

# **ORGANIZING A LADIES AUXILIARY VFW**

## **An Organizer's Step-by-Step Guide**

## **HELPFUL HINTS**

- **NAMING OF AUXILIARIES:** Each Auxiliary shall be assigned the name and number of the Post with which it is affiliated. The Auxiliary's location shall correspond to the location of the Post.
- **GETTING QUALIFIED OFFICERS:** The utmost thought should be given to the selection of officers qualified to serve effectively and who are willing to do full justice to their offices. At the very first meeting of prospective members, it would be well for the organizer to read a list of the offices to be filled by election so that all will have given thought to their votes by the time the election takes place.
- **USEFUL BYLAWS SECTIONS:** Knowledge of the following sections of the Ladies Auxiliary Bylaws will benefit both the Organizer and members of the new Auxiliary.
  - Section 101-Eligibility-defines who may join the organization and that proof of service to establish for membership rests with the applicant.
  - Section 102-Application-New Members-explains completion of the application card and that admission fee and the required member ship dues will accompany the application card.
  - Section 104 Recommendation-The application shall be presented at a stated meeting of the Auxiliary on recommendation of a member in good standing of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW or the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The member making the recommendation shall not be a member of the investigating committee.
  - Section 105-Investigation-explains the investigating committee's duties.
  - Section 106-Voting on Candidates-whether by group and accepted by voice vote or separately by written ballot.
  - Section 107-Notification and Obligation-explains when and how an applicant becomes a member. The new member shall receive from the Auxiliary a membership pin and a copy of the most current edition of the National Bylaws and Booklet of Instructions. She will also receive a copy of each issue of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Magazine, cost of same included in the dues paid by the Auxiliary to the National Auxiliary.

## **ORGANIZER CHECKLIST**

- The Organizer carefully reviews the application cards and service record of the veteran to be sure each applicant is eligible according to the Bylaws.
- The names of at least fifteen (15) eligible prospective members (new or reinstated) are required for an Application for Charter for a new Ladies Auxiliary.
- The Organizer and prospective members decide on the date of institution, allowing at least, four (4) weeks for the arrival of the Charter kit, the letter of permission to institute and the forms for report of institution.

- The Ladies Auxiliary shall be instituted within sixty (60) days of the date on which the National President approves the application. If the Auxiliary is not instituted within that time, the application for Charter for a new Auxiliary shall be considered void and the Charter fee forfeited. If for good reason, the Auxiliary cannot be instituted within these sixty (60) days, the Department President may request an extension of time from National Headquarters.
- The institutional meeting should be publicized, and if desired, the public should be invited along with prominent officials and persons in the community. Consideration should be given to the size of the meeting place so the room can be arranged according to the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Ritual.
- Department Officers should be invited along with the District Officers to attend the ceremony. Be sure the Post members and officers are invited.

## **PROCESSING THE CHARTER APPLICATION**

1. The application must be signed by the Post Commander.
2. The Organizer shall forward the Charter fee of \$40.00 and the approved application to the Department President.
3. Upon approval, the Department President shall forward the Charter application and fee to the Department Treasurer.
4. The Department Treasurer shall forward the application with the Department check for the Charter fee to the National Secretary for approval of the National President.
5. When ordering membership pins and Bylaws for each member, make check payable to Ladies Auxiliary VFW.
6. Charter fees for Ladies Auxiliaries not within a Department shall be \$40.00. Checks must be made payable to the Ladies Auxiliary VFW and mailed direct to National Headquarters.
7. National Headquarters mails a letter of approval and a Charter kit to the Organizer.

## **THE INSTITUTION**

- The Department President shall designate the Instituting and Installing Officers and complete the Warrant for Installation which shall be mailed to the Instituting Officer.
- With prospective members and guests assembled, the Instituting Officer conducts the institution of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW.
- Remember, the first impression is the lasting one. It is essential that the Ladies Auxiliary VFW be instituted in a very serious and proper manner.
- The Instituting Officer shall follow the procedure set forth in the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Ritual for the institution of the Auxiliary and the obligation of members.

- The Instituting Officer should know her Ritual and impress upon the members present her sincerity in the performance of her duties. The District floor team could be used to assist with the floor work.
- The Instituting Officer then addresses the newly obligated members, covering the following points:
  - You are now a Ladies Auxiliary VFW. You are a very important part of a great service organization.
  - Within your Auxiliary, each member has an equal right to propose action, to participate in discussion, to vote and to participate in the work of the Ladies Auxiliary. Each member is expected to share in the responsibilities of maintaining the Ladies Auxiliary and advancing the work it undertakes.
  - Your membership card entitles you to attend Ladies Auxiliary meetings on all levels: County Council (where applicable), District, Department and National. The privileges of proposing action and voting at these meetings are limited to elected Delegates and Officers of the respective group. Speaking privileges may be extended to guests.
  - Your membership card also entitles you to attend as a guest, the meetings of any other Ladies Auxiliary VFW within the National Organization.
  - The Ladies Auxiliary should maintain a cooperative relationship with its Post. It should work with the Post when requested to do so. The Ladies Auxiliary should not interfere in the internal affairs of the Post. The Post should not dictate the policies of the Ladies Auxiliary as the Auxiliary shall be permitted to function in accordance with the National Bylaws, Booklet of Instructions and Ritual of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW and lawful orders issued by Department and National Presidents of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW.
  - The balance of the Instituting Officer's remarks should acquaint the new Ladies Auxiliary with its District and Department. The entire address should be simple, sincere and brief.

### **Remaining Procedures for the Instituting Officer**

- If prospective Officers have been chosen, members of the newly instituted Auxiliary must ratify these Officers. The admission fee and annual dues set by the prospective members at the organizational meeting must also be ratified at this time.
- If prospective Officers have not been chosen, the Instituting Officer will hold an election of Officers. Elective Officers are listed in the Bylaws, Section 802. The newly elected President shall appoint Officers in accordance with the Bylaws, Section 803.
- The meeting may be held immediately following the institution for the purpose of accepting transfers and electing Officers. (The accepted transfers are then eligible to be elected to office.)
- The newly elected and appointed Officers are then installed in accordance with the Installation of Officers as set forth in the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Ritual.

## **ADDITIONAL DUTIES OF THE INSTITUTING OFFICER**

After the institution and installation of Officers, the Instituting Officer shall complete the following forms:

- **Official Report of Institution.** The entire report (front and back) must be completed in duplicate using report forms sent by National Headquarters. Care must be exercised to assure the correct spelling of the Ladies Auxiliary name. National Headquarters will use the Auxiliary number and location in ordering an official seal for the Auxiliary. The Ladies Auxiliary VFW name, number, and location must read exactly the same as that of the Post to which it is affiliated. The original of this report must be mailed to the National Secretary. The copy must be sent to the Department Secretary.

- **Official Report of Installation.** The entire report must be completed in detail and signed by the Installing officer and mailed to the National Secretary and Department Secretary as indicated on the form.

- **Transmitting Dues Payments.** The New/Reinstated/Transfer (N/R/T) Membership cards included in the Charter Kit shall be filled out for each member paying her dues. Part 1 of this card is the member's dues card and must be presented to the member. Part 2 of the N/R/T Membership card shall be completed and retained in the permanent file of the Auxiliary. Part 3 of the N/R/T Membership card must be completed, making sure that the members correct name and address is given, (as she will not receive the National Ladies Auxiliary VFW Magazine unless her address is correct in every detail) and send it to the Department Treasurer.

- After completing the N/R/T Membership card for each member who has paid her dues, the new Auxiliary Membership Summary form must be completed and the white, pink and blue portion of this form must be forwarded with the N/R/T Membership cards and one exact copy of the membership application card for each member to the Department Treasurer with the remittance for Department and National dues. The check should be made payable to the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Department of \_\_\_\_\_

- After the dues for the members are received in the National Headquarters office from the Department Treasurer, the Auxiliary Treasurer will receive from National Headquarters, a Monthly Maintenance Journal that shows all of the members in alpha betical order whose dues have been recorded. The Monthly Maintenance Journal shall become a permanent record in the files of the Ladies Auxiliary and will serve as a receipt for the members whose dues have been received in Department and National Headquarters.

- The Department Treasurer shall send a check payable to the Ladies Auxiliary VFW, covering National dues, which are stated in the National Bylaws. Auxiliaries not in a Department shall send the above-mentioned items direct to National Headquarters.

- The Instituting Officer completes her duties by making sure the final steps to obtaining a charter are completed.

- Upon receiving the Report of Institution, National Headquarters will order from the manufacturer, an official seal which Officers of the Auxiliary should use to make an official imprint on credentials, membership cards, and correspondence. Manufacture and

delivery of the seal requires about four (4) weeks. The seal will be mailed to the Auxiliary Secretary.

- Remind the new Auxiliary Secretary to check the official seal to see that everything is correct. If not, please notify National Headquarters immediately.

## **SUCCESS WITH PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS**

Ask the first person you sign up to go with you, if possible, and introduce you to other ladies in the community. If she cannot help, she may have a friend who is eligible, who can assist you in contacting prospective members. It is much better to have at least two people, but you may have to go alone.

When talking to prospective members, be positive in your approach. Complete the membership application cards for the prospective member. If you do not, she may look at it and say, "Come back and see me later." These callbacks waste your time, so try to avoid them.

Once you have the first applicant signed up, do not stop until you have reached the minimum of twenty (20) applications from new or reinstated members, as that is what it takes to complete the Charter application.

## **THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

- The Organizer calls the meeting to order and appoints a temporary Secretary, preferably one with initiative and some clerical ability.
- The Organizer gives a short and concise talk on the purpose of the meeting and answers questions. It is helpful to have members of other Ladies Auxiliaries and VFW Posts present for support and encouragement.
- In discussing the advantages of membership, the Organizer should emphasize:
  - (a) The benefits of volunteering in the Community, hospitals, nursing homes, etc.
  - (b) Cancer Grant program
  - (c) The low cost group specified diseases and cancer insurance, if allowable in that state
  - (d) Member benefits (Brochure enclosed in kit.)
- Prospective members will discuss and make decisions regarding the following:
  - (a) The Charter fee of \$40.00. If not paid by the Post, the Charter applicants must assume the cost.
  - (b) Admission fee of not less than \$5.00 per member. This entitles each member to a membership pin and a current copy of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW Bylaws and Booklet of Instructions.
  - (c) Each Ladies Auxiliary VFW\! shall fix the amount of annual dues to be charged each member. The amount shall never be less than the amount required to

cover the Department and National dues as prescribed by the Department and National Bylaws and an amount for the Auxiliary. Dues must be paid for the current calendar year before a prospective member may be accepted into the new Ladies Auxiliary.

(d) A meeting may be held immediately following the institution for the purpose of electing Officers and accepting transfer members (who would then be eligible to be elected to office). If a selection of Officers has been made prior to institution, such selection must be ratified at this meeting before the Officers are installed.

## **COMPLETING THE APPLICATION CARDS**

In the appropriate place on the application card, the applicant lists the following which is stated on the veteran's separation documents:

- (a) name of the veteran
- (b) her relationship to the veteran
- (c) the campaign ribbons or medals the veteran received
- (d) dates and location of Foreign Service or duty assignment on foreign soil (A guide in determining eligibility for membership can be found in your current copy of the Bylaws or (the Program/Leadership Manual.)

## **HOW TO ORGANIZE A LADIES AUXILIARY VFW An Organizer's Step-by-Step Guide**

### **BACKGROUND**

In fortitude and loyalty, the Ladies Auxiliary VFW, founded in 1914 by female relatives of Spanish-American War veterans, sets its goal to assist the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States through service to those who honor the dead by helping the living. Early Auxiliary members ministered to the wounded in hospitals and raised funds for needy veterans and their dependents. The Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has effectively supported proposals for educational, medical, job and housing benefits for veterans through the years.

While retaining its commitment to veterans and their families, the modern Ladies Auxiliary VFW has added a wide range of programs that promote humanitarian concerns and community and national interests.

### **PRELIMINARY STEPS**

**STEP 1** There shall be approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Post present at a stated meeting. (Refer to Section 202)

**STEP 2** The Post notifies the Department President in writing of their decision for a Ladies Auxiliary.

**STEP 3** If the Auxiliary is approved by the membership at the stated meeting, Department President appoints an Organizer who--

- Shall be a member of the Ladies Auxiliary VFW
- Must be approved by the Department President
- Shall be responsible to the District Deputy Chief of Staff within her territory (Refer to Section 816)
- Must be enthusiastic
- Should be well informed about Ladies Auxiliary procedures
- Should be able to speak persuasively about the Ladies Auxiliary and its programs

**STEP 4** The Organizer contacts the Department Chief of Staff for an Extension Kit.

**STEP 5** The Organizer will publicize, set up, and conduct an organizational meeting inviting prospective members.

**STEP 6** The Post Commander will sign the Application for Charter and forward it along with a \$40.00 check to the Department President.

**STEP 7** The Organizer begins locating potential members by:

- Personally contacting as many interested and eligible women as possible.
- Asking the cooperation of Post members in inviting eligible members of their families, neighbors and friends to attend the organizational meeting.
- Writing news/press releases for area newspapers and radio and TV stations to explain eligibility requirements, proof of service (DD214 or any other document that shows eligibility such as pay stubs or letters, etc.) and the date, location, and time for the upcoming organizational meeting.
- Going to the county courthouse and reviewing its recorded service discharges. From these public records, compile a list of eligible veterans to contact personally or by mail to see if there are any eligible family members. If you contact them by mail enclose a self-addressed postcard that can be mailed back to you if there are eligible family members.
- Visiting with City officials or the Chamber of Commerce as their members have the interest of the community at heart and will help in the recruiting of prospective members. They are well aware that a Ladies Auxiliary VFW will be an asset to their community. Many officials are themselves veterans and can suggest the names of family members of veterans.

## **FINAL STEPS TO OBTAIN CHARTER**

The Charter shall remain open not more than 90 days from the date of institution of the new Ladies Auxiliary. In order to obtain a Charter the following must be received at National Headquarters:

- Dues transmitted on at least fifteen (15) members
- Institution Report
- Installation Report
- Bond Application
- Complete list of Charter members in alphabetical order with care exercised to assure correct spelling.

Charter Members include:

- All those taking the obligation at the meeting or those who have signed the obligation on the back of the membership application card by the institution date
- Those who join during the 90 day Charter period
- Transfer members who join the new Auxiliary during Charter period

The Department Treasurer verifies the list of Charter names and forwards said list to the National Secretary in order to have a Charter printed at National's expense.

The printed Charter is mailed to the President of the new Auxiliary and should be checked for any errors immediately.

## **SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTIONS**

The member(s) assigned by the Department President to assist the Ladies Auxiliary for a minimum of one year shall ask assistance from other members in conducting Schools of Instructions.