

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP AMBASSADOR



FRANCINE CORNISH

3119 Newton Street NE
Washington, DC
20018-4023

(202) 365-2280

fcornish24@outlook.com

Through most of our experiences with families, careers and other pursuits, we have been inspired by others. We have also encouraged and nurtured others to do their best. This is the basis for the VFW Auxiliary Mentoring for Leadership Program. The Auxiliary attracts members who want to support veterans, service members, their families and communities. When they join, they are usually enthusiastic and willing to serve. We need to channel that enthusiasm into a willingness to serve in leadership positions.

We can encourage members to participate by:

- Creating a welcoming atmosphere at meetings and activities.
- Showing a genuine interest in members
- Closely listening to what they are saying.
- Recognizing their strengths and interests in order to match them with Auxiliary leadership goals.

Mentoring is essential to good leadership. Mentoring can be successful by anyone in a position of experience. We look to Auxiliary Officers and Program Chairman as natural mentors since they have experiences within the Auxiliary that can benefit mentees. We should also consider members who bring skills from other experiences that can help the Auxiliary. Remember, although we may be longtime members, there is much to be learned from nurturing and interacting with members of all ages and experience levels. Good leaders are also good followers.

Training

Training is also essential to good leadership. The rules and traditions of the Auxiliary were established more than 100 years ago. Revisions are made to improve the organization. The Auxiliary is one of the best examples of "you were not born knowing this." Remember when you were a new member? Now you see what I mean!

The good news is that there are so many resources available to help members, new and old, to understand the organization. Starting with the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual*, a member should continually be made aware of and use these valuable resources and tools. *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation* includes the *Mentoring Guide: Relationship Building for the Future* which is a tremendously helpful guide to help you understand how to get started. Many useful resources are also available in MALTA Member Resources.

Ask yourself these questions:

Do I want to be a mentor?

Answer: Yes, if you care about veterans and their families and you are willing to lend a helping hand to this organization that is very important to you for many reasons.

Do I want a mentor?

Answer: Yes, if you have questions about how things work and what to do.

- Take the initiative to get to know those you would like to know better.
- Accept offers and invitations to do things and to spend time with others.

Should the Auxiliary organize their Mentoring Program?

Answer: Yes. You need a process in place to get those new members involved and included as soon as possible. Create a timeline to help engage new members and develop a team approach.

- Welcome new members by phone or email.
- Invite new members to the next Auxiliary activity. Make them feel comfortable at their first Auxiliary meeting.
- Be prepared to answer questions and offer support along the way.

These are a few ways to build a healthy Auxiliary relationship with a new member.

Keep in mind, this process can also be used to encourage current members to become more active and to consider a leadership role. Host a Department Mentoring Program training day. If an Auxiliary has more than one mentee, bring them together for a Mentoring Program social hour. There are so many opportunities to support the Mentoring for Leadership Program.



MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Ensure a Positive Member Experience • Engage in Learning and Training Opportunities Develop and Empower Members for Leadership Roles

Mentoring helps broaden leadership skills and leadership provides guidance for mentoring members; they work hand in hand.

Mentoring

A stronger membership on every level of our organization will be accomplished through mentoring. Mentoring for Leadership will enhance all types of Program activities. Vigilance in mentoring will make the difference in obtaining and maintaining members; since a large number of other organizations are vying for our members' time and talents.

Through the mentoring process, extending the hand of friendship to a new member or even a tenured member who has been inactive for a while can create a strong and vibrant organization. Providing a positive and organized meeting experience will leave members wanting to come back, especially when good communication and respect for each other is demonstrated.

By engaging in mentoring activities you will build a stronger relationship amongst new and tenured members. Whether you create a formal or informal mentoring program, every Auxiliary should have a type of resource to assist in communicating and motivating members to better understand the organization. Utilizing the *Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future* document will help you get started in creating a Program for your Auxiliary. Through this Program you will be encouraged to embrace and promote the CARE concept.

C - Catch the member when they first join.

A - Ask them to participate.

R - Remember what it felt like to be new.

E - Engage them in a Program that fits them.

Some individuals may be hesitant to take on the task of being a mentor; however, keep in mind there are also silent mentors amongst our members.

A mentor who is able to communicate, energize interest and is patient will enrich the member experience. The majority of our members have had someone who took an interest in them, is knowledgeable about the Auxiliary, willing to explain meeting proceedings, the *Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual* and National Programs.

Over time, the mentee may express interest in going beyond just attending meetings. They may even realize they have gained confidence to take the next step in entering a leadership role. This may consist of holding an Officer position, Chairmanship or becoming a committee member.

Leadership

Leadership can be difficult in any organization. Through mentoring, willingness to listen to the suggestions of others and following the guidelines set in place for the office or position held, leadership is easier.

A mentor who uses the *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation* is the key to creating a successful leader. This resource should be shared on each level of the organization. The guidebooks provide suggestions and examples for Officers, Chairmen and members to understand their duties according to the National Bylaws and the best practices discovered during the 100-plus year history of the organization.

The goal of the guidebooks is to develop and maintain consistent practices across the organization, to train and equip leaders of today and tomorrow, and to strengthen the basic building blocks of the organization: the foundation.

Mentoring for Leadership resource materials may be found in MALTA Member Resources.

- *2023-2024 National Program Book*
- *Mentoring at VFW Auxiliary: Relationship Building for the Future*
- *Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation*

Please be aware the Mentoring for Leadership and Extension & Revitalization Programs utilize many of the same tools and resources. Reviewing and sharing the various member materials available will create dialogue and interest to the mentee and future leaders.

Listed within the Extension & Revitalization Resources:

- VFW Auxiliary Acronyms and Common Terminology
- Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit
- Auxiliary Meeting Checklist
- Communication Phone/Text Tree
- Healthy Auxiliary Checklist – Auxiliary To-Dos and Deadlines
- VFW Auxiliary Meeting Challenges & Solutions
- VFW Auxiliary Member Questionnaire

Utilize the various Membership Recruitment and Retention Tools:

- Membership Engagement Packet
- Membership Moments
- VFW Auxiliary Fact Sheet

- Member Benefits One-Sheet
- Cultivate Engagement by Asking “How would you like to contribute?”
- Matching Member Talents to Leadership Success
- Engaging Existing Members
- Know your National Bylaws
- *Understanding Auxiliary Traditions* video
- VFW Auxiliary National Programs Overview

Additional beneficial resources for the mentor, mentee and leader may be found at the Online Auxiliary Academy.

- MALTA (Membership Auxiliary Leadership Technology Access)
- Administrative & Instructional
- Social Media (Facebook)
- Membership & Leadership

Goals + Mentoring + Leadership = Healthy Auxiliaries

MENTORING FOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Members

1. Citation awarded to the first, second and third place VFW Auxiliary members in each Department with the most unique and/or creative way to mentor a member to become a leader. Three nominations from each Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman are due to the National Mentoring for Leadership Ambassador by April 30, 2024.

Citations will be mailed directly to winners from National Headquarters after National Convention.

Awards for Auxiliaries

1. Most outstanding activity and/or event that educates their Auxiliary members about how to find and train mentees while using and promoting VFW Auxiliary resources and learning materials.

- Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or training that educates their Auxiliary members on how to find and train mentees while using and promoting Auxiliary resources and learning materials. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging.

The Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman must email National Headquarters by April 30, 2024 at info@vfwauxiliary.org a total combine list of every Auxiliary in their Department that completed and submitted an entry form.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or training that educates their Auxiliary members on how to find and train mentees while using and promoting Auxiliary resources and learning materials.

The Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Mentoring for Leadership Ambassador by April 30, 2024 for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into Auxiliary account after National Convention.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen

1. \$25 VFW Store Gift Certificate to one Department Mentoring for Leadership Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion to educate their Auxiliary members on how to mentor future leaders for a specific position within the Auxiliary. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

2. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of the Program Goals listed at the top of Page 48. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2024 National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.