



## **2025-2026 Department of Maine Membership Plan**

Membership is not only one person's responsibility! If you carry a Legion Membership card, membership is your responsibility as well. Our goal this year as in previous years is retention and recruiting new members. 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 stronger retention ideas, streamlined education, and hard work, we can continue our growth from within, and in the process gain new members.

We are implementing a new program this year. A membership team will be formed to assist in recruiting and retaining members to the American Legion. A member of each District will be assigned to this team. The District Commander, Adjutant, or Membership Chair will be on this team and will meet via Zoom at intervals as deemed by the Department Membership Chair. These members will assist Posts in their District to form membership teams and will discuss their progress at their District meetings and report to the Department Chair.

### **Retention: The Key to Membership Is Growth!**

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 the work and allow more outreach. 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 with which they are comfortable. It is up to us to retain the new members. Pamphlets like "Why You Should Belong," "This Is The American Legion," and "Troop Support" are excellent examples of what you should have when siting 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.

I Challenge each of you to retain your membership you currently have. Membership will grow when everyone sees how we care for our own.

**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 especially 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's 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 time of financial hardship and natural disasters.

# **2025 – 2026 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET GOALS**

<b>EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 10, 2025</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>FALL MEETINGS</b>	<b>OCTOBER 15, 2025</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>VETERANS DAY</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 13, 2025</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>PEARL HARBOR DAY</b>	<b>DECEMBER 10, 2025</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>MID-WINTER</b>	<b>JANUARY 14, 2026</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>PRESIDENT’S DAY</b>	<b>FEBRUARY 11, 2026</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>LEGION BIRTHDAY</b>	<b>MARCH 11, 2026</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUTH</b>	<b>APRIL 8, 2026</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>ARMED FORCES DAY</b>	<b>MAY 13, 2026</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>DELEGATE STRENGTH</b>	<b>30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION</b>	

**Targets dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday on that day or at the beginning of that week.**

**The October Target Date is moved a week to allow departments to participate in Fall Meetings without affecting membership processing for that week.**

**Since Veteran’s Day falls on Monday, the November target date will be on a Thursday.**

**To maximize the December renewal notice, the January target date will be on the third Wednesday of the month.**

# THE AMERICAN LEGION

## 2026 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL SCHEDULE

---

### CUTOFF DATES

MAY 14, 2025

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

OCTOBER 15, 2025

DECEMBER 10, 2025

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

APRIL 8, 2026

### RENEWAL MAIL DATES

JULY 1-8, 2025

OCTOBER 4-10, 2025

NOVEMBER 8-14, 2025

JANUARY 3-9, 2026

MARCH 1-8, 2026

MAY 2-8, 2026

---

Transmittals not received by the cutoff date may not prevent a subsequent renewal notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date.

Please note, renewals transmitted and received by the cutoff (which is also National Target Date) will be updated prior to printing renewal notices, assuming they can be successfully scanned. Membership that must be hand-keyed (new members and renewals that cannot be scanned) will take longer to process. Please transmit as early and as often as possible in advance of the Target Dates to help avoid delays in processing.

# Membership & Post Activities Committee

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Strategic Plan

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To increase membership and post development by creating a culture of growth and Community Involvement.

### **OVERALL OBJECTIVE:**

Increase membership progressively over the next five years and beyond using the following strategies; *Be The One*;

*Training/Education/Leadership Development; Communication; Post Development and Revitalization; Membership Recruiting & Retention and Community Engagement. (Resolution 64, Tab 3)*

### **PRIORITIES:**

**BE THE ONE** -Significantly Reduce Veteran & Military Suicide

### ***Tactics:***

1. Training
  - A. Any available training that supports Be the One. (i.e. Face to Fight USAA grant to Columbia University, Light House Project; Identify Risk, prevent suicide.)
2. Encourage departments to develop a Be The One team.
3. Incorporate Be The One in the *Accredited Service Officer's Manual*.
4. Conduct Buddy Checks.
5. Increase our presence on social media platforms on Be The One training.
  - A. Promote what the post is doing for Be The One.
  - B. Incorporate Be The One walks for visibility.
6. Promote the wide dissemination of calling 988 press1, when in crisis.
  - A. Encourage family members to call when they need assistance with their veterans.

**Training/Education/Leadership Development** – To engage, educate and empower. If we do not train and mentor future generations of Legion family members, then there will be no Legion family. Improving knowledge of The American Legion by implementing educational tools and encouraging leadership development at all levels. It's an investment in our future that we must make – we cannot afford not to. (*Resolution 50 and 52 Tab 4*)

**TACTICS:**

1. Implement online training modules and interactive platforms to modernize training methods. (i.e. encourage members to take the Basic Training course.)
2. Establish regular communication with organizations willing to offer training resources and schedule training sessions accordingly.
3. Pair new members with experienced mentors to facilitate knowledge transfer and foster a sense of belonging.
4. Develop a coordinated approach across all levels to provide structured leadership development opportunities.
5. Host regular “Training Tuesday” events to encourage participation and continuity in educational initiatives.
6. Implement a “Train the Trainer” program to ensure consistency and sustainability in training efforts.

**COMMUNICATION** – Ensure dissemination of accurate and essential information to all members and the public. (*Resolution 51, Tab 4*)

**TACTICS:**

1. Utilize all internal media to encourage membership to join us in this five-year membership plan.
2. Encourage departments to develop a media relations team.
3. Communicate The American Legion’s story to the nation’s military.
4. Collect all members’ email addresses to encourage correct timely dissemination of information and any calls to action.
5. Increase PSA in local media channels.
6. Increase presence in social media.

**POST DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION** – Develop new posts, revitalize, or merge existing pots to promote growth within The American Legion. (*Resolution 48, 49 and 52, Tab 4*)

**TACTICS:**

1. Encourage departments to conduct post evaluations to identify areas that may need post revitalization, merging of posts, or new post development. (1<sup>st</sup> year)
  - a. Revitalize posts as identified.
  - b. Encourage the development of new posts where revitalization efforts have not been successful.
  - c. Form new posts in communities with significant veteran populations.
2. Improve and actively engage the community through awareness of post activity in the community.
3. Encourage every post to welcome all members and guests.
4. Identify and use the proper membership tools at all levels to achieve growth.

**MEMBERSHIP RECRUITING AND RETENTION** – Increase membership by developing a comprehensive recruiting and membership retention strategy. (*Resolutions 48, 49, and 51, Tab 4*)

**TACTICS:**

1. Establish membership teams at all levels.
  - a. Develop a retention strategy at every level of the organization. **RETENTION MUST BE THE FIRST PRIORTY TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP.**
  - b. Develop and implement a strategy for transferring members from the department headquarters post into traditional posts.
  - c. Increase emphasis on traditional recruitment. (*Especially at post level*) (i.e. provide recruitment training, utilization of the Legion apps.)
  - d. Evaluate current reward and incentive programs at all levels and make recommendations for change if necessary.
  - e. Encourage all levels to develop a working relationship with their military leaders to off an opportunity to join The American Legion to all eligible members of the Active Military, National Guard and Reserve components.
2. Find the right post to ensure the value of membership for new members is met.
3. Ensure all new members feel welcome and are invited to participate.

4. Having successfully completed the VA claims process, department service officers are encouraged to invite eligible veterans to join The American Legion or renew their membership.
5. Offer participants in The American Legion programs, their families, the opportunity to be part of the American Legion Family, if eligible.
6. Encourage all members to establish their MyLegion account.
7. Emphasize the importance of utilizing MyLegion at post level.
8. Encourage and promote multi-year and PUFL memberships.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** – to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to community, state, and nation.

## **TACTICS**

1. Lead local patriotic ceremonies and events. (i.e. Legion birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag retirement ceremonies, etc.)
  - A. Invite local leaders to attend and participate.
  - B. Work with local youth organizations.
2. Encourage attending other VSO conventions.
3. Promote post activities and include community involvement whenever you can, by inviting the public to attend the activities.
  - A. Hosting open houses
  - B. Have an accredited service officer present at these events.
  - C. Have displays on American Legion programs, i.e. Oratorical, baseball, JROTC, American Scouting, Jr. Shooting, Dirigo State, etc.
  - D. Share the Consolidated Post Report with the local leaders.
4. Create an environment where the post evolves into the community center for veterans and their families.
5. Engage with other community groups or organizations. (i.e. churches, chamber of commerce, other community involved organizations.)



## **Start planning your year's membership plan now.**

### **September;**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025 – 2026 membership target date of 50% by September 10, 2025.
2. Communication is the key, whether by Post Newsletters, E-mail, or phone call, keep your members informed of the importance of meeting membership target dates. Meeting those dates could mean money for the Department.
3. Attend the Fall Conference and promote your Post members to attend the conference. The 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 especially important. Start with 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. **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, 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 publicizing The American Legion Oratorical Contest.
- Begin working towards October's target of 55%.

### **October**

1. Post Commander/Membership Chairs work on the 2025 -2026 membership target date of 55% by October 15, 2025.
2. Contact 20% of the Post members that have not paid to date. Stress the fact that paying online will be quicker.
3. Contact 20% of your DMS expired list of 2022, 2023, and 2024.

4. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership. Buddy Checks are very important. Start with checking on their well-being.

**Don't make your Buddy Check calls about membership.**

5. There may be hidden issues with the member that without the phone call it would never be known. Once you make contact, update them on 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," Halloween Dance/Costume Party
- Ensure there is a membership table at all events with knowledgeable people to sit at it. Ensure you have Publications and membership applications.
- Reach out and do Buddy Checks for 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 on November's target of 65%.
- Have or plan an Early Bird dinner for those who have paid early.

## **November**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025 -2026 membership target dates of 65% by November 13, 2025.
2. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership. Buddy Checks are important. Check on their well-being. **Do not make Buddy Checks about membership.** Once you make contact, update them on the things the Post/Department has been doing or will be doing in the future. Invite them to join in on the fun.
3. Call at least 20% of your unpaid members. Invite them to your Veteran's Day event, if you call before November 11.
4. Be sure to hold an open house with a membership table set up for the event. Ensure you have someone sitting at the table to answer questions.

### **Monthly Challenge!**

- Hold a Veteran's Day Ceremony.
- Celebrate the Marines Corps Birthday on November 10.

- Plan a Christmas Party.
- Be The One to check in on any WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans.
- Begin working on December's target of 75%.

## **December**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025 – 2026 membership target date of 75% by December 10, 2025.
2. Hold a Pearl Harbor Day ceremony with an open house and membership table. Ensure you have members sitting at the table for questions.
3. Contact an additional 20% of the DMS expired list of 2021, 2022, and 2023.
4. Contact the names from Post 178 that are in your area zip code. Once you transfer them to your post, follow up and invite them to your post with a meal or other function.
5. Promote attendance at the Mid-Winter Conference in January.
6. Conduct Buddy Checks on 20% of your membership.

### **Monthly Challenge!**

- Celebrate the Space Force's birthday.
- Celebrate the National Guard's birthday.
- Hold a ceremony to honor Pearl Harbor and the many lives lost on December 7, 1941. Acknowledge Pearl Harbor as "a day that will live in infamy." Invite the community.
- Visit Veterans in nursing homes.
- Begin working on January's target of 80%.

## **January**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025-2026 membership target date of 80% by January 14, 2026.
2. Contact remaining members on your Post delinquent list and remind members that their membership has expired and next month they will lose their Legion Insurance Trust (LIT) policy they 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 on your February target goal of 85%.

## **February**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025-2026 membership target date of 85% by February 11, 2026.
2. Continue contacting members on your Post delinquent list.
3. Continue working on the DMS expired list from 2022, 2023, 2024.

### **Monthly Challenges!**

- Hold Four Chaplains Ceremony inviting the community and all the Legion Family members. Provide membership table.
- Plan a gathering to honor President's 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 the membership table and resources. Follow up with a story for the paper.
- Begin working on March's target goal of 90%.

## **March**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025-2026 membership target date of 90% by March 11, 2026.
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 2022, 2023, 2024.

### **Monthly Challenge!**

- Follow through with the planning of an Open House to celebrate the American Legions' Birthday. Make it a huge event with a membership table. Ensure you have members sitting 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 dinner.
- Begin working towards April's target of 95%.

## **April**

1. Post Commanders/Membership Chairs work on the 2025-2026 membership target date of 95% by April 8, 2026.
2. Contact remaining members on your roster who have not renewed their membership.
3. Contact remaining members of the DMS expired list from 2022, 2023, and 2024.

### **Monthly Challenge!**

- Hold a community supper with the proceeds going to support Dirigo State. Ensure a membership table is ready with applications, resources, and knowledgeable people sitting 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 is challenging work but together we can succeed.

## **May**

1. Achieve 100% membership goal target date of May 13, 2026.
2. Complete the follow-up calls or send out postcards to 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 set up. Ensure you have members to sit at the table to answer questions.
- Hold a Mother's Day breakfast. If you are able, offer a discounted meal to a veteran who brings their mother to breakfast.
- Hold a Blue Star Banner presentation to mothers of service members.
- Invite veterans and community members to support getting flags out on all veterans' graves. Have membership applications available.
- Get in the high schools before school lets out and start early to push the Oratorical Program. This will give students time over the summer to prepare for the Oratorical Contest at your Post.

## **June/July**

1. Continue tracking 2025-2026 membership through July 2026, 30 days prior to National Convention.

### **Monthly Challenge!**

- Hold another community service day.
- Celebrate the Army's birthday.
- Do a toll fundraiser. Give out information and an application to every vehicle with a veteran's plate.
- June 14<sup>th</sup> is Flag Day! Hold a dignified flag disposal ceremony. Invite the community and scouts. Provide meals. Provide history books, pictures, and videos of your Post for all to see. Membership, membership, membership! Ensure applications are available.

Let's all work together to make Team Maine the best we possibly can be.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Michaud  
American Legion Department of Maine  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander