



# ***American Legion Auxiliary*** Questions and Answers

## **1. What is the Auxiliary's primary purpose?**

Auxiliary members believe in the ideals and principles of America's founding fathers and pledge to foster patriotism, preserve and defend the Constitution, promote allegiance to God and Country and to uphold the basic principles of freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. Auxiliary programs were created to provide assistance, education and financial support for veterans and their families, and in the community, the organization focuses on helping to create a better society, particularly for the nation's citizens of the future, our children and young people.

## **2. What are some of the Auxiliary's major programs and activities?**

*(See American Legion Auxiliary Programs sheet)*

## **3. What is the relationship between The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary?**

The Legion family includes The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of The American Legion. Local Auxiliary Units are usually, but not always, affiliated with an American Legion Post through volunteer service and fundraising activities. Most programs complement The American Legion programs. The Auxiliary has expanded some of its programs and initiated others to meet the special needs of women and their families.

## **4. What is the difference between the Auxiliary and other veterans organizations?**

The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world. Affiliated with The American Legion, the Auxiliary is a women's veterans' service organization with volunteer representation in all 171 VA Medical Centers. Nearly 1 million Auxiliary members in nearly 10,000 American communities provide a rich and varied resource pool of ability, talent and leadership experience.

## **5. Who can join the Auxiliary?**

Membership is open to female veterans and to the wives, sisters, daughters, granddaughters or great-granddaughters of Legionnaires or deceased veterans who served in the Armed Forces during World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, and/or Lebanon conflicts, and the Persian Gulf War. Step-relatives are also eligible. Descendants of veterans (great-granddaughters, etc.) are often presented with Junior memberships at birth or during childhood through the generosity of an older relative and Auxiliary member. Many of these young women continue their membership as Senior members after they reach age 18.

## **6. What do Auxiliary members have in common?**

Auxiliary members are women of all ages, from all walks of life. They are service-oriented and have a variety of outside interests, activities and lifestyles. They are active in their communities. Auxiliary members share a deep and abiding concern for their fellowman, great compassion for those in need and a sense of personal responsibility and commitment to God, country and community. Auxiliary members are patriots in every sense of the word. Patriotism is not mandated through legislation or instilled by force. It is a chosen characteristic of an individual. A member's primary goal is to serve our veterans, to safeguard and nurture our nation's children and to educate all citizens, young and old, about the benefits, privileges and responsibilities of American citizenship.

## **7. What are the advantages of Auxiliary membership?**

The Auxiliary is a highly visible, remarkable organization, with more than 80 proud years of service to veterans and the nation's communities. In addition to the personal gratification and rewards gained in voluntary service, there are many tangible benefits for members of the Auxiliary. Members receive a complimentary subscription to the Auxiliary's bimonthly publication, *National News*, special MasterCard and money-market investment plans, free travel and accident insurance, low-cost life and health insurance coverage, and discounts on interstate moves, eye-glasses, hearing aids, prescriptions and rental cars. Auxiliary members who find themselves without other resources can obtain temporary, emergency financial assistance or money for schooling to re-enter the job market.

**8. What types of membership are available?**

Membership applications can be obtained from local Units, Department offices or National Headquarters in Indianapolis. Members can renew their membership each year or purchase a lifetime membership called "VIM" (Very Important Member). Some Units confer Honorary "Life Memberships" to outstanding members. Members wear special Honor Guard pins denoting continuous membership for a period of 5 to 75 years. Many women veterans are members of both The American Legion and the Auxiliary.

**9. Where will new members come from?**

One day a lasting peace may eliminate the need for veterans organizations like the Auxiliary. Until then, the Auxiliary continues the battle against poverty, ignorance and numerous social problems in our communities and the nation. There will always be the need for new Auxiliary volunteers who are willing to help with the important volunteer work needed. The Auxiliary seeks every opportunity to attract new members and to tell the nation about the valuable community service work of the organization.

**10. What kinds of services does the Auxiliary provide for homeless veterans?**

Auxiliary volunteers across the nation will offer their support to homeless veterans in a variety of ways, depending on the preferences of individual Units and the needs of particular communities. Many local Units work closely with other organizations in their community, dedicated to helping the homeless. Individuals and entire Units may volunteer time and/or financial support to local shelters and coordinate or participate in food or clothing drives. Units may serve as a referral service to the homeless veteran as well, offering individuals in need the names and telephone numbers of local, available resources in their communities.

**11. What is teen court and how does it work?**

Teen Court is a cooperative, volunteer community program which provides an alternative to the formal process of trial and sentencing for young offenders. Young, mostly first-time offenders, aged 10 through high school, who have committed certain misdemeanor crimes (Class C and B only) such as traffic tickets, shoplifting, truancy, drinking, drugs, assault and others, agree to meet with local authorities and parents. There, they agree to take responsibility for their own actions and to voluntarily accept a sentence from a jury of their peers. The sentence is a contract to serve a suitable amount of time in volunteer or community service or to make some kind of appropriate restitution for their offense. Upon completion of the sentence, the referring agency dismisses charges against the youth. The young person takes an active role in clearing their record and learns that breaking the law is unacceptable. Many young people return to the program as volunteers themselves or enter law enforcement. Auxiliary Units across the nation are working to initiate this type of program by contacting and meeting with local agencies and working cooperatively wherever there is a need.

**12. What is the Citizens Flag Alliance?**

The Citizens Flag Alliance is an apolitical, non-partisan confederation of organizations and individuals who wish to protect the United States flag from public physical desecration. Stressing education along with rallying public support, the Citizens Flag Alliance goal is to pass a Constitutional amendment, making it illegal to publicly desecrate the flag. The American Legion Auxiliary joined this effort in 1994 due to its belief that the flag is unique among our national symbols, deserving proper respect, care and protection.

**13. How does the Auxiliary support American servicemen and women during overseas deployment?**

When thousands of men and women on active duty and in the reserves are called to overseas ventures, many service families need help to cope with the emotional and financial burdens caused by the sudden separation and disruption to their lives. The American Legion and Auxiliary pledge their "mutual helpfulness" to support the families of American servicemen and women while they serve overseas through the Family Support Network, a national emergency assistance program, in which military families call a toll-free number manned by Auxiliary and Legion members with requests for help.