you have volunteers to call, great. If not, send a Post card first to whittle down the list before calling.
- Providing incentives to renew early were successful for members who generally renew eventually. Unit 107 in Phoenix has a membership renewal discount every Independence Day. Many others offer Early Bird dinners or raffle drawings for renewal on/before Veteran's Day.

As of May 5, 2026:

- **Current Arizona membership is at 16,301. Arizona has met National's 1% growth goal of 16,189 and is at 97.5% of Arizona's internal 4% goal of 16,715.**
- **2 of 10 AZ Districts have met their Arizona goals; 7 others are over 95%!!**
- **29 of 85 Units have met their Arizona goals; another 33 are over 90% of goal. Only 4 Units are less than 75% of goal!!!**