

Dear ALA Leaders,

April was a productive month across the organization as staff focused on leadership development, member engagement, communications growth, and preparations for several major upcoming events. As we enter the final months of the administrative year, much of our work continues to center on equipping departments and members with the tools, training, and resources needed for long-term success.

One of the most encouraging developments this month was the overwhelming response to the inaugural National Poppy Day Virtual 5K. What began as a new engagement opportunity quickly gained momentum across the organization, with nearly 800 participants registering by the close of registration on April 30. The strong response reflects both the continued relevance of the Poppy program and the enthusiasm our members have for finding new ways to engage communities in support of veterans. We look forward to building on this momentum in the future.

April also included significant preparation for the Department Leadership National Conference, which finished last week in Indianapolis. Department leaders attended to focus on leadership development, collaboration, governance, membership strategy, and mission-focused training for the year ahead.

Across the organization, staff also continued advancing communications initiatives, supporting operational priorities, and strengthening member engagement efforts through programs, webinars, and digital outreach.

Below are April's highlights and updates across the divisions.

Highlights

- **National Poppy Day Virtual 5K exceeds expectations:** Registration for the inaugural virtual event closed April 30 with 792 participants, demonstrating strong engagement and excitement surrounding National Poppy Day initiatives.
- **Leadership development takes center stage:** Department leaders attended the Department Leadership National Conference in Indianapolis to focus on leadership preparation, governance, membership strategy, and mission delivery.
- **Strong digital engagement continues:** Social media views increased 45% month-over-month, blog traffic grew nearly 39%, and ALA eNews maintained a strong 39.8% open rate.
- **Membership engagement remains steady:** A targeted renewal email campaign to senior members generated more than 15,000 opens and over 1,300 clicks, while webinar participation around membership strategy continued to grow.
- **Foundation grant impact expands:** The ALA Foundation awarded nine Veteran Projects Fund grants totaling \$55,869 while also implementing updated grant criteria to strengthen consistency, clarity, and program impact.
- **National Convention Information:** Info regarding authorizations, housing, and travel details, is scheduled for distribution May 18–20.

Programs

National Poppy Day Virtual 5K

The inaugural National Poppy Day Virtual 5K exceeded expectations, generating strong engagement from members and supporters across the organization. Registration closed April 30 with 792 participants registered for the event.

The strong response reflects continued enthusiasm surrounding the Poppy program and demonstrates how new engagement opportunities can help expand awareness and participation in support of veterans.

Veterans Creative Arts Festival

The 2026 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Letter of Commitment was signed April 22, continuing the Auxiliary's support of this important program recognizing the healing power of the arts for veterans.

Program Activity

- 35 Good Deed Awards and 13 Youth Hero Awards distributed
- 342 Junior Patch Program patches awarded
- 10 Spirit of Youth patches awarded totaling \$395 in donations
- 6 Children of Warriors National President patches awarded totaling \$356 in donations
- 2 VAVS certification forms processed

Q3 Committee Meetings

- 9 meetings held
- 453 registered
- 395 attended

Membership

Membership engagement efforts continued throughout April through webinar education, renewal outreach, and ongoing support for departments and units.

The National Membership Committee hosted the webinar *Building a Strong Membership Strategy – Engagement, Retention & Year-Round Planning* on April 14. More than 300 participants registered, with 150 attending the session.

A renewal email campaign targeting senior members who had not yet renewed for 2026 generated strong engagement:

- 33,227 emails sent
- 15,330 opens (46%)
- 1,307 clicks (4%)

Additional Metrics

- Phone renewals: 577 processed
- Unit growth: 5 units chartered or rechartered in April (43 YTD)
- Paid Up For Life: 26 applications processed
- ALAMIS: 116 users set up; 4 Department Full User trainings conducted

Events & Education

ALA Academy LIVE Webinars

Upcoming webinar sessions include:

- *Celebrating America's 250th Birthday* – May 12

Engagement with the ALA Academy continues to grow. During the past month, members accessed the platform more than 1,100 times, with more than 350 course completions recorded.

Department Leadership National Conference

The 2026 Department Leadership National Conference was held May 1–4 at the Sheraton Indianapolis North.

More on this in next month's update.

Communications & Marketing

April reflected continued growth across the organization's communications platforms, with strong engagement across social media, blog content, eNews, and website traffic.

Auxiliary Magazine

Staff is currently producing the August issue of *Auxiliary magazine*, which will include features on the ALA-sponsored Honor Flight and the 2026 National Convention. The issue is expected to arrive in homes July 6–12.

Magazine production continues during one of the organization's busiest communications periods, alongside preparation of the Book of Reports and convention publications.

Blog

The ALA blog published 17 posts in April and generated approximately 9,000 views, representing a 38.7% increase in traffic over the prior reporting period.

Top-performing content included:

- National Poppy Day Virtual 5K
- Month of the Military Child content
- Honor Flight stories
- Member engagement ideas and resources

Social Media

Social media growth continued across platforms:

- Views: 667,911 (up 45%)
- New follows: 746 (up 93%)
- Content interactions: 21,000 (up 22%)
- Facebook visits: 13,300 (up 56%)

Top-performing content included Purple Up! Day, National Poppy Day Virtual 5K promotions, Honor Flight content, and American Legion Family Day posts.

ALANHQ social media channels also surpassed 35,500 followers this month.

ALA eNews

- Emails sent: 321,072
- Delivered: 316,016

- Opens: 125,713 (39.8% open rate)
- Clicks: 2,468

Top engagement items included National President Pam Ray's Honor Flight video and Project Ruck Sack resources.

Website

- 47,000 total users
- 161,000 total views

Top viewed pages included:

- Member profile
- Homepage
- Scholarships
- Renew
- Registration

Top downloads included:

- ALA Membership Application
- Legion Family Membership Brochure
- Unit Guide Book
- Constitution & Bylaws

Development

ALA Foundation

Staff supported the April 15 ALA Foundation Board meeting, including implementation and communication of updated Veteran Projects Fund grant criteria designed to improve clarity, consistency, and program impact for departments.

The Foundation also awarded nine Veteran Projects Fund grants totaling \$55,869.

Staff completed the draft FY27 Foundation budget, which will be reviewed during the May board meeting.

Conference & Presentation Development

Development staff also assisted in preparing and refining presentations and materials for the Department Leadership National Conference.

Human Resources

Human Resources staff continued recruiting and interviewing for open positions while ensuring applicable background checks remain current for staff and volunteers.

Additional priorities included:

- Preparing the FY27 budget for wages and benefits
- Ensuring compliance with 401(k) reporting and annual requirements
- Coordinating with third-party vendors on compliance testing and IRS filings

Finance

The organization's IRS Form 990 returns were electronically filed during April.

The American Legion Auxiliary property tax return was also prepared and submitted to the assessor's office.

Staff continues preparing for the FY27 budget development process through updates to budget templates and reporting tools.

March financial statements were distributed to the Finance Committee, and NEC financial statements were distributed April 23.

The organization's audit reports and IRS Form 990 filings will also be posted to the ALA website this week.

Closing Note

April's progress reflects the continued commitment of our staff, volunteers, and department leaders as we prepare for the year ahead while continuing to strengthen programs, operations, and member engagement across the organization.

From the strong response to the National Poppy Day Virtual 5K to the continued growth across our communications platforms and leadership development efforts, the organization continues building momentum as we move toward National Convention and the next administrative year.

Thank you for your continued leadership, partnership, and support. The work highlighted throughout this report reflects the collective efforts of members and staff across the organization working together to advance the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions, comments, or feedback.

Ben Hendricks

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American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters

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A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.

Veterans Crisis Line Dial 988 and Press 1