

**2025-2026 American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Oklahoma
Poppy Program Plan of Action**

Poppy Program Chair: Katie McInnis

katheryn.r.mcinnis@gmail.com

918-804-4974

Overview of the Poppy Program

The purpose of the American Legion Auxiliary Poppy Program is to honor & support veterans for their service and sacrifice by promoting and educating all people of the history of the Poppy and the financial benefits realized by our nation's veterans as a result of its distribution.

Important Dates

1. Unit End of the Year Report - April 15, 2026
2. Poppy Poster Contest Submissions
 - a. Units: March 31, 2026
 - b. Districts: April 15, 2026
3. Poppy Day - May 22, 2026

Strategies and Tactics of the Poppy Program

1. **Promote the Poppy Program and increase revenue.**
 - a. Wear a poppy to promote conversation and interest.
 - b. Educate your community about how funds collected help veterans, servicemembers, and their families.
 - c. Contact local businesses for permission to distribute poppies on their premises. Make sure you have permission for liability purposes; in some instances, permits are required.
 - d. Send a thank you to businesses that allow distribution. Consider using the Poppy Poster thank you cards, available for purchase through Emblem Sales, for your communication.
 - e. Organize a department poppy drive with The American Legion Family. Encourage The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders, and ALA Junior members to join poppy distributions in your community.
2. **Educate your community on the meaning and history of the poppy**

- a. Using the image and story of the Flanders Field poppy to educate people about the sacrifices of our military servicemembers helps us raise awareness of the Legion Family and connects us to our mission in the eyes of the public.
- b. Promote the ALA Poppy Poster Contest in your local schools and youth groups.
- c. Promote the Little Miss Poppy Contest to Juniors in your unit.
Offer to speak at local civic engagements about the meaning and significance of the poppy and how Poppy Funds help veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

3. Celebrate National Poppy Day

- a. Wear a red poppy all day and tell everyone why.
- b. Distribute poppies to friends, co-workers and family and tell everyone why.
- c. Tell the story on Facebook of who you are wearing your poppy to remember or support on National Poppy Day®. Don't forget to tag us! #PoppyDay #LegionFamily
- d. Accept a poppy and donate if you see a member of The American Legion Family in your neighborhood distributing poppies.
- e. Distribute National Poppy Day material and make it available to members.
- f. Organize a poppy distribution at local Memorial Day Ceremonies. Make sure to wear your Auxiliary branded apparel to help tell everyone who you are.
- g. Invite a local dignitary to lay a poppy wreath at a memorial in your community and invite unit members to be present. Consider singing patriotic songs or other ways to involve your unit members.
- h. Contact local legislative offices to announce poppy distribution days, and request proclamations declaring Poppy Days in your community.
- i. For more information and resources, visit
<https://member.legionaux.org/member/committees/poppy/poppy-days>

4. Increase the number of poppy makers in your community.

- a. Set up meetings with recreational and occupational therapists at local U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers (VAMCs), Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), or community hospitals to incorporate poppy-making into their therapy programs.
- b. Distribute "How to Recruit New Poppy Makers" promotion information.
- c. Partner with The American Legion to recruit poppy makers within their post homes and departments.
- d. Post information on "How Veterans Can Make Money by Making Poppies" in local VA homes, medical centers, clinics, nursing homes, and other community organizations that house and care for veterans

- e. Using the image and story of the Flanders Field poppy to educate people about the sacrifices of our military service members helps us raise awareness of The Legion Family.

Allowable Uses of Poppy Funds:

1. For the rehabilitation of Veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917.
2. For the welfare of the families of Veterans of the above named period
3. For the rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals.
4. For the welfare of veterans, active military personnel, and the families of Veterans and active military personnel of the above-name period where financial and medical need is evident.
5. For the purchase of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy fund.
6. Sponsoring Veterans on an Honor Flight.
7. Veteran Food Pantries.

2025-2026 National Poppy Program Awards

Deadlines and Submission Requirements

All award submissions must include a narrative (either a PDF or Microsoft Word document) explaining why the department or unit you're nominating should receive the award. You may also upload other supporting documentation that will give the committee a full picture of the important mission work your department or unit has accomplished this year. These files can be photos (JPG, JPEG or TIFs -- no larger than 14MB) or PDF documents. If you have more than three supporting files, please email the committee email address listed in the form.

National Awards Form Link: <https://www.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form>

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Poppy Program (per division) All unit entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1. Note: You will receive a confirmation when your award is submitted.

Department Award: Best Department Poppy Program (per division) All department entries must be submitted via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1. Note: You will receive confirmation when your award is submitted.

Little Miss Poppy

More information on National Little Miss Poppy Contest:

<https://member.legionaux.org/Member/Awards/Little-Miss-Poppy-Contest>

Poppy Poster Contest

Rules and cover sheets for schools can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/5ett2fh6> Please reach out to Katie if you have any trouble accessing this folder. The same materials can be found on the national website: <https://www.legion-aux.org/national-poppy-poster-contest>

Questions, Comments, Concerns

Please reach out to Katie if there are any resources you want for your unit that are not mentioned here. Anything requested will go to this link for everyone to share: <https://tinyurl.com/5ett2fh6> Things will be added throughout the year, so keep an eye on that folder for new stuff throughout the year.