



**POST
DEVELOPMENT
&
REVITALIZATION**

Procedures and Resources

Post/Community Evaluation:

- To determine where a post should belong in a community, or where a post should be revitalized within a community, a Post/Community Evaluation should be conducted first.
 - An evaluation anticipates an organization will participate in meaningful activities within the community.
 - You should be able to measure the results of a post's activities.
 - Qualitative analysis of a post
 - Quantitative analysis of a post
 - The evaluation is not necessarily to just rate your post, although this could be a very valuable tool, but how an American Legion Post would interact within a community.
 - The primary purpose is to indicate whether a post is:
 - Fulfilling a useful function,
 - Whether it is an organization attracting veterans, and
 - Whether it is truly a community asset.
 - Honestly evaluate the post and community.
 - Evaluation will indicate where a post is needed or revitalized.
 - Evaluation will indicate where improvement is most needed, or where one might want to brag about what their post is doing greatly.
 - You can also evaluate what YOUR own post is doing.
 - Share your response with your own post and brag about how well you're doing.
 - See where improvements are needed.

POST & COMMUNITY EVALUATION

1. Post has good youth programs.

When scoring this one, look not only at the variety of the programs and the number of youth served, but also at the post's management of the programs.

Score _____

2. Post members are interested and active.

Does the post offer a variety of activities to appeal to the interests of a broad spectrum of the membership or are all the "eggs in one basket?"

Score _____

3. Post is a real asset to the community.

Does an identifiable segment of the post's financial support and volunteer manpower go to assist community programs and facilities – hospital, charity fund drives, recreation programs, etc.?

Score _____

4. Post is a community center.

A dozen card players and/or a few daytime bar patrons won't identify your post as a community center.

Score _____

5. Post aids veterans in need of help.

This element begins with an active post service officer and goes on from there – counseling, medical care of hospitalization assistance, claims, jobs, education and training, etc.

Score _____

6. Post has a businesslike operation.

Don't be decoyed on this one by an adjutant who substitutes activity for progress. Look at the condition of post records, files, clubroom operation, etc.

Score _____

7. Post is a friendly place to be.

Does post make a sincere effort to make new members feel at home? Or does it cater to the few "regulars" who drop in every day?

Score _____

8. Post is well thought of by the community.

Does the post have an effective public relations program to display its achievements and its participation in civic programs?

Score _____

9. Post offers activities and functions for Legion families.

Are such activities well planned and well attended?

Score _____

10. Post conducts regular, interesting meetings.

Are meetings conducted according to ritual? Does commander have a prepared agenda? Are programs planned in conjunction with the meetings?

Score _____

Now, transfer your scores for each of the ten items to the chart on the next page by placing a check mark in the appropriate scoring column for each item.

Post Responsibility Audit

Rating Schedule:

- 0 - No Participation
- 1 - Poor
- 2 - Below Average
- 3 - Average
- 4 - Above Average
- 5 - Excellent

Rate 0 to 5

	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Youth Programs						
2. Interested and active members						
3. Community asset						
4. Community center						
5. Aid to veterans						
6. Businesslike operation						
7. Friendly atmosphere						
8. Attitude of community						
9. Functions for families						
10. Post meetings						

TOTAL POST SCORE _____

Rating Schedule from Total Score:

- 0 – 4 Dead
- 5 – 14 Poor (“Barely Breathing”)
- 15 – 24 Below Average (“Early Stage of Malignancy”)
- 25 – 35 Average (“Can be Sold Enthusiastically”)
- 36 – 50 Excellent (“Sells Itself”)

This entire exercise has been put together not necessarily to indicate a quick method for rating posts, although it can be used in this manner. The primary purpose is to indicate, by evaluating what a post is doing (or not doing), whether the post is fulfilling a useful function, whether it is an organization that has the potential for attracting a larger membership, and whether it is truly a community asset.

It is also a method of pinpointing a post’s weaknesses that should be valuable to its leadership in bringing about needed improvements.

• **New Post Start-Up & Revitalization Procedures & Timelines**

Topics below will be covered in detail within this document

- Determining if a new post or revitalized post needed
 - At least one post to service each high school.
- Use of delinquent & headquarters post listings (Leads Listing Reports)
 - Request lists from department headquarters.
- Pamphlets/brochures available
 - See *Post Officer's Guide* or contact your department headquarters.
- Other tools needed to be a success
 - Volunteers, maps, phone books, GPS, etc.
- Sample Letters & Media Releases (provided)
 - Letters to expired members and headquarters post members asking them to join or transfer to new or revitalized post.
 - Media Releases to announce new post or revitalization membership efforts in the community.
- Post/Community Resources
 - Inform current Legionnaires.
 - Inform community leaders of up-coming membership efforts.
 - Local Government Leaders
 - Religious Leaders
 - School Board members
 - Local Law Enforcement and Firefighters
 - Local business leaders/Chambers of Commerce
 - National Guard or Reserve Units or Active Duty Installations
- How to utilize your national staff, department and district officers
 - Contact your district, department or National leadership for assistance.

- 1) Determine the area in which you wish to start a new post or revitalize an existing, but struggling or stagnant, post. You should plan on spending at least 2 – 4 days per area. Anything less than that would not constitute a true new or revitalization post effort.

New Posts:

- a) Departments of The American Legion should consider placing posts in:
- i) Communities without a post and a population that is growing
 - ii) Location where a post charter has been canceled
 - iii) Communities with a post that has closed its membership (i.e., does not want any new members, special interest post, etc.)
 - iv) Town or city with a high school and a population that is growing
 - v) County that does not have a post

Identify areas that do not have a post:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Revitalized Posts:

- b) If a post is already in place, look for these indicators to revitalize a post:
- i) Post does not have any active programs
 - ii) Post is not holding scheduled or regular meetings
 - iii) Post membership has declined at an alarming rate
 - iv) Post where leadership has lost vision or interest
 - v) The community is growing but post membership is declining
 - vi) Post membership is declining with no activity

Identify areas where there are posts that need revitalizing:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Leads Listing Report (expired and Headquarters Post extract):

- 2) Contact your Department Adjutant and request, by zip code, a list of American Legion members who currently belong to the department's "holding" or Headquarters Post in the area where you wish to start or revitalize a post. Also request a list of expired members from all posts that reside in those zip codes. List to include Member ID Number, Name, Address, Phone Number, War Era and Continuous Years. (Some Departments may keep a record of expired members covering a few years prior.) If ordering from National, these listings can be e-mailed, put on a CD and also provided in a printed format.

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 3) Review the membership lists with the New/Revitalization Post Team. Locate a place to be used as a Headquarters while you are conducting the recruiting drive – usually two to four days. Prime places to use are: existing post home, municipal building, fire/rescue station, library, bank building, community activities center, township building, church, fraternal organizations such as Elks, Moose, Eagles, Masons, Lions and Union Halls.

Location with street address: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Flyers/Posters:

Place recruiting posters/flyers on bulletin boards making announcement of recruiting activity - giving time, place and contact name. Use posters/flyers anywhere there is a high traffic flow of people – mini-mart, gas station, grocery store, hardware store, dry cleaner, city utility payment office, barber shop, bowling alley, etc.

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 4) Build a "sales kit" for use while recruiting. Items you will need for recruiting event are:
- a) Membership Applications
 - b) Member Data Forms
 - c) "Why You Should Belong to The American Legion" brochure
 - d) Membership Benefits brochure
 - e) Troop Support Services "TS2" brochure (for use at NG or Reserve Units)
 - f) Other pamphlets/literature that "sells" The American Legion

Other tools/resources needed:

- g) Four (4) to Eight (8) Legionnaires to make up the recruiting team
- h) Leads Listing Report from department listing all current and expired members with addresses and phone numbers
- i) Map of area
- j) Phone books
- k) Access to telephone
- l) GPS

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

5) Send Invite Letter (see samples) to all individuals on Leads Listing Reports in the zip code(s) where you are planning a new or revitalized post. Inform them of the time and place that you will be available to talk to them about membership in the new or revitalized post. If possible, try to have a Department, District or Post Service Officer on hand to answer questions about veterans, dependents and survivor benefits; this information should be included in the Invite Letter. Give name and phone number of a contact person in the area who can answer questions about the organization of the new or revitalized post.

Local contact person: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

6) News release and recruiting flyers/posters. Prepare a news release announcing recruiting drive (see sample). For best results the press releases *should be hand delivered* to all area newspapers and TV and radio stations by a member of the New/Revitalization Post Team. Make sure it is delivered well in advance of the recruiting drive. Flyers and posters will be developed announcing the recruiting drive and both should be provided to the local contact person. Placement in the community should be at least one week prior to the event.

News Releases:

- i) For use in local newspapers and neighborhood bulletins
- ii) For broadcast use (radio or cable access TV stations)
- iii) Use in community bulletins (church, recreations centers, home owner publications, etc.)
- iv) Use in newsletters of other community-based organizations/corporations (i.e. employers, fraternal organizations, etc.)

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 7) Locate a place for organizational and subsequent monthly meetings. Can be same location used during the recruiting effort: (existing post home, municipal building, fire/rescue station, library, bank building, community activities center, township building, church, fraternal organizations such as Elks, Moose, Eagles, Masons, Lions, and Union Halls).

Location with street address: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

- 8) During the event there are a number of things that need to be accomplished in order to make your effort successful. One way a new post or revitalization event is considered successful is by the number of recruited members. A second, *and as important*, way to measure the success of a membership drive is the number of community leaders that have been informed. Whereas numbers are important, the community leaders also need to be educated about what The American Legion post can do for their neighborhood.

Membership Focus

- a) Use leads for making personal contact with all prospects, informing them of The American Legion's goals, utilizing the tools from your sales kit to assist you in this effort.
- b) Station recruiting teams at high traffic areas to sign up new members.
- c) Personally visit (knock on doors) all delinquent/expired and Holding/Headquarters Post members on the Leads Listing Report asking them reinstate or transfer their membership into the new or revitalized post. Leave a brochure with contact information if they are not home and follow-up.
- d) For those that do not have a physical address, make phone calls instead.
- e) You, the recruiter, should complete a membership application and have individual pay their annual dues.
- f) Complete a Member Data Form for all members wishing to transfer from another post. Capture all other data as well (birthday, branch of service, etc.)
- g) Determine with the Membership Team, and the recruited members, when to hold the Organizational Meeting and set the date, time and place. The Organizational Meeting should be held within thirty (30) days to ensure that the enthusiasm of building the post membership is not diminished.
- h) Quiz the new member(s) for leads. Utilize any and all leads developed by these individuals.

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Date accomplished: _____

Before you move on, thank the new member(s) and provide information on the time, purpose and location of the first/next meeting. Inform the new member(s) that their membership card will be issued at this meeting or put in the mail if they are not in attendance.

Community Focus (your time to brag)

Brief the following key community agencies on The American Legion family's programs and its service to veterans. Also, from community agencies may come possible members and leaders for the new or revitalized post.

- a) National Guard or Reserve Units (Operation Outreach – TS2)
- b) School superintendents and administrators
- c) Other civic organizations
- d) Chamber of Commerce
- e) Police and Fire Departments
- f) Mayor/City Managers
- g) Unions or other major businesses in the area

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Assigned to: _____

Date accomplished: _____

9) When the recruiting event is over:

a) Make a roster or list of all members of the new or revitalized post, to include:

- i) Name, address and phone number
- ii) Include Membership ID Number
- iii) If known, add War Era and Branch of Service
- iv) Designate if member is new, transfer or renewal
- v) How much paid for membership and if by cash or check

b) Deliver roster, membership applications, member data forms and ALL money to one of the following: the department headquarters representative, post adjutant or mentor. Have person sign that they received all paperwork and payments and ensure you keep a copy of signed roster for your files.

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

10) Prior to the new post or revitalized post Organizational Meeting:

- a) About 2 weeks prior to the meeting send a notice to all members of new or revitalized post informing them of the meeting.
- b) Send Organizational Meeting Notice to everyone on the Leads Listing Report even if they have not joined prior. This will act as a second invitation to join the new or revitalized post.
- c) Invite department and district officers to Organizational Meeting.
- d) Prepare a news release stating a new or revitalized post has been formed in the area and inviting all interested parties to join you at that meeting. Again, it is very important that news releases *are hand carried* to the newspapers and radio stations.
- e) Designate one or two mentors for the new/revitalized post.
- f) The mentor(s) should be knowledgeable of The American Legion customs and able to attend the meetings of the new or revitalized post as an advisor the first 4-8 months.

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Assigned to: _____ Date accomplished: _____

Mentors Assigned: _____

Date accomplished: _____

11) The Organizational Meeting is typically held within 30 days after the recruiting event. Items to be accomplished at this meeting are: (See page 17 for detailed information on this subject).

- a) Prepare a written agenda for the meeting.
- b) Have everyone in attendance stand and introduce themselves. This is your opportunity to determine if all present have either joined or transferred. Have those who have not signed up meet with a member of the Recruiting Team to complete the paperwork.
- c) Conduct initiation of all new members and, if possible, present each with an initiation certificate and American Legion lapel pin. Check with the department headquarters or obtain from Emblem Sales.
- d) Explain how meetings are conducted then open and conduct the meeting.
- e) Explain the duties of all officers and ask for officer volunteers.
- f) Hold an election and installation of all officers.
- g) Issue new membership cards (supplied from department) to all members.
- h) Cover information pertaining to projects the post can be involved with.
- i) Try to have a Service Officer on hand to explain their duties and answer any questions they may have about veterans, dependents and survivor benefits.
- j) Never close the Organizational Meeting until the decision is made when and where the next meeting will take place.
- k) Have members develop a list of leads for current Membership Team or mentor to follow up with before next meeting.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

The
**American
Legion**



For God and country

★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ P.O. BOX 1055 ★ INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-1055
★ (317) 630-1321 ★ Fax (317) 630-1413

For Immediate Release

American Legion Post Expands Service to the Community

INDIANAPOLIS (date) – Wartime-era veterans of the ----- area have an opportunity to join in on a partnership that will increase community service in the area. The American Legion, the nation's largest veteran's organization, is inviting all wartime-era veterans in the area to join them in providing service to all veterans and their families.

Officers and staff members of the Indianapolis-based American Legion National Headquarters and -----based State Headquarters will be in town, along with members of American Legion Post # _____, to kick off this community and veteran service campaign.

Wartime-era veterans can visit with Legion representatives at _____ at _____ at (address) on day/date, between the hours of ____ to _____. Or, call _____, Post (representative) at (phone). Information about veteran's benefits and Legion membership will be available.

Post # _____ will focus on community service and assistance to veterans, in keeping with the over-90-year tradition of The American Legion. The scope and nature of the post's community service will be determined by its members and inputs from local civic and community officials.

"Service! That's what The American Legion is all about," said _____, Commander of The American Legion for the Department of _____. "We exist to help each and every veteran, their families and the communities they live in. (City/town) is an ideal place to strengthen partnerships with the veterans and the community. The people here care about their community and practice good citizenship every day. Now, wartime veterans have a special place from which they can make a difference."

Since its inception in 1919, The American Legion has been an outspoken advocate for veterans' benefits, children & youth, patriotic American values, a strong national defense and quality-of-life issues for those serving in today's armed forces.

The organization, which spearheaded the original GI Bill, has been advocating reform of the veteran's health care system under its GI Bill of Health. Creation of the federal forerunner of the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the agency's ascent to cabinet-level status is due in part to The American Legion's advocacy. The American Legion also was instrumental in the establishment of the Veterans Home Loan, veterans hiring preference and just compensation to veterans suffering from illnesses related to their military service, including those whose ailments stem from exposure to Agent Orange and mysterious Persian Gulf origins.

Equally aggressive are The American Legion's efforts to instill values in young people through numerous programs, including American Legion Boys State, American Legion Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports, the National High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, Teenage Suicide Prevention, Child Health and a McGruff Safe Kids Program. The American Legion has supported Scouting since 1919. Many American Legion posts also support Junior ROTC high school units, fund-raising for handicapped children, the Children's Miracle Network and partnerships with other nonprofit organizations such as Special Olympics.

--30--

Contact: _____

SAMPLE LETTER

(Date)

Dear Veteran:

Do you feel it is important to have a strong national defense? Do you feel current members of the military should be adequately compensated for their service and sacrifice? And do you feel our children should grow up with a sense of patriotism and respect for our nation and what you fought for?

If you answer “yes” to any or all of these questions, then The American Legion would like to have you in our corner by becoming a member of The American Legion.

The American Legion is chartering a new post in [redacted] to expand its services to veterans, their families and the community. Our commitment since 1919 has been to provide service to our veterans and to this end provide you the information you need to join in this commitment. Did you know that. . .

- As an American Legion member you and your spouse and children (up to age 18) **can save up to 40%** off on eyewear (frames and lenses)?
- as an American Legion member you could receive **up to \$1,500** in the event your home is damaged by a natural disaster (payable within one week to you after applying)?
- as a veteran, you have **free** access to the state’s American Legion Service Officer who can represent veterans with the VA and assist with filing claims?

If you were not aware of these programs, then we hope you consider becoming a member of the newly formed [redacted] American Legion Post. Through your membership we can keep you informed of everything that you have earned for you and your family in serving your country.

Officers and staff members of the Indianapolis-based American Legion National Headquarters and [redacted]-based State Headquarters will be in town [redacted] through [redacted], to kick off this community and veteran service campaign. According to American Legion by-laws, at least 15 veterans are required to form a post.

We invite all wartime veterans in this area to attend the new post’s formative meetings at [redacted] [redacted]. Membership and veteran information staff will be available at that location on [redacted] from [redacted] to [redacted].

A [redacted] American Legion Service Officer will also be available for all area veterans with claims or other veteran-related questions on [redacted], from [redacted] to [redacted] at the [redacted] [redacted].

Additionally, the first [redacted] American Legion Post meeting is scheduled for [redacted], at [redacted] at the [redacted].

We would be honored if you would share with us in building up the [redacted] American Legion Post and helping make it a post that all area veterans would be proud to claim as an asset to their community – **an asset that makes a difference!**

If I can assist you in any way with a Legion or VA matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or [redacted] [redacted] at [redacted].

For God & Country,

[redacted]
Department Commander
The American Legion Department of [redacted]

Follow-Up Timeline for New Post or Post Revitalization Activities:

- Who is responsible?
 - It is critical that there is constant mentoring from the department and district so this post does not “fall through the cracks.”
- When Should Follow-Up Start?
 - A representative should attend the post meetings for at least a year, or until such time as the post dictates that they are capable of surviving in their community.
- Why do we Follow-Up?
 - No newly formed or revitalized post should be expected to be able to jump right in and “make it on their own” the first 8 months to 1 year.
- The following guidance is provided as a guideline to assist you in determining how/when/where/what, etc., so that the follow-up effort is a success.

“Follow-up Timeline
for New Post or
Revitalization
Activities”

Department Headquarters and District, 7-day action plan:

7 to 10 days after the initial effort the District Commander or Department Headquarters should send a letter, with information as follows, to all new members and prospects not signed up during the initial recruiting campaign:

- Provide date, time, and location of first meeting and include a proposed activity agenda. Example of information as follows: all new members will receive their membership card, fill out a form for free AD&D insurance and meet other veterans with similar interests and a common goal.
- Welcome all new, reinstated or transferred members to the post.
- Inform members of the current status of the post, to include the total number of members and names of those newly acquired Legionnaires on the Temporary Charter or revitalized post roster.

Department Headquarters and District, 14-21 day response plan.

- Conduct the first post meeting. The post meeting should be held within two to four weeks after the completion of the Charter/Revitalization fieldwork.
- Department/District officers should help conduct the first meeting for a newly chartered post and assist as required for a revitalized post.
- The mentoring process begins at the first post meeting. Introduce department and district officers; allow them to give a brief description (3 minutes or less) of the elected or appointed duties of the office they hold.
- Have the post members introduce themselves to one another. Allow a two minute time frame for the member to give a brief background of his or her interests, family and military service.
- Introduce members to the responsibilities and activities required of the post officers.
- Provide a brief highlighted history of the accomplishments of The American Legion.

- Before closing the meeting set the date, time, and place for the next post meeting.
- Involve as many new members as possible in the activities that will lead up to the next meeting; i.e., press releases, telephone trees, volunteers to do mailing of notices and what is planned for future meetings.
- Exchange names and telephone numbers with all interested members. Contact and communication is very important and should be developed between the new post members.

District and Department 5 to 6 weeks – second post meeting

- Department/District officers should help conduct post meeting, as needed.
- For a new post: if the temporary charter has been approved, signed and returned completed from National Headquarters, present to post membership.
- To ensure that a post makes progress, explain the importance of having post officers, as outlined in the Constitution and By-laws. Once you have completed the explanation, elect or appoint a slate of post officers.
- Assist and mentor the new officers and appointees working with them to ensure they are successful. This will make you a success. Make certain the new post officers and appointees understand the mentoring process is an on-going Department/District activity.
- Complete Post Officers Data Form to be submitted to Department Headquarters.
- Assist the post in filing for their non-profit tax ID Number.
- Give a very brief overview of two or three basic American Legion programs they may wish to get involved with. Ask membership for their input on what they feel may be a good post program or community activity.

Recommend three committees are formed as soon as the mentor feels the time is right, or in the time-frame of the 2nd or 3rd meeting:

1. **Financial**: Provides plans and ideas for fundraisers and other activities designed to develop monies for planned post activities and programs.

2. **Membership:** Develop ideas to increase membership and activities focused on the retention of the member. Develop teams within the post to make contact with new member prospects. Support developing public relations campaigns, newsletters, welcoming committees, and all activities promoting membership of the post.
 3. **Programs:** Develops post activities and programs that benefit the majority of the members, create good public relations, co-sponsor community activities, and provide the public with information on Americanism, Children & Youth programs. Remain open to ideas as they are presented from the floor.
- District/Area/Department must continue to work with the post, be available to them, and provide support and mentoring as required. Plan on attending the posts meetings until you feel they are comfortable in conducting their meetings and required business.

- **Recognition:**

People will work harder for you if you let them know how much you appreciate their help. While there are many ways you can thank your volunteers, it would be easy for one to develop/create certificates for those who have assisted in the Post Development or Revitalization effort, and have the certificates presented at an appropriate venue.