



# VETERANS

## STRENGTHENING AMERICA

### The American Legion Veterans Strengthening America Campaign Toolkit



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## Instructions

This toolkit is designed to help your department/post maximize participation in the new national awareness campaign of The American Legion – Veterans Strengthening America. Now more than ever, Legionnaires are making an impact in communities across the country by organizing blood drives, delivering meals, hosting food banks, helping families in need, making buddy checks and more. The Veterans Strengthening America campaign highlights the work we are doing through a new series of public service announcements (PSAs). The first in the series is called “Making Communities Stronger” and is available now.

This toolkit contains a variety of tactics and creative elements that can be used to help grow awareness about the national campaign while also promoting membership locally. The items in this toolkit are intended to help your team tell the story of who The American Legion is, what we do and why it matters. Promoting the campaign will also bring visibility to your department and post and can drive membership and donations.

## Campaign Goals

- Educate the public about the core values of The American Legion – patriotism, youth, national security and veterans.
- Attract attention and educate like-minded veterans on the values and importance of The American Legion to grow membership.
- Provide materials with a consistent look and feel that can be utilized locally to build upon national efforts.

## Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

You can help ensure that the new American Legion “Making Communities Stronger” public service announcements get into the hands of your local television and radio stations. The PSAs aim to educate the public about the values of The American Legion and how Legionnaires take action and strengthen communities across the country. Increased visibility of The American Legion can lead to new members and supporters.

### TV and Radio PSAs

The TV and radio PSAs feature Legionnaires in action and demonstrate how veterans strengthen our nation through The American Legion. Whether it be organizing a blood drive, delivering meals or cleaning up after a natural disaster, The American Legion is “Making Communities Stronger.”

We have developed a press release (available for download at [legion.org/vsa](http://legion.org/vsa)) that you can use to reach out to your local TV and radio stations. The release talks about the PSAs and provides instructions on how a station can download the files. To determine whom to contact at a station, you can visit their website and look for “contact us” which is often at the bottom of the homepage. Or you can call the station and ask to speak to the person responsible for airing PSAs. This is typically the community relations department or marketing manager. From there, you can email them the press release or tell them why you are calling. Sample scripts are below to assist you in having these discussions.

## Downloadable Files Available:

:15, :30 and :60 second TV PSAs are available for download at: [psadirect.com/legion](http://psadirect.com/legion)

:10, :15, :30 and :60 second Radio PSAs are available for download at: [psadirect.com/legion](http://psadirect.com/legion)

(PLEASE NOTE: These files contain special coding that allows us to track how many times the PSA airs. It is imperative that station downloads the PSA from the website.)

## Sample Script for TV Stations:

“Hello, this is [NAME], from American Legion post [#] in [TOWN]. Could I please speak to the person in charge of airing PSAs for your station?”

“Yes, this is [NAME], from American Legion post [#] in [TOWN]. I am calling on behalf of the [HUNDREDS/THOUSANDS] of veterans in our local community to ask if you could run a new PSA for The American Legion. The professionally produced PSA highlights the values of Legionnaires and how we make communities across the country stronger. It comes in :15, :30 and :60 second versions and is available in high and standard definition formats. It’s online for easy download. Can I share the download website address with you?”

“The PSAs can be downloaded at [psadirect.com/legion](http://psadirect.com/legion).”

“Thank you so much for making the veterans in our community a priority by agreeing to review this PSA. We sincerely appreciate it.”

## Sample Script for Radio Stations:

“Hello, this is [NAME], from American Legion post [#] in [TOWN]. Could I please speak to the person in charge of airing PSAs for your station?”

“Yes, this is [NAME], from American Legion post [#] in [TOWN]. I am calling on behalf of the [HUNDREDS/THOUSANDS] of veterans in our local community to ask if you could run a new PSA for The American Legion. The professionally produced PSA highlights the values of Legionnaires and how we make communities across the country stronger. It comes in :10, :15, :30 and :60 second versions and it’s online for easy download. Can I share the download website address with you?”

“The PSAs can be downloaded at [psadirect.com/legion](http://psadirect.com/legion).”

“Thank you so much for making the veterans in our community a priority by agreeing to review this PSA. We sincerely appreciate it.”

## Talking Points

Before you call the media or send a press release about the new PSA, take time to be prepared for questions they may ask. Here are a few key message points about The American Legion and the Veterans Strengthening America campaign to aid you in speaking with the media.

- The American Legion was founded in 1919 and is the nation's largest veterans service organization, with nearly two million members worldwide.
- Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 12,000 local posts.
- Members of The American Legion volunteer to help during times of need. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura Legionnaires from across Alabama took relief supplies to Louisiana. One of our posts in Arizona has been serving as one of the largest COVID-19 testing sites in the United States.
- The American Legion has been a national leader in blood donations since World War II.
- Membership in The American Legion is a great way for veterans to continue to serve their country on the home front.
- Each year Legionnaires collectively donate millions of hours of volunteer service in their communities.
- Focused on four distinct pillars, The American Legion believes in advocacy for veterans, a strong national defense, mentoring youth and keeping patriotism and honor alive and well.
- Membership in The American Legion is open to any veteran with an honorable discharge who served since the day Pearl Harbor was attacked.
- The American Legion has been instrumental in the creation of a number of major institutions of American society, including formation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, creation of the U.S. Flag Code, passage of the GI Bill and more.

The previous talking points should be combined with key points about your local efforts. Here are some examples of questions the media might ask you about:

- How many veterans make up your local membership?
- How/what has your post been doing during COVID-19?
- Do you have other American Legion Family organizations, i.e. Auxiliary, Sons and Legion Rider programs? (Articulate the added membership of these organizations.)
- What specific programs does your department/post offer? What are the program benefits? What is the impact of these programs on the local community?

# Social Media

Social media and your website can be valuable tools to raise awareness about how departments and posts are making communities stronger. In addition to posting on social media about what is happening locally, you can influence your “friends and followers” by encouraging them to visit [legion.org](http://legion.org) to learn more about The American Legion and its national efforts that help veterans.

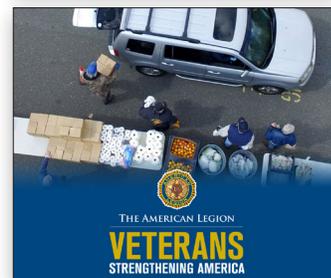
We have developed several items to help you have an impact online. These include social media graphics and sample posts that can be used to help share the Veterans Strengthening America message with your online community of followers.

## Social Media Graphics:

Available for download: [legion.org/vsa](http://legion.org/vsa)

## Sample Facebook and Instagram Posts:

- For more than 100 years The American Legion has been strengthening America by serving local communities. Legionnaires take action during times of need and organize blood drives, assist food banks and deliver relief supplies. If you are a veteran with a desire to continue serving your country, become a member today. @americanlegionhq #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica  
Link: <https://www.legion.org/join>
- As Legionnaires we have a strong desire to continue serving our country and local community. From buddy checks to organizing blood drives, every day we are strengthening America. If you are a veteran, join us and become a member today. @americanlegionhq #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica  
Link: <https://www.legion.org/join>
- Even during a global pandemic members of The American Legion have been making our local community stronger. Legionnaires are organizing blood drives, food banks, and conducting buddy checks to be sure veterans are safe and cared for. Join us! @americanlegionhq #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica  
Link: <https://www.legion.org/headlines/coronavirus>



## Sample Twitter Posts:

- The American Legion - 100 years of making communities stronger. Join us! @AmericanLegion #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica Link: <https://www.legion.org/join>
- Legionnaires have a strong desire to continue serving our country and communities. Become a member today! @AmericanLegion #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica Link: <https://www.legion.org/join>
- During the pandemic Legionnaires have continued to make communities stronger. Learn more. @AmericanLegion #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica Link: <https://www.legion.org/headlines/coronavirus>



## Don't forget to like or tag The American Legion:

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are about helping your message to “go viral.” That happens when you “like,” “tag” and “tweet@” people with large social followings like The American Legion. Here are some tips to ensure that your message is shared by The American Legion National Headquarters when you post:

- Make sure that on your department/post account you “like” or “follow” the following pages:
  - The American Legion National Headquarters
    - Facebook: @americanlegionhq
    - Instagram: theamericanlegion
    - Twitter: @AmericanLegion
- When the National Headquarters social media team sees your post in their feed, they will have the opportunity to share the post with the national community of followers.
- When posting on Twitter and Instagram be sure to include a few hashtags. A hashtag is a keyword phrase that brings conversations on the same topic into a single thread. They encourage social media users to explore content that catches their eye and can help grow your audience.
  - Some hashtags to consider using: #VeteransStrengtheningAmerica #Veterans #AmericanLegion #Military #Army #Navy #Marines #CoastGuard #AirForce #SpaceForce