

**DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI
STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR
SUSTAINED MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**

22 February 2015

Reviewed and updated July 10, 2023

PURPOSE STATEMENT: This plan serves as a linchpin¹ between the Department of Missouri, its Districts, and Posts, and the objectives and tactics of the National Strategic Plan for Sustained Membership Growth.

MISSION STATEMENT: To increase membership and post development by building and supporting a culture for growth.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE:

Increase membership progressively through collaborative tactics employed for the following subject matter:

- Create Brand Awareness
- Communication
- Training, Education and Leadership Development
- Post Development and Revitalization
- Membership Recruiting and Retention

RESULTS: Membership at the end of 2015 was 41463. Membership today (July 10, 2023) is 26904, a decrease of 35%, or over 4% each year.

PRIORITIES:

CREATE BRAND AWARENESS – Renew and reinforce, within our communities and state population as a whole, the favorable impression, and recognition of the American Legion.

TACTICS:

- Promote & sponsor community programs and activities that put The American Legion at the forefront of community awareness.
- Promote Veteran’s awareness and Legion programs to the general public such as Boys State, Oratorical, American Legion Baseball, Scouting, SAL, Flag Education, American Legion Riders, etc.
- Encourage partnerships with veteran friendly organizations that share the same values as The American Legion.

¹ The word "linchpin" is used figuratively to mean something that holds the various elements of a complicated structure together.

RESULTS: COVID pandemic had an adverse impact from 2020-2022, resulting in reduced programs, cancellation of MBS, Cadet Patrol, and reduced programs at Post and community level. National Headquarters has launched the “Be the One” campaign as well as the Indy Car project, increasing Legion visibility and brand awareness. The Legion is a leading member of MAVO. Participation and program for MAVO hosted Veterans Day at the Capitol has decreased.

Tactics Update:

- Original tactics are still valid.
- Increase emphasis at District level on major programs such as Boys State, Oratorical Contest, and Legion Baseball, support and encourage Post efforts.
- Take advantage of National Marketing efforts and material.

COMMUNICATION - Disseminate in a timely manner high quality, accurate and essential information to all Legion members, the community, and sponsors.

TACTICS:

- Develop and maintain a Media and Communications Team,
- Document, Define & Improve Department business processes
- Develop and document Office, Staff, Officer, Committee and Commission Job Descriptions

Internal Communication:

- Maintain personal contact information (address, phone, email) of all Legionnaires for dissemination of Legion communications.
- Utilize teleconferencing and collaborative information sharing technologies when and wherever possible to expedite and improve quality communication.
- Maximize utilization of electronic communications where feasible

External Communication:

- Promote utilization of Department website.
- Establish a relationship with state and local media (television, radio, and newspaper) and promote Legion activities.
- Collaborate Legion activities with community organizations, universities, community colleges, and technical school veteran centers.
- Develop and implement “Out Reach” programs for active duty, guard, and reserve service members
- Utilize social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
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RESULTS: Standard operating procedures have been developed for most Department Committees and Commissions. Publication and mailing of the Missouri Legionnaire newspaper has been limited to two printed editions per fiscal year. Readership of the two online publications of the Legionnaire remains low. Department website has been enhanced. Post Monthly mailing is online. Over 1000 of mailed Missouri Legionnaires are returned each

edition, indicating we have bad addresses for over 3% of our membership. National has ended publication of the Dispatch, and does weekly updates and information by email lists.

Tactics Update:

- Original Tactics remain valid.
- Increase efforts to get more Legionnaires, (individuals, Posts, and Districts), into the digital world.
- Update mailing and email addresses for as many members as possible. Make this a point of emphasis for Post Adjutants.
- Use Buddy Checks to verify contact information.

TRAINING, EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Improve the knowledge of Legionnaires by employing and implementing educational and leadership development tools and training.

TACTICS:

- Empower the Department Training and Education Team with the authority to manage and implement training initiatives.
- Require District, Zone, and Department Officers to take and pass the American Legion Extension Institute
- Provide District members with identified courses of Leadership, Educational and Development training.
- Implement a District and Department mentoring program
- Encourages ALL members (especially Post Officers) to take the American Legion Extension Institute on line course (LEI).
- Promote participation in The American Legion College.
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RESULTS: There have been too few requests for training support from the Department team. They have been underutilized for several years. The Department has had a participant at all recent classes of the American Legion College, we have the resources to implement a Department training program.

Tactics Update:

- Original Tactics remain valid.
- Encourage or perhaps require Zones to schedule training for Post Commanders, Adjutants, and Service Officers each year.
- Provide training for Post Commanders and Adjutants, as well as training on MyLegion at the Fall Conference. Expand training for District Commanders and Adjutants as needed.

REVITALIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND POST CREATION

Develop new Posts, revitalize, or consolidate existing Posts, to promote membership growth.

TACTICS:

- Develop revitalization teams within each district.
- Conduct Post evaluations to determine revitalization needs.
 - Post self-assessment.
 - Post Responsibility Audit form
 - Post membership.
 - Mylegion.org data and reports.
- Conduct community assessments to determine new Post creation or consolidation.

RESULTS: Only one new Post has been opened in the past 5 years. Three Posts have been consolidated. Thirteen Posts have been closed. Revitalizations, when conducted have been successful, but too few have been held, and are often scheduled only when the National Vice Commander visits. Membership is down 35% since 2015.

Tactics Update:

- Original Tactics remain valid
- Emphasize Revitalization Team development at District Level. Ensure teams know how to access and use the resources on myLegion.
- District Commanders assist Posts in self assessment, or conduct Post analysis if Post leadership is unable or unwilling to do so if Post performance warrants review.
- Schedule and HOLD one revitalization per Zone as a minimum each year.

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITING AND RETENTION

Develop and implement a recruiting and retention plan.

TACTICS:

- Retention
 - Plan, develop and implement a membership retention strategy.
 - Create a District membership team.
 - Ensure Districts and Posts have access to mylegion.org accounts.
 - Promote participation in Membership awards program.
 - Create a new member sponsorship program.
 - Annually perform 100% membership appreciation visitation (in person or telephone).
- Recruitment
 - Develop a partnership/relationship with Whiteman AFB, Fort Leonard Wood and Marine Corp Mobilization Command service - and family members to afford the opportunity for membership to the American Legion family.

- Require Department, District, and Post Service Officers to participate in military job fairs, VA health fairs, and military open houses, etc.
- Encourage Department Service Officers to invite eligible veterans to join or renew membership in The American Legion
- Transfers
 - Utilizing mylegion.org tools, reach out to members who are in the headquarters-level holding post to facilitate their transfer to a local post.
 - Facilitate a consolidated or closed post transfers in a timely manner.

RESULTS: Membership is down 35% since this plan's inception, and down 7.5% since 2022. In 2023 we renewed only 89.6% of our members from 2022. Only 6.8% of eligible veterans in Missouri are members of the American Legion.

Tactics Update:

- Original Tactics remain valid.
- The second tactic under recruitment is revised to expand participation to a District or Post representative in addition to service officer.
- Set a realistic goal of increasing membership to 7% of veteran population in 2024, and 8% of veteran population in 2025. 2023 veteran population is estimated at 392,041, minimum goal would be 27,441, or an increase of 539 over our 2023 end strength.
- Districts over 7% participation maintain their level: if all Districts currently over 7% maintain participation percent and others reach 7% we would exceed 32,900 members.
- Allocate membership goal assigned by National Vice Commander in a manner which will encourage the 7% goal.
- Provide resources to Districts with the greatest downward deviation from 7%. Zone commanders will be encouraged to strengthen weakest districts, while maintaining strength in others. Share Zone revitalization successes with weakest districts. Focus visits by Senior Vice Commander and Zone Commander to Districts needing assistance. Focus District Commander visits to Posts needing assistance.
- Reinforce Success-share strategy that works with others in Department, Zone, and District.
- Obtain lists of veterans for recruitment, even if we have to pay for them. Work with national headquarters to obtain mailing lists of veterans in Missouri who did not respond to National's Direct mailing efforts. Use those lists for a local appeal.