



**American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Michigan
Community Service Guide
2025- 2026**

Community Service Chair

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What is this program, and why do we have it?

The purpose of the Community Service Program is to promote the American Legion Auxiliary's commitment to making our communities better places to live by supporting local service projects. A major outreach program of the Auxiliary since 1926, Community Service also demonstrates our longstanding commitment to supporting the work of American Legion posts and other organizations in aiding with blood drives, first aid and CPR training, child safety programs, support for women in shelters, and disaster and emergency preparedness programs.

The American Legion Auxiliary is well-positioned, due to our history and reputation, to mobilize our communities in support of veterans, service members, and their families. Units and departments should closely examine the needs of their communities and organize programs either of their own initiative or in cooperation with the American

Legion or other organizations to cultivate a patriotic community. Cultivating patriotism in the community involves acknowledging our country's military history, saying "thank you" to veterans and service members, and supporting them with practical and tangible services.

The American Legion Auxiliary is **"Making our communities better places in which to live is something Auxiliary members strive for each day across this country."**

Why do we track hours and money?

Every hour, every dollar that Auxiliary members invest adds up. It not only gives each member a sense of pride in belonging to the organization, but it also allows us to demonstrate our effectiveness to the world. Either a big or a small sum of numbers is added to the collective numbers and is known as an Impact Number.

Impact Numbers proclaim our importance and help make membership in the ALA meaningful. These numbers are also reported to The American Legion, which includes them in its annual report to Congress. **If you aren't sure of your actual numbers, giving an estimate is better than not reporting at all.**

Why do we volunteer?

Auxiliary members are naturally volunteers; we volunteer to make a difference in the lives of others. And yes, one person can make a difference. You are making a difference, and if you doubt that, stop for a moment and reflect on the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and George Washington and how they made a difference. Interestingly, our motivation to make a difference has been defined by Valerie Forgeard in Brilliantio (April 6, 2022):

The true definition of "making a difference" is that which makes the soul feel alive and the inner light shines brightest. The reason we want to "make a difference" is that when we do, we become happier – and often the people around us are happier, too.

So simply put, one reason we volunteer is for the personal benefit that we receive, happiness.

Community Service Calendar Opportunities to Serve

September 11, 2025 - Designated Day of Service

The American Legion Family is dedicated to honoring the victims of the September 11 attacks. Members are encouraged to plan annual patriotic or memorial events in the community on that day of Service. Consider making a pledge to serve others on or around 9/11. You can participate in a volunteer activity or project of which you are already a part and encourage others to join you. ALA encourages its members to share their 9/11 Day of Service pledge on social media sites.

October 25, 2025- Make a Difference Day

National Make a Difference Day is a day to recognize the importance of volunteering and positively impacting communities. It encourages people to participate in acts of kindness, community service projects, and volunteer work. Some examples of projects that have been done in the past include painting a bandshell and planting vegetation at a school. Some say it builds camaraderie, unites communities, extends the importance of volunteerism, and creates lasting, positive changes in the world.

November 22, 2025- Family Volunteer Day

For many volunteers, the family giving season begins the Saturday before Thanksgiving, when the United Way and others across the U.S. celebrate National Family Volunteer Day. Created in 1992, National Family Volunteer Day invites families to use the day to introduce children to volunteering and teach them valuable lessons about compassion and caring.

January 19, 2026 -Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service

In 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (observed on the third Monday of January) as a National Day of Volunteer Service. Instead of a day off from work or school, Congress asked Americans of all backgrounds and ages to celebrate Dr. King's legacy by turning community concern into citizen action.

The American Legion Auxiliary promotes patriotic community service activities and the building of community partnerships. Our service on this day elevates our presence in the community while focusing on the needs of our national heroes.

February 20, 2026- National Caregivers Day

There are many ways to celebrate National Caregivers Day. The most important part of celebrating this date is showing appreciation and thanks to the caregivers you know. You can give gifts and words of gratitude to professional care providers, as well as family caregivers who offer ongoing support.

April 19-25, 2026-National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 by the United States government. Today, the holiday is organized by Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. Community-based organizations across the country celebrate National Volunteer Week in recognition of "the power that volunteers must tackle society's greatest challenges.

National Volunteer Week formalized the recognition of volunteers in our communities. Organizations of all scopes and sizes should take the time to thank our neighbors, strangers, friends, and family who selflessly give their time to help others.

May-National Military Caregiver Month

The month of May is used to honor more than five million military caregivers in the United States. It is important that we pay tribute to those who care for the veterans of our country.

Generally, caregivers are relatives of the wounded veteran. However, sometimes friends, neighbors, and co-workers take on the responsibility as well, this care and assistance provided promotes faster recovery.

This observance raises awareness for both wounded veterans and those who care for them.

May 8, 2026- Military Spouse Appreciation Day,

This appreciation day is traditionally set for the Friday before Mother's Day. This is a day to honor military spouses and recognize the important role military families play in keeping our Armed Forces strong and our country safe.

May 16, 2026- Blue Star Salute Day

It is only natural that The American Legion family should lead the way in organizing an event for the entire community to say “thank you” to a new generation of American veterans and their families.

With history tracing back to the World Wars, a Blue Star Service Banner signifies that a loved one is serving in the Armed Forces. Each blue star represents one family member serving. Banners are available with up to five stars. If the service member is killed or dies while deployed, a smaller golden star is placed over the blue star. Blue Star Banners can be purchased through Emblem Sales. Blue Star Banners can be presented to family members with deployed loved ones year-round without ceremony, or you can hold a Blue Star Salute.

Certificates for service members and family members can also be downloaded from the event planning page of The American Legion’s website. Many of these certificate templates recognize the efforts of the entire Legion Family.

Suggestions to help Units participate in Community Service projects

- Blankets for the homeless
- Christmas gifts for hospitalized children
- Poppies on graves (Mary Rogers last year on Memorial Day with my granddaughters)
- Wreath Across American
- Clean veterans headstones
- Donations to Ronald McDonald House, St. Jude’s and other organizations
- Donate to food banks
- Donate or participate in Relay for Life
- Gift basket for the first baby born on Veteran’s Day
- Participate in parades
- Sponsor blood drives
- Do breakfast for veterans, seniors, the community, and 1st responders
- Drive veterans and seniors to appointments
- Participate in Community Beautification Projects by picking up trash, cutting grass and planting trees and flowers
- Help at senior centers or nursing facilities doing crafts or giving gifts
- Donate and/or participate with Special Olympics
- Adopt a family for Christmas
- Contribute to youth organization
- Donate money so that the homeless can wash their clothes · Have a day to recognize the police, firefighters, and EMTs. · Participate in trunk or treat in your community

Annual Reports and Narratives

UNIT CHAIRMAN sent your narratives and Community Service Unit Report Form to your District Chairman by March 30, 2026.

DISTRICT CHAIRMAN sends the Community Service District Report Form and up to 5 narratives (one/ award) with a **completed Green Sheet for each** to the Department Chairman by APRIL 15, 2026. District Chairman are encouraged to include a copy of all Unit narratives.

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DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

1. The Wilber M. Brucker Cup: to the Unit with the best all-around report.
2. The Lida Murphy Cup: for the greatest number of hours reported on community service programs. Include the number of hours for each event.
****Without a number of hours, the narrative will be disqualified for the Lida Murphy Award. Named for Past Department President Lida Murphy, Northville Unit 14 1937-1938.**
3. The Earl L. Stewart Cup: to the Unit with less than 50 members for the most outstanding Community Service report.
4. The Betty Cline Community Service Citation: to a Unit with over 200 members for a single program that has benefited or assisted their community during the year. *Named for Past Department President Betty Cline, Port Huron Unit 8 1980-1981*
5. The Patricia Jewell Award: For Units under 200 members. For the most outstanding single program that has benefited the community. *Named for Past Department President Patricia Jewel*

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE RECOGNITIONS

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Community Service Program (one per division): All unit entries must be submitted by the District Community Service Chairman with a completed green sheet. Entries must be received by Department Chairman Kim Frazier by **April 15, 2026**.

Unit Award: Best Promotion of American Legion Family Day: Entries must be received by Department Chairman Kim Frazier by **May 15, 2026**. The event can occur on or before May 1, 2026. More than one unit entry per district is permitted.

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