



THE AMERICAN LEGION

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



The mission of The American Legion, Department of Wisconsin is to provide service to veterans, their families and their communities.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



America's largest supporter of veterans

The American Legion is the nation's largest and most powerful organization of U.S. wartime veterans and their families. Today, it counts 2.4 million members who operate through nearly 14,000 posts across the United States and beyond.

Since its inception by an act of Congress in 1919, The American Legion has delivered substantial improvements for veterans, families and communities. The Legion ushered in the modern VA. The Legion drafted and drove home passage of the GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The Legion has brought into existence dozens of health-care benefits for veterans and programs designed to provide decent civilian careers after discharge.

The American Legion works every day on behalf of all U.S. servicemen and women. It is recognized as a national leader in transition assistance from military to civilian life, providing resources for careers, education opportunities, child care and more.

The Legion is active every day. Examples include:

- **VA volunteers:** Millions of community service hours are logged by VA-trained volunteers, and more than \$1.5 million is raised annually to assist VA hospitals in local communities.
- **American Legion Baseball:** America's pastime is played out on fields each summer, providing healthy, wholesome activity for young people, some of whom go on to play Major League Baseball.
- **National Emergency Fund:** The Legion's emergency fund provides much-needed funding for victims of disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes and floods.

For those looking to make an impact in local communities, The American Legion has endless opportunities. The Legion's services can be classified under the organization's four pillars: **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; National Security; Americanism; and Children & Youth.**

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



PILLAR I: VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

The American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation pillar is composed of programs, services and advocacy efforts that improve the lives of those who served, along with their families and dependents, after discharge from the military.

On a national level, the Legion lobbies Congress for a well-funded, appropriately staffed VA that can handle benefits claims efficiently, quickly and accurately.

The Wisconsin American Legion Veteran's Service Office operates out of the Milwaukee Regional VA Medical Center. American Legion Service Officers handle over 12,500 cases annually and help secure almost \$100 million in benefits for Wisconsin Veterans and their families.

- *Disability Benefits*
- *Education Benefits*
- *Claims*
- *Temporary Financial Assistance*
- *Military Retirement*
- *Employment Assistance*

For more information on filing a claim please contact the Wisconsin American Legion Service Office at 414-902-5722 or visit our website: www.wilegion.org.

EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

The American Legion conducts, promotes and supports hundreds of veteran career events nationwide each year. Thousands of veterans land jobs because of these efforts. Meanwhile, the Legion helps place hundreds

DID YOU KNOW?

The American Legion offers a free smartphone app that helps service officers and veterans get through the VA claims process. Go to www.legion.org/mobileapps

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

of other veterans in job-training programs every year. Working veteran-to-veteran with The American Legion Small Business Task Force, along with the Small Business Administration, Department of Labor, VA and corporate associates, the Legion helps veterans understand the federal contracting process and offers personal guidance for career-seeking veterans. www.legion.org/careers

VETERANS EDUCATION AND THE GI BILL

The American Legion was instrumental in the creation of the modern Post-9/11 GI Bill, providing veterans with education benefits that better meet today's needs. Following its passage, the Legion has continued to fight for even more improvements to the benefit, making it more helpful to National Guardsmen, reservists and those pursuing online education. www.legion.org/education

VA VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Legionnaires collectively donate nearly 1 million hours of service a year at veterans health-care facilities, working through the VA Volunteer Services program. These volunteer hours save the federal government at least \$18.5 million a year and connect Legionnaires with veteran patients and their families. www.legion.org/volunteers

FINAL RESPECTS

The American Legion fulfills a sacred duty by honoring the memories of U.S. military veterans after their deaths. Legion honor guards salute their fallen comrades at funeral services throughout the country every day. Legion Riders provide motorcycle escorts and security at services for fallen troops and veterans. The Legion also works closely with the National Cemetery Administration, Arlington National Cemetery and the American Battle Monuments Commission to ensure their respect and honor are bestowed upon fallen servicemembers.

CAMP AMERICAN LEGION

Camp American Legion is located 17 miles north of Rhinelander in Oneida County. It has been maintained and operated by The American Legion since 1925. On the shores of Big Carr Lake, it is a haven for the Wisconsin veteran who could use a little help. People from all over the state come for rest and relaxation.

This group of comfortable, handicapped accessible cabins with dining and recreation facilities are set aside for Wisconsin veterans who need a hand on the road back to health. Veterans who visit Camp American Legion have shorter hospital stays, quicker reintegration into society and a brighter outlook on their future. Camp American Legion recreational activities include fishing, boating, crafts, nature trails and exercise.

CAMP AMERICAN LEGION
8529 County Road D
Lake Tomahawk, WI 54539-9561
(715) 277-2510



WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG



PILLAR II: NATIONAL SECURITY

The American Legion's positions on national defense, homeland security, border control and military support are all part of the long-held Legion value that the key to peace and world stability is a strong, well-resourced defense.

In order to protect America, troops and their families must have support. The American Legion plays a vital role in supporting the men and women who risk their lives to protect our freedoms.

TROOP AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Supporting the troops and their families means more than just flying the flag and tying a yellow ribbon. It is finding a way to make a sacrifice that compliments and truly supports their efforts and ideals. The Wisconsin American Legion Troop and Family Support Fund is designed to do just that. This program provides a network of support and assistance to the families of those that are serving in the Armed Forces. It includes emergency support as well as assistance for the daily responsibilities that don't stop just because a loved one is serving. Phone cards, care packages and Blue Star Banners for the families to proudly display are also available...and our members are in the community welcoming the troops home upon their return from deployment.

Legionnaires and their families have been in your boots. We understand the problems and stresses that go with separation from loved ones during war. We stand behind you all the way and are anxious to help you when you need it.

DID YOU KNOW?

In a given year, American Legion posts collect more than 80,000 pints of blood through donation drives.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

This program provides wounded servicemembers with rehabilitation equipment for physical therapy and entertainment in the form of soft clothing, electronics, video games, movies, music and more. One hundred percent of donations to OCW go toward gifts for injured servicemen and women. www.legion.org/ocw

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

The Legion's support of the U.S. military – from adequate funding for weapons systems to reasonable child-care services for deployed troops – is respected in the Pentagon, at the White House and on Capitol Hill.

SUPPORT FOR TRICARE

The U.S. military's health-care system and medical insurance program frequently face challenges in Washington. The American Legion persistently testifies on the need to keep TRICARE and TRICARE For Life viable and affordable benefits of military service.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The American Legion works with the Department of Homeland Security at the national, state and local levels to prepare for natural disasters. In many communities, American Legion posts serve as civil-defense shelters and havens of relief in the event of catastrophe or attack on U.S. soil. The Legion and DHS collaborate to help local posts prepare their communities.

www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/disaster_07.pdf

BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The American Legion opposes illegal immigration and amnesty for those who came to the United States illegally. The Legion advocates for strict border and port security as a defense against invasion or attack by foreign enemies, illegal drug trafficking and adverse economic impact. The Legion, however, strongly supports legal naturalization.

www.legion.org/citizenship/immigration

NATIONAL EMERGENCY FUND

The National Emergency Fund has provided more than \$6 million in direct financial assistance to American Legion family members and posts affected by natural disasters in recent years. The donations have enabled Legion family members to rebuild their homes and their lives. www.legion.org/emergency

BLUE STAR BANNERS

The American Legion's Blue Star Banner was resurrected after 9/11 to acknowledge U.S. families with loved ones serving in the Armed Forces during wartime. American Legion Blue Star Salutes and other post-sponsored events to distribute the banners are effective expressions of homefront support for military families. www.legion.org/troops/bluestar

BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM

The American Legion conducts state competitions throughout the country for posts that donate blood or host blood drives. www.legion.org/security/blood

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The American Legion maintains a strong working relationship with the State Department to promote peace, human rights and trade on a global scale. The Legion urges the president and Congress to continue pursuing the "smart power" strategy of using military and economic strength in tandem with foreign aid and human-rights negotiations to fulfill U.S. foreign policy.

FULL ACCOUNTING OF POW/MIAs

The American Legion maintains unwavering support for the full accounting of all U.S. military personnel taken as prisoners of war, missing or killed in action on foreign soil. Official meetings of the Legion start with a prayer to honor our nation's POWs. POW/MIA flags, patches and pins are displayed at Legion events to demonstrate the organization's eternal vigilance. www.legion.org/powmia

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PILLAR III: AMERICANISM

For those looking to make differences in their local communities, The American Legion is a great place to start. From Legion Baseball to Boys State/Boys Nation to Legion Riders, there are plenty of opportunities to make your mark.

Take, for example, American Legion Baseball which began in 1925 with the aim of providing recreation for teenaged players. The goal of the program is to build players' strength, coordination and over-all physical fitness, as well as to develop good sportsmanship and combat juvenile delinquency. The wholesome activities associated with American Legion Baseball help prevent substance abuse and deviant behavior. Players in the program need not be dependents of veterans. American Legion Baseball is available to interested players 15 through 18 years of age in communities across Wisconsin.

On average, 52% of Major League Baseball Players participated in American Legion Baseball as teenagers and almost 80% of college players participated. Milwaukee Brewers greats Paul Molitor and Robin Yount are Legion Baseball Alumni. Since 1972, The Wisconsin American Legion Baseball All-Star Game has been played on the Brewers' home field following a regular season game.

Scholarships are awarded to players whose conduct on and off the field reflects credit on themselves, their family, their community and The American Legion Baseball Program. www.wilegion.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Major League stars Josh Hamilton, Cliff Lee, Albert Pujols, Mark Teixeira and Justin Verlander all played American Legion Baseball

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

BADGER BOYS STATE

The Badger Boys State program is designed to teach young men that the American form of government is stronger and more vital in today's world than ever before. It is a week-long program at Ripon College that allows high school boys to experience the workings of municipal and state government and embrace the principles of our great American heritage.

Approximately 900 young men from every part of Wisconsin come to Badger Boys State each year. Upon arrival at the Ripon College Campus, they are grouped into cities and counties which form the "51st State." For seven days the "Citizens" of the "New State" will carry out all the primary functions of city, county and state government using basic laws and fundamental procedures of the State of Wisconsin as their guide. They elect their own city, county and state officials. As alderman or county supervisors, they frame, present and pass their own ordinances and laws. Their own police and sheriffs enforce them. As attorneys they prosecute or defend, as judges they hear cases in their own courts. It is truly an outstanding and unique educational opportunity.

JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

American Legion youth air-rifle teams compete throughout the country for a possible berth in the National Junior Shooting Sports championships at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., each year. www.legion.org/shooting

ORATORICAL COMPETITION

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program gives thousands of young people the opportunity to hone their speaking skills and learn about the U.S. Constitution. Competitions at the local and state levels lead up to the National American Legion High School Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis, where top finishers are awarded more than \$138,000 in scholarships. www.legion.org/oratorical

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

American Legion posts nationwide sponsor more than 2,500 Scouting units and provide thousands of dollars in scholarships. The Legion offers a national scholarship for Eagle Scout of the Year, and the Square Knot Award for Legionnaires who work for the Scouting programs in their communities. www.legion.org/scouting

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

At the national, state and local levels, The American Legion provides access to dozens of scholarships and education programs. For more information about Legion-affiliated scholarships and application materials, visit www.legion.org/scholarships

LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP

Opportunities to attend college should not be out of reach for children left behind because a parent died on active duty. This is why The American Legion established The American Legion Legacy Scholarship, which provides funds for the children of military personnel who lost their lives on duty after 9/11. www.legion.org/scholarships/legacy

LEGION RIDERS

The Legion Riders, with more than 1,200 chapters, have raised more than \$3.3 million for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, making them the single biggest contributors. The Riders also perform a number of services for Legion-supported causes and provide support at military funerals. www.legion.org/riders

U.S. FLAG PROTECTION AND EDUCATION

The American Legion is the nation's leading supporter of a constitutional amendment to protect the U.S. flag from desecration. Since a 5-4 Supreme Court decision in 1989 defined flag burning as free speech, The American Legion has lobbied alongside members of Congress, the Citizens Flag Alliance and the majority of the American people to return to the states the right to enact flag-protection laws. The Legion is also the nation's foremost authority on the proper disposal of unserviceable U.S. flags. www.legion.org/flag

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PILLAR IV: CHILDREN & YOUTH

The American Legion's Children & Youth pillar is guided by three main objectives: strengthen the family unit, support organizations that help children in need, and provide communities with well-rounded programs to provide hope and opportunity for young people facing difficult challenges.

One program within this pillar is Temporary Financial Assistance. This program provides funds to veterans and military servicemembers' families who are struggling and have minor children at home.

For example, when health problems forced a Vietnam War veteran and his wife to quit their jobs, they still had to care for their five children at home. A local American Legion post in Washington state raised funds to help out and provided money through Temporary Financial Assistance.

After a fire at an apartment complex in New Hampshire left the families of five active-duty servicemembers homeless, The American Legion stepped in with \$500 in TFA funds for each family.

The American Legion provides temporary cash grants to hundreds of families in need each year. Local posts make requests for funds from the TFA program, which annually distributes more than \$500,000 to help families.

www.legion.org/financialassistance

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2012, the Legion's Child Welfare Foundation awarded more than \$730,000 to 20 nonprofit groups who care for the well-being of American youth.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Established during Operation Desert Storm, this program connects American Legion members with families struggling at home when loved ones are called to military duty. The program takes many shapes. Legion volunteers provide child-care services, yard work, car repairs or other forms of personal help. A dedicated hotline – **800-504-4098** - is available for families looking for assistance. www.legion.org/fsn

CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION

Nonprofit organizations that reach out to help young people in need are supported through American Legion Child Welfare Foundation grants. The foundation provides grants to enhance communications for groups that tackle problems ranging from childhood neglect to substance abuse. www.legion.org/childwelfare

SOCIAL ISSUES

The American Legion opposes attempts to weaken U.S. laws governing the production and distribution of pornographic materials and takes a zero-tolerance stance on sexual exploitation of children. The Legion also works with local programs, law-enforcement officials and schools to prevent substance abuse among young people in their communities. Other issues of Legion concern include Halloween safety, suicide prevention, support for children of deployed troops, and control over excessive use of violence in the entertainment media.



THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY



- **The Sons of The American Legion:** Founded in 1932, the Sons honor the service and sacrifice of Legionnaires. There are more than 355,000 members in the United States. Members include males whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership. www.legion.org/sons
- **The American Legion Auxiliary:** As the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world, the Auxiliary's membership is around 800,000. With 9,500 units in the United States, members are fiercely dedicated to serving, helping and meeting the needs of veterans, their families and their communities. www.alaforveterans.org
- **Legion Riders:** With more than 1,200 chapters, Legion Riders have raised more than \$3.3 million for the Legacy Scholarship fund. The Riders also perform a number of services for Legion-supported causes and provide support at military funerals. Participants must be members of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons. www.legion.org/riders



WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

Benefits of Legion Membership



THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

Members of The American Legion receive a free subscription to *The American Legion Magazine*, the largest veterans magazine in the nation. Every month, the magazine is filled with interesting feature stories, interviews, graphics, photos and ads of interest to Legionnaires and their families. www.legion.org/magazine

AMERICAN LEGION ONLINE UPDATE

Members are automatically invited to receive the weekly American Legion Online Update e-newsletter, which delivers a comprehensive roundup of stories, photos, videos and other material straight to their email inboxes. To subscribe, go to www.legion.org/subscribe

MYLEGION.ORG SOCIAL NETWORK

A social network just for Legionnaires is available through mylegion.org. The network is built for veterans who want to communicate better with each other and with their posts. It offers a variety of services, including membership administration tools.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

Members stay up to date on congressional action related to American Legion resolutions and programs. Frequent legislative alerts, information about how to contact the media and elected officials, and much more including an e-newsletter are available.

www.legion.org/legislative

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Membership in The American Legion means discounts on a variety of products and services. Member discounts are available through participating businesses in automobile rental, home services, financial and insurance, medical, moving and relocation, travel and other industries. www.legion.org/benefits

FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SERVICES

The American Legion and USAA have teamed up to connect the nation's largest veterans service organization with the nation's top-ranked insurance and financial services company. Legion members now have access to the full range of financial and insurance services and a separate credit card. For every USAA membership originating through the dedicated Legion-USAA website (www.usaa.com/legion) or by a special toll-free phone line – 877- 699-2654 – Legion programs receive a financial donation from USAA.

AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM SALES

Members of The American Legion Family are invited to review the Emblem Sales catalog for the latest in patriotic merchandise, American-made flags and apparel. A catalog of products is shipped to members or they can visit Emblem Sales online anytime to safely place their orders. www.emblem.legion.org

BADGER LEGIONNAIRE

Members of The American Legion in Wisconsin receive a free subscription to the Badger Legionnaire. The newspaper is published ten times each year and provides in-depth coverage of Legion activities and veterans issues in Wisconsin.

WHY YOU SHOULD BELONG

Contact information

MEMBERSHIP

(608) 745-1090, info@wilegion.org

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

(202) 263-5759, var@legion.org

ECONOMIC

(202) 263-5771, economicdivision@legion.org

LEGISLATIVE

(202) 263-5752, leg@legion.org

NATIONAL SECURITY/FOREIGN RELATIONS

(202) 263-5765, nsfr@legion.org

AMERICANISM/CHILDREN & YOUTH

(317) 630-1203, acy@legion.org

PUBLIC RELATIONS

(317) 630-1253, pr@legion.org

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

(317) 630-1298, magazine@legion.org

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

(317) 630-1205, sal@legion.org

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

(317) 630-1327, legionriders@legion.org

How do I ...

... find a post close to me?

Go to www.legion.org/posts to search our database.

... know what benefits I may be eligible for?

Go to www.legion.org/veteranservices and click on the link to the “Benefits Calculator.”

... find a service officer?

Go to www.legion.org and look for the “Find it Quick” box, then click “Service Officer.”

Mail the membership application below along with a \$30 check made payable to: The American Legion, to

The American Legion
Department of Wisconsin
P.O. Box 388
Portage, WI 53901-0388

or join online at www.wilegion.org

Questions? Please call (608) 745-1090

The American Legion Membership Application

(Name) _____ (Phone) _____

(Mailing Address) _____ (Date) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____ (Post #) _____

(Membership ID# former member) _____ (Email Address) _____ (Dues) _____

Please check appropriate eligibility dates and branch of service below

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aug 2, 1990 – Present | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Army |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Navy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Air Force |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Marines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955 | <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Coast Guard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946 | <input type="checkbox"/> Merchant Marines 12/7/41 – 12/31/46 (only eligibility) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April 6, 1917 – Nov 11, 1918 | |

I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or am still serving honorably.



Signature of applicant

Name of recruiter

30-009 (2011)

Receipt of Dues

(Please Print)



From _____

\$ _____ for 20____ Post # _____

Recruiter's Name _____

Recruiter's Signature _____

Recruiter's Phone # _____



THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

P.O. Box 388
Portage, WI 53901-0388
(608) 745-1090

 www.wilegion.org

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 twitter.com/AmericanLegion



Scan to join!

Who to contact: