



American Legion
Department of Maine
Membership Plan
2024-2025

“Operation Outreach”



BUILDING OUR LEGION FAMILY
Past, Present, Future

2024-2025 Membership Plan

This year our focus is going to be on member retention. While I was recovering from my open-heart surgery, I had a lot of time available on my hands. I used that time to call on renewals for each post. I probably called about 950 phone numbers. One of the most eye-opening things I learned was that we don't keep things simple. We do not collectively call our members and see how things are with them. We don't ask if we can help them with anything, and we don't ask them to renew their membership and tell them why it is important that they do. Now before anyone says anything, I am speaking as a whole and not individually as I do know that there are posts that do this and do it well. Honestly, we could all do better and if those posts that are great at it would share that information on with other posts, we could all be more successful together. If we are on a mission to make a difference in veteran's lives, we should be reaching out more and showing our members how important we are to each other.

Our organization needs YOU to make this membership year a success. As you know we are stronger together and need to work to make this happen. With streamlined education, stronger retention ideas, and hard work, we can continue our growth from within, and in the process gain new members.

Membership is not one person's responsibility! If you carry a Legion Membership card, membership is your responsibility as well. If each of us takes on this responsibility to ensure our fellow members are not forgotten or they don't feel like just a number, we will retain members. They will begin to see their importance in the post. We shouldn't be talking about membership during our Buddy Checks. Make those calls special and learn how we can help our members better. Make membership calls separate.

Last membership year we ended up in **24th** position at the National level. This should show us all that while we did well, there is always room to grow and improve.

Every good idea should have some basic framework to support it. Retention should be a program rather than a campaign. Campaigns are fine for short-term goals, but retention is a year-round priority and needs to be planned, so you want an ongoing

retention program. Any post that is, or wants to be, successful at retention must be able to identify the specific steps it takes to increase its retention rate. In addition to having a series of activities that make up a retention program, your post should be able to identify resources that can be allocated to help implement the program. You can start mapping out a program by using the legion and post calendar. Chances are that the post already has predetermined or reoccurring events and activities. These are good anchor points for a retention program, so leverage what you have. If you can identify large gaps, then start thinking of ways to fill the void.

It is important for members who do get involved to have a good experience during their involvement. Leadership training is becoming one of the best services that organizations can give their members. The skills developed through leadership training are transferred back to the members' Post and District. At renewal time, members will remember where these skills were developed.

Have a retention committee and a new member welcoming committee. There is a need for member involvement in the recruiting process and there should be member involvement in the retention process. When a new member joins, ask someone who is already a member to call the new member. Tell the new member what a good investment membership has been for them and congratulate the new member on making a great decision to join. In as little as 10 seconds, the welcoming member has validated the new members decision to join by making that person feel more welcome at the Legion Post. This is how we retain our members; we make them feel wanted and needed. We show them that we care and that we all matter, that we are all a big family. You just never know when that can come in handy when someone needs it the most. #BeTheOne

Retention: The Key to Membership Is Growth!

I challenge each of you to retain the membership you currently have!

Membership will grow when everyone sees how we care for our own.

It is important that you develop a MEMBERSHIP TEAM to complete tasks and follow up on membership plans. Vice Commanders should be recruiting help from other post members to form a membership committee to spread out the work and allow more outreach.

I want to stress that everyone has a story. If we take the time to talk to members, whether they are expired or current, we will find our shortcomings and ways to improve to gain new members. Utilize the knowledge that we all have. We are a team and there is a lot of experience and expertise that has driven us for over 105 years. This has been passed on year after year and has paved the way for us to all be here right now.

Remember to stay in contact with the new member you sign up. Ensure they feel welcomed and informed. Remember to take them from where they are at with the level of involvement they are comfortable with. It's up to us to retain the new members. The pamphlets "Why You Should Belong", "This Is the American Legion", and "Troop Support" are excellent examples of what you should have when sitting a table for membership. Be ready with applications to sign up new members. Ensure you have membership applications for all prospects of the American Legion Family.

Why do we have a membership plan? Why do we all work so hard to recruit and retain members? Why does this all matter? It matters because of:

VA Benefits Assistance

Accredited American Legion service officers are specially trained to provide expert assistance, free of charge, to veterans and their families. Your membership also helps support American Legion Department Service Officers nationwide who assist veterans in preparing claims and obtaining their full military healthcare benefits through the VA.

A Voice in Our Nation's Capital

The American Legion is the nation's most influential, effective and dependable advocate of veteran affairs fighting for better active-duty pay, improved housing for active-duty families and helping to ensure that the VA's medical system can properly care for veterans.

Monthly Magazine (a \$30 value)

Our nation's leaders speak directly to citizens on the pages of The American Legion Magazine. The American Legion's organizational goals are promoted using the words of talented writers, professional journalists and world leaders.

Family, Camaraderie and Continuing Service Through Community Support

Financial grants are among the ways The American Legion supports its members and families of military servicemembers during times of financial hardship and natural disasters.

MONTHLY GOALS & CHALLENGE IDEAS

September

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 50% by September 11, 2024
2. Communication is the key whether it is by Post Newsletters, E-mail or phone calls, keep your membership informed of the importance of meeting membership target dates. Meeting those dates could mean money for the Department.
3. Attend Fall Conference and have your Post members attend the conference. Fall Conference is normally training on the latest membership tactics, plus learning what works at other Posts within the Department.
4. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership. Buddy Checks are very important. Start by checking on their well-being. Don't make your buddy check calls about membership. There may be a hidden issue with the member that without the phone call it would never be known. **Be The One to check in on any WWII, Korean and Vietnam Veterans.** Once you make contact, update them on the things the Post/Department has been and will be doing in the future. Invite them to join in the fun.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold an Open House/Membership Drive while recognizing Patriots Day on 9/11 or POW/MIA Day on 9/15. Offer snacks! Be ready to sign up new members. Advertise this event in your local paper.
- Write an article for your local paper explaining information on the American Legion history or more current events. Example the Four Pillars, the Pact Act, Be The One, Why You Should Belong.
- Celebrate the Air Force's Birthday by having a meal and birthday cake and invite the community to join you. Remember to have a resource table with membership material and someone to sit at the table and answer questions.
- Plan a Halloween Party, trunk or treat, a Halloween costume party or a special event. Could be for an upcoming holiday or to raise awareness of Be The One.
- Begin working towards October's target of 55%.

October

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 55% by October 16, 2024.
2. Contact 20% of the Post members that have not paid to date. Stress the fact that paying on-line will be quicker.
3. Contact 20% of your DMS expired list of 2021, 2022 and 2023.
4. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership. Buddy Checks are especially important. Start by checking on their well-being. **Do not make your buddy check calls about membership.** There may be a hidden issue with the member that without the phone call it would never be known. Once you make contact, update them on the things the Post/Department has been and will be doing in the future. Invite them to join in the fun.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold a "Trunk or Treat," A Halloween Dance or maybe even a Costume Party
- Ensure there is a membership table at all events with knowledgeable people to sit it. Ensure you have publications and membership applications.
- Reach out and do some buddy checks on any veterans in your community.
- Celebrate the U.S. Navy's Birthday.
- Plan a Thanksgiving Day meal and give options for those who cannot attend. Possibly deliver meals.
- Have a friendly competition with all members in your Post to bring in the most members.
- Begin working towards November's target of 65%.
- Have or plan an Early-Bird Dinner.

November

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 65% by November 14, 2024.
2. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership. Buddy Checks are very important. Start by checking on their well-being. Do not make your buddy check calls about membership. There may be a hidden issue with the member that without the phone call it would never be known. Once you make contact, update them on the things the Post/Department has been and will be doing in the future. Invite them to join in the fun.
3. Call on at least 20% of your unpaid members. Invite them to your Veteran Day events if the call is prior to November 11.
4. Be sure to hold an open house with a membership table set up for any event. Ensure you have members to sit at the table for questions.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold a Veterans Day Ceremony.
- Celebrate the Marine's birthday.
- Plan a Christmas Party
- Celebrate the Marine Corp's birthday November 10th.
- Be The One to check in on any WWII, Korean and Vietnam Veterans.
- Begin working towards December's target of 75%.

December

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 75% by December 11, 2024.
2. Hold a Pearl Harbor ceremony with an open house and membership table. Ensure you have members to sit at the table for questions.
3. Contact an additional 20% of the DMS expired lists from 2020, 2021 and 2022.
4. Contact the names from Post 178 that are in your area zip code.
5. Promote attendance at Mid-Winter Conference in January.
6. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership. Buddy Checks are very important. Start by checking on their well-being. **Don't make your buddy check calls about membership.** There may be a hidden issue with the member that without the phone call it would never be known. Once you make contact, update them on the things the Post/Department has been and will be doing in the future. Invite them to join in the fun.

Monthly Challenge!

- Celebrate the Space Force's birthday
- Celebrate the National Guard's birthday!
- Hold a ceremony to honor Pearl Harbor and the many we lost on December 7th. Acknowledge Pearl Harbor as "a day that will live in infamy". Invite the community.
- Visit veterans in nursing homes.
- Begin working towards January's target of 80%.

January

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 80% by January 15, 2025.
2. Contact remaining members on your Post delinquent list and remind members that their membership has expired and next month they will lose any Legion Insurance Trust (LIT) policy they may have.
3. Conduct Buddy Checks and be sure to ask about how they are feeling, ask them how the Post can help, or if they need anything.
4. Invite all members to your Post Four Chaplains' Ceremony being held next month.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold a meal for all new members. Invite all Legion Family members and community members. Ensure you have photos taken to get information in the newspaper.
- Make/Mail postcards to all unpaid members as a reminder.
- Plan a Valentine's Dance/Ball
- Begin working towards February's target of 85%.

February

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 85% by February 12, 2025.
2. Continuing contacting members on your Post delinquent list.
3. Continue working on the DMS expired list from 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold a Four Chaplains Ceremony inviting the community and all Legion Family members. Provide membership table.
- Plan a gathering to honor Presidents Day.
- Begin planning the American Legion's birthday. Get a committee together to ensure nothing is forgotten. Example: birthday cake, (most local grocery stores will donate towards the event), meal, invite scouts to participate, give a tour of your Post, send an invite to your local paper inviting the community and all members to join you. Most importantly remember membership table and resources. Follow up with a story for the paper.
- Begin working towards March's target of 90%.

March

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 90% by March 12, 2025.
2. Conduct Buddy Checks on or around the American Legions' Birthday.
3. Contact remaining members on your roster who have not renewed their membership.
4. Contact more of the DMS expired list from 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Monthly Challenge!

- Follow through with the planning of an Open House to celebrate the American Legion's Birthday. Make it a huge event with a membership table. Ensure you have members to sit at the table for questions. Publicize!
- Begin publicizing Dirigo State by putting an article in the paper. Send out solicitation letters to help with delegate tuition.
- Hold a Vietnam Veterans Day celebration with a lunch or supper.
- Begin working towards April's target of 95%.

April

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2024-2025 membership target date of 95% by April 9, 2025.
2. Contact remaining members on your roster who have not renewed their membership.
3. Contact remaining members of the DMS expired list from 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold a community supper with proceeds going to support Dirigo State, ensure a membership table is ready with applications, resources, and knowledgeable people to sit at the table.
- Get a group of members to complete a community service event, (some towns hold a community clean-up day, clean up your local Veterans Memorial Park) wear Legion logo shirts and caps. Remember to have membership applications not only for Legionnaires but for their family members as well.
- Begin working towards May's target of 100%. It's hard work but together we can succeed.

May

1. Achieve 100% membership goal target date of May 14, 2025.
2. Complete the follow-up calls or send out postcards for members who have not renewed.

Monthly Challenge!

- Conduct further Buddy Checks and invite all to your Post Memorial Day events. Have an open house/meal with a membership table setup. Ensure you have members to sit at the table for questions.
- Hold a Mother's Day breakfast. If you are able offer a discounted membership to any veteran bringing their mother to the breakfast.
- Hold a Blue Star Banner presentation to mothers of service members.
- Invite veterans and community members to support getting flags out on all veteran's graves. Have membership applications available.
- Plan a 5k race to benefit a local project.

June/July

1. Continue to track 2024-2025 membership through July 2025, 30 days prior to the National Convention.

Monthly Challenge!

- Hold another community service day!
- Celebrate the Army's birthday.
- Do a toll fundraiser. Give out information and membership app to every vehicle that comes through with a veteran plate.
- June 14th is Flag Day! Hold a Dignified Flag Disposal Ceremony. Invite the community and scouts. Provide a meal. Provide history books, pictures and videos of your Posts for all to see. Membership, membership, membership! Ensure applications are available.

Let's put a challenge out there for all Districts. This challenge will end 30 days prior to National Convention in 2025. The winning Districts will be paid at the 2025 Fall Conference.

District Membership Contest

1. Highest District Overall Membership Percentage

1st Place gets \$500 and bragging rights for a year!

2nd Place gets \$250

2. Highest Renewal Percentage

1st Place gets \$500 and bragging rights for a year!

2nd Place gets \$250

Let's all work together to make Team Maine the best we possibly can be. Remember, I don't lead by myself, and you don't lead by yourself, here in the Dept of Maine we all lead, and we do it together! I am sure we have all heard of the Latin word Dirigo, which means I lead, or I direct. This year I would like to introduce another word.

(du-chee-mus)

DUCIMUS

It is a latin word meaning we lead.

Remember, we are stronger together! We are TEAM MAINE

Thank you all for your time and confidence.

Respectfully submitted,

Leroy McKenzie

American Legion Department of Maine, 1st Vice Commander

Membership Chairman