

Department of New York
Strategic Plan for Sustained Membership Growth

Mission Statement: To increase membership and post development by creating a culture of growth.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE: Grow Membership

To obtain the goal of growing our membership progressively over the next 5 years and beyond, utilizing the following strategies: Create Brand Awareness; Communication; Training/Education/Leadership Development; Post Development & Revitalization; Membership Recruiting & Retention.

Priorities:

Create Brand Awareness - Target members & non-members to create awareness of who we are and what we do.

Tactics:

1. Create a tagline that best describes The American Legion. (1st year)
 - Utilize the tagline created by the National Organization.
 - Place tagline on all American legion letter head to include the American Legion Department through the Post, Sons of the American Legion and the Legion Riders.
 - When the American Legion Emblem is used, the tag line must be included.

Create Brand Awareness Continued

2. Recommend development of marketing expertise to lead new marketing focus and development of a comprehensive marketing plan to increase clarity of our brand awareness of the American Legion as the Premier Veterans Service Organization. (1st year)
 - Update & modernize the Department web-site and social media, (Facebook) by a professional Web-Master.
 - Department to issue/publicize the summary of the Consolidated Post's reports.

3. Encourage new corporate partnerships with Veteran friendly organizations that have the same values as The American Legion to increase the benefits of being a member. (2nd year)
 - Encourage partnering with companies that gives priority to hiring Veterans.
 - Partner with Chamber of Commerce's that are not politically affiliated.
 - Associate corporate name with Legion programs; such as Legion Baseball, Boys State and Department Conventions
 - Partner with VA, such as using their Mobile Van Resource Center.

Communication – Ensure dissemination of accurate and essential information to all members and the general public.

Tactics:

1. Utilize all internal media to encourage membership to join us in this 5-year membership plan. (1st year)

Communication Continued

- Communicate information from the Department to Past Department Commanders, Department Vice- Commanders, Districts, Counties and the Posts, via electronic and/or regular mail.
 - All levels of leadership should be held accountable for the dissemination of information.
 - Utilize information gathered from Consolidated Reports.
2. Encourage departments develop a media relations team. (1st year)
 - Web-Master, social media, Department Newsletter.
 3. Communicate The American Legion's story to the Nation's military components, with emphasis on eligibility. (1st year)
 - Encourage a closer relationship with our military installations within our state.
 - Supply military installations with Legion brochures and program information.
 4. Collect all members' email addresses to encourage correct timely dissemination of information and any calls to action. (1st year & continuous)
 - The department should compile an email list of all legion members by requesting individual emails from the Post.

Communication Continued

5. Increase PSA's in local media channels. (ongoing)
 - Insure that all levels of our Department's organization is aware of Public Service Announcements that are available and instruct them how to use them.
 - Encourage Post to form a working relation with local media outlets.

6. Increase presence in social media. (ongoing)
 - Facebook, Web-site.

Increase Training/Education/Leadership Development - Improving knowledge of The American Legion by implementing educational tools and encouraging leadership development at all levels.

Tactics:

1. Encourage departments to develop membership training teams and long term plans for membership growth. (1st year& continuous)
 - Continue to educate the Membership Task Force.
 - Membership Task Force should meet minimally 4 times per year to continue developing the membership plan, and to follow up on progress of the Districts, Counties and Posts.
 - Encourage Mentoring.

2. Recommended meeting dates for the Membership Task Force:
 - Department Convention, December (Albany), Mid-Winter & Hill Day.

Increase Training/Education/Leadership Development Continued

3. Encourage growth of the LEAD Program, ALEI and Department Legion Colleges. (1st year& continuous)
 - The Department to make available the information on the LEAD program & ALEI to the counties.
 - The Department to continue to promote our Legion College.
 - Encourage the District Vice-Commanders to attend the National Membership workshop.

Post Creation, Development & Revitalization- Develop new posts, revitalize or consolidate existing posts to promote growth within The American Legion.

Tactics:

1. Encourage Departments to conduct post evaluations to identify areas that may need post revitalization, consolidation or new post development. (1st year)
 - a. Revitalize posts as identified.
 - Encourage Post to do a self-assessment using the Post/Community Audit
 - Encourage Identified post(s) to use Mylegion.org to assist in increasing membership.
 - b. Encourage the development of new posts where revitalization efforts have not been successful.
 - Contact County Commanders for input to develop a new post in their area.
 - Develop a team of 2-3 interested legionnaires to form new posts.
 - Determine why existing post failed.
 - Contact department for delinquent and holding post list.

Post Creation, Development & Revitalization Continued

- c. Form new posts in communities with significant veteran populations.
 - Develop a team of 2-3 interested legionnaires to form new posts.
 - Use myLegion for delinquent and post 1 list.
 - Develop Cyber post. Social media!

2. Improve community awareness of your post by being active in your community. (1st year)
 - Create and maintain a public relations position at your post.
 - Inform the local media of Posts accomplishments.
 - Project a positive image.
 - Department to make available the CPR's summary report to the posts, to utilize this information for dissemination to the local community, to increase the positive image of the American Legion.

3. Encourage every post to welcome all members and guests. (1st year)
 - Be a friendly post.
 - All post to have a new member initiation.

4. Identify and utilize the proper membership tools at all levels to achieve growth. *See appendix.*(1st year)
 - Encourage Post & Counties to enroll in MyLegion.org
 - Highly recommend that all District/County/Post Commanders and Membership Chairpersons attend the Department Membership Workshop in their area.

Membership Recruiting & Retention - Increase membership by developing a comprehensive recruiting and membership retention strategy.

Tactics:

1. Establish membership teams at all levels. (1st year & continuous)
 - a. Develop a retention strategy at every level of the organization. **RETENTION MUST BE THE FIRST PRIORITY TO INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP.**
 - Keep the lines of communication open.
 - Reach-out to the delinquent members.
 - Department Task Force to develop the guidelines for the post membership teams.
 - Establish permanent membership chairperson for post continuity.
 - Develop an elevator speech that everyone can utilize for retention and recruitment.
 - b. Develop and implement a strategy for transferring members from the Department headquarters post into traditional posts.
 - The County conducts mini revitalizations.
 - District revitalization is conducted with the assistance of National Staff.
 - c. Increase emphasis on traditional recruitment.
 - *Just ask*, make personal contacts.

Membership Recruiting & Retention Continued

- d. Evaluate current reward and incentive programs at all levels and make recommendations for change, if necessary.
 - Continue all reward and incentive programs in place as established in the Department Membership Award Manual.
 - The Membership Task Force will review this program annually and recommend changes as necessary.

- e. Encourage all levels to develop a working relationship with their military senior leaders to offer an opportunity to join The American Legion to all eligible members of the Active Military, The National Guard & Reserve Components. *see appendix*
 - Encourage County and Post to contact Military Installations in their area and form a working relationship to increase awareness of the American Legion.

2. Ensure all new members feel welcome and are invited to participate. (1st year & continuous)
 - Be a friendly Post; make that new member feel welcome.

3. Continue to enhance the membership renewal process.
 - Encourage Post to submit the transmittals in a timely manner.
 - Encourage Post to enroll in Mylegion.org

Membership Recruiting & Retention Continued

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.
 - Encourage Service Officers to provide membership eligibility information **after** the Veteran's claim has been processed.

5. Offer participants in The American Legion programs, and their families, the opportunity to support such programs through membership in The American Legion Family, if eligible.
 - Encourage all Post to inform the participants and their families, of the eligibility requirements to be a member of the American Legion Family.