
Mission Training and national Junior meetings, webinars, and more

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ALA eNEWS: *CONNECTING WITH YOU MONTHLY*



JANUARY 2026

Don't miss the remaining Mission Training and national Junior meetings!

Winter national Junior meetings are approaching alongside Mission Training. Interested in learning more about our mission and becoming a stronger ALA member? Plan on going, then bring a Junior, or Juniors, along to learn valuable information and become well-rounded members and individuals. Juniors will have their own meetings happening where they'll do service projects, meet new friends, and — most importantly — have fun!



What's happening in the 2025-2026 national Junior meetings?

- Hats for Heroes — a service project developed by ALA National President Pam Ray to give personal hygiene products to homeless veterans
- Learning the Pledge of Allegiance in American Sign Language
- Crafts, such as beaded keychains and America's 250th birthday hats
- Receiving *A Life of Service: The Story of Senator Tammy Duckworth* book about a U.S Army veteran with many firsts in Congress

To learn more about the national Junior meeting activities, [click here](#).

Winter meetings and trainings listed below:

- Jan. 31: Las Vegas
- Jan. 31: Indianapolis*
- Feb. 7: Atlanta*

Please note: Las Vegas and Indianapolis Mission Training are sold out and operating on a waiting list, but the national Junior meetings are still open.

Register [here](#) for both national Junior meetings and Mission Trainings.

*These events will be held with The American Legion's National Regional Information Conference and the Sons of The American Legion Regional Meeting.

ALA hopes to embolden members to volunteer for Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service

Martin Luther King Jr. National Day of Service on Jan. 19 provides the ALA opportunities to host or participate in volunteer activities throughout our communities in honor of the Rev. Dr. King. ALA units and members are encouraged to use this day to make a difference in their communities and in the lives of our veterans by volunteering their time, talent, and compassion. A list of the types of activities the ALA can host or participate in on this day:



- Coordinate a community cleanup — parks, schools, neighborhoods, or cemeteries that honor veterans.
- Collect and distribute hygiene kits to people experiencing homelessness.
- Sponsor a food drive for local food pantries or for veteran families in need.
- Partner with Junior members for a multi-generational service project, such as assembling care packages or making no-sew blankets.
- Sponsor an MLK Day Reflection Program highlighting the Rev. Dr. King's commitment to service and equality, tying in the ALA mission.
- Collaborate with local service organizations (American Red Cross, shelters, food banks) to join large-scale community volunteer events.
- Deliver baked goods or thank-you baskets to first responders.

For more information, check out the [ALA Community Service webpage](#).

ALA ACADEMY

Register for these upcoming January and February ALA Academy webinars

Mastering Media Presence Locally

When: Jan. 20 @ noon ET

There is a right way and a wrong way when it comes to working with media outlets. We'll cover some basics to help protect your organization while also spreading the word about your mission outreach activities.

Objectives:

- Understanding media relations basics — both external and internal
- Building a relationship with your local media
- Developing key messaging skills
- Navigating difficult topics
- Learn about resources offered by ALA National Headquarters (news release templates, national communications team, etc.)

[Click here](#) to register!

Wills & Estate Planning: Essential Documents and Practical Guidance

When: Jan. 27 @ noon ET

This session will provide participants with straightforward, easy-to-understand information about the core components of estate planning. The presentation will explain the purpose of key legal documents, common considerations for families of all types, and the practical steps individuals should take to ensure their wishes are clearly documented. Participants will also receive guidance on how to begin or update an estate plan and where to find reliable resources. Please note: The presenting attorney is licensed in Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Minnesota. This session is for informational purposes only and does not include legal advice.

[Click here](#) to register!

Planning and Hosting a Successful American Legion Family Day

When: Feb. 10 @ 7:30 p.m. ET

The goal is to provide ideas on how to successfully plan, organize, advertise, and host an American Legion Family Day. The webinar will also discuss the American Legion Family Day Citation that ALA National President Pam Ray is promoting this administrative year. After the webinar, attendees should walk away with a list of ideas to help them host an American Legion Family Day event.

Click [here](#) to register!

Heads up to our social media followers!

As our members interact with our social media content, please be alert. Spammers have been disguising themselves as military servicemembers and commenting on our members' comments by asking you to "friend" them. Please be aware of what you click and who you talk with. Stay safe!

Salute to Servicemembers Award nominations open now!

We've made it much easier to submit for the Salute to Servicemember Award! An ALA member/entity simply makes the nomination, rather than the servicemember, to effectively tell the story of why they feel this person is "head and shoulders" above their peers and worthy of this award.

A simple narrative (no more than 1,000 words), a picture of the servicemember (preferably official Department of Defense photograph), and the endorsement from their command group are the only requirements. The nomination form is live now, and you have until June 1 to enter. [Click here to fill out the form!](#)

This award acknowledges the servicemember's contributions that go beyond their military career, displaying their impact on their community. The goal is to have every branch of the military represented: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, and the National Guard/Reserve.

Do you have questions about what it takes to have a successful submission?

You're in luck as there is a Zoom meeting open to everyone that will explain the entire form, and you will be able to ask questions. Join us Tuesday, Feb. 3, at 7:30 p.m. ET. To register, click [here!](#)

If you have any questions before Feb. 3, please email nationalsecurity@ALAforVeterans.org.

Don't wait: Apply now! ALA scholarships' deadlines approaching

The Auxiliary has four scholarship funds that members and non-members are eligible to apply for: Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship, Non-Traditional Student Scholarship, Spirit of Youth Scholarship, and Member Loyalty Scholarship. The deadline to apply online is March 1.

- Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship: 15, \$5,000 each, gift scholarships are awarded.
 - Given to high school seniors who are direct descendants, or adopted children, of U.S. wartime veterans.
- Non-Traditional Student Scholarship: Five, \$2,000 each, gift scholarships are awarded.
 - Awarded to American Legion Family members, veterans, and veteran and active-duty spouses who are pursuing a college degree later in life or pick up their education from when it was interrupted.
- Spirit of Youth Scholarship: Each department/state will award one \$1,000 gift scholarship. From each department/state, the national ALA Education Committee will select five recipients for a \$5,000 gift scholarship, instead of the \$1,000 scholarship.
 - Awarded to current ALA Junior members who are high school seniors and have been a member for the past three years.
- Member Loyalty Scholarship: 10, \$2,500 each, gift scholarships are awarded.

- Awarded to current college students who were Junior members and retained their membership into adulthood.

To learn more and to apply, click [here](#). If you need help navigating the application process, click our [Navigating ALA Scholarships 101](#). If you have any questions, email education@ALAforVeterans.org. To donate to scholarship funds, click [here](#)!

Enroll in the USA 250 Challenge to celebrate America's birthday

Join this challenge culminating with America's birthday on July 4, 2026. Participants have three areas — fitness, mental wellness, and/or community service — they can engage in as part of a team, like an ALA unit, or as an individual. You can do one category or go the extra mile and do all three!



Register here for \$30 and get a USA 250 Legion Family T-shirt and donate to a good cause. For more information on ways to fulfill the categories, go to [the USA 250 Challenge website](#).

Want more than a T-shirt? [Click here](#) to look at other USA 250 Challenge merch!

Watch [National President Pam Ray's video](#) for ideas on the community service category.



Special awards are available for fundraising!

To keep the USA 250 momentum going, The American Legion has awards available for those who hit certain fundraising goals with three fundraising tiers:

- For \$250 in donations raised, participants receive a USA 250 Challenge hat pin.
- For \$500 in donations raised, participants receive a USA 250 Challenge coin and a personalized certificate of appreciation.
- For \$2,500 in donations raised, participants receive a personalized plaque signed by American Legion National Commander Dan Wiley.

To support donors, the Legion will send a commemorative challenge coin and a special poster to each individual or group (like a unit) that donates \$250 or more to the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation.

To learn more, click [here](#). Have questions regarding fundraising for the USA 250 Challenge? Click [here](#) to learn more.

MEMBER BENEFITS



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Benefits and allowance amounts vary by plan. Please call for more details.
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donates 1.5% of your eligible purchases to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund at no extra cost to you. Same shopping, same prices, same Prime perks, but now every gift you buy helps support scholarships for deserving students.



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GOOD TO KNOW

Missed one of our webinars? Go to the ALA Academy to view recordings and see what other webinars are coming up. Click [here!](#)

Have an idea for an Academy course? Email ALAAcademy@ALAforVeterans.org to send your ideas for potential courses.

Keep a lookout for the February *Auxiliary* magazine! This issue is on its way to mailboxes in early February. A digital copy will be available soon on our [website](#).



ALA COMMITTEE FACEBOOK GROUPS ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION

These national committee groups are spaces on the social media platform for ALA members to discuss or share ideas about topics related to each committee. Groups provide a safe place for organic discussion about your local programs or services and support efforts to grow our organization's awareness. Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org/social-media to join the groups you're passionate about.

ON THE ALA BLOG

Volunteering at any age in the ALA reaps benefits for everyone involved

The American Legion Auxiliary is a membership organization, but at the heart of it all, we are a community of volunteers serving veterans, military, and their families. We roll up our sleeves and host stand downs, we volunteer at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, we educate and mentor our youth, and so much more.

[Read more.](#)



Tips for being an effective leader, mentor

High-quality leadership gets people interested in participating in organizations, according to 2025 research in Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly. And poor leadership often drives them away.



That means to keep members and the community engaged in efforts to support our mission, the American Legion Auxiliary needs effective leaders and mentors.

[Read more.](#)

SAVE THE DATE



January: Poverty Awareness Month
January: National Blood Donor Month
Jan. 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Jan. 27: International Holocaust Remembrance Day
Feb. 3: Four Chaplains Day
Feb. 4: World Cancer Day
Feb. 6: Time to Talk Day
Feb. 28: ALA's Mid-Year National Executive Committee Virtual Meeting
Feb. 28 – March 4: The American Legion's 66th Annual Washington Conference

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

“Every day, we support and honor our active military, veterans, and their families — especially during the holidays to let them know we appreciate their service and sacrifice for our country, that they are not forgotten or alone.”

— Marguerite Agee, Georgia

LEGION FAMILY NEWS

Be the One online training available for the Legion Family

The American Legion is partnering with Columbia University to develop training for American Legion Family members who want to learn more about interacting and responding with veterans who are in crisis.

These trainings will teach participants how to:

- Use the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale to determine at-risk individuals
- Identify risk factors and warning signs
- Outline the types of suicidal ideation and four behaviors that indicate imminent risk
- Effectively communicate with individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves

Upcoming dates:

- Jan. 15 @ 2:30-4 p.m. ET
- Jan. 22 @ 5:30-7 p.m. ET

Go [here](#) to learn more about the training and register.

Samsung American Legion Scholarship applications open

Attendees of the 2026 ALA Girls State or American Legion Boys State programs who are a direct descendant (or legally adopted child) of a U.S. military veteran who served honorably on active duty during a period of war are eligible for this scholarship, which awards up to \$10,000 for undergraduate studies. Applicants must complete and submit their online application before 11:59 p.m. (local time) of day one of their respective programs.

To learn more and to apply, click [here](#).

Follow SAL National Commander Bill Clancy's new Facebook page

"[On the Road with SAL National Commander Clancy](#)" hopes to connect with all Legion Family members as Clancy travels and visits Sons across the nation. His page will share and document the hard work and spirit of squadrons, and the whole American Legion post. Support our Legion Family by giving the page a follow.

The official national Sons of The American Legion Facebook page is still [Facebook.com/AmericanLegionSons](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionSons). Follow both pages to keep up with SAL and American Legion Family news!

American Legion Gaming is accepting writing submissions

The ALG, an American Legion-backed organization that aims to enrich veterans and servicemembers' lives through gaming, is looking for original stories focused on how gaming provides comfort, builds connection, or open doors to careers. These writings can be submitted by any veteran, servicemember, and/or family member. The stories need to be a minimum of 400 words, include a short biography of the writer, and an accompanying photo is optional. No prior publishing experience is required. Stories that are selected will be published on American Legion Gaming platforms.

For more information on what to write about, click [here](#). To submit, email rikki.a@americanlegion.gg

Sons of The American Legion hit a big milestone

Our Legion Family members, the SAL, reached a record number of 404,941 national members this year! They increased membership by 1.94 percent from 2024. The ALA is extremely proud of our Sons' growth!



ALA Membership

Where does your department stand in Auxiliary membership? [Click here to log in and view the latest reports.](#)



The American Legion Legislative Center

The ALA supports the legislative agenda of The American Legion. [Get involved.](#)



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