



Constitution & By Laws

2025-26 Engagement Plan Guidelines

Department chairs' annual reports reflect the cumulative summary of units' mission service in the Department. Each Department Constitution & Bylaws Committee chair is required to submit via email a narrative report to the Division Constitution & Bylaws Committee chair, plus copy the National Constitution & Bylaws Committee chair by May 15.

The annual report is separate from the submission for National award consideration and impact number reporting. However, Department reports may be taken into consideration for National awards.

Photos (in a high-resolution format) that show Unit mission Constitution & Bylaws Committee activities accompany these reports.

Note: *Individual members and Units should follow the Department's guidelines and deadlines.*

Unit Chairs' Annual Reporting Guidelines:

The Department chair report share the positive impact of our mission! They help us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps are needed to add your part to our National success story:

1. Department reports are limited to 1,000 words.
2. Provide details/examples about the activity. Be sure to include specific information such as unit name and number.
3. *Submit your Mid Year Report to the Department chair by December 31st, and Year End report to the Department chair with photos by email by April 15th.*
4. Photos should be in a high-resolution format (at least 300 DPI) or sent using the high-resolution option on your smartphone. When emailing the photo, select "actual size" for attaching to the email.
 - When possible, include photos of actual events
 - The request for photos is important for our national chairs to highlight members serving our mission.

Committee-Specific Reporting Guidelines:

These should be tied directly to the Program Engagement Plan (where applicable) or the Key Program Statements.

- As part of your Unit narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:
- Have you done an annual review of your Constitution & Bylaws?
- How was your Unit inspired to review its governing documents?
- Has your Unit sponsored any Constitution & Bylaws activities? If so, what were those activities? Please be specific.
- Did your Unit participate in any Constitution & Bylaws virtual meetings or webinars? If so, were they helpful?

Chair: Ann Moore

Committee members: Flora Jean Craig, Mary Ward, Lynn Pearly, Michelle Potuzak

Constitution & Bylaws: Understanding the Difference

It can be confusing when trying to understand where a rule should reside. Should it be in the Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules? Clarify in your governing documents will help encourage compliance and greater adoption by your members. Structuring governing documents in a way every member can grasp will help ensure success for your team.

The dictionary defines the Constitution as a system of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, corporation, or the like is governed. In the American Legion Auxiliary, it should constitute the Articles of Incorporation. It should also contain the core purpose and structure of your department or unit.

The Constitution should contain articles that are rarely changed. An example of what not to have in your constitution is the amount of dues you charge. They belong in the Bylaws or Standing Rules. Since the national organization had changes in its Constitution this year, all departments and units need to adjust their Constitutions to agree with the National Constitution.

Bylaws are defined as the governing regulations of a corporation's or society's internal affairs. In your department or unit, this should include how you govern yourself and any fundamental rules voted on by the organization. Bylaws should be amended every five to 10 years as needed and supported by Standing Rules.

The dictionary defines Standing Rules as issues that relate to the details of the administration of a society and which can be adopted or changed the same way as any other act of the assembly. Standing rules can be suspended by a majority vote for the duration of the session, but not for longer. In the Auxiliary, your Standing Rules should be more specific than the Bylaws, administrative, and "process focused." They should provide details about provisions in the Bylaws. They can be amended as frequently as needed to keep the organization up to date.

Using the example of dues, in the Bylaws, it would be correct to say your unit dues would always be \$5 more than the amount due to department and national, because this would naturally change if national or department changes their dues. If you stated that your unit dues are \$30, this should be in Standing Rules because you would need to vote on the change of the exact amount of unit dues.

Civility lives in governing documents containing rules for all members to follow. Be sure to implement rules appropriately, follow your governing documents for how revisions should occur, and then help your members understand the changes by providing clarifying language and rationale for the change.