



2019-2020 Program Action Plan

PUBLIC RELATIONS

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What is the Public Relations program and why do we have the program?

- Public Relations promotes who we are, what we do, and why we matter.
- Through the 2014-2019 ALA Centennial Strategic Plan, Public Relations promote who the Oklahoma American Legion Auxiliary are by:
 - Goal 5- strengthening our brand through awareness, recognition, promotion, and internal/external marketing.
 - Goal 1- make us appeal to potential members who will recognize our common goal of helping veterans, service members, and their families.

What can American Legion Auxiliary members do?

- With the American Legion, Build Brand Loyalty, promote a positive image of the American Legion Auxiliary by supporting and promoting the efforts of the ALA Centennial Strategic Plan Goal 5.
- Use a variety of public relations materials and resources available online.

What are some ideas for ALA members to consider in promoting the ALA?

- Give an Auxiliary magazine gift subscription to your local library and doctors' offices. See the subscription form at the end of the program.
- Distribute ALA brochures and posters in the community at libraries, job fairs, medical facilities, community events, post homes, etc.
- Print brochures online from the PR/Marketing Resources section at www.ALAforVeterans.org or order them from your department secretary.
- Wear your officially branded ALA apparel and "Honor Their Service" button when out and about. Button order forms are available at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Share your unit's centennial information and events on your personal social media accounts.
- Be prepared to answer when asked who the Auxiliary is, what we do in your community, and why we matter.



What can American Legion Auxiliary Units do?

- Reach out to local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations to promote centennial events.
- Utilize social media accounts to promote centennial celebrations.
- Hand out materials such as the ALA at a Glance brochure, American Legion Family membership brochure, ALA youth programs brochure, and the ALA membership application at local centennial events.
- Community open house – Invite residents of your local town or city for a good old-fashioned party. Be sure to have membership brochures visible and available as takeaways. A community event for the public is a great way to recruit new members, volunteers, or donors.
- Ask your town mayor, city council, or chamber of commerce to proclaim an American Legion Auxiliary centennial day. A template for a proclamation is included in this media toolkit.
- Host a dinner or dance at your American Legion post home.
- Host a community festival. Invite vendors in the community to set up booths.
- Organize a centennial blood drive, canned-good, or toy drive.
- Host a birthday party.
- Invite members to a crafting event.
- Ask local businesses to let your unit create a window display. The display can contain historical items and pictures related to your unit and the community. Or you can paint a display on the windows.
- Host a centennial tea. Make it a recruiting event by inviting potential members.
- Volunteer to host a cleanup day at a local park. Wear ALA branded t-shirts so others know who you are. Host a centennial picnic. Invite families from your unit, your post, and the community. Create old-fashioned games for families to play. Wear your branded clothing and hang banners in celebration of the 100th.
- Create a centennial display booth at county fairs or other community events. Have members take shifts at the booth to answer questions and tell visitors who we are, why we matter, and what we do.
- Have a float in a parade, or have members carry a banner in a parade and toss out candy.
- Plant a centennial garden. Consider doing this at your post home in a community garden.
- An antique car or military vehicle show stretching back to the founding of your post.
- A historical pageant or dramatic presentation, with re-enactors performing different events in your post's history.
- An open house at the post, with historical artifacts on display.
- An assembly, with guest speakers talking about the ways in which the local post has influenced their lives.
- An outdoor carnival with children's activities, food trucks and music.
- A centennial dinner at the post.
- A ceremony at a cemetery, memorial or monument.
- An American Legion birthday party, for the post, the national organization or both.



- A U.S. Flag event (etiquette lesson, folding procedure, retirement ceremony, honor guard, etc.)
- A career fair for veterans and their families.

What can American Legion Auxiliary Departments do?

- Compile a list of media contacts for distributing department news. Step-by-step instructions are available in the *ALA Public Relations Guide and Tips for Volunteer Recruitment* toolkit, available in PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Be familiar with Auxiliary public service announcements (PSAs), brochures, and other ALA publications. Educate units on centennial materials available and how to obtain them. View the compilation of resources in the *ALA Marketing Resource Guide*, available in the PR/Marketing Resources in the Members Only section at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- Monitor news coverage to share with department and national leadership, if needed.
- Promote local posts centennial celebrations and events.

Public Relations Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

Taking the time to celebrate ALA's Centennial Celebration and share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission this year is our goal! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just two simple steps to add your part to our national birthday celebration and success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Public Relations committee contact information may be found on the Public Relations chairman, www.OKAmLegionAux.org.

A. Member Award: ALA Brand Ambassador

- Deadline: May 1, 2020
- Sent to department chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

B. Unit Award: New Website or Social Media Account Launch

- Deadline: May 1, 2020
- Send to department chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.



C. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program (per division)

- Deadline May 1, 2020
- Send to your department chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

D. Unit Award: Active PR TEAM Centennial Celebration (per division)

- Deadline May 1, 2020
- Send to department chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.
- Best narrative (with photos and media results) to convey the work a unit public relations team (of no less than 3 members) conveying the Centennial Celebration as unit activities are publicized.

E. Department Award: Best Department Public Relations Program (per division)

- Deadline June 1, 2020
- Send to your national division chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

F. Centennial Award: All state programs.

- Deadline May 1, 2020
- Send to American Legion Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma *President* Jody Chisolm postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

Public Relations Reporting:

Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each Unit Public Relations chairman is required to submit a narrative report by December 21, 2019 to the department Public Relations chairman.

Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each Unit Public Relations chairman is required to submit a narrative report by May 1, 2020 to the department Public Relations chairman, . Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines for report submissions at the department level.



Special 100th Anniversary History Program Facts:

Public relations has always been an important part of the American Legion Auxiliary. From word of mouth to personal phone calls and letters to unit bulletins, public relations has been utilized many ways over these hundred years. ALA members have been using PR at the grassroots level since its inception in 1919. One example of unit public relations is distributing poppies. As members encouraged the public to remember those who sacrificed for our freedom, it also spread awareness of the ALA. This same concept is true today for each and every program. Each unit can use public relations to increase awareness on programs and events. These PR efforts can get the units powerful positive results.

At the national level, public relations has been used to connect members across the country. In 1927, the national magazine was first printed and named the American Legion Auxiliary Bulletin. Over the decades, the national magazine has changed names and morphed into different sizes, but today Auxiliary magazine is an award-winning quarterly publication. Public Relations tools have changed over this last century and today's ALA media includes Auxiliary magazine, the website www.alaforveterans.org, the ALA Blog www.alaforveterans.wordpress.com, YouTube, and social media pages on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, and LinkedIn. This also includes more than a dozen Facebook groups. These same opportunities are available for the Units to utilize in today's fast-paced lifestyles. Keeping both members and the public aware of what the unit is doing will result in pride in membership and more involvement.

As we celebrate our 100 years, units should look ahead on how to strengthen their unit for the next century. Putting public relations practices to use at the local level can lead to a strong future of service, growth of both membership and program strength and assure another hundred years of service. We encourage PR teams to work with each unit program chairman as the unit hosts or participates in events.