

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA



All-State Membership Program 2024 – 2025

Deb Johnson
State Commander

June 30, 2024

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Introduction

The VFW Department of California’s success lays in our ability to retain our current members, recover previous members, and recruit new members into our ranks. This is dependent upon our ability to communicate effectively at all levels of the organization. We need to utilize any and all methods to deliver information and training to our membership. We need the ability to address our members’ needs and concerns. As an organization, we need to focus on the tenants of the VFW: take care of our members, their families, and the veteran community.

Membership Mission

The 2024 – 2025 Membership Program is designed to recruit, reinstate and retain a committed membership base to help support the Veterans of Foreign Wars’ (VFW) mission. To develop a membership that is educated in organizational procedures and policies and actively engages in all levels of the Department and in their local communities. To embrace all generations of veterans and develop strong leadership and community involvement in our Posts. This will be done by:

- Increasing membership and participation in VFW programs.
- Increasing our presence in our communities through VFW events and programs.
- Remaining a vital and valuable presence in our local, State and National Legislatures.

Membership Goals and Objectives

- To increase the number of new and reinstated members to reach 101%. This will be based on membership numbers ending 06/30/24.
- For every member to recruit at least one new member and then mentor that member.
- Reinstate previous members.
- To increase and participate in the number of membership drives in our communities.
- Develop new Posts and/or revitalize existing Posts.
- To increase our Life Membership and Legacy Life Memberships.
- To maintain an average retention rate of 85% for Posts in California.

Membership Chairman

The Membership Chairman, **Michael Croy**, will oversee the program and will work directly with members of the Post and District Membership Teams. His contact information is:

- Phone: 760.488.3931
- Email: mcroy2@gmail.com

All-State Criteria

Each year, the State Commander sets criteria to recognize exceptional leadership and teamwork, acknowledge accomplishments in membership growth and VFW core programs for Posts and Districts to achieve All-State status.

All-State Post Criteria

The 2024 – 2025 All-State Program for Posts is designed to reward Posts based on the following:

- **Post must be in Good Standing**
 - The Post Election Report for 2024 – 2025 must be received at Department and National HQ prior to July 1, 2024.
 - Post Quartermaster and/or all accountable officers must be bonded no later than August 31, 2024.
 - Posts must provide proof of liability insurance to the Department by September 30, 2024.
 - The **Post Commander, Quartermaster, Adjutant** and **AT LEAST two Trustee's** must complete the District School of Instruction/Department Training before December 31, 2024.
 - Post's copy of IRS 990/990n and CA Form 199/199n must be received at Department prior to December 31, 2024, if the Post is on the same fiscal year as the Department (7/1-6/30). If the Post financials is on the calendar year (1/1 – 12/31), the tax forms are due by April 15, 2025.
 - All properly signed Trustee's Report of Audit must be received at the Department within 30 days following the end of the observed quarter.
 - Post Commanders and/or their representatives (SVC or JVC's only) shall attend all District meetings.
 - Posts must submit their elected delegates to Department NLT June 1, 2025.
 - Delegate dues for State Convention shall be paid NLT June 1, 2025.
 - The Post shall have no arrearages with District, Department, or National as of June 1, 2025.
 - All deficiencies noted on the Post Inspection Report shall be corrected NLT June 1, 2025.
 - Post Service Officer must attend a Post Service Officer Training through Department or National (at Convention) prior to December 31, 2024. There will be 5 training sessions offered, 1 in person at the VFWCA State Convention and the remaining via Zoom. Dates and times will be posted on the Department calendar at vfwca.org.
- **Post must participate in the Buddy Poppy Program.**
 - The Post must purchase five (5) poppies per member, based upon Post membership as of June 30, 2024.
 - The Post must conduct one Buddy Poppy drive and report it via the Department online reporting system.
- **Post must, at minimum, participate in the following VFW Programs.**
 - Submit at least one Voice of Democracy entry to your respective District for judging.
 - Submit one Patriot's Pen entry to your respective District for judging.
 - Submit one Teacher of the Year (any category) entry to your respective District for judging.
 - Submit one Law Enforcement/Firefighter and/or EMT of the Year entry to your respective District for judging.

- **Post must make the minimum Department monetary donations.**
 - Divisions 1 – 4: minimum \$300 donation and Divisions 5 – 11: minimum \$150 donation. Donations will be divided between programs and the VFW Foundation Post & Community Assistance Grant Program. **Donations made to National Programs or to the National Home do not count for credit in this category.**
- **Post must report two (2) Veteran Assistance Events bi-annually via the Department online reporting system.**
 - Reporting Period 1: 7/1/24 - 12/31/24
 - Reporting Period 2: 1/1/25 - 6/5/25
- **Post must report two (2) Community Assistance Events bi-annually via the Department online reporting system.**
 - Reporting Period 1: 7/1/24 - 12/31/24
 - Reporting Period 2: 1/1/25 - 6/5/25
- **Post Membership Goals**
 - Post must provide, to their District Commander and the State Adjutant, a Membership/Recruiting Plan by August 31, 2024. The form can be found on the department website under: Resources/Forms/Post/District Membership Recruiting Plan.
 - Post must conduct **at least two (2)** membership drives/recruiting events [personal contact, mail, e-mail, telephone, and/or Recruiting Booth campaigns] by May 1, 2025, and report the results via the Department online reporting system.
 - Post must achieve its membership goal by June 30, 2025, per the following table:

Membership Goal by Division

Division	Membership size	Goal
1	951 and up	101%
2	750-950	101%
3	356-749	101%
4	246-355	101%
5	185-245	101%
6	143-184	101%
7	112-142	101%
8	88-111	101%
9	68-87	101%
10	51-67	101%
11	1-50	101%

- **District Commander Recommendation**
 - While it is understood that this is under the District Commanders purview, one guideline that must be met is that if a Post is going to make “All-State” they must have representation (Post Commander, Sr. Vice or Jr. Vice only) at each and every District Meeting. District Commanders must factor that in their decision for recommendation.
 - The intent is that Posts *should* be participating in VFW Programs. Upon recommendation of the District Commander, the State Commander may consider a “waiver” of participation in up to **two mandatory programs**. In that event, the Post may qualify for All-State by paying

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\$100.00 for each of the missing program requirements, payable to VFW Department Headquarters, but the Post will not be considered a top five Post.

All-State Post Award

The top five (5) Post's in each Division, provided they meet all the "All-State" requirements shall receive:

- Post Commanders will receive an "All-State" Commander's Cap and Pin.
- Post Quartermasters will receive their choice of an "All-State" Quartermasters Cap or a \$75.00 gift certificate from the VFW Emblem & Supply Department.
- All other Posts qualifying for All-State may purchase, through the Department ordering process, an All-State Cap. (See the Post All-State Application form in the appendix)
- NOTE: The closing date for the All-State Program shall be the close of business on April 15, 2025, to receive "All-State" Caps for presentation at the State Convention. Any Post earning All-State status between April 16, 2025 – June 30, 2025, will have their awards ordered in July and upon receipt will be forwarded to the District Commanders for appropriate presentation in a timely manner.

All-State District Criteria

The 2024 – 2025 All-State Program for Districts is designed to reward Districts based on the following:

- **District must be in Good Standing**
 - The District Election Report for 2024 – 2025 must be received at Department and National HQ prior to July 1, 2024.
 - District Quartermaster and/or all accountable officers must be bonded no later than August 31, 2024.
 - District’s copy of IRS 990/990n and CA Form 199/199n must be received at Department prior to December 31, 2024, if the District is on the same fiscal year as the Department (7/1-6/30). If the Districts financials are on the calendar year (1/1 – 12/31), the tax forms are due by April 15, 2025.
 - All properly signed Trustee’s Report of Audit must be received at the Department within 30 days following the end of the observed quarter.
 - District meeting minutes for 2024-2025 must be received by Department HQ within 30 days following the actual District meeting, and all minutes must be received no later than June 1, 2025.
 - All Post Inspections must be completed by December 31, 2024.
 - The District must provide a School of Instruction by December 31, 2024.
 - District Commanders or their representatives (SVC or JVC’s only) shall attend all Department Council of Administration meetings.
 - All deficiencies noted on the District Inspection Report shall be corrected NLT June 1, 2024.
 - District Service Officer must attend a Post Service Officer Training session prior to December 31, 2024. There will be 5 training sessions offered, 1 in person at the VFWCA State Convention and the remaining via Zoom. Dates and times will be posted on the Department calendar at vfwca.org.
 - The District shall have no arrearages with Department and National as of June 1, 2025.
- **District must, at minimum, participate in the following VFW Programs.**
 - Submit at least one Voice of Democracy entry to Department for judging accompanied by the District Post Participation report.
 - Submit one Patriot’s Pen entry to Department for judging accompanied by the District Post Participation report.
 - Submit one Teacher of the Year (any category) entry to Department for judging accompanied by the District Post Participation report.
 - Submit one Law Enforcement/Firefighter and/or EMT of the Year entry to Department for judging accompanied by the District Post Participation report.
- **District Membership Goals**
 - District must provide, to the State Adjutant, a Membership/Recruiting Plan by August 31, 2024. The form can be found on the department website under: Resources/Forms/Post/District Membership Recruiting Plan.
 - District must conduct **at least two (2)** membership drives/recruiting events [personal contact, mail, e-mail, telephone, and/or Recruiting Booth campaigns] by May 1, 2025, and report the results via the Department online reporting system. For purposes of reporting, the District is considered Post “0”.

- District must achieve its membership goal by June 30, 2025, per the following table:

Division	Membership size	Goal
1	5,000 - 14,000	101%
2	3,282 - 4,999	101%
3	2,172 – 3,281	101%
4	1,447 – 2,171	101%
5	906 – 1,446	101%
6	1 - 905	101%

All-State District Award

To be considered an All-State District Commander, you must demonstrate outstanding, positive leadership qualities. You shall provide quality communication skills to the Posts in your District to ensure they participate in the programs and goals of the VFW.

- District Commanders will receive an “All-State” Commander’s Cap and Pin.
- District Quartermasters will receive their choice of an “All-State” Quartermasters Cap or a \$75.00 gift certificate from the VFW Emblem & Supply Department.
- NOTE: The closing date for the All-State Program shall be the close of business on April 15, 2025, to receive “All-State” Caps for presentation at the State Convention. Any District earning All-State status between April 16, 2025 – June 30, 2025, will have their awards ordered in July and upon receipt will be awarded at the next Council of Administration meeting.

Important Program Information

The Community Service Chairman will provide guidance to Posts and Districts throughout the year regarding reporting. Please review the department website for additional information and instructions.

Note: Events shall be reported only once in the online reporting system. Posts shall not report the same event in multiple categories. For example, if a Post awards a grant of \$500 to a deserving veteran, the Post cannot report the \$500 grant in Community Assistance and \$500 in Veterans Assistance.

All-State Department Monetary Program Donations: Reporting for this section will be via the Monetary Donation Form. *It is NOT necessary to make a report on this via the department website.*

School of Instruction (SOI): Attendance is mandatory for the Commander, Quartermaster, Adjutant and at least two (2) trustees to attend SOI/Department training for the Post. Four (4) training modules must be offered to get credit. SOI will be held by the Districts and there is no set limit as to how many may be conducted. SOI can be offered “in person” or by video conferencing such as Zoom, Microsoft teams, etc.

The Department may offer webinar training for the Quartermaster and Trustees. This training will qualify as a substitute for the District SOI for Quartermasters and Trustees. You must report it on a check in sheet, and it must be verified and signed by both the District Commander and the District Instructor. The sign-in sheet must be legible for individuals and Posts to get credit. Members will be verified by their Post Election Report. The training modules are located on the department website under:

Resources/Training/School of Instruction. ***SOI is not to be reported via the department website.***

Training Module	Required Attendance
Commander Training	Post Commander
Quartermaster/Trustee Training	Post Commander Post Quartermaster Two (2) Trustees
Adjutant Training	Post Commander Post Adjutant
Parliamentary Procedure	Post Commander

Post Service Officer Training: The Post and District Service Officer must attend one regional or webinar training session provided by the Department and/or State Service Officer. Attendance shall be verified by the Department or the instructor. Members attending the National Convention may attend the Post Service Officer Training and get credit. They must report it to Department HQ immediately following the Convention.

Conduct Veterans Assistance Events: Posts must report at least two (2) separate events via the online reporting system bi-annually to receive credit. The following events qualify: Adopt-a-Unit/MAP activities (Identify the Military unit and event)

- National Home
- Unmet Needs/Relief (Ensure you report the specific reason for the relief)
- VFW Mental Wellness
- Sport Clips Help a Hero Scholarship submission.
- Military & Veterans Support (Women Veterans, Homeless, Iraq/Afghanistan)
- Claims & Benefits Assistance (DO NOT report names or specific issues)

Conduct Community Assistance Events: Posts must report at least two (2) separate events via the online reporting system bi-annually to receive credit. The following events qualify:

- Citizenship/Americanism
- Honor Guard
- Flag Etiquette
- POW/MIA
- VA Volunteer Services (hospital/clinic)
- Disaster Relief
- Stand Down Participation
- Safety Recognition

Buddy Poppy Drives: Posts must conduct one (1) Buddy Poppy drive during the year and report it via the online reporting system. To qualify as a Buddy Poppy drive, you must set up a booth, table, etc., in an area to specifically disperse poppies and related materials. Handing out poppies at a dinner, funeral, parade, etc.... does not qualify as a “drive”.

Non-Reportable Events: Attending a Post or District meeting or attending a weekly or monthly dinner is not community service and reportable. The money you raised is reportable when you donate it to a specific cause. Special event dinners where the Post provides a free meal to needy veterans, their families or their community members is a reportable community service event.

Conduct Membership Drive or Recruiting Event(s): You must report at least two (2) separate membership drives and/or recruiting events via the online reporting system. Follow the steps outlined in National’s recruiting guide.

1. Step #1 – Select and organize a membership committee.
2. Step #2 – Develop a recruiting plan.
3. Step #3 – Set realistic goals.
4. Step #4 – Plan your activities.

Types of drives/campaigns/events:

- Personal contact
 - Door to Door
 - Membership Recruiting Booth
- Mail
 - Unpaid (by Zip code) member at large lists
 - Dues notices
 - Post newsletters.
 - Benefits information
- Conduct a Telephone/E-mail campaign.
 - Contact unpaid members.
 - Reach out to prior years lapsed members.
 - Obtain unpaid members (by Zip code) at large lists from Department.
- Request Department recruiting training or event assistance.

Department Membership Program Incentives

The size of Post/District membership will be calculated by official numbers from National HQ on June 30, 2024

Department

The Department Commander and the Department Membership Team will conduct membership drives at events across the State of California as available and directed throughout the VFW year.

District

District Commanders are required to appoint a Membership Chair and provide that name to the Department Membership Chair.

The District Commander and their respective Chair will organize a minimum of two (2) District-wide recruiting events. The recruiting event will be reported in the online Department Reporting System.

Post

The Post Commander is responsible for their Post's membership program and will report directly to the District Chair.

Member Incentives

- New and Annual members will be offered ½ off life membership starting August 1, 2024, until all allocated funds are exhausted. This incentive will be on a “first come, first served” basis.
- Current conflict veterans (Post 9/11) and Purple Heart recipients will be offered their first-year membership for free until funds are exhausted. Instructions on how to process membership for reimbursement.
- Annual members who are Purple Heart recipients will be placed in a monthly drawing for life membership until funds are exhausted.

Post Incentives

Category 1 (1 – 100 members)

- Any Post that reaches 101% by 10/31/24 shall receive \$200.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 1/31/25 shall receive \$150.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 4/15/25 shall receive \$100.00.

Category 2 (101 – 175 members)

- Any Post that reaches 101% by 10/31/24 shall receive \$300.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 1/31/25 shall receive \$200.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 4/15/25 shall receive \$175.00.

Category 3 (176 – 250 members)

- Any Post that reaches 101% by 10/31/24 shall receive \$500.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 1/31/25 shall receive \$300.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 4/15/25 shall receive \$200.00.

Category 4 (251 - 400 members)

- Any Post that reaches 101% by 10/31/24 shall receive \$700.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 1/31/25 shall receive \$500.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 4/15/25 shall receive \$200.00.

Category 5 (401+ members)

- Any Post that reaches 101% by 10/31/24 shall receive \$900.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 1/31/25 shall receive \$600.00.
- Any Post that reaches 101% by 4/15/25 shall receive \$300.00.

District Incentives (July – December 31st)

Category A: (1 – 1000 members)

- Any District reaching 101% in membership by 12/31/24 shall receive \$1,000.00.

Category B: (1001 - 1999 members)

- Any District reaching 101% in membership by 12/31/24 shall receive \$1,000.00.

Category C: (2000+ members)

- Any District reaching 101% in membership by 12/31/24 shall receive \$1,000.00.

District Incentives (January – June 30th)

Category A: (1 – 1000 members)

- Any District reaching 101% in membership by 06/30/25 shall receive \$500.00.

Category B: (1001 - 1999 members)

- Any District reaching 101% in membership by 06/30/25 shall receive \$500.00.

Category C: (2000+ members)

- Any District reaching 101% in membership by 06/30/25 shall receive \$500.00.

Additional District Membership Incentives

District 90 – 100% Payout

- Districts will be paid .35 cents per member over 90% until they hit 100% by November 1st.
- Districts will be paid \$5.00 per member from 100% to 101%.

Recruiters

- 25+ New or Reinstated members by 12/31/24 State Commander’s Shirt
- 50+ New or Reinstated members by 3/31/25 \$75 check presented at State Convention
- 75+ New or Reinstated members by 3/31/25 \$100 check presented at State Convention
- 100+ New or Reinstated members by 3/31/25 \$175 check presented at State Convention
- 200+ New or Reinstated members by 3/31/25 \$275 check presented at State Convention