



2026

AWARDS MANUAL

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS
FOR
MEMBERS, POSTS, AND DISTRICTS

***Membership is the lifeline of the
American Legion.***

***Let's make 2026 the best membership
year ever!***

RETAIN, RECRUIT, REINSTATE

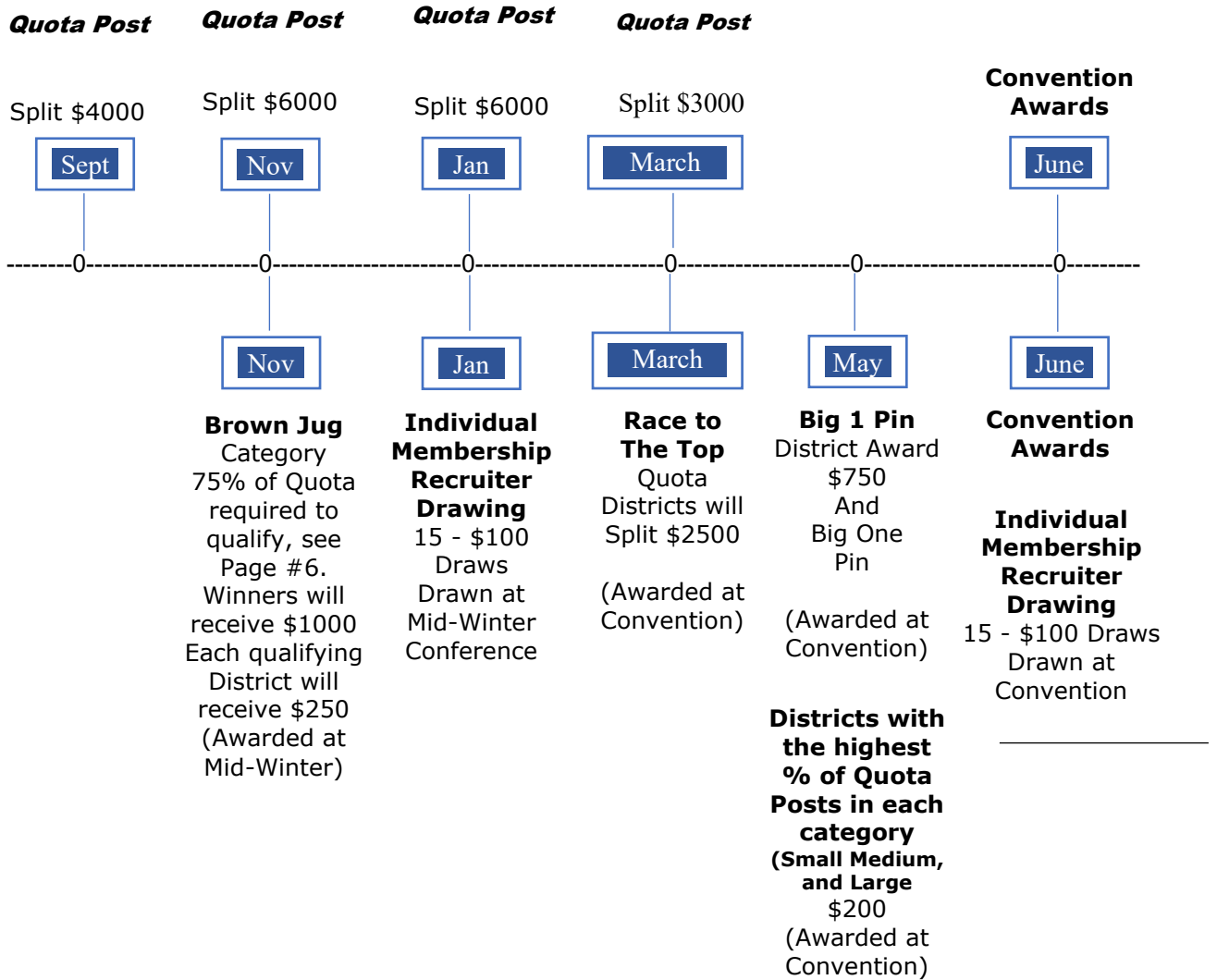
***"Growth is never by mere
chance: it is the result of forces
working together."***

-James Cash Penny

***Communication is the number one
tool for effective engagement.***

BE THE ONE

AWARD TIMELINE



POST AWARDS

All Posts that reach Quota by the target date will equally split a prize corresponding to the date they reach Quota. This would include all cleared transmittals by the below date. There will be no repeat winners. Prizes for September and November will be awarded at the Mid-Winter Conference and prizes for January and April will be awarded at Summer Convention.

Post Quota Date & Prize Amount

September 10 \$4000

November 12 \$6000

January 14 \$6000

April 1 \$3000

POST ACTIVITY AWARD

Post Activity Award Details:

- **Eligibility:** All Posts are eligible.
- **Criteria:** Posts must feature four (4) or more special or community events that are not typically included on their regular calendar.
- **Award Amount:** \$100 per (4) event, up to a maximum of twelve (12) events, totaling no more than \$300.
- **Application Process:** Submit flyers, pictures, and brief descriptions of the event.

Tips for Maximizing Your Post's Award:

- **Brainstorming Events:** Get your Post members together to brainstorm unique and engaging events. Think outside the box! Consider events that cater to different age groups and interests within your community.
- **Planning & Promotion:** Once you've chosen your events, plan them carefully and promote them effectively. Utilize social media, local newspapers, and community bulletin boards to disseminate the information.
- **Documentation is Key:** For each event, be sure to gather the required documentation:
 - **Flyers:** Include copies of promotional flyers or posters you created for the event.
 - **Pictures:** Take plenty of high-quality photos of the event. Try to capture the event's highlights and show participation.
 - **Brief Descriptions:** Write concise and informative descriptions of each event. Include details like the date, time, location, purpose of the event, and approximate attendance. Highlight what made the event unique and different from your regular activities.
- **Tracking:** Record all your special events and gather the necessary documentation. This will make it easier to submit your application.
- **Submission: Ensure that you submit all** required documentation for each event on time. Don't wait until the deadline!
- **Submissions are due by May 31 and awarded at the Department Convention.**

Example Event Ideas (Beyond Regular Calendar):

- **Community-focused:**
 - A "Veterans Appreciation Day" with a free community picnic.
 - A fundraising event for a local charity.
 - A workshop on flag etiquette or Americanism.
 - A youth mentorship program or a partnership with a local school.
- **Unique:**
 - A themed social event (e.g., a 1940s swing dance night).
 - A skills workshop (e.g., resume writing for veterans).
 - A family-friendly outdoor activity (e.g., a fishing derby or a hike).

November 14, 2025

BROWN JUG AWARDS

<p>Big Brown Jug: Districts 3, 5, & 10</p> <p>Highest quota percentage over 75% - \$1000 All Districts qualifying with 75% will receive \$250 Large District 7300 members and Above</p>	<p>Medium Brown Jug: Districts 1, 2, 4,& 9</p> <p>Highest quota percentage over 75% - \$1000 All Districts qualifying with 75% will receive \$250 Medium Districts 3500-7299 members</p>
<p>Small Brown Jug: Districts 6,7,8,11,12,13,& 14</p> <p>Highest quota percentage over 75% - \$1000 All Districts qualifying with 75% will receive \$250 Small Districts 3499 and Below</p>	

District Size will be based on the last membership report in May 2025.

"JUGS" will only be awarded one time presented at the Mid-Winter Conference 2026.

The actual monetary award will be distributed at the Department Convention, provided the Districts maintain their top five percent ranking by March 31, 2026.

Individual Membership Recruiter Drawing

Any member who recruits a **new member or reinstates an expired member (who has not paid for 2024 or before)** will receive an entry into the drawing at the Mid-Winter Conference and the State Convention. A member will receive an entry for each new member and a reinstated member with an unlimited number of entries. Fifteen (15) winners are drawn at the Mid-Winter Conference, and (15) again at the State Convention. Each winner will receive \$100. The Department will save all entries not drawn at the Mid-Winter conference for the drawing at the Department Convention.

Buckeye Membership Award

The first District to achieve Quota before the last day of March will qualify for the National American Legion Race to the Top Award. The quota District will receive \$2,500.00 and a plaque recognizing their achievement.

RACE TO THE TOP

March 31

DISTRICT AWARD

All Districts that are Quota on this date will split \$2,500.00. The deadline for all criteria is March 31, 2026. The Race to the Top Certification form must be submitted to National by the April target date.

BIG 1 PIN AWARD

The last Membership Report in May

DISTRICT AWARDS

<p>Large Districts: 3, 5, & 10 District in First Place wins- \$750.00 Large District 7300 members and Above</p>	<p>Medium Districts: 1, 2, 4, & 9 District in First Place wins- \$750.00 Medium Districts 3500-7299 members</p>
<p>Small Districts: 6,7,8,11,12,13,& 14 District in First Place wins- \$750.00 Small Districts 3499 and Below</p>	

(All Awards presented at the Department Convention)

Department Second Vice Commander Award

Each District with the highest percentage of Quota Posts in each category (small, medium, large) will win \$200, which will be awarded at the Department Convention.

The Last Membership Report in May will determine department convention seating based on category.

2025 - 2026 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL SCHEDULE

CUTOFF DATES

MAY 14, 2025

SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

OCTOBER 15, 2025

DECEMBER 10, 2025

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

APRIL 8, 2026

RENEWAL MAIL DATES

JULY 1-8, 2025

OCTOBER 4-10, 2025

NOVEMBER 8-14, 2025

JANUARY 3-9, 2026

MARCH 1-8, 2026

MAY 2-8, 2026

Transmittals not received by the cutoff date may not prevent a subsequent renewal notice from being delivered at or around the renewal date.

Please note that renewals transmitted and received by the cutoff (also a National Target Date) will be updated before printing renewal notices, assuming they can be successfully scanned. Membership that must be hand-keyed (new members and renewals that can't be scanned) will take longer to process. Please transmit before the Target Dates as early and as often as possible to help avoid processing delays.

2025 – 2026 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF	SEPTEMBER 10, 2025	50%
FALL MEETINGS	OCTOBER 15, 2025	55%
VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 13, 2025	65%
PEARL HARBOR DAY	DECEMBER 10, 2025	75%
MID-WINTER	JANUARY 14, 2026	80%
PRESIDENT'S DAY	FEBRUARY 11, 2026	85%
LEGION BIRTHDAY	MARCH 11, 2026	90%
CHILDREN & YOUTH	APRIL 8, 2026	95%
ARMED FORCES DAY	MAY 13, 2026	100%
DELEGATE STRENGTH	30 DAYS BEFORE NATIONAL CONVENTION	

Target dates fall on the second Wednesday of the month unless a holiday occurs on that day or at the beginning of that week.

The October target date has been moved a week to allow departments to participate in Fall Meetings without affecting membership processing for that week.

Since Veterans Day falls on a Monday, the November target date will be the Thursday preceding it.

To maximize the December renewal notice, the January target date will be on the third Wednesday of the month.

MEMBERSHIP

AWARDS FOR MEMBERS

CONTINUOUS CERTIFICATES—For members who have continuously paid Legion dues, denoting 30 through 75 years of continuous membership, special certificates recognizing these multiples of continuous membership are ideal for presentation by the Post to members. These certificates are available from Department Headquarters at any time upon certification of the eligible name by the Post Adjutant. 50-, 60-, and 70-Year Certificates are automatically printed and sent by National.

Big NUMBER ONE PINS – A small REPLICA Gold One pin will be presented to each District Commander who leads during a Department Executive Committee meeting. At the end of the May lap (30 days before the Convention), a large Replica Gold Big 1 pin will be presented to the District 1st Vice in each category for the year.

SILVER BRIGADE RECRUITER AWARD—This Award is given for recruiting 25 to 49 new members. The Post Adjutant must send the completed certification form to the Department on or before the May target date. Posts should retain a copy for their records.

GOLD BRIGADE RECRUITER AWARD – Awarded for recruiting 50 or more new members. The Post Adjutant must send a completed certification form to the Department before May 1. (First-time qualifiers for the award receive a Gold Brigade cap pin, certificate, a Gold Brigade patch, and a choice of a jacket, sweater, or polo shirt with the Gold Brigade logo. Second-time qualifiers for the award receive a Gold Brigade certificate, patch, a hash mark for the sleeve, and the choice of another Gold Brigade jacket, sweater, or polo shirt with the Gold Brigade logo). Post should retain a copy for their records.

Legionnaire of the Year Award—This Award highlights the efforts and contributions of a Legionnaire who reflects participation and involvement within Posts, District, Department, and National programs. It will be awarded at the Department Convention. Therefore, nominations need to be received by Department Headquarters by March 1.

AWARDS FOR POSTS

POST CERTIFICATE OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE - Awarded to each Post that achieves a membership by December 31 equal to or exceeding its previous All-Time-High. Department Headquarters automatically determines the Winning Post. (Awarded by National).

POST HONOR RIBBON - Awarded to each Post that equals or exceeds its previous year's membership by December 31. (Awarded by National).

QUOTA PLAQUE - Awarded by the District Commander to each Post reaching Quota.

1000 AND OVER QUOTA AWARD - Posts with an assigned Quota of 1000 or more that reach or exceed the Quota by Veterans Day Report will receive a Certificate of Recognition. (Awarded by Dept)

QUOTA CERTIFICATE - Sent to District Commander for Award to the Post automatically upon reaching Quota. (Awarded by Department).

100% POST COMMANDER'S PATCH - Sent to District Commander to Award the Post Commander automatically upon their Post reaching Quota. (Awarded by Department).

200% AND 300% COMMANDER'S PATCH - A very exclusive patch for Post Commanders whose membership reaches 200% or 300% of the Quota. (Awarded by Department).

AWARDS FOR DISTRICTS

DISTRICT COMMANDER QUOTA AWARD – 100% Pin presented to each District Commander equaling or exceeding their assigned Quota. (Awarded by Department).



DEPARTMENT CONVENTION AWARDS

In addition to the awards listed previously, numerous plaques and other awards are presented to outstanding Posts and individuals for membership and program accomplishments throughout the previous year. The following are the awards and purposes:

HUGH K. MARTIN AWARD – Post showing the highest goal percentage over Quota for the membership year.

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER'S AWARD - Awarded annually to the Post with a Quota of 750 or more, which attains the highest percentage of the previous year's membership by February 4, 2026. **WINNER MUST BE QUOTA POST BY the Last membership Report in May.** The Department automatically determines the winner.

DEPARTMENT FIRST VICE COMMANDER'S AWARD - Awarded annually to the Post with a Quota between 25 and 749, which attains the highest percentage of the previous year's membership by February 6, 2026. **WINNER MUST BE QUOTA POST BY THE Last Membership Report in May.** The Department automatically determines the winner.

GRAND AWARD - Presented annually to the Post, first reaching membership in the Quota group of 1,000 and over. The Department automatically determines the winner.

ELI K. JENSEN AWARD—Awarded to the District showing the greatest percentage increase over the previous year. The District must be Quota to qualify. Determined by the Last Membership Report in May.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT'S AWARD – Plaque presented annually to each District 1st Vice-Commander whose District reaches the Quota. Determined by the last Membership Report in May.

All these awards are based on the membership report run 30 days before the Department Convention.

Remember the 3 R's:

R- Retain

R- Recruit

R- Reinstate

BE THE ONE



"FOR GOD AND COUNTRY"