



2019-2020 Program Action Plan ***CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS (Governing Documents)***

Chairman
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Historical amendments were made to the National American Legion Auxiliary Governing Documents at the August, 2019 National Convention held in Indianapolis, IN. Anytime the National Governing Documents change, that means that **ALL** subsidiary organizations must change; more specifically, Department, District and Unit levels.

I fully comprehend that members shudder when they hear, “Constitution and Bylaws”. Governing documents are basically legal documents. The general population is not knowledgeable in that area resulting in discomfort; which is understandable.

The Constitution and Bylaws program informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed and updated documents, as well as policies and procedures at ALL levels of the organization. This program would be more properly named Governing Documents, since it consists of the adopted Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, Finance Rules, Unit Handbook, and Department Operations Guide. Our Governing Documents are the foundation for governance for our Department, Districts and Units. Preparing and adhering to updated Governing Documents will ensure a more successful organizational process and provide the structures to follow at ALL levels.

I know that in reality, there are those who would prefer not to ever hear about governing documents, there are some who do not want to be bothered by governing rules, and there are some who operate however they want to. It is the responsibility of all members, but especially those holding leadership roles, to be knowledgeable of the Governing Documents. You are expected to operate within the parameters of the ALA governing documents; to do otherwise could lead to dire consequences. If you know the rules and follow the rules, should someone file a complaint and bring disciplinary action against you, you will normally be fine. It is a different story, though, when people are either ignorant of the Governing Documents or elect to disregard them and operate outside the parameters set forth in those documents.

When properly written, reviewed, updated and followed, our Governing Documents serve us well and help strengthen our organization through clarification of roles and responsibilities. This in turn, creates an atmosphere that allows goodwill to develop and grow. They are our “How To: manual,

Once your Unit / District governing documents have been amended, please send them to me for review. I am available to answer questions or lend guidance as you work through your amendment process.



I am asking each District President to provide a member from his or her District to serve on this Committee.

Please remember that members may propose changes to the Department Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. There is a hierarchy that is observed to accomplish this:

1. A member of a Unit presents a motion containing amendment to their Unit that a resolution be presented to their District membership for adoption. Once that Unit adopts the proposed motion, the Resolution is prepared and sent to the District Secretary. Ideally, this should be done early enough for the Secretary to include in the Call to the next District Convention.
2. Sometimes during the course of a District Convention a Resolution is submitted to the District Resolutions Committee. The Resolutions Committee presents the proposals to the District meeting attendees. If the Resolution is adopted by the District, the District Secretary is to submit the Resolution to the Department Governing Documents Chair.
3. The Department Governing Documents Chair submits to our Department Headquarters all Resolutions prior to the time the Call to Department Convention is sent out. This gives Units time to give thought to how they wish to respond.
4. At the Pre-Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee meeting, the Committee will review and discuss each one. A decision will be reached as to whether or not the Committee recommends or does not recommend that the Resolution be adopted. When the Resolution is presented to the Convention Body, the Committee should provide information to support their recommendation. Keep in mind, that just because the Committee does not recommend that a Resolution be adopted does not mean that it should not be presented to the Convention Body and voted on by the Body.

Resolutions must be submitted to the Chair no later than April 15, 2019.

Governing Document Reporting

Annual reports from Units and Districts may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Please submit a written narrative (a story told in your words) of what your Unit or District has done to write, review and update your Governing Documents. The reports may be either mailed to me through the US Postal Service, or e-mailed to me. The report should be in my hands no later than May 1, 2020

Resources:

ALAforveterans.org
Unit Handbook
Department / Unit Operations Guide
Department Support Tools – ALA Governing Documents
How to Amend, Handle, Report
Unit Support Tools – Guidelines for Unit Standing Rules
How to Write a Resolution
How to Write Standing Rules
Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (Latest Edition)

Attached to This Plan of Action:

How to Write a Resolution
Sample Resolution
How to Write Standing Rules
Template – Unit Constitution and Bylaws