

The American Legion

Department of New York



2026-2027

Membership
Program Manual

72,100 Membership Goal

**The American Legion
Department of New York**

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TBA
First, Second, Eighth, Ninth
District Membership

2026 Department Target Dates

September 3, 2026	50%
October 7, 2026	55%
November 5, 2026	65%
December 2, 2026	75%
January 6, 2027	80%
February 3, 2027	85%
March 3, 2027	90%
April 7, 2027	95%
May 5, 2027	100%
June 15, 2027	Department Convention Call

2027 Direct Renewal Cutoff Dates

Must be Received at Dept. by	In Order for Dept. to get to National by	National Starts Mailing Notices for those whose Dues were Not Received by the Cutoff Date (In Alphabetical order by Dept.)	Result
September 3, 2026	September 10, 2026	October 3-9, 2026	If dues not rec'd at Dept. by 9/3/26, members get notices in late October, Mail by early August
October 7, 2026	October 14, 2026	November 7-13, 2026	If dues not rec'd at Dept. by 10/7/26, members get notices in late November, Mail by mid-Sept.
December 2, 2026	December 9, 2026	January 2-8, 2027	If dues not rec'd at Dept. by 12/2/26, members get notices in late January, Mail by early Nov.
February 3, 2027	February 10, 2027	March 2-9, 2027	If dues not rec'd at Dept. by 2/3/27, members get notices mid-March, Mail by early January
April 7, 2027	April 14, 2027	May 1-7, 2027	If dues not rec'd at Dept. by 4/7/27, members get notices in late May, Mail by early March

The above cutoff dates are the dates that membership cards MUST be received at Department Headquarters in order to count toward the listed target, count toward Department Convention awards, or for the member not to receive the next renewal notice.

CUTOFF DATE IS THE RECEIPT DATE AT DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

2026– 2027 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP
TARGET DATES

EARLY BIRD/ NEF KICKOFF	SEPTEMBER 10, 2026	50%
FALL MEETINGS	OCTOBER 14, 2026	55%
VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 12, 2026	65%
PEARL HARBOR DAY	DECEMBER 9, 2026	75%
MID-WINTER	JANUARY 13, 2027	80%
PRESIDENTS DAY	FEBRUARY 10, 2027	85%
LEGION BIRTHDAY	MARCH 10, 2027	90%
CHILDREN & YOUTH	APRIL 14, 2027	95%
ARMED FORCES DAY	MAY 12, 2027	100%
DELEGATE STRENGTH	30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION	

For complete information on the National awards points program, target dates, and information on other important membership goals, see the National Awards Points Program Manual at www.legion.org.

Constitution of The American Legion

Department of New York

Article X: Dues

Section 1. The annual dues paid to the National, Department, District, and County Organizations shall be collected by each Post and expeditiously forwarded to the Department Organization of The American Legion. Annual dues forwarded to the Department shall be an amount payable to the Department as approved by a previous Department Convention in addition to whatever amount is required to be paid to the National, District, and County Organizations on account of its members; of this sum, an amount will be determined by a previous Department Convention mandate and that sum to be placed in the Department Rehabilitation Fund and used for that purpose only. The Department Organization shall pay to the National, District, and County Organizations whatever sum is required for each individual member. The minimum annual dues of individual members to be charged by each Post shall be the amount as herein above required by the National and Department Organizations, and in addition thereto, any amount charged as dues by an intermediate body between the Post and the Department of New York. The Department Organization shall expeditiously forward to the District and County Organizations whatever sum is required for each individual member transmitted by their respective intermediate organizations.

Section 2. All annual dues shall be payable in advance on August 20th of each year, and in any event shall be due by January 1st of each year.

Section 3. Nothing contained herein shall prevent a District Organization from collecting sums due to it by reason of membership from the County Organizations of which it is composed, in which case the Department Organization shall not be responsible for such sums.

Important Information for You, Membership Chairman

What you as a Membership Chairman can do to help the Membership Department: Please make sure of the following when checking on a member or a transmittal:

Prior to your call, please have the following information available:

1. Member name – correctly spelled
2. Membership ID number
3. Date members' dues were paid or transmitted

The more information available, the better we can assist you.

Post Transfers

If your Post is transferring a member in from another Post and that member has already paid their dues for the current year, please do not send in a membership card for them. All that is needed to transfer is a member data form signed by both the member and the accepting Post. You will not receive credit for this member until the following year when he submits dues to your Post.

Post 0001 and DMS Transfers

Individual Post 0001 and DMS members that have been personally contacted and express a desire to join the local Post may be transferred, however bulk Post 0001 transfers that have been done at a revitalization or from a listing will not be accepted for processing at Department Headquarters until after the A.L. Birthday target date. No member data forms will be accepted at any time without the member's signature consenting to the transfer – any forms received without the member's signature will be returned.

County Membership Chairman Duties

The County Membership Chairman holds a position of extreme importance and responsibility on the Department Membership Team. It is vital that those accepting this position be aware of what these obligations are. The following is an attempt to outline the areas of responsibility that should be met by all County Membership Chairmen to ensure the success of the Department Membership Program.

1. The County Membership Chairman is expected to attend the following:
 - A. Department Membership Workshop in his/her area, usually in August
 - B. Department Mid-Winter Conference, usually in January.
 - C. Meetings of his/her County and District
 - D. It is suggested that, if possible, the County Membership Chairman attend the Department Convention, usually in July.
2. The County Membership Chairman is responsible, in conjunction with his/her County Membership Team, to maintain a flow of information to the various Posts in that County about Membership Programs on the County, District and Department levels. He/She is further expected to identify problem Posts and situations and to address a solution to them.
3. The County Membership Chairman is expected to meet with his/her Membership Team on a monthly basis, preferably at a time other than a regular County meeting. The County Membership Chairman should, additionally meet with the Post Commanders and Post Membership Chairmen on a regular basis, possibly before County meetings, to discuss problems and successes.
4. The County Membership Chairman should visit each Post within the County at least once during the year.

The following are some suggestions for the County Membership Chairman; he/she should not be limited to these but should expand upon them.

1. Be sure your County determines goals for each Post fairly and promptly.
2. Encourage his/her County to have a viable Membership program.
3. Encourage active new member recruitment and renewals of expired members from both local Posts and Post 0001.
4. Insist that each Post transmit dues promptly, regardless of how many.
5. Solicit from each Post: comments, suggestions, criticisms, etc., for the betterment of the Membership Program.

MEMBERSHIP ENHANCEMENT

The Department of New York American Legion's Membership Enhancement program is administered by the ten District Membership Directors, two Area PDC Membership Consultants, and the Department Membership Chairman.

All requests from various Posts or Counties must be sent to the District Membership Director, who will review such requests, and if the proper paperwork (a signed voucher and a copy of all bills, statements and invoices that support the request) is in order, he/she will forward such requests to the Department Membership Chairman.

The Department Membership Committee will meet three times each year to review these requests: Department Convention, Mid-Winter Conference, and Hill Day Membership Meeting; the Department Adjutant will give final approval before any request is honored.

All applicants will be notified of the determination of their request. This will be done within a reasonable amount of time after the committee has met. No approved request will exceed \$250.00.

It will be the District Membership Directors' responsibility to notify his/her District Commander of all requests.

In the following pages you will find some previous requests that have been approved and some that have been denied.

These are guidelines, and the Department Membership Committee asks that all members look and work for innovative ideas for the recruitment of new members and retaining of current members.

PAST APPROVAL REQUESTS

All requests must be submitted on a signed voucher. All necessary paperwork must be attached and forwarded to the Area Task Force Director. All requests must be approved by Department Headquarters before any expenses are incurred.

- A. A cost of up to \$50.00 toward a Department Sergeant-At-Arms Cap. This is for Counties who reach 100% of their membership goal by the end of Department Convention. Receipts for Caps must be in to Department no later than Veterans Day in order to get the reimbursement.
- B. Billboards: The cost of printed matter for Billboards. Printed material can be purchased from CALLAHAN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING, 4 West View Rd, Pittsfield, MA 01201. Cost (if any) for use of billboards will be the responsibility of the Post or County. It is suggested that the Post or County try to get space donated.

- C. Rental space: Such as fair booths, tents for civic affairs, mall space. A copy of a signed contract must be furnished to the committee as well as a letter stating what the space is/was used for.
- D. Public address systems rentals: If used for membership purposes. A signed contract must be presented.
- E. Telephone banks: Requests for this type of membership tool is only approved for delinquent members and veterans who have not joined The American Legion. Highly concentrated veteran population areas: Nassau/Suffolk Counties, Buffalo/Niagara Falls, Albany/Schenectady/Saratoga/Rensselaer Counties. Department approval and guidelines must be met and approved before any phone bank can be utilized.
- F. Cable television ads: A contract is needed and must list the number of projected homes it will reach. Ad must be for membership only. Most cable networks have public broadcast stations that can be used free of charge.
- G. Posters for store fronts: Invoices showing cost of printing and amount purchased. Again, membership must be the theme.
- H. Anything new and innovated that can be used to recruit new members or pick up delinquent members. If you have questions about your new idea, contact your Area Task Force Director.
- I. New membership recruiting door hangers and stand-up posters for use in storefronts. The Department Membership Committee is looking into possibly supplying this item in the future.

REQUESTS THAT WERE DISAPPROVED

- A. Newspaper ads: The result from past experience in various parts of the Department have shown little or no new members at all. The cost vs. the results make it unproductive.
- B. Rental cars: The membership committee is against any Post or County using rental cars in any membership drive, or membership purposes.
- C. Refreshment: No reimbursements are given for the cost of membership breakfast, or dinners or food of any kind. The County or Post sponsoring a membership drive should bear the cost.
- D. Shirts/Jackets: The Committee feels that individuals working for the goal of increased membership should be doing it for their Post/County and not looking for gifts. The National Organization has in effect Gold Brigade (new member recruiter award) Program, with many within the Department receiving these jackets in the past.
- E. Bands/music: If a County or Post is having a membership booth or drive, they should not have to resort to bands to draw a crowd. This cost is not considered membership worthy.
- F. Individual awards/ plaques/ money: Money for these items have been disallowed because the Department and National organization has individual awards already built into their membership programs, such as new member recruiter awards, top recruiter awards on the Post/Department/National levels and the "Gold Brigade" new members awards.

ELIGIBILITY

The Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service Act of 2019 – The LEGION Act – offers American Legion membership eligibility to any U.S. military Veteran who served at least one day of active military duty since Dec. 7, 1941 and was honorably discharged or is serving now.

You are also eligible for membership if:

- Your basic training time was on federal activation orders and during the above period.
- You were federally activated subsequent to and during the period given above.
- Your activations were for training or for missions; check the title and subsection of your activation orders.

Under eligibility guidelines for Legion membership, the term "active duty" as used in our national constitution includes "active duty for training."

However, our guideline further defines National Guardsmen and reservists as eligible under services to federal activation orders Title 10, Subsection 672 or Subsection 12301, created following Desert Storm to replace Subsection 672. In other words, to determine eligibility for service members in the National Guard or reserves, the activation order is the authority line. Non-eligible activation orders are Title 32 for the National Guard and Title 10 Subsection 270 for the reserves.

Space Force

Per Title 36 of the US Code, Chapter 217, Section 21703,

An individual is eligible for membership in the corporation [The American Legion] only if the individual—

(1) has served in the Armed Forces of—

(A) the United States at any time during—

(i) the period from April 6, 1917, through November 11, 1918; or

(ii) any time after December 7, 1941; or

(B) a government associated with the United States during a period or time referred to in subclause (A) of this clause and was a citizen of the United States when the individual entered that service; and

(2) was honorably discharged or separated from that service or continues to serve honorably during or after that period or time.

The United States Space Force was created by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020, signed by the President on December 20, 2019. It became Public Law No: 116-92,

“§9081. The United States Space Force

“(a) ESTABLISHMENT. — There is established a United States Space Force as an armed force within the Department of the Air Force....

(c) SPACE FORCE AS AN ARMED FORCE. — Section 101(a)(4) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting “Space Force,” after “Marine Corps,”.

Thus, as amended, Section 101(a)(4) of title 10, United States Code reads:

(4) The term “armed forces” means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard.

Therefore, as title 10 of the United States Code now includes Space Force as an “Armed Force” and our federally chartered membership criteria uses the same wording [“has served in the Armed Forces.... any time after December 7, 1941”] there are no necessary acts required to extend membership to all who have served or continue to serve in the United States Space Force.