



South Dakota

# **Department of South Dakota Program & Membership Guide**



**Dr. Martin Christensen  
State Commander**

**“Strength With Unity”  
2025-2026**

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**Commander's 2025-2026 Motto**  
**“STRENGTH WITH UNITY”**

Comrades,

Our strength as an Organization lies in our unity. To reinforce this, we must focus on growing our membership, enhancing communication, and continuing to develop strong leaders through training. By fostering teamwork and collaboration, particularly with the support of our Auxiliary, we will strengthen and unify all 49 South Dakota VFW Posts, five Districts, and our Department.

A Past Commander once stated that we should never waver in our commitment to what is best for veterans and the integrity of our Organization. I wholeheartedly embrace this philosophy as we move forward, ensuring that each Post and District have the resources and direction needed for long-term success. Additionally, improving communication and coordination across our Department will remain a priority, enabling us to serve veterans more effectively. On a National level, we will continue to build and elevate the image of South Dakota veterans at our National Home.

**Department Programs & Membership Goals**

Enclosed are the Department Program and Membership Guide for 2025-2026, along with the National Membership Guide. These resources outline essential programs, incentives, and expectations. Please note that updates may be necessary throughout the year.

Each Post, District, and Comrade has specific responsibilities that must be met to qualify for various awards and recognition. Progress can be tracked using the Dashboard on both the Department website ([vfwsd.org](http://vfwsd.org))(All-State) and National website ([vfw.org](http://vfw.org))(All-American). Commanders and Quartermasters at all levels must stay engaged with these Dashboards to monitor their status and ensure compliance with program requirements.

**Membership: Our Key to Growth**

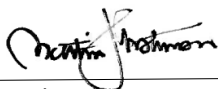
Membership remains a top priority. Every post and district should set an ambitious goal: 101% of their quota, plus one additional member. Integrating VFW programs into community engagement, recruitment, fundraising, and member retention efforts will be vital to achieving this target.

**Mentorship & Leadership Development**

Leadership development is essential to our continued success. I am committed to mentoring our Officers at the Post, District, and Department levels, providing them with the tools and support they need to excel. Additionally, I will engage Past Commanders to help guide and mentor our future leaders.

Together, through “Strength With Unity,” we will expand our impact, strengthen our Organization, and remain steadfast in our mission to serve veterans and their families. I look forward to working alongside you throughout the 2025-2026 Command Year.

Respectfully,



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Dr. Martin Christensen  
State Commander South Dakota

**“Strength With Unity”**  
**Commander Dr. Martin Christensen**  
**2025-2026**

**Post and District Expectations/Obligations**  
*(Regardless if trying to achieve All-State or All-American status)*

**VFW POST “to do” CHECKLIST**

Use this checklist (and Membership Guide) to put you on the right track to be a successful, thriving VFW Post. If your desire is to obtain All-State or All-American Status, please refer to Membership Guide. **Start working programs/checklist on July 1st!** Do not forget to include your Auxiliary when submitting reports. The Dept Office will continue to send out reminders in monthly General Orders (GO's).

Access GO's, Forms, this Checklist, SD VFW Program information, etc., at:  
SD VFW Website: <https://vfwsd.org>  
National VFW website: <https://www.vfw.org>

<b>POST RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>DUE BY:</b>
<b>JULY</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Post Membership Plan (Form on Dept Website) (Submit to Dept HQs)	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Trustees' Quarterly Audit Report (Quartermaster & Adjutant Books & Records) (Apr - Jun) (Submit to Dept HQs)	Jul 31 <sup>st</sup>
Input Community Service on State Dashboard <a href="http://www.vfwsd.org">www.vfwsd.org</a>	Aug 15 <sup>th</sup>
<b>AUGUST</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Complete Post BOND Forms (Submit to Dept HQs)	Aug 31 <sup>st</sup>
Department Dues (Post membership as of Jun 30 <sup>th</sup> previous Command Year)	
Hospital Fund (Supports VA Med Centers in SD) (.35 cents per member)	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Service & Rehabilitation Fund (Supports VAVS/VVS Programs in SD) (.20 cents per member)	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Memorial Park & Chapel (Supports cost of maintaining Park & Chapel located in Black Hills) (.10 cents per member)	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Department Donations (By Membership Category) (Post membership as of Jun 30 <sup>th</sup> of previous Command Year)	
Veterans Military Service (VMS) (Paid to National All-American Dashboard)	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Department Recruiting Events -	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
National Home for Children	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Special Olympics	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Purchase Legacy Buddy Poppies (.30 cents each – OR Tin Tap Poppies (.15 cents each – Must order 500 Poppies per Post to qualify for All-American and All-State Programs	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>

<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Trustees' Quarterly Audit Report (Quartermaster & Adjutant Books & Records) (Jul - Sep) (Submit to Dept HQs)	Oct 31 <sup>st</sup>
Accomplish One Membership Activity and input on state dashboard	Oct 15 <sup>th</sup>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Attend Department Fall Council / Homecoming in Sioux Falls at Alliance Center	Oct 3-5, 2025
Attend Fall District Meeting	Oct/Nov
Posts Pay District Dues (Pay District QM)	Due by Fall District Meeting
Input Community Service on State Dashboard <a href="http://www.vfwsd.org">www.vfwsd.org</a>	Nov 15 <sup>th</sup>
Annual Awards Programs (Forward to District POC)	
Patriots Pen (One Entry to District Judging for every 15 Entries at Post Level) on Scholar's App – Must make entry on All-American Dashboard to qualify	Oct 31 <sup>st</sup>
Voice of Democracy (One Entry to District Judging for every 15 Entries at Post Level) on Scholar's App -Must make entry on All-American Dashboard to qualify	Oct 31 <sup>st</sup>
Teacher of the Year (Teacher Entry Grades (K-5) (6-8) (9-12) (Submit to Dept Chair)	Oct 31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Veterans Day Activities – input Veterans Day activities on state dashboard	Dec 15 <sup>th</sup>
<b>DECEMBER</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Trustees' Quarterly Audit Report (Quartermaster & Adjutant Books & Records) (Oct - Dec) (Submit to Dept HQs)	Jan 31 <sup>st</sup>
Accomplish One Membership Activity and input on state dashboard	Jan 15 <sup>th</sup>
<b>JANUARY</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Attend Mid-Winter District Meeting	Jan/Feb
Attend Department Legislative Conference / VOD/PP/Teacher of the Year Banquet in Pierre	Annually in Jan
Input Community Service on State Dashboard <a href="http://www.vfwsd.org">www.vfwsd.org</a>	Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>
Annual Awards Programs (Watch GO's)	
Public Servant Recognition (Entries to Dept Chair) (Law Enforcement, Fire Fighter & EMT)	Jan 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
District Inspector Conduct Post Inspections (Send Copy to Dept HQs)	Due by Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>

<b>MARCH</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Accomplish One Membership Activity and input on state dashboard	Mar 15 <sup>th</sup>
Conduct/Complete Post Inspection (Form on Dept Website) (Copy to Dept HQs)	Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>
Trustees' Quarterly Audit Report (Quartermaster & Adjutant Books & Records) (Jan - Mar) (Submit to Dept HQs)	Apr 15 <sup>th</sup>
Annual Awards Programs (Watch GO's)	
Scout of the Year (Boy/Girl) (Submit to Post-Mar 1 <sup>st</sup> ) (Post to Dept Chair-Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> )	Mar 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>APRIL</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Complete National Convention Form & Delegation Form (Submit Form/Fees to National) (QM will receive in Mail)	Annually in Apr
Complete Department Convention Form & Delegation Form (Submit Form/Fees to Dept HQs) (Watch GO's)	Annually in Apr
Complete Post Election Report (Submit to National for 2025-2026)	Jun 1 <sup>st</sup>
Complete Annual Post Committee Appointment Letter (Submit to Dept HQs for 2025-2026)	Jun 1 <sup>st</sup>
Attend Spring District meeting	Apr/May
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Programs Report (Feb - Apr) (Submit to Dept HQs) - Update in Dashboard	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>MAY</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Memorial Day Activities (Submit on Quarterly Programs Report) (Submit to Dept HQs) - Update in Dashboard	Annually by Jun 30 <sup>th</sup>
Loyalty Day Activities (Submit on Quarterly Programs Report) (Submit to Dept HQs) - Update in Dashboard	Annually in May
Complete Tax Form 990 - Complete on IRS Website (Copy to Dept HQs)	Refer to May GOs
Community Service and Program Books	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
Accomplish One Membership Activity and input on state dashboard	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>JUNE</b>	
Complete & Maintain Monthly Accounting Report	Monthly
Complete & Maintain Monthly Meeting Agenda & Minutes	Monthly
Attend Department Convention in Mitchell	June 17-21, 2026
Trustees' Quarterly Audit Report (Quartermaster & Adjutant Books & Records) (Apr - Jun) (Submit to Dept HQs)	Jul 31 <sup>st</sup>
<b>PROGRAMS TO WORK ON ALL YEAR</b>	
Achieve 101% in Membership	on-going
Support & Attend Department Recruiting Events	on-going
Donate and Support Commanders/President Special Project	on-going
Publications Contest (Post Newsletter)	on-going

Veterans in the Classroom	on-going
Support SD VFW Baseball	on-going
Youth Activities	on-going
Americanism	on-going






## **Membership Goals/Objectives**

1. Build a stronger VFW for the future
2. Instill Mentorship, Team building and Esprit de Corps among members
3. Provide Veteran Service Officers (VSO) outreach to Posts and Districts
4. Ensure ALL Veterans living in the State of SD are aware of the Programs, Benefits, and Assistance available through the VFW
5. Increase Membership and Participation in the VFW
6. Recruit more Life Members
7. Increase Legacy Life Membership
8. Recruit New and Recover Unpaid Members
9. Retain and Mentor Existing Membership
10. Encourage cooperation between Posts for Membership Drives
11. Encourage Involvement within your Communities and to get the word out what the VFW is about
12. Change the image of the VFW to a family friendly and modern environment
13. Embrace and welcome all Veterans!
14. Encourage Family Members to join the Auxiliary
15. Encourage cooperation between VFW and Auxiliary

The Membership Program is a Post program. We need to ensure we involve our members in Recruiting and Retention. We still have too many members who are not renewing their membership. Encourage members when they sign up or renew their membership to become Life Members. They can use the 12-month payment plan. Offer Incentives or Discounts, get creative!

❖ **We are only as strong as our Membership Status!!**

## **Membership Achievement Goals**

-  Increase the number of New Members by 5%
-  Increase our Life Members by 10%
-  Increase Reinstated Members by 5%
-  Increase Legacy Life Members by 5%
-  Average 95% Retention for Posts in South Dakota

## **Student Veterans Chairman**

This Chairperson will work with the Recruiting and Retention team to gain access to the State Universities and Colleges. He or She will assist the team in recruiting

Student Veterans. The VFW will help the Recruiter obtain a computer, tables, signs, table covers, and other things needed through a grant from National VFW.

### **Top Recruiter**

The Member who signs up for the most new, new life or reinstated members will receive an incentive (TBD). State Headquarters will use information from the National Monthly Recruiter Report. **Cutoff date May 1, 2026.**

### **Commander's Recruiting Challenge**

State Commander Christensen is challenging every member of the Department of South Dakota to recruit two (2) new or recovered members this year.



### **Annual Members (individual member)**

Recruit 5% total Post member count based on MemStats (Quartermasters have access to MemStats in OMS) on **Jul 1, 2025.** You will receive an incentive TBD.







### **Life Members (individual member)**

Recruit 5% total Post member count based on MemStats (Quartermasters have access to MemStats in OMS) on **Jul 1, 2025.** You will receive an incentive TBD.

### **LEGACY Life Members (Post)**

Recruit 2% total Post member count based on MemStats (Quartermasters have access to MemStats in OMS) on **Jul 1, 2025.** You will receive an incentive TBD.

### **Months/Percentages to reach for Membership:**

 Jul 31, 2025	– obtain 80%
 Sept 30, 2025	– obtain 85%
 Nov 30, 2025	– obtain 92%
 Jan 31, 2026	– obtain 96%
 Mar 31, 2026	– obtain 99%
 May 1, 2026	– obtain 101%







### **Retention Defined**

Although Retention is **not** a prerequisite for the All-State or All-American Programs, it is



extremely important to understand how Retention is derived and the significant role it plays in accomplishing growth. The number of paid members in your Post on Jun 30<sup>th</sup> is your ensuing year's "prior year total." A new or recovered member is required to make up for each prior year member the Post failed to retain.

Your Post retention is derived from six types of payment components based on your prior year total of annual members:

-  A prior year Annual member pays his or her Annual Membership dues
-  A prior year Annual member pays their Life Membership via the Installment Plan
-  A prior year Annual member pays for Life Membership
-  A prior year Annual member transfers to another Post and pays his or her annual membership dues to your Post prior to transfer
-  A prior year Annual Member transfers to another Post and pays the Life Membership installment fee to your Post prior to transfer
-  A prior year Annual Member transfers to another Posts and pays Life Membership dues to your Post prior to transfer

### **Consider a Life Membership**

This will help your Post and it will increase the payout your Post receives on your behalf each year. This Membership also pays for itself as you do not have to continuously contact members for their dues annually. Please consider converting to Life Membership as it boosts our overall numbers and there are no annual dues to track down.

### **Consider obtaining Legacy Life Membership**

As a Legacy Life member, future generations will know you not only for the sacrifices you made as a Veteran but for the contributions you made as a member. As a Legacy member your payouts to the state and the post will continue for as long as the Post exists. There are many other incentives! Visit <https://www.vfw.org>

## **ALL-STATE POST COMMANDER & POST QUARTERMASTER QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Membership Categories**

Posts in the Department of South Dakota have been divided into six (6) Membership Categories. These Categories will be used to determine points for the All-State Teams for Post Commander and Post Quartermaster.

Also, these Categories will be used for other contests that have been introduced or additional contests that may be introduced later by the Membership Committee.

The Membership Committee highly recommends you take the time to review the

“Membership Categories” and the 2025-2026 VFW National Membership Program.

<b>Category 1 (Total: 19)</b> Alcester Armour Chamberlain Elk Point Eureka Faith Flandreau Gettysburg Goodwin Lake Andes Lemmon Marty Newell Parker Plankinton Quinn/Wall Turton Tyndall Wessington Springs	<b>Category 2 (Total: 14)</b> Belle Fourche Beresford Brandon Britton Burke Canton Miller Parkston Redfield Scotland Vermillion Wagner Webster Winner  <b>Category 3 (Total: 6)</b> Huron Madison Milbank Sisseton Spearfish Sturgis	<b>Category 4 (Total: 4)</b> Deadwood Brookings Mitchell Pierre  <b>Category 5 (Total: 4)</b> Aberdeen Custer Watertown Yankton  <b>Category 6 (Total: 2)</b> Rapid City Sioux Falls  <b>Department Total: 49 Posts</b>
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## **All-State Post Commander & Post Quartermaster Teams and the Baker-Simpson & William J. Radigan Awards**

To be considered for the selection on the All-State Post Commander and Post Quartermaster Teams, you are required to complete the following criteria by the judging date in May of 2026 (the exact date to be published in Apr 2026 GO's). This contest is open to all Post Commanders and Post Quartermasters in the Department of South Dakota and begins Jul 1, 2025.

1. Post must attain **101% Membership** based on Jun 30, 2025, Membership Statistics (MemStats in OMS).
2. Post must submit their 2025-2026 **Election Report** in OMS and Department Headquarters **NLT Jun 1, 2025**.
3. Post must purchase **at least 500 Poppies per Post**. The Legacy Poppies and/or Tin Tap Poppies satisfy this requirement.

4. Post must submit payment for all **Department Dues** (Hospital, Service & Rehab, Memorial Park) based on Post Membership as of Jun 30, 2025, to Department Headquarters **NLT Oct 1, 2025**.
5. Post must submit a **Membership Plan**, to include Post Membership Chair to Department Headquarters and Department Membership Chair **NLT Oct 31, 2025**. (Additional Points Available if turned in by August 1, 2025)
6. Post must accomplish at least one (1) **Membership Activity per quarter** and submit **After-Action Report (AAR)** on the state dashboard quarterly **NLT May 1, 2026**.
7. All Four (4) **Quarterly Trustee Audit Reports and Programs Reports** must be submitted to Department Headquarters.
8. Each Post must **pay \$125** to the **Veterans and Military Support (VMS) Programs**. Submit funds **Directly** to National VMS Department through the All-American Dashboard.
9. Post shall submit **District Dues** to their District Quartermaster based on Membership as of Jun 30, 2025, **NLT your District Fall meeting**.

### **All-State Post Commander and Post Quartermaster Teams:**

The following Point System has been devised to determine the outstanding Post Commander and Post Quartermaster in each Category who will comprise the All-State Teams. There may be up to **Six (6) White Hat Post Commanders (CO) and Six (6) White Hat Post Quartermasters (QM)** awarded. If a Membership Category does not qualify based on the established criteria, there will not be a White Hat awarded in that Category. For the Commander and Quartermaster with the highest points total after the six Categories, an additional **Two (2) At-Large White Hats** will be awarded for a total of up to **Eight (8) CO & QM White Hats**. The Commander receiving the most points will be awarded the **Baker-Simpson Award** and the Quartermaster receiving the most points will be awarded the **William J. Radigan Award**.

### **All-State Post Commanders and Post Quartermasters Awards & Prizes:**








1. All-State White Hat
2. All-State Pin
3. Registration to the Department Convention
4. Room for 3 nights at Department Convention (IAW DEPT SOP)
5. Mileage to and from the Convention from your home (IAW DEPT SOP)
6. Gift (TBD)
7. **Baker-Simpson Award** (Eagle Award) to Outstanding Commander
8. **William J. Radigan Award** (Eagle Award) to Outstanding Quartermaster
9. Captain Pin (Awarded to Outstanding Commander and Quartermaster)

### **Membership Division:**

(Per Membership Category (Page 10) and your Post must be 101% to receive points)

	<u>POINTS</u>
1. Top Five (5) Posts to achieve 101% in membership (200/150/100/75/50 (Top 5 Posts in order)	200
2. Five points per member over Quota up to 40 Members	200

**New and reinstate percentage in the “green”:**

-  5% = 10 points
-  10% = 20 points
-  15% = 30 points
-  20% = 40 points
-  30% = 50 points
-  50% = 100 points
-  100% = 200 points

Post Membership Plans received by **Oct 1, 2025**, will be awarded 200 points.

Post Membership Plans received by **Aug 1, 2025**, will be awarded 100 additional points.

**Maximum Total Points: 900**

**VFW Programs and Projects Division:**  
**(20 Points or the Points indicated per Program or Project)**

**Sponsor:**

Aid to Others/Hospital  
 Americanism/Patriotism  
 VFW Baseball  
 Citizenship Activities  
 Community Involvement  
 EMT (100)  
 Firefighter (100)  
 Law Enforcement (100)  
 Newsletter  
 Patriots Pen (150)  
 Safety Activities  
 Scout of Year  
 Teacher of the Year (50 ea.)  
 Veterans in the Classroom  
 Voice of Democracy (150)  
 Youth Activities

## **17 Programs/Projects**

**Maximum Total Points: 1050**

### **VFW Donations Division**

You shall donate the required amount of funds for your Membership Category (page 10) to receive the points indicated in each category. **Donation period is from Jul 1, 2025, to Mar 1, 2026.** (Donations for VMS to be paid on the All-American Dashboard).

Donations or Post participation in Department Recruiting/Retention Activities (example: State Fair & Sturgis Bike Rally), National Home for Children, Special Olympics should be sent to Department Headquarters.

Membership Category (Page 10) Minimum Donation Requirements for the items below:

<b>Category #1:</b> \$20.00	<b>Category #3:</b> \$40.00	<b>Category #5:</b> \$75.00
<b>Category #2:</b> \$30.00	<b>Category #4:</b> \$50.00	<b>Category #6:</b> \$100.00

	<u>POINTS</u>
• National Home for Children	50
• Recruiting/Retention Activities	50
• VMS (National Program) (Must Donate Additional \$25.00 more than in Your Category to VMS to receive 75 Points)	75
• Special Olympics	25

**Maximum Total Points 200**

### **VFW Reporting Division**

Send Programs Reports to Department Headquarters Quarterly. A maximum of **50 points** will be awarded for each report received during the month following the end of each reporting period (max 200 pts). If the reports are received after the month following the reporting period, a max of **25 points** will be awarded for each report received (max **100 pts**). The final report must be received prior to the May judging date, exact date to be published in the Apr GOs.

### **Reporting periods for above reports:**






1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter:	July, August, & September
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter:	October, November, & December

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: January, February, & March  
4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: April, May, & June

<b><u>Memorial Day 2025</u></b>	50 points (Report on Programs Report <b>NLT Jul 31</b> )
<b><u>Veterans Day 2025</u></b>	50 points (Report on Programs Report <b>NLT Dec 31</b> )
<b><u>Loyalty Day 2026</u></b>	50 points (Report on Programs Report <b>TBD in April GOs</b> )

**Maximum Total Points 350**

## **Attendance at Council of Administration & District Meetings**

	<u>POINTS</u>
 Fall Council of Administration (COA)	50
 Legislative Conference	50
 Fall District Meeting	50
 Winter District Meeting	50
 Spring District Meeting	50

### **Bonus Points:**

Each Post Commander and Post Quartermaster who attends any of the meetings listed above will receive the 50 points per meeting (250 max pts). Additional Post members up to 3 will receive an additional 50 bonus points per meeting (150 max pts). The Post Commander and Post Quartermaster must attend meetings before any bonus points are awarded.

**Maximum Total Points: 400**

**Maximum Total Points for the Program: 3120**



## **All-State District Commanders Team**

To be considered for the selection on the All-State District Commanders Team, you must complete the following criteria by the judging date in May of 2023 (to be set; refer to Apr GO's). This contest is open to all District Commanders in the Department of South Dakota and begins **Jul 1, 2025**.

1. **98.5% in Membership** by judging date.
2. Each Post in your District shall purchase a minimum of **500 Poppies** during the year beginning Jul 1.
3. **Inspection** of each Post must be conducted and forwarded to Department Headquarters.
4. **One VOD entry** from District must advance to the Department Chairperson.
5. **One Patriots Pen entry** from District must advance to the Department Chairperson.
6. **One National Citizenship Education Teacher's Award entry** from District must advance to Department Chairperson.
7. **One School of Instruction (SOI)** must be conducted at a District meeting. (A program or contest can be presented by a District, State Chairman or State Officer)
8. **Commander shall attend all COA and your District meetings.** Exceptions will only be granted by the State Commander in advance.
9. **District Membership Plan & an appointed District Membership Captain** must be submitted to the Department Headquarters NLT **Oct 31, 2025**.
10. Provide a **District Membership Captain's After-Action Report (AAR)** at all **COA meetings as part of District Commander's Book of Reports.**

A point system has been devised for each of the following Categories. For example: The District with the best percentage of **Membership** will receive 250 points; the second-best percentage of membership will receive 225 points; the third place will receive 200 points; fourth place will receive 175 points; and fifth place will receive 150 points. **New/Reinstate** points will be the same as above for the best percentage of Membership. Points in all other categories will be determined by the **percentage** of Posts who participate in the Program within the District.

The top two qualifying District Commanders receiving the most points will qualify for the All-State District Commanders Team and the Commander receiving the most points will be the Team Captain and will be awarded the **Tice-Gallagher Award**.



## **All-State District Commanders Awards & Prizes**


1. All-State White Hat
2. Registration to the Department Convention
3. Room for 3 nights at the Department Convention (IAW SOP)
4. Mileage to and from the Convention from your home (IAW SOP)
5. Gift (TBD)
6. **Tice-Gallagher Award** to Outstanding District Commander
7. Captain Pin (Awarded to Outstanding District Commander)

### **Membership**

#### **CATEGORY**

#### **POINTS**

Membership percentage	250 – 150
New and reinstates percentage in the “green” (Mem Stats in OMS)	250 – 150
Five points per member over quota up to 75 points	75

-  Ten points for every Post in your district (max 120) that sends in a **Membership Plan by Oct 31**. If your District is **100% by Oct 31** you receive an additional **50 points**.

**Maximum Total Points: 745**

**Points in all other categories will be determined by the Percentage of Posts who participate in the Program within the District.**

	<b><u>POINTS</u></b>
EMT, Firefighter, Law Enforcement	50
National Home Donation	50
Scout of the Year	50
Service & Rehabilitation Obligation	50
VMS (National Donation)	50
Memorial Park Obligation	50
Hospital Fund Obligation	50

**Maximum Total Points: 350**

## **Reports and Attendance**

### **District Commander Reports for Book of Reports at COA Meetings:**

	<u>POINTS</u>
1. Submitted for Fall Council	25
2. Submitted for Legislative Conference	25

### **District Commander attendance at COA Meetings:**

1. First COA Meeting after Department Convention	25
2. Fall COA Meeting	25
3. Legislative Conference and COA Meeting	25
4. Member participation for Recruiting/Retention Events like State Fair or Sturgis Bike Rally	25

**Maximum Total Points: 150**

**Maximum Total Points for the Program 1245**

### **Notice:**

Membership turn-in on the day of judging before judging time is scheduled with proper verification (copy of applications or renewal notices and copy of payment) is provided; they will be included in the membership totals. Also, all other reports or documents will be accepted before judging time is scheduled for other parts of the contest. This is for all contests and awards for Post Commanders, Post Quartermasters & District Commanders.

The Three (3) Awards listed below are selected exclusively by the State Commander. These awards, if selected, will be presented during the State Convention Banquet.

### **Double Eagle Award**

To be considered for selection of the Double Eagle Award the Comrade must be a Past Department Commander or a Department Officer who has been instrumental in providing the Commander with guidance and counsel during his/her term.

### **Tice/Gallagher/Radigan (TGR) Award**

To be considered for the TGR Award the Comrade must be a Life Member, have been a member of the VFW for at least ten (10) years, and active in VFW affairs.

### **Most Valuable Comrade (MVC) Award**

May be awarded to anyone within the Department or Department Auxiliary for Exemplary Dedication and Service to the Department of South Dakota and Veterans

## **Membership Campaign** **2025-2026**

The Membership Campaign will start on Jul 1, 2025, and end on May 1, 2026 (this date is used for judging purposes). This will allow time to process each winner for the judging of awards. Then continue until Jun 30, 2026.

### **Who May Participate:**

Campaign is open to all VFW and Auxiliary members. Any VFW member or Auxiliary member that recruits or reinstates one or more VFW members for the South Dakota VFW will receive a beautiful distinctive South Dakota Recruiter pin. A Recruiter shall recruit members only for South Dakota.

Recruiting from another state. If a recruiter should by chance entice a member from another state to transfer his or her membership to a SD VFW Post, this member will be considered the same as a newly recruited member and the recruiter will be eligible for a South Dakota "Recruiter" pin.

### **How Many Pins May I Receive?**

A Recruiter may receive only ONE (1) South Dakota Recruiter Pin, regardless of how many new members he or she may recruit. Each Post Quartermaster is asked to keep in close contact with the Department Membership Chairman who will be receiving the National roster on a weekly/monthly basis. In case a Recruiter's name does not appear on the National roster, a statement by the Post Quartermaster a member did in fact recruit or reinstate a new member will be accepted so a South Dakota Recruiter Pin may be awarded to that Recruiter.

## **101% Award and Pin for District and Post Commanders & Post Quartermasters**



All District and Post Commander & Post Quartermasters who reach 101% in Membership by May 1<sup>st</sup> will be awarded the “Q” Quota Buster Pin award.

The award will be presented by the State Commander or by a delegated representative of the Department as soon as the District or Post Quota Buster status has been reached or at another appropriate time.



### **Post 101% Award**






Contest is for Posts who reach 101% in Membership that was assigned to them by the Membership Committee for the 2025-2026 Membership Year. Cut-off date for this contest will be based on the members reported for each Post to National Headquarters Direct Dues Department on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The top 3 Posts (101% + # over 101%) will receive a 2025-2026 Membership Post Quota Buster Plaque. All other Posts that reach 101% and 101%+ will receive a certificate.

## **Membership Resources**

State of South Dakota VFW website is located at: <https://vfwsd.org> go under resources, then Templates and Forms.

-  All Forms and Reports required for Quarterly Reports and VFW programs are located on this website
-  All General Orders, Bylaws, Directory and Resources are also located at this website.

The National Headquarters VFW website is located at: [vfw.org](http://vfw.org). It has a wealth of Resources at your disposal. Many of those are available free of charge to our members.

-  Membership materials ranging from applications, recruiting brochures, posters, and benefits brochures can be ordered directly from the Membership Department using the Membership Order Form (located under Membership Quick Links once you login).
-  Resources for Post Development, Membership Campaigns, and Mentorship such as training guides, videos, and webinars are available in the Training & Support section.
-  Promotional tools such as radio spots, sample advertisements, public service announcements, & media kits are all available through the Media Room.

The VFW National Headquarters staff is ready and trained to answer any questions you may have concerning Membership, VFW programs, or other issues. You can contact our **Member Service Center directly at 1.833.VFW.VETS**, or the **Membership Department at 1.888.JOIN.VFW**.

**Please check with our Department Office for assistance before going to National. Let us handle questions/concerns at lowest level first.**



**NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.®**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

2025-2026

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Approved:

_____	Attest: _____
State Commander	State Adjutant



## **DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

### **CODE OF ETHICS POLICY**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Department of South Dakota is a non-profit Organization under the laws of the State of South Dakota. VFW members, affiliated organizations (including Posts), and the general public look to the VFW Department of South Dakota to provide strong leadership on veteran's issues and to develop and to implement effective programs to promote patriotism, community service, youth development and a strong national defense. In order to fulfill those important responsibilities, the Department must maintain a reputation that is above reproach.

In order to sustain the Organization's reputation and assure its continued success, Officers, Council Members and employees, as well as members put in leadership positions (e.g. committee chairman and other appointees), are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with the admonition in the Ritual to live lives of stainless integrity. To maintain the trust and confidence of the members, persons who donate to the Organization and the public, the Officers, Council Members, employees and others in leadership positions must adhere to the highest standards of honesty, integrity and professional conduct, and comply with the Code of Ethics.

This Policy of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of South Dakota is intended to foster an environment that promotes ethical conduct in carrying out the mission of the Organization by its leaders, volunteers and employees.

### **CODE OF ETHICS/POLICY STATEMENTS**

Officers, Council Members, employees and other members in leadership positions in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of South Dakota shall be governed by the following Code of Ethics and Policy Statements:

#### **PERSONAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY**

All Officers, Council Members, employees, and other members in leadership positions shall:

1. Display personal integrity, avoid misrepresentation and always be honest with others;
2. Act in a professional manner at all times;
3. Promote an environment where honesty and open communication are valued;
4. Resolve differences of opinion in a professional and mature manner;
5. Respect the confidentiality of privileged information;
6. Refuse to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment toward members, employees, volunteers or other officers;
7. Exhibit respect and fairness toward all people;
8. Speak highly of the Organization and its members; and
9. Promote the VFW and support the activities of the Organization.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Members and donors have placed their trust in the leadership of the Organization to use funds to best fulfill the mission of the VFW. The Officers, Council Members, employees and others in leadership positions shall:

1. Refrain from using VFW's resources for any purpose that does not benefit the Organization;
2. Ensure that travel, entertainment and related expenses that are incurred on behalf of the VFW are for the benefit of the Organization and not for personal gain or interests;
3. Make objective and informed decisions concerning the proper use of funds or assets of the Organization; and
4. Regard the assets of the Organization with the same consideration and same care as personal assets when making decisions.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY STATEMENT**

To avoid the appearance of a Conflict of Interest which would tarnish the image of the Organization, no one serving as an Officer, Council Member, employee or in any leadership position shall take personal advantage of his or her leadership role by allowing a situation to exist that is, or may be perceived to be, a Conflict of Interest. All Officers, Council Members, employees and others in leadership positions must:

1. Make all decisions based upon the best interests of the VFW;
2. Refrain from the use of the VFW resources for personal gain;
3. Timely disclose any direct or indirect relationship with a person, or interest in a business or other entity, that may benefit from a decision in which they have a vote or over which they have an ability to influence;
4. Refrain from influencing the selection of vendors who are relatives, personal friends or persons who are affiliated with, employ or are employed by, a person with whom such Officer, employee or other person in a leadership position has a personal or professional relationship;
5. Avoid any conduct that could directly or indirectly benefit the Officer, employee or other person in a leadership position and refrain from using such positions, directly or indirectly, for private gain or to advance personal interest or that of any family member, personal friend or other person with whom a personal relationship exists;
6. Decline any extravagant gift, travel, entertainment, gratuity, favor or extraordinary discounts on merchandise in the performance of VFW duties for anyone, and, under no circumstances, should any of the aforementioned affect business decisions\*; and
7. Avoid any situation that may have an appearance of a Conflict of Interest.

\*Any Officer, Council Member, employee or person in any leadership position who questions the appropriateness of the gift, travel, entertainment, favors or discounts must disclose it to the Department Commander or Quartermaster.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY — DISCLOSED**

When a Conflict of Interest is disclosed, the State Adjutant will determine whether a conflict exists. If the conflict concerns the State Adjutant, then the State Commander will determine whether a conflict exists. The Audit Committee will subsequently review the determination.

When a Conflict is determined to exist, resolution of the matter may include:

1. Approving or disapproving any transaction or situation in question;
2. Requiring the individual to be recused from positions in which the Conflict exists until there is no longer a Conflict;
3. Requiring the individual to discontinue, reduce or modify her/his participation in the Council of Administration or other committees where the Conflict exists.

## **WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY STATEMENT**

A whistleblower, as defined in this policy, is an Officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) who reports an activity that he/she believes to be illegal or dishonest or in violation of the Bylaws or policies of the Department Organization. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the matter, other than making himself/herself reasonably comfortable so that the reported information is credible. Neither is the whistleblower responsible for determining fault or corrective measures, which is the responsibility of the appropriate Officers and/or Council Members.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; requesting or accepting bribes, kickbacks or benefits from vendors, or other fraudulent financial reporting. Examples of violations of policies could be failure to accurately report on travel and reimbursement requests.

If an Officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer has knowledge of such conduct, the Officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer may report it to the State Commander or State Adjutant. The Officer, Council Member, employee or member/volunteer should base his/her allegations on credible information and use sound judgement to avoid baseless allegations. Intentionally making a false report of wrongdoing may subject the individual to discipline.

Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas — confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may be disclosed in order to conduct a thorough investigation, comply with law or provide individuals with their legal rights. VFW will not retaliate against a whistleblower. Any whistleblower who believes he/she has been subjected to retaliation must contact the State Commander or State Adjutant.

The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include complete immunity for any personal wrongdoing in which the whistleblower participated.

## **EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The Department of South Dakota VFW Bylaws empower the State Adjutant with the responsibility of managing the State Headquarters and staff on a day-to-day basis. Any complaints that you might have must be first addressed to the State Adjutant. This policy dictates that your supervisor, the State Adjutant, be the first officer to address any employee issues. If the issue concerns unlawful behavior on the part of the State Adjutant, it may be addressed directly with the State Commander.

As such, all employees of the Department of South Dakota VFW who have a complaint will first address such complaint, in written form, to the State Adjutant. The State Adjutant will initially address the complaint and try to resolve the problem. If the State Adjutant's decision does not resolve the problem or the employee feels that the problem is not resolved, the employee may, in written form, request that the complaint be forwarded to the State Commander for his/her action/determination. If the employee is not satisfied by the determination of the State Commander, the State Commander will appoint an individual to act as an arbitrator. The decision of the arbitrator is final unless the employee feels the case merits action by a state or federal agency.

Except as described above employees will not discuss/forward any type of complaint to Department of South Dakota VFW Officers without first submitting it to the State Adjutant for his/her action. Failure to do this will result in immediate termination of employment.

## CODE OF ETHICS/POLICY STATEMENTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars of the Wars Code of Ethics and Policy Statements. I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the principles and standards defined in this Code and these Policies, including, specifically, those provisions concerning Conflicts of Interest. I am not aware of any interests or relationships that could rise to a Conflict of Interest or otherwise violate the Code of Ethics or Policy Statements. I will disclose any such interests or relationships as soon as I am aware of it. I confirm that I will conduct myself in accordance with the principles and standards of the Code and adhere to these Policy Statements.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Title

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Date

**\*\*\*\*Failure to sign and return the Code of Ethics Policy will result in removal from office\*\*\*\***