

At the August Membership Involvement Training (MIT), information was shared by all the chairmen for our programs. As Chief of Staff, my presentation was designed to help us to spot Healthy Auxiliary traits and Unhealthy Auxiliary traits. Read through the following information and evaluate your own Auxiliary. Do you feel you are healthy or do you have some issues to work on? We can be a bit of both so after evaluating where your Auxiliary is today, think about how you can utilize the items of improvement to be on a path of continuous improvement.

What is a Healthy Auxiliary?

Healthy Auxiliaries have a good understanding of the Bylaws, Ritual, and Booklet of Instruction.

Healthy Auxiliaries follows the “Chain of Command”.

Healthy Auxiliaries report on their programs (remember you do not have to report or do things in all programs). Pick the programs you like best and do a great job. However, at least one of the things you do and report on needs to benefit veterans in some way.

Healthy Auxiliaries DO NOT submit membership applications that have not been verified by the Investigating Committee and VOTED on the floor for approval by the membership.

Signs of an Unhealthy Auxiliary

Low Member Engagement - Members not attending meetings, events or volunteer activities. General lack of enthusiasm.

Declining Membership Numbers - Steady decline in membership over time suggests that the organization is failing to attract new members or to retain existing ones.

Inadequate Leadership - Ineffective leadership, such as a lack of direction, communication issues or disputes among officers. Also, rare changes in leadership.

Financial Problems - Struggling with finances, financial statements and Audits not done in a timely fashion. Lack of transparency, inadequate budgeting, clarity on financial statements. Untrained Trustees.

Lack of Communication - A Communication Gap causing members to lose touch with the organization and miss out on meetings, events& important updates or By-Laws changes.

Internal Conflict - Infighting, disputes or lack of respect and kindness detracting from the organization's effectiveness in the Mission and creating a harmful environment

Failure to Fulfill the Mission - Not doing our programs which are designed to support veterans, service members & their families, is a failure of our Mission.

Limited Community Involvement - We are disconnected from our communities' needs, not promoting patriotism, not sharing we are, and what our Mission is.

Lack of innovation - We are resistant to change or new ideas that may help with the evolving needs of our veterans and members.

Negative Reputation - A bad reputation within the VFW community and our local communities due to controversies, conflicts or simply the Old View of just a place to drink and hang out.

How to Improve the health of an Auxiliary

Utilize Building on the Auxiliary Foundation – The newest version is available in Malta to continually improve our understanding of positions & roles.

Create a private Facebook page to inform members – Any private groups you belong to are the first items shown when you log into Facebook. Keep members that you do not see regularly updated on info & events.

Attend other organizations' events & meetings & see how you can help – Showing the Auxiliary's interest in community participation while sharing info on our organization. Building future Auxiliary Outreach projects.

Ask members to be assistant officers – your future officers & leaders can gain confidence & understanding of the positions.

Invite all members to attend audits & ask questions - Ensures that members feel involved & have confidence in the financial transparency while learning.

Develop text trees to remind members of meeting or events – Encouraging participation as well as shows interest in the members.

Partner new members with mentors & give them new member packets – Builds friendships, makes new members feel welcome and involved.

Invite potential new members & community leaders to your events – Be viewed as important participants for veterans AND your community. Local leaders are great partners!

Use the Healthy Auxiliary questionnaire or design your own – Found in the Healthy Auxiliary Toolbox in Malta to get feedback for improvement of member involvement.

VFW & AUXILIARY WORK TOGETHER! – No one does more for Veterans than the VFW and No one works harder than the VFW Auxiliary – Together we are the strongest team!!

As always, we at Department, are standing by to help when needed!