

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR UNIT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN & UNIT LEADERS

DID YOU KNOW:

Two recent updates will affect ALA eligibility:

- The LEGION Act was signed by POTUS in July of 2019 which no longer requires The Legion, and thus the ALA, to verify which time period a veteran served...we just have to verify now that they served for at least one day of active duty (and boot camp from the 1960's on counts as active duty).
- Male spouses of Legion members (or Legion-eligible deceased veterans) will be eligible to join as of Sept. 1, 2019...but no other categories of males (not sons, grandsons, fathers, or brothers). The male spouses are subject to the same rules of eligibility as female spouses – if the veteran spouse of the male spouse is living, he/she must be a current TAL member in good standing; if the veteran spouse of the male spouse is deceased, he/she has to provide documentation of his/her veteran spouse's service showing they served at least one day of active duty. This makes male spouses of female TAL members/veterans now eligible. Federal law legalized same sex marriage so as long as a male TAL member is legally married to his male partner, that spouse is eligible to join the ALA.

Here is the official verbiage from our governing documents (added to the footnotes of our National C & B's) regarding these changes. This can also be seen on the ALA's website:

[https://www.alaforveterans.org/About/Eligibility/:](https://www.alaforveterans.org/About/Eligibility/)

Membership in The American Legion Auxiliary shall be limited to the:

(1) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of members of The American Legion; and

(2) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who served in either of the following periods: April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918 and any time after December 7, 1941 who, being a citizen of the United States at the time of their entry therein served on active duty in the Armed Forces of any of the governments associated with the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge;

(3) grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces of the United States during either of the following periods: April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918; and any time after December 7, 1941 who served on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States during either eligibility periods and died in the line of duty or after honorable discharge; and

(4) to those women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion.*

** A woman who is eligible for American Legion membership(served in the military) is eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary regardless of whether or not she is a member of The American Legion. However, eligibility of her female relatives (sister, mother/grandmother, daughter/granddaughter) and/or spouse (either male or female) depends upon her membership in The American Legion. Ie: She can be in the ALA herself without being in The Legion, but before any of her relative can join, she'll have to join TAL also.*

And here is a “plain English” explanation to accompany these so you know what these mean and how it relates at the unit level dealing with recruiting and processing applications:

#1 outlines the change from the word “wives” to all spouses – male or female. **You won't see specific language stating that we now allow some males...this is the only verbiage change that indicates that. No other categories of males are eligible – just male spouses of either a male or female Legionnaire or widower of a male or female Legion-eligible veteran.

#2 means that a US citizen who served in the Allied armed forces/military during the referenced dates is eligible to join The American Legion, and therefore his/her eligible family members are eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

#3 means that anyone who served/serves in the US military during the referenced dates, whether or not they were/are a US citizen, is eligible to join The American Legion, and therefore his/her eligible family members are eligible to join The American Legion Auxiliary.

#4 outlines that female active duty servicepersons and female veterans are eligible to join The American Legion Auxiliary through their own service. **This rule had no changes.*

ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY INFO:

- **Great- and great-great granddaughters are not eligible to join the ALA.** A memo went out in October 2019 to all Dept's that explains this. It reads:

The IRS regulation concerning auxiliaries to veteran service organizations states in part: "At least 75 percent of its members are veterans, spouses of veterans, or related to a veteran within two degrees of consanguinity (i.e., grandparent, brother, sister, grandchild represent the most distant allowable relationships)."

This has been a regulation for many years, and with the recent review of the Auxiliary eligibility criteria, the issue was evaluated, and the decision was to ensure the organization was compliant. This means that no great or great-great-granddaughters can join the Auxiliary. Current members whose eligibility relationship is great-granddaughter, great-great-granddaughter or direct descendent can continue being a member, as long as their dues are kept current.

In order to align with IRS regulations, the most distant allowable will be granddaughter. Great-granddaughter, great-great-granddaughter will no longer be available for selection on the relationship tab in ALAMIS.

Membership applications available for download off the website have already been updated. Print applications in the form of our *ALA at a Glance* and *TAL Family* brochure will be updated as stock is depleted.

- **Are stepchildren eligible to become members?** No, IRS regulation for 501(c)19 organizations do not include stepchildren in their definition of an auxiliary organization. There was some confusion about this in the past, but per above, we wish to be in compliance with all IRS regulations.
- **Common law marriage and domestic partnerships** are no longer recognized by the ALA regarding membership into the ALA due to the changes in IRS rules in 2015. Only legally married spouses (including same-sex marriage) are recognized for membership application purposes.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMEN FAQ's:

- **WHEN A MEMBER'S JOIN DATE CHANGES ON THEIR CARD:** It is always because the national ALAMIS system shows there is a year or years missing in their account. Contact Dept or National to find out which year(s). It could only be due to 1 of 3 reasons:
 - 1) The member didn't actually pay.
 - 2) The member paid but there was a "hiccup" with the unit not getting it properly transmitted (which is most often the case).
 - 3) The unit transmitted it and there was a "hiccup" with the Dept getting it processed into ALAMIS.
 - If the unit believes the member paid and/or the member can provide proof (a card from the year showing missing, a receipt, a cashed check, etc), then the unit needs to work with & transmit the missing year(s) to the dept per dept procedures/form for back dues. Or the member or unit can call National to see the cost and options to fix it.

- If the unit's records show they transmitted it, they need to work with the dept to get it fixed (ie: Dept already got the money and now must enter the missing year into the National system).
- **The Dept must request that National manually update a join date after taking payment for back dues, as the system won't automatically update it just because a payment was entered. Most Depts know this is part of the process.**

**National doesn't handle any part of processing dues. All info & money is entered by the Dept into the National system. We base all printing for cards and renewal notices off of what is entered into the system.

****Catching the missing years is done via a manual audit...ie: a human being manually runs a report to find accounts with missing year's payment and then manually changes the join date on each of these accounts to the next year dues are paid. These audits are done in 3-5 year cycles so it is possible that a member's card will continue to have their original join date printed on the card for years before it is caught and then changed. Sorry for that added confusion.*

- **RENEWAL NOTICES:**

- As of 2020, we are going back to all first renewal notices being mailed in September by National Headquarters...even to those who have an email in our system, though we will continue to email additional renewal reminders in August, November, and February to those members that have emails in the system. Second/Final notices (mailed in January) are always snail-mailed to ALL that still haven't renewed by early December. Plus units are still encouraged to send out their own personalized reminders.
- The National ALAMIS system can begin accepting the upcoming year's renewal dues (NOT new member dues which can't be entered until Sept. 1) after July 4th each year, even before renewal notices go out. However, some units and/or departments may not accept dues this early. But online and phone payments can begin that early.
- The ALA does not send out renewal notices as early as The Legion does....our first renewal notices go out in September, whereas The Legion starts sending them in late June. But per above, ALA members do NOT have to wait for or have a renewal notice to pay.
- Keep in mind that if a unit doesn't transmit dues by at least early November in time for the Dept to enter that info into the national system by Dec. 1st - the deadline set to pull data to print final renewal notices each year - those members will get a renewal notice in January and wonder why, when they believed they paid, they still got a notice. This causes unnecessary postage costs and a flood of calls & man hours to research why the unit took so long to submit those dues. **It is imperative that dues are transmitted in a timely manner, especially in Oct & Nov.** Same goes in late summer. Those renewals not entered by Aug. 1st will get that first renewal notice in Sept.

- **RENEWING ONLINE/BY PHONE:** Members who pay online (or by phone) will receive an auto-generated emailed receipt (& a printable PDF of their card if paid online) AND they will also now get a card mailed to them by National HQ that contains the authorized signature of a National Officer. Cards will be mailed directly to the member within 30 days.
 - **Members will no longer have to contact their units about getting their card after paying online/by phone, nor do units have to worry about distributing the cards to their members who renew via these methods.** (NOTE: Units will still be sent preprinted cards for all members each year, so they can decide what to do with the "duplicate" cards they have left over from those that paid by these methods.)
 - Departments will still be responsible for providing a report and payment/credit of the unit portion of dues to units and this process varies by Department. Please contact your department for details.

- **HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIPS vs PAID UP FOR LIFE MEMBERSHIPS:**

- “Honorary Lifetime Memberships” (HLM) is when your unit votes to pay the dues of a member for the rest of their life.
 - Please let Dept know if you have any members that your unit pays for so they can mark them in the system as “HML”. You will see that marking next to their name on subsequent rosters AND those members will no longer get renewal notices.
 - The unit should pay the dues of HLM’s as early in the renewal season as possible and provide them their card.
 - The parameters of who the unit will pay should be voted on and added to your unit’s Bylaws. Ex: Those who reach 50 years of continuous membership and/or reach the age of 80.
 - Some units run into trouble being overly generous with parameters and if new memberships aren’t maintained, they run out of funds to pay their HLM’s down the road...so maybe have someone with some accounting skills review the plan.
- “Paid Up for Life: (PUFL) is where the member pays one lump sum by filling out an application and submitting a check for a lump sum cost (which is determined by their age and current unit dues rate).
 - The unit will get membership cards for these members each year and they should be distributed as early as possible in the renewal season (ie: between July-Sept).
- Emblem Sales sells a certificate maker on CD that you can use to commemorate milestone or continuous years (and/or birthdays) or when you gift them an HLM. There are also preprinted certificates you can buy. Go to Flag & Emblem Sales:
<https://emblem.legion.org/Certificates/products/576/>. *Be careful when ordering Life membership items - “Life” membership (which is the HLM stuff) vs PULF items.

- **TRANSFERS** – As of a 2016 & 2019 amendment to the National Standing Rules (X, 3):

*A member who is not subject to suspension or membership revocation under due process is eligible to transfer her membership to another Unit if she has paid her membership dues to her current Unit for either the current year or immediate past membership year. A member transferring to a new Unit must pay current year dues to either her current Unit or the Unit into which she wishes to transfer. **Transfer is final upon verification of eligibility, evidence of paid membership, and acceptance of the transferee by the new Unit.***

- In plain English, this means that a transferring member can pay his/her dues to the unit they are transferring to (if they need to pay the immediate past year’s dues too, they can...along with current year’s dues). It used to be that they had to be current in dues to the unit they were in before they could transfer. No longer.
- I’ve attached a generic Member Data Change form to collect a transferring member’s signature...though some Dept’s have their own form. Units should get a signature from all transferring members (on a form or via an email or letter) confirming they wish to transfer. The Legion’s Judge Advocate recommends that a copy of these forms/signatures should be kept with the unit’s records for the life of the member’s membership (same goes for applications and supporting eligibility documentation from the qualifying veterans), whether or not the Dept asks for these signatures, because eligibility can be challenged at any time & there are cases where transfers were made without the members knowledge or consent.
- The 2016 amendment also noted that transferring was a right and therefore units could not deny a transfer, but the 2019 amendment rescinded that and reverted back to units having the right to deny a transferring member based on the unit’s right to determine its own membership (like they always have with a new applicant).

***NOTE: The unit should be careful not to deny transfers (or new members) for discriminatory reasons and*

it is **HIGHLY** recommend they not be denied based on gossip/hearsay from another unit or people. Sometimes it is the “good apple” leaving a group of “bad apples” or simply a personality conflict & a new member/transfer will be just fine in a new unit...and those talking about him/her were really the issue. Membership is recommended to be bases on eligibility rather than “acceptability”but if it turns out a member creates serious issues or worse, a due process disciplinary process should be implemented to remove that member properly. A unit cannot just “kick a member out” without a proper due process hearing. Contact the Dept HQ for guidance on that process.

- **Junior vs Senior dues** – when a junior is about to turn 18, the way you know if she has to pay “senior/adult” dues is this: For the year being paid for, if the girl will be 17 years old for any part of the year she is paying for, she gets to pay as a junior. It does not matter WHEN those dues are paid, it only matters about the calendar year she is paying for. SEE EXAMPLES:

- **Example 1:** Megan’s birthday is Jan. 3rd, 2020. Her grandma is paying 2020 dues for the family in October 2019 after getting the renewal notice. Megan will still be 17 for at least one day in 2020 (though barely) so grandma gets to pay Megan as a junior one last year for 2020.

- **Example 2:** Megan’s birthday is Dec. 20th, 2019. Her grandma is paying 2020 dues for the family in October 2019. Though Megan is still 17 at the time grandma is paying in Oct, because grandma is paying for the 2020 calendar year, Megan must now pay 2020 dues at the full adult/senior rate.

- **Updating personal information:** You and any of your/our members can keep their contact info up-to-date by logging into the “Members Only” account on the National website. You might have to create an account the first time (per below). Once in, there is a link that says “My Profile” where you can keep names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses up-to-date without having the bother of filling out a Member Data Change form and submitting it to the Dept.
- **Female Veteran Discount: ****This discount will be DISCONTINUED starting with 2021 new joins. Some depts and units may choose to continue waiving their portion for female veterans, but National will no longer waive theirs....and we will cease “advertising” this discount program.****

* For the remainder of 2020 female veteran recruits, be careful about saying they join “for free.” We waive only the National portion of dues (\$12) for new female vet applicants for their FIRST YEAR. Rejoins aren’t eligible. They still owe the unit & dept portions, but many depts/units waive their portion, too. Check with your department. Only if the dept & unit also waive their portion is it free.

You can share these helpful steps to create an account and/or RENEW online (and get access to LOTS of resources for you & the unit):

Once you set up an account, it is easy to RENEW online (*You can't be more than one year behind with your dues to be able to renew online...otherwise you'll need to call or pay through your unit*).

*NOTE: New members may now join online too BUT....they can **only be joined into your Dept Headquarters "at large" unit** so if you want them to join **your unit**, you still need to have them join the traditional way - via a paper application to your unit!*

When a member RENEWS online (or by phone), they get an instant emailed receipt and **ALA National HQ will mail a signed membership card to them within 30 days.**

- Go to the American Legion Auxiliary's national website, www.ALForVeterans.org
 - Click on "Log In," which is located in the upper right hand corner of the home page.
 - Click on "Sign Up" which is located under the "Log In" button.
 - Provide the following information:
 - Member ID Number
 - First Name & Last Name*
 - Department (which is your state)
 - E-mail Address
 - Click "Submit"
 - Check your email. Registration instructions will be mailed to you to finish the Log In process.
 - Click on the link provided in the email you receive to claim & set up your account.
 - The link will open a page of the American Legion Auxiliary's website. You will need to create the following:
 - Username
 - Password (**Your password must be at least 6 characters long and exclude spaces, tabs, single quotes, double quotes, percent signs and pound signs**).
- Click "Submit"
- Once you click submit you will be redirected to the American Legion Auxiliary homepage. You now have full access to the American Legion Auxiliary's national website!

****Please note that names (first and last) need to be spelled exactly as it appears on your membership card (which is how it appears in the ALAMIS database)***

***For help setting up an account or logging on or...
To pay dues by phone with a MC, Visa, or Discover (Debit or credit),
call the ALA National HQ Help Desk at 317-569-4536 week days from 8-4:30 p.m. EST.***

Best,

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