



# Purpose

The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest patriotic women's service organization in the world, with nearly 1 million members. Affiliated with The American Legion, the Auxiliary is a veterans' service organization with members in nearly 10,000 American communities. The organization sponsors volunteer programs on the national and local levels, serving veterans, their families and their communities.

Auxiliary members believe in the ideals and principles of America's founding fathers and pledge to foster patriotism, preserve and defend the Constitution, promote allegiance to God and Country, and uphold the basic principles of freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of choice. The Auxiliary embodies the spirit of America that has prevailed through war and peace and continues to stand firmly behind America today, as it did when the organization was first founded.

Initially, the Auxiliary was organized by concerned women who took on the day-to-day responsibilities of life when their male family members went across sea during World War I. Aware of the many fatherless families and the needs of returning veterans, Auxiliary women vowed to continue their supportive roles when the veterans of World War I founded The American Legion in 1919. Auxiliary members today are wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters of these courageous veterans. Some members are veterans themselves.

The Auxiliary has conceived and implemented hundreds of programs for veterans, their families, young people and the community at large. Many programs have been expanded, creating commonly accepted institutions within the community and nation.

Two of the American Legion Auxiliary's showcase programs are Girls State and Girls Nation. Both are intended for young women entering their senior year in high school with an interest in local, state and federal government. As a result of participation in these programs, these young women take responsibility for good citizenship and develop an understanding of government.

In addition to the Girls State and Girls Nation programs, the Auxiliary takes part in many community service projects and activities, while providing a focal point for citizens' involvement within their own communities. The Auxiliary raises more than \$18 million every year and reinvests these funds in VA medical centers and community programs. Thousands of hours are devoted to crime prevention, instructing children, elderly and the general public on safety and protection within the community. The Auxiliary supports programs for drug and alcohol abuse, missing children, teen suicide and teen pregnancy while working with organizations like the Children's Miracle Network and Red Cross.

Auxiliary volunteers are the backbone of assistance in 171 VA Medical Centers. These volunteers not only provide diversion and entertainment for patients, but assist the hospital staff in physical and psychological therapy. There are more than 20 programs nationwide that receive support and financial aid from the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Auxiliary is a national co-sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Along with The American Legion, the Auxiliary has helped to lead the movement to return to the people their right to protect the American Flag from physical acts of desecration. The American Legion Family is working in Washington for passage of a Constitutional amendment to help protect and preserve the fabric of the nation.

The services of the American Legion Auxiliary directly and indirectly touch the lives of all Americans. With the philosophy of "Service, not Self," the American Legion Auxiliary develops a strong spirit of volunteerism in its members, who have joined together in the fellowship of giving to others.

Few people realize that:

- The Auxiliary and the Legion are often centers for community and civic activities in mid-America, and provide a focal point for citizens' involvement.
- The Auxiliary raises more than \$18 million every year and reinvests those funds in VA medical centers and community programs.
- Thousands of hours are devoted to crime prevention programs, instructing children, the elderly and the general public on safety, crime prevention and protection within the community.
- Auxiliary volunteers are the backbone of assistance in the 171 VA Medical Centers.
- They not only provide diversion and entertainment for patients, but assist the hospital staff in physical and psychological therapy, clerical and many other duties that would otherwise cost American taxpayers millions of dollars.
- The Auxiliary deals with issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, missing and abused children, teen suicide and teen pregnancy. Its services touch the lives of all Americans directly or indirectly.
- More than 20 nationwide programs receive support and financial aid from the American Legion Auxiliary.