



DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDE 2026-2027

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PURPOSE

Public Relations Committee is to establish and maintain a positive public image of the organization by encouraging ALA members to be visible in their communities through branding and informing the public about the mission of the organization.

GOAL

- Spread the word about the American Legion Auxiliary: A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.
- Promoting who we are and what we do. Strengthen our brand (emblem and name) and let communities know how we make a difference. It also gives information to potential members who will recognize our goal.
- Promote a positive image of the ALA. Encourage members to be visible in their communities through valuable, distinct branding.
- Work with the media at the local level to build a working relationship.
- Share the latest news from ALA volunteer national leadership and ALA National Headquarters.
- To establish and maintain a positive public image. Covering communication, from casual conversation to speaking at a public event.
- Units/Districts help members compile a list of phone and/or email contacts. To help them learn local reporters, radio and TV personalities. Share information about all events. Free publicity is a bonus! Don't forget to say, "Thank You."

WHAT & HOW – Can Members “get the word out”

- Distribute brochures and posters within the community (library, job fair, post office, etc.) Look at www.ALAforveterans.org in the Members Resources section for Brochures that can be printed from.
- Be ready to answer “What is the Auxiliary? What do you do?” Point to activities and events in the community members do (besides helping Veterans) like church events, coat drives, food distribution, volunteering in local schools, and (promoting our programs like Americanism, Children & Youth, Education). Etc.
- One question we should be happy to answer is: Why we matter! Think about your answer and remember everything we (Auxiliary) do in/for our community, state, and nation! A good practice is to carry a few membership applications with you. People walk away with something in their hand!

SOCIAL MEDIA

A MUST in these times for our Auxiliary to Promote Auxiliary events. Facebook – not just your personal account, but a unit, District account including all social discussion forums. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. There is also (X) - formally called Twitter.

REMEMBER: For any of these, especially your personal FB page - BE MINDFUL of what you post on your personal accounts about ALA events. Remember: We (Auxiliary) are non-partisan.

- Subscribe to the ALA eNews and ALA Blog. Units:
- Develop a media contact list for the Units’ use. KEEP IT UPDATED! (Step-by-step instructions are available in the Marketing and Promotional section of the Member Resources section.
- Create/improve and maintain active social media presence for your unit. Social Media/Platforms: Does your unit or district have a social media page?
- These platforms are generally free and can be a useful communication tool. Remember: You are representing the ALA. A “picture is worth a thousand words” and can get your point across or better capture the moment. Be mindful about what you post! ▪ Remember – Do not use “ladies” auxiliary as we are the American Legion Auxiliary.
- Do not handle issues on public media, handle them in person. Branding: Use our wave logo for Marketing, recruiting and fundraising. Marketing, recruiting, and fundraising uses, such as: ▪ Advertising ▪ Apparel (use word mark, above left, for embroidery)
- Business cards, letterheads, email signatures
- Credentials, event badges
- Press releases
- Digital (apps, web, social, PowerPoint presentations)
- Promotional communications (flyers, handouts, etc.)

- Events (signs, backdrops, tents, tablecloths, swag/giveaways) Use our original emblem-logo for official, legal and historical uses. Official, legal, and historical uses, such as: Uniform caps, financial documents, history books, Flags, Legal Affairs, internal manuals and guides, reports and resolutions, awards (option emblem or brand), building signage (option emblem or brand) and formal government communications (option emblem or brand)

DEPARTMENT OF MICHIGAN AWARDS

Press Book Awards

1. Gladys Lee Citation - Unit with the most publicity in a weekly newspaper, substantiated by articles in their Press Book. Entries are judged based on word count.
2. Alma Viergever Citation - Unit, with under 75 members, with the most publicity in a daily, weekly, or monthly paper, substantiated by articles in a Press Book. Entries are judged based on word count.
3. Leslie F. Kefgan Citation - Unit with the most inches of publicity in a daily newspaper, substantiated by articles in their Press Book.
4. Ivy Lee Reinhardt Citation - Unit with the best all-around Press Book.
5. Ada Bogart Citation - Junior Member with the best publicity Press Book.

Press Book Criteria

Material must be prepared in a Press Book (binder) no larger than 12" x 15" on 8 1/2" x 11" pages. The first page of the entry must include the name, address, and phone number of the Unit Chair, name of the Unit and total number of words (or inches, see Kefgan Citation) and pictures in the Press Book. The entry must include a copy of the Unit's Annual Public Relations Report. The name of the newspaper, date and page number must appear at the top of each article. Newspaper articles, bulletins and photographs concerning the Auxiliary and/or Legion Family function/program should be included in chronological order. Photostat copies of articles may be used. The Press Book should tell the story of how the American Legion Auxiliary programs were promoted by the Unit. Do not underline anything! The American Legion Auxiliary and/or the American Legion Family should be included in each article.

Broadcast Awards

1. Kanaby Broadcast Citation - Unit with the best script for either a radio or TV program. Script verification from the radio or TV station with written confirmation from said radio or TV station.

Website Award

1. Marion “Pic” Webster Citation - All Units creating/maintaining a properly branded website.

Newsletter Award

1. Unit “Letter Style” Newsletter - Unit that sends out the best newsletter in the form or a letter to their members.
2. District “Letter Style” Newsletter - District who that sends out the best newsletter in the form of a letter to their members.

“Letter Style” newsletter Criteria:

1. Send one copy each of three (3) issues published between April-March, to be judged by the District PR Chair or President postmarked no later than their deadline.
2. Include a copy of the Unit’s Annual Public Relations Report with entry.
3. Entries will be judged as follows:

a. Unit or District name, number, address, editor’s name	10 points
b. Meeting information (time, date & contact, if needed)	10 points
c. Member information (new members, illness, etc.)	15 points
d. Summary of Unit recently completed projects or activities	10 points
e. Summary of Unit upcoming projects or activities	25 points
f. Auxiliary Programs or Reports	15 points
g. General Appearance	15 points
Total possible points	<u>15 points</u>
Total possible points:	100 points
3. Best Unit Newsletter - Unit with the best newsletter publication
4. Best Unit/Post Joint Newsletter - Unit with the best joint newsletter publication.
5. Best District Newsletter - District with the best newsletter publication.

Newsletter Publication Criteria:

1. Send one copy of three (3) issues published between April-March, to be judged by the District PR Chair or President postmarked no later than their deadline.
2. Include a copy of the Unit’s Annual Public Relations Report with entry.
3. Entries will be judged as follows:

a. Masthead (emblem, name of newsletter, date, editor’s name)	10 points
b. Meeting information (time, place & contact, if needed)	10 points
c. Unit Officers & Chair (list of names by articles)	5 points
d. Member information (new members, illness, birthday, etc.)	10 points
e. Summary of Unit recently completed projects or activities	10 points
f. Summary of Unit upcoming projects or activities	15 points
g. Auxiliary Programs or Reports	15 points

h. Calendar of Events (including Dist. & Dept. Mtgs & Events)	10 points
i. General Appearance	<u>15 points</u>
Total possible points:	100 points

*Items listed as Units should identify Legion or SAL if it's not a joint effort/event.

Unit Public Relations Effort/Event Award

Viola Starkey Citation - Unit with the best narrative, describing their outstanding effort/event that positively projects our image or programs.

Criteria:

1. Article must be written in narrative form, not to exceed 300 words. (Tell your story).
2. Article must describe some outstanding activity pertaining to an American Legion Auxiliary Program or some special event that involved the Auxiliary. The activity must have taken place during the current Auxiliary reporting year. (April 1st – March 31st).
3. The Unit may submit more than one entry in any Reporting Year.

NOTE: For Units submitting for Department Press Book awards or having an active Social Media page, consider also entering for either of the two National Unit Awards listed below.

ALA National Public Relations Committee Awards

National Awards Form Link: <https://www.legionaux.org/NationalAwards-Form>

Please follow the instructions when you submit for awards. Mail or email entries to the Department Chair who will then forward the 1st place winners to the ALA National Division Chair.

Member Award – ALA Brand Ambassador

- Personalized ALA Ambassador Badge. Presented to: One member in each department who achieves excellence in promotion of the American Legion Auxiliary with their use of social media, appearance in public wearing ALA branded apparel, and other activities that showcase the Auxiliary's unique branding through visual identity.
- Materials and guidelines: Documents with action photographs, screen shots, and other evidence of brand promotion activities; Activities must occur between May 1st, 2026, and May 1st, 2027. All entries must be submitted to the department chair via electronic format by 5pm EST on May 1, 2027.

Unit Award - ALA Mission Focused Social Media Account

Presented to: Units with active social media accounts. Must have a maintained account on the mission of the ALA. Encourage postings of VCAF/NVCAF or POW/MIA Awareness. Must conform to ALA Branding Guide. Materials and Guidelines: Documents with screenshots/photos of social media postings.

Social Media URL Unit Award - Most Outstanding Unit Public Relations Program

- One unit in each division that earns media placements in their community
- Materials and Guidelines: Media placements/coverage highlighting ALA mission delivery in three different months (September 1-May 1 of the current administrative year)
All unit entries must be submitted to the Department Chair via electronic form by 5PM (EST) on May 1, 2027.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. www.Alaforveterans.org, our ALA National website for specific Public Relations Program information, as well as award and branding information. The Public Relations Toolkit can also be found there. Under resources, you can download the Branding Guide.
2. <https://www.michalaux.org>, our Department website for general and Public Relations Information.
3. Legion Family Website: www.legion.org/about/american-legion-family
4. Facebook Pages:
 - a. ALA Public Relations is where the National Public Relations Committee Facebook Group is located.
 - b. American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan is where our Department of Michigan's Facebook page is located.

MORE RESOURCES

Even more information on Public Relations can be found on our secure National Website: alaforveternas.org or legion.org/auxiliary. You must sign in to get this information. It is easy to create a sign in, be sure you have your membership ID number to create a sign in.

- Table of contents for the toolkit
- Media Resources Best Practices
- Create Useful Media Lists ▪ Building Relationships with Media
- Promoting Events and Building Engagement using social media
- Media Relations Support Tools
- Local Letter to the Editor
- Letter to the Editor Content Example
- Media Release Example
- Media Release Key
- Event Promotion Tools
- Newsletter Templates
- Optimizing Media Opportunities at Events
- Enhancing Your Volunteer Event with Local and Public Officials
- Recommended Information to include in Event Flyers
- New Volunteer Communication Tools
- Following Up with Advertising Responders by phone
- Enhancing the Volunteer Experience
- Engage New Volunteers Post Volunteers Event
- After Volunteer Event Thank You Letter Content