

Department of Arizona Auxiliary
District President's Guide
2026-2027



Congratulations on your election as District President for 2026-2027!

Thank you for accepting this vital role. Your members have confidence in your ability to lead, support our veterans, and serve our communities.

As a key link between your District Auxiliaries and the Department, you play a crucial role in communication. Please keep us informed of all significant positive or negative developments.

Key Responsibilities:

- Leadership: Preside over District meetings, maintain order, and appoint leaders.
- Representation: Serve on the Department Council of Administration, overseeing budgets and programs, while conveying your district's concerns.
- Collaboration: Build a strong rapport with your District Commander.
- Conduct: Ensure all interactions are respectful and courteous, as we are all volunteers.

For questions, contact me, Department Secretary Chrissy Harlan (520-906-7363), or Department Treasurer Kim Sloan (520-307-7940) for financial matters. A dedicated mentor will also be assigned to you.

Thank you for your service as we keep "Always Evolving for our Veterans."

Best,
Melissa Martin
2026-2027 Department President
602-503-3973 newfoundfreedom3@msn.com

Important Event Dates

Please take note of the upcoming event dates listed. More information will be provided as it is available.

More Information will be provided to you once available.

- June 11-13, 2026- Department Convention- Tucson
- June 13, 2026- 26/27 Installation of Officers- Tucson
- June 14, 2026- Council of Administration (C of A)- Tucson
- July 2026- National Convention- Reno *(Optional- Live Stream Available)*
- August 14-16, 2026- Member Involvement Training (MIT) - Tempe
- September 4-6, 2026- Department Fall Conference/C of A - Tucson
- November 6-8, 2026- Western Conference- Phoenix *(Optional)*
- January 2027- Department Winter Conference/ C of A- Phoenix
- June 2027- Department Convention - TBD *(potentially Tucson)*

Important Contact Information

All contact information and a full department roster are available via the members-only login on the Department Website.

- Department President: Melissa Martin
- Department Secretary: Chrissy Harlan
- Department Treasurer: Kim Sloan
- Chief of Staff: Donna Ventola

I. LEADERSHIP

Core Purpose & Leadership

- ★ Inspire and Motivate: Create a vivid, compelling vision for the future that encourages members to be active and successful.
- ★ Lead by Example: Learn the responsibilities of the office and the Ritual thoroughly; observe proper protocol at all times.
- ★ Represent the VFW Auxiliary: Maintain a gracious, complimentary, and professional demeanor, as you are constantly on display.
- ★ Maintain Professionalism: Watch your language and behavior; there is no place for profanity, bullying, or name-calling. Be mindful of body language.

Mentorship & Knowledge

- ★ Be Confident, Not All-Knowing: It is acceptable not to have all the answers. Speak confidently that you will find the correct information rather than guessing.
- ★ Avoid Guessing: A wrong answer is more detrimental than taking time to research the correct one.
- ★ Mentor Members: Use questions as opportunities to teach members how to find answers on their own.
- ★ Utilize Resources: Call the appropriate Department Officer if an immediate answer is required.

Conflict Resolution & Diplomacy

- ★ Be Diplomatic: Always look for positive points and be kind when correcting errors.
- ★ Handle Issues Objectively: When concerns are brought to you, make no immediate judgments.
- ★ Document Concerns: Ask that complaints be put in writing to avoid misunderstandings and ensure proper follow-up.
- ★ Involve Leadership: Once all sides are heard and information is gathered, bring the matter to the Department President. Do not rush to solve problems alone.

II. PLAN & PREPARE

District Planning & Preparedness Checklist

- ★ Create a Master Calendar: Immediately map out all District Meetings, Official Visits, Council of Administration Meetings, Conferences, and Trainings.
- ★ Share the Schedule: Distribute the finalized calendar to all Auxiliaries in the District.
- ★ Schedule Communications: Mark dates to send regular, monthly communications to Auxiliaries to ensure consistency.

Plan the School of Instruction:

- ★ Plan rather than improvising to ensure a successful event.
- ★ Collaborate with officers to share your vision and act as a team.
- ★ Ensure the content is beneficial, informative, and fun for members.

Coordinate with Leadership:

- ★ Meet with the District Commander to align on goals and mutual support.
- ★ Prepare for Department President's Visit: Monitor for the notification letter regarding the Department President's official visit and prepare accordingly.

Ensure Operational Readiness:

- ★ Communicate plans promptly to keep everyone informed.
- ★ Prepare all necessary scripts, supplies, and tools for meetings and conferences.
- ★ Study all Rituals and scripts thoroughly, practicing your part repeatedly.
- ★ Verify the phonetic pronunciation of names before the event.

III. RESOURCES

Core Resources

- ★ Podium Edition of the VFW Auxiliary Bylaws & Ritual (includes the Booklet of Instructions):
 - Please take time to review and be familiar with the following section
 - *Article 5, Pages 38-42* of the 2026 National Bylaws.
 - *Article 8, Section 810, Pages 72-73* of the 2026 National Bylaws.
 - This is your #1 resource. Read it, and keep a copy with you at all times. Bring it to every meeting, visit, fundraiser, and dinner.
 - Usage Rule: If asked a question covered in these documents, show the inquirer exactly where the answer is found.

Additional Resources

- ★ Robert's Rules of Order
- ★ National Website (vfwauxiliary.org)
- ★ Department Website (vfwauxaz.org)
- ★ Current National Program Book
- ★ Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation
- ★ Supplements: Newsletters, blogs, and emails

Support & Mentorship

- ★ Emergency Contact List: Keep the Department President, Secretary, and Treasurer on speed dial.
- ★ Department Officers: Utilize them to resolve problems, seek advice, or serve as a sounding board.
- ★ Program Chairmen: Reach out to them to bounce around new ideas.
- ★ Mentors: You will be assigned a mentor by the Department President. When choosing others, ensure they are knowledgeable, reasonable, and trustworthy

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Effective Communication & Leadership Tips

- ★ Core Principles: Be honest, respectful, and gracious in all interactions.
- ★ Prompt Responsiveness: Aim to respond to all emails, calls, and invitations within 24 hours.
- ★ "Pending" Response: If you don't have an immediate answer, reply that you are investigating and will follow up shortly—then ensure you do.
- ★ Delegation/Passing Information: When passing requests to the Department President or officers, ask to be included in the response to facilitate learning and mentoring.
- ★ Streamlined Communication: Send short, concise, and informative emails.
- ★ Establish Contact Groups: Create a phone tree or group email for District Officers, Auxiliary Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers for rapid notification.

Best Practices

- ★ Monthly Contact: Contact each Auxiliary in your district monthly.

- Monthly communication may include, as appropriate, officer elections, district or department delegate elections, bonds, official visits, and important due dates
- ★ Journaling: Maintain a daily journal of actions, phone calls, travels, and projects to stay focused and track progress.
- ★ Documentation: Use your journal to track ideas, what is/isn't working, and to follow up on specific member issues.

Active Listening & Mentoring

- ★ Active Listening: Practice active listening to show interest and understand the concerns of volunteers.
- ★ Mentoring Moments: View interactions with Department Officers as opportunities for mentorship.

V. DISTRICT MEETINGS

Required Meetings & Preparation

- ★ Required Meetings: The District is only required to hold two meetings: a (1) District Convention and a (2) School of Instruction.
- ★ Agenda & Script: Work with the District Secretary to prepare the agenda and share it with members. Request a script from the Secretary if needed.
- ★ Meeting Preparation: Know in advance which guests are attending, what business is required, and any announcements.
- ★ Speaker Coordination: Notify all speakers, including those presenting short Schools of Instruction, and allot them 5–10 minutes.
- ★ Schools of Instruction: Present required short Schools of Instruction under "Reports of Committees" or "Good of the Order" to achieve Outstanding status.

Necessary Tools for District Meetings

- ★ Agenda
- ★ Current podium book
- ★ District Charter
- ★ American Flag with stand
- ★ District Banner with stand
- ★ Bible and altar cloth
- ★ Presidents gavel

- ★ List of District officers/Past District Presidents & Auxiliaries (number and current President's name)
- ★ National Program Book
- ★ Current membership report for each Auxiliary

Motions & Business

- ★ Prep Officers: If you want a motion made, prepare an officer beforehand with all necessary information.
- ★ Handle Improper Motions: If a motion is improper, explain the correct manner to the member, rather than making it personal.
- ★ Auxiliary Reports: Invite Auxiliaries to present SWAP Ideas or Upcoming events during reports of Auxiliaries

Meeting Logistics & Protocol

- ★ Arrive Early: Ensure the room is ready (conductors typically handle chairs, podium, altar, microphones, and temperature).
- ★ Start on Time: Start promptly to respect members. If delayed, inform members of the reason and the new start time.
- ★ Quorum Verification: Verify a quorum is present.
 - Section 507 of the National Bylaws.
- ★ Gavel Use: Use the gavel wisely: 3 taps to sit/adjourn, 1 tap to call to order, 2 taps to stand.

VI. SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

- ★ Event Definition: The School of Instruction is to be held as a special event, replacing one of your regularly scheduled meetings.
- ★ Duration: The meeting should last approximately the same amount of time as a regular meeting.
- ★ Opening Procedures: Begin with a prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ★ Attendance: Ensure a Roll Call of Auxiliaries is conducted so they receive credit for attending.
- ★ Topics: Focus on one or multiple subjects, such as:
 - Programs
 - Officer duties
 - Malta and websites
 - Parliamentary Procedure

- Building on the Auxiliary Foundation
- ★ Presenters: Secure individuals well-versed in the selected topics. Reach out to Department Officers and Chairmen for assistance.
- ★ Mentorship: Please invite your District Mentor to this event.

VII. AUXILIARY OFFICIAL VISIT

Purpose & Scope

- ★ Nature of Visit: This is an Official Visit, not an inspection.
- ★ Role: Attend one business meeting of each Auxiliary in your District (except your own) to review and report to the Department President.
- ★ Expectation: You are discouraged from attending every meeting of every Auxiliary; doing so is not your responsibility.
- ★ Representation: If you cannot attend or if it is your own auxiliary, you must get approval from the Department President to send another District officer. It is recommended to use this as a mentoring experience for the District Senior Vice President.

Before the Visit

- ★ Notify the Auxiliary President: Send written notification (email is acceptable) at least one month before the visit, detailing the date, time, and any guests you are bringing.
- ★ Confirm Receipt: Always verify that the Auxiliary President received your notification.
- ★ Resources: A sample notification letter is available on the Department website under "Secretary."

On the Day of the Visit

- ★ Punctuality: Be on time.
- ★ Demeanor: Be friendly and professional. Treat all Auxiliaries fairly and impartially.
- ★ Remarks: The Auxiliary President should call on you for remarks at the end of the meeting.
- ★ Feedback Structure: Offer positive, complimentary comments first, address concerns, and end with a positive note.
- ★ Q&A: If asked a question you cannot answer, state that you will research it and follow up promptly. Do not guess
- ★ Talking Points: Can be found in the building on the Auxiliary

Foundation or provided by the Department President.

After the Visit

- ★ Initial Visits: Complete all Official Visits and submit reports no later than November 30, 2026. To the Department President, Treasurer, Secretary & Chief of Staff.
- ★ Follow-up Visits: If recommended, complete follow-up visits and submit reports no later than March 15, 2027.

VIII. COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION

Council of Administration Meeting Guidelines

- ★ Ask Questions: If you have questions during the meeting, ask them.
- ★ Review Documents: prior to the C of A review the Minutes of the previous meeting, Financial Report, and Budget Report.
- ★ Approve Reports: Consider for approval the current audit report, budget overages, new/changed Department Standing Rules, and program changes involving finances.
- ★ Announcements: Dates and locations of your District meetings and major district-wide events.
- ★ Share Projects: Share **ONE** completed or upcoming project from each Auxiliary in your District.

District President Responsibilities

- ★ Act as Representative: You represent all Auxiliary members in your District, acting as a liaison between them and the Department.
- ★ Respond Positively: Address member concerns, questions, or comments in a positive manner.
- ★ Communicate Changes: Explain the reasoning behind any changes, if known.
- ★ Seek Answers: If you do not know the answer, get the correct information from the Department President.

IX: OTHER EXPECTATIONS

Social Media

- ★ Be cautious-what you share is public.
- ★ Think before you post, because once it is out there, you can not take it back

- ★ What you post on your own page or someone else's can be seen far beyond your intended audience.

Initial Compliance (Within 30 Days of Taking Office)

- ★ Submit a copy of the last quarterly audit report and current membership status to the District Commander.
- ★ Procedure: The District Secretary typically prepares this letter and attaches the audit. The packet is then hand-delivered by the President or emailed to the District Commander.

Attendance & Representation

- ★ District Functions: Attend all District functions. If unavailable, ensure the Sr. Vice President or another designated officer represents the District.
- ★ Department/Training Events: Attend required events, including:
 - 2026/2027 Department Installation (6/13)
 - 2026 Department Convention C of A (6/14)
 - MIT (Member Involvement Training)
 - Fall Conference & C of A
 - Winter Conference & C of A
 - 2027 Department Convention (all scheduled events)
- ★ Encouraged Events: Attendance is encouraged for:
 - Western Conference
 - National Convention
- ★ Dress Code Definitions for Events
 - Official Look: Marine Blue blouse/shirt, black slacks/skirt, collar pins & appropriate black shoes
 - Business: Suit with full-length slacks/trousers with a blouse, dress, appropriate shoes, jacket optional
 - Business Casual: Full-length slacks/trousers, nice jeans, dressy capris, polo shirts/blouse, appropriate shoes
 - Casual: Jeans, T-shirts, appropriate shoes

X. OUTSTANDING DISTRICT CHECKLIST 2025-2026

- Administrative & Communications
 - By June 1, 2026: Get the Outstanding Auxiliary Checklist to every Auxiliary President & Secretary within the district.
 - Complete [Outstanding District Activity Log](#) (click here or behind login on Department website)
 - Monthly Communication: Communicate monthly with Auxiliary Presidents
 - [Outstanding District Activity Log](#)
 - Share **only ONE** event from each Auxiliary at each C of A
- Membership & Goals
 - 100% Membership: Achieve 100% in Paid Membership for the District.
 - Growth: Ensure every Auxiliary in the District has at least one new or rejoin member.
- Training & Meetings
 - School of Instruction: Plan and hold a District School of Instruction in place of one business meeting.
 - Invite the District Mentor.
 - Complete [Outstanding District Activity Log](#)
 - At each District Meeting: Provide some form of School of Instruction or Training.
 - Complete [Outstanding District Activity Log](#)
- Visits & Reporting
 - Official Visits: Complete Official Visits to all Auxiliaries by November 30.
 - Submit Visit Reports to the Department President, Chief of Staff, Secretary, Treasurer, and Mentor.
 - Complete [Outstanding District Activity Log](#)
 - Auxiliary Events: Attend at least one event at each Auxiliary in the District.
 - Complete [Outstanding District Activity Log](#)
- VFW Joint Participation (*excluding Voice of Democracy, Patriots' Pen, or Membership*)
 - District-Wide Project: Participate in a district-wide project or event with the VFW Auxiliary and VFW.
 - Complete [Outstanding District Activity Log](#)

- Department Events
 - District President (SR/JR Vice in the absence of the President) to attend the following
 - 2026 Department Installation-District President only
 - June 2026 Department C of A
 - Member Involvement Training (MIT)
 - Fall Conference & C of A
 - Winter Conference & C of A
 - 2027 Department Convention