

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA



All-State Membership Program 2025 – 2026

David Kuta
State Commander

June 30, 2025

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Introduction

The VFW Department of California's success depends on our ability to retain our current members, recover previous members, and recruit new members into our organization. These actions are dependent upon our ability to communicate effectively at all levels. We need to utilize all available methods to deliver information and training to our membership. The ability to solicit, meet and address our members' needs and concerns are a priority. As an organization, we need to focus on the tenants of the VFW: take care of our members, their families, and the veteran community. This will allow us to be successful in conducting the mission of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, thus keeping us positioned as a primary voice and resource for the Veteran community

Membership Mission

The 2025 – 2026 Membership Program is designed to recruit, reinstate and retain a committed membership base to help support the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW) mission. A committed membership is a participative group. Participation among members results in a thriving and growing post environment. 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 will ensure the Veteran voice is heard. 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.
- Developing community organization partnerships.
- 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 100% + 1 member of last year's membership. This will be based on membership numbers ending 06/30/25.
- 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.

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- To RETAIN existing membership in addition to recruiting new members.
- To maintain an average retention rate of 85% or higher for Posts in California.

Membership Chairman

The Membership Chairmen, **Leo Castillo**, **Manuel Inacio**, and **Michael Croy II** will oversee the program and will work directly with members of the Post and District Membership Teams. His contact information is:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| • L. Castillo Phone: 619.261.3484 | Email: vfwpasorobles@gmail.com |
| • M. Inacio Phone: 559.232.2554 | Email: manuel.e.inacio@gmail.com |
| • M. Croy II Phone: 760.488.3931 | Email: mcroy2@gmail.com |

All-State Criteria by Level

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 2025 – 2026 All-State Program for Posts is designed to reward Posts based on the following:

- **Post must be in Good Standing.**
- **The Good Standing requirements are:**
 - The Post Election Report for 2025 – 2026 must be received at Department and National HQ no later than (NLT) June 1, 2025.
 - Post Quartermaster and/or all accountable officers must be bonded no later than August 31, 2025.
 - Posts must provide proof of liability insurance to the Department by September 30, 2025.
 - The **Post Commander, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Adjutant** and **AT LEAST two Trustee's** must complete the District School of Instruction/Department Training before December 31, 2025.
 - Post's copy of IRS 990/990n and CA Form 199/199n must be received at Department prior to December 31, 2025, if the Post is on the same fiscal year as the Department (7/1-6/30). If the

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Post financials are on the calendar year (1/1 – 12/31), the tax forms are due by April 15, 2026.

- All posts must be inspected NLT December 31, 2025.
- All properly signed and correct 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 delegate election report to Department NLT June 1, 2026.
- Delegate dues for State Convention shall be paid NLT June 1, 2026.
- The Post shall have no arrearages with District, Department, or National as of June 1, 2026.
- All deficiencies noted on the Post Inspection Report shall be corrected NLT June 30, 2026.
- **Post must participate in the Buddy Poppy Program.**
 - The Post must purchase a minimum of five hundred poppies or more.
 - The Post must conduct two 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 NLT November 15th, 2025.
 - Submit at least one Patriot's Pen entry to your respective District for judging NLT November 15th, 2025.
 - Submit at least one Teacher of the Year (any category) entry and/or submit at least one Law Enforcement/Firefighter and/or EMT of the Year entry to your respective District for judging NLT November 15th, 2025.
- **Post must make the minimum Department monetary donations.**
 - Divisions 1 – 4: minimum \$300 donation and Divisions 5 – 11: minimum \$150 donation. Donations will be used for programs. **Donations made to National Programs or to the National Home do not count for credit in this category.**
- **Post must report at least one Veteran Assistance Event quarterly via the Department online reporting system.**
- **Post must report at least one Community Assistance Event quarterly via the Department online reporting system.**
- **Post Membership Goals**
 - Post must provide, to their District Commander and the State Adjutant, a Membership/Recruiting Plan by August 31, 2025. 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 June 1, 2026, and report the results via the Department online reporting system.
 - Post must achieve the membership goal of 100% + 1 member by June 30, 2026.

Post Divisions by Membership Chart

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

- **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 Department Commander may grant a post recommendation at their discretion.*
- 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 \$150.00 for each of the missing program requirements, payable to VFW Department Headquarters.

- **All-State Post Award**

The Posts meeting 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 and Pin.

- ❖ **NOTE:** The closing date for the All-State Program shall be the close of business on April 15, 2026, to receive “All-State” Caps & Pins for presentation at the State Convention. Any Post earning All-State status between April 16, 2026 – June 30, 2026, 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 2025 – 2026 All-State Program for Districts is designed to reward Districts based on the following:

- **District must be in Good Standing.**
- **The Good Standing requirements are:**
 - The District Election Report for 2025 – 2026 must be received at Department and National HQ prior to June 1, 2025.
 - District Quartermaster and/or all accountable officers must be bonded no later than August 31, 2025.
 - District's copy of IRS 990/990n and CA Form 199/199n must be received at Department prior to December 31, 2025, if the District is on the same fiscal year as the Department (7/16/30). If the Districts financials are on the calendar year (1/1 – 12/31), the tax forms are due by April 15, 2026.
 - All properly signed and correct 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 2025-2026 must be received by Department HQ no later than June 1, 2026.
 - All Post Inspections must be completed by December 31, 2025.
 - The District must provide a School of Instruction (SOI) by December 31, 2025. The department HQ must receive the attendance roster NLT 30 days after completion of the SOI.
 - 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, 2026.
 - 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, 2026.
 - District must make the minimum Department program donations: ▪ Divisions 1-3 minimum \$500 donation, Divisions 4-6 minimum \$300 donation which will be used for programs.
 - Must be recommended by the Department Commander.
- **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 NLT December 15th, 2025.

- Submit one Patriot's Pen entry to Department for judging accompanied by the District Post Participation report NLT December 15th, 2025.
- Submit at least one Teacher of the Year (any category) entry and/or submit at least one Law Enforcement/Firefighter and/or EMT of the Year entry to Department for judging accompanied by the District Post Participation report NLT January 1st, 2026.
- **District Membership Goals**
 - District must provide, to the State Adjutant, a Membership/Recruiting Plan by August 31, 2025. 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 June 1, 2026, and report the results via the Department online reporting system. For purposes of reporting, the District is considered **Post "0"**.
- District must achieve the membership goal of 100% + 1 member by June 30, 2026.

District Divisions by Membership Chart:

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

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 and a Pin.
- **NOTE:** The closing date for the All-State Program shall be the close of business on April 15, 2026, to receive "All-State" Caps & Pins 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, Senior Vice Commander, Junior Vice Commander, Quartermaster, Adjutant and at least two (2) trustees to attend SOI/Department training for the Post. All listed training modules must be attended 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 all attendance on the Department website Training Module to receive credit. A District Commander must request access to the Training Attendance Module. The members will submit their membership numbers to receive credit for all SOI training. Officers will be verified by their Post Election Reports to receive credit for attendance.

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 Post Senior Vice Commander Post Junior Vice Commander
Quartermaster/Trustee Training	Post Commander Post Senior Vice Commander Post Junior Vice Commander Post Quartermaster Two (2) Trustees
Adjutant Training	Post Commander Post Senior Vice Commander Post Junior Vice Commander Post Adjutant
Parliamentary Procedure	Post Commander Post Senior Vice Commander Post Junior Vice Commander

Conduct Veterans Assistance Events: Posts must report at least one (1) separate event via the online reporting system quarterly 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 one (1) separate event via the online reporting system quarterly to receive credit. The following events qualify:

- Citizenship/Americanism (Parades, Holiday events, Ceremonies, etc)
- Honor Guard/ Color Guard
- Flag Etiquette
- POW/MIA (Req'd)
- VA Volunteer Services (hospital/clinic)
- Disaster Relief
- Stand Down Participation
- Safety Recognition

Buddy Poppy Drives: Posts must conduct two (2) Buddy Poppy drives 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. Must state FREE in the report notes.

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, 2025

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, 2025, 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 will be provided by Department Adjutant.
- 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 100% + 1 member by 10/31/25 shall receive \$200.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 1/31/26 shall receive \$150.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 4/15/26 shall receive \$100.00.

Category 2 (101 – 175 members)

- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 10/31/25 shall receive \$300.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 1/31/26 shall receive \$225.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 4/15/26 shall receive \$175.00.

Category 3 (176 – 250 members)

- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 10/31/25 shall receive \$500.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 1/31/26 shall receive \$300.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 4/15/26 shall receive \$200.00.

Category 4 (251 - 400 members)

- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 10/31/25 shall receive \$700.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 1/31/26 shall receive \$500.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 4/15/26 shall receive \$300.00.

Category 5 (401+ members)

- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 10/31/25 shall receive \$900.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 1/31/26 shall receive \$700.00.
- Any Post that reaches 100% + 1 member by 4/15/26 shall receive \$500.00.

District Incentives (July – December 31st)

- Any District reaching 100% + 1 member in membership by 12/31/25 shall receive \$1,000.00.

District Incentives (January – June 30th)

- Any District reaching 100% + 1 member in membership by 06/30/25 shall receive \$500.00.

Additional District Membership Incentives

District's 90% thru 100% Payout

- Districts will be paid .35 cents per member over 90% until they hit 100% by November 1st, 2025
- Districts will then be paid \$5.00 per member from 100% + 1 member to 101% capped.

Member Recruiting Incentives

- 25 - 49 New or Reinstated members by 12/31/25 will receive State Commander's Shirt + Coin
- 50 - 74 New or Reinstated members by 3/30/26 will receive State Cdrs Shirt + Coin + VFW Rocks Glass Set presented at State Convention

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- 75 – 99 New or Reinstated members by 3/30/26 will receive State Cdrs Shirt + Coin + VFW Decanter and Glass Set presented at State Convention
- 100 - 199 New or Reinstated members by 3/30/26 will receive State Cdrs Shirt + Coin + Bluetooth Speaker presented at State Convention
- 200+ New or Reinstated members by 3/30/26 will receive State Cdrs Shirt + Coin + U.S. Army NCO Sword presented at State Convention
- Top 3 recruiters in Department will receive a U.S. Army NCO Sword to be presented at State Convention.