

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF OKLAHOMA
GOVERNING DOCUMENTS COMMITTEE

PLAN OF ACTION

Administrative Year 2026–2027

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I. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Governing Documents program informs and educates members on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed, and updated governing documents, policies, and procedures at every level of the organization. Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, and adopted policies are the basis for governance of the Department, Districts, and Units. Preparing and adhering to current documents ensures a successful organizational process, protects member rights, and provides the structure needed to carry out our mission of Service Not Self.

This Plan of Action sets the Department Chair’s work plan for the 2026–2027 administrative year. It follows the comprehensive governing-document revisions adopted at the 2026 Department Convention and focuses on implementation, education, conformity with National documents and Oklahoma nonprofit law, and readiness for the next convention amendment cycle.

II. OBJECTIVES FOR 2026–2027

- Place the adopted 2026 Department Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, and related policies in the hands of every District and Unit.
- Educate members on the difference among Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, and policies, and on how each may be amended.
- Assist Units and Districts in reviewing their own governing documents for conflict with National and Department documents, including automatic National conformity provisions.
- Operate a clear, timely, and fair Department amendment process consistent with the first-Friday-in-April submission deadline and first-Friday-in-May distribution requirement.
- Support parliamentary regularity at DEC meetings, District meetings, and Convention, consistent with RONR (12th Edition) and Department documents.
- Maintain accurate files of Unit and District governing documents submitted to Department.
- Submit year-end reports that reflect actual work done, not activity for its own sake.

III. THEME FOR THE YEAR

Know the Rules. Use the Rules. Teach the Rules.

A governing document that sits unread cannot protect members, officers, or the mission. The work of this year is not another wholesale rewrite. It is implementation, education, and disciplined maintenance of what the Convention adopted.

IV. PRIORITY WORK AREAS

A. Implementation of the 2026 Adopted Documents

- Confirm that the official adopted text (Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, and separately adopted policies) is posted, dated, and available to Units, District Presidents, and DEC members.
- Coordinate with the Department President, Secretary/Office Director, and Parliamentarian so that DEC agendas, convention planning, and official correspondence cite the current documents.

B. Education and Training

- Encourage each Unit to review its Constitution and Bylaws at least once during the year and its Standing Rules as often as needed—without changing documents merely for the sake of changing them.
- Remind Units and Districts that their documents may not conflict with National or Department governing documents, and that National changes should be incorporated under the Department's automatic-conformity provisions where applicable.
- Make Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th Edition) and the ALA Unit Guide Book known as working tools, not shelf ornaments.

C. Unit and District Document Review

- Request that each Unit and District send a current, dated, signed copy of its Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules to the Department Governing Documents Chair for file.
- Review submitted documents for obvious conflicts with National/Department documents, missing amendment articles, unclear officer duties, and Standing Rules that attempt to amend Bylaws.
- Return written, courteous comments—not as a “veto,” but as assistance. Department does not rewrite a Unit's documents; the Unit membership adopts its own.
- Keep a simple tracking log: Unit/District name, date received, date reviewed, status (current/needs update/no document on file).

D. Department Amendment Cycle

Proposed amendments to the Department Constitution or Bylaws must be submitted to the Department Governing Documents Chair by the first Friday in April, on the prescribed amendment form, and must contain a rationale. The Chair shall bring proposed amendments to the Governing Documents Committee for review, deliberation, and compilation; thereafter they shall be forwarded by the first Friday in May to the Department Secretary/Office Director for distribution to Units and DEC members at least thirty (30) days before the convening of Department Convention.

- Publish the amendment form and instructions no later than January.
- Acknowledge every proposal in writing and record the date received.
- Committee review is for completeness, conflict with superior documents, clarity, and proper form—not to suppress a proposal that is in order.
- Compile proposals for Convention consideration with existing language, proposed language, and rationale in a readable format.
- After Convention, verify that adopted amendments are correctly incorporated into the official text and dated.

E. Committee Organization

The Department Governing Documents Committee consists of the Chair, appointed by the Department President and confirmed by the DEC, and one member appointed by each District President so that every District is represented. The purpose of the Committee is to inform members about having proper governing documents at all levels and to carry out the amendment and review duties assigned by Department documents.

- Obtain the name and contact information of each District C&B representative early in the year.
- Communicate with the Committee at least quarterly (email is sufficient) on deadlines, reviews in progress, and training materials.
- Use District representatives as the first line of help to Units in their Districts.

F. Parliamentary Support and Governance Hygiene

- Be available to the Department President and DEC for questions of interpretation of Department documents. Interpretation is not legislation; when the document is silent or ambiguous, say so.
- Discourage “custom” that contradicts written rules. If a practice is needed, put it in Standing Rules by proper vote.
- Keep C&B work separate from disciplinary fact-finding. The Chair may explain what the documents require; the Chair does not serve as prosecutor, defender, or finder of fact in a member-conduct matter unless the documents specifically assign that role.
- Maintain records of the year’s work and turn them over to the successor and Department Headquarters at year end.

V. REPORTING

Reporting exists to show whether Units and Districts actually have current governing documents and whether members were helped to use them. Keep it factual.

- Unit C&B Chair’s report to the District C&B Chair (or District President if no District C&B Chair is appointed). Suggested Unit deadline: April 1.
- District C&B Chair’s compile Unit information and report to the Department Chair. Suggested District deadline: April 15.
- Department Chair submits a year-end narrative report to the Department President as required, and a Convention report to the body.

Unit reports should answer, at minimum:

- Does the Unit have a written Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules? Date last reviewed or amended?
- Were documents compared to current National and Department documents this year?
- Was a copy filed with Department?
- What training or discussion on governing documents occurred (meeting program, workshop, new-officer briefing)?
- How many members participated? What help is still needed?

VI. CHAIR’S COMMITMENT

The Governing Documents Chair will work impartially, answer questions from the documents rather than from preference, meet the amendment calendar, keep the Committee informed, and turn over complete records at

the close of the administrative year. The goal is not more paper. The goal is a Department, Districts, and Units that can govern themselves fairly, lawfully, and in a manner worthy of the veterans we serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Charmane Miller

Department Governing Documents Chair

American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Oklahoma

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