

*American Legion Post 147  
Legionnaire Assistance Planning Document  
August- 2020*

Overview:

As with many organizations in the private and public sectors, there are Employee Assistance Programs which respond, in a collegial manner, to the health/social welfare needs of the organizations' constituencies.

This response is non-judgmental, but supportive and delivered to the employee at little or no cost. The primary objective of an assistance program is to enable the employee/receiver to overcome a hardship and return to work at his/her former capacity with services delivered in a discreet and confidential manner.

As we peruse the demographics of our Legionnaire Post, we discover a vast number of our members are senior citizens (75%) with a host of unique needs and situations which often times go unaddressed because of lack of knowledge, resources or access to available options for relief at a convenient location. Moreover, we also have on our rolls several younger members who could benefit from services if they could be provided in a confidential manner.

What this planning document hopes to establish is a Post 147 Legionnaire's Assistance Program for all members modeled along similar lines to those programs in private industry but tailored to the unique needs of our members as we respond to our diverse population.

I hasten to add, that while one may rightly respond that much of what will be proposed herein may be available through the Veterans' Administration (VA), many of our members do not or cannot access these services for a variety of reasons. In other instances, the services are more esoteric and require customization which is not feasible within the VA umbrella of services.

By having resources made available within the immediate or close vicinity of the post; and supported by the post, members may feel more comfortable in obtaining necessary or ancillary supportive services.

What follows is a menu of service areas we may want to consider which remains open ended, a brief rationale for the service, cost considerations to the user of the service, and the establishment of a planning committee with subcommittees and **SMART** goal(s) to guide the work in progress.

When the planning process is completed, a menu book of services (options) can be developed which can then be made available to all members via hard copy and online means.

**Description of Services:**

**1. Transportation**

**Rationale** – Many older Legionnaires lose their ability to be mobile because of health restrictions, license issues, health (eye-sight factors) or the fact that their partner may be the

principal operator of the family's vehicle. When transportation is not available, essential services to the Legionnaire or his/her family may go unmet or the Legionnaire may have to resort to costly private transportation resources such as taxi or uber services.

**Proposal** – Establish a “bank” of drivers from within the post who are available during the work week to transport members who otherwise would not be able to obtain essential services. The service could be for medical, essential family needs (food shopping, etc.) or visiting close family members who are in health care situations. Emergency transportation on weekends could also be a consideration, depending on the depth of the bank, but the primary goal would be to have transportation available during the week. **No Cost**

## **2. Visitations/Well Being Checks**

**Rationale** – Some of our members are confined to their homes and have limited or no access to outside resources. Others may encounter a situation in their homes that render them incapacitated and unable to summon assistance. In the latter instance, a member may be in jeopardy for many hours, even days.

**Proposal** – Construct a process that enables home-bound individuals, at their request, to have someone from the Legion to stop by their home on a predetermined schedule to assess their practical needs. This could include accessing groceries, medicine, or other reasonable needs. *Well Being Checks, again on request, would consist of individuals being visited if they do not check in\* daily. This could be accomplished by phone or direct contact.* **No Cost**

## **3. Legal**

- a. Wills**
- b. Power of Attorneys**
- c. Divorce**
- d. Adoption Rights**
- e. Pending Litigation**
- f. Disability Claims**
- g. Inheritance Law**
- h. Social Security Rights**
- i. Notary Service**
- j. Other**

**Rationale** – The legal needs of our members are varied and are often only realized when an extreme set of circumstances present themselves. By establishing a pool of legal resources, members will have the opportunity to better anticipate their impending needs and respond accordingly. In emergencies, members may need immediate and confidential services, but not have the background or wherewithal to access the services. With a pool or resources established, guidance can be provided to respond to the specific situation on set-by-set circumstances.

**Proposal** – Secure the services of local attorneys who would be willing to be on call when a Legionnaire is in need. These attorneys would agree to participate, at reduced rates, and the costs would be borne by the person(s) using the service. As an inducement to the attorneys, Chapter 15 letters could be provided by the Post in situations where the costs are significant and beyond the means of the Legionnaire. The details of the latter would be determined by the Legal Subcommittee and negotiated with the attorneys who agree to participate in the program.

**Modest Cost**

#### **4. Finance**

- a. Estate Planning**
- b. Reverse Mortgages**
- c. Debt Recovery**
- d. Tax Preparation/Advice**
- e. Investments**
- f. Retirement Planning**
- g. I.D. Security**
- h. Job Counseling**
- i. Banking**
- j. Other**

**Rationale** – As in other areas, financial issues for Legionnaires and their families surface under emergency situations and in the general conduct of life. Having knowledgeable individuals available, on site, to offer advice and direction would be invaluable to the individual.

Collaterally, with convenient services available, members may better anticipate their long-range needs and prepare for them accordingly. In instances where the legion member is house bound, services could be provided at the residence.

**Proposal** – Assess the level of expertise available within the post from members and establish a resource bank interested parties could contact. This would be a pro bono situation and in areas where there is an absence or indigenous resources outside agencies or individuals could be recruited under the same conditions noted within Legal. Again, a subcommittee should be established to support this area while working vigorously to recruit local resources to serve in some capacity within this area. **No Cost/Modest Cost**

#### **5. Mental Health**

- a. Grief Counseling**
- b. Depression**
- c. Separation Issues**
- d. Gambling Addiction**
- e. Drug Addiction**
- f. Alcoholism**
- g. Marriage Counseling**
- h. Suicide Prevention**
- i. Grand Parent Adoption**
- j. PTSD**
- k. Other**

**Rationale** – While all matters pertaining to mental health are highly sensitive, it is an area that ostensibly has the greatest need for services within most communities. Because of the sensitive nature of this area, however, many individuals shy away from seeking services which only exacerbates the situation. As we review the above list, the needs of our post are evident. This is an area of great need and concern because issues related to mental health impacts all other aspects of our lives.

**Proposal** – Create a sub-committee which will access local agencies which provide services in mental health areas and secure working agreements with these agencies. Third party insurance

should be used, but in emergency situations, where there is no insurance, have established understandings with the agencies to treat Legionnaires with Chapter 15 letters being issued. This would entail establishing a resource bank of practitioners who would agree to treat Legionnaires on a priority basis and by doing so better enable our members to confidentially seek services which they might otherwise avoid. **No Cost/Modest Cost**

## **6. General Health**

- a. Nutrition**
- b. Exercise**
- c. Geriatric Concerns**
- d. Prescription Advice**
- e. Smoking Cessation Programs**
- f. Other**

**Rationale** – Most members have some form of health care which responds to their general and critical needs, however, there remains some ancillary services as enumerated above which could be provided at little or no cost to our members on site. These services would be more on the order of enhancing/improving the general health of our members in areas that are often not given enough attention when individuals see their private physician. Nutrition and Exercise are two vital categories of health care that may require more frequent reminders and basic information about the area if members are to improve their overall health. They are also areas that people can administer to themselves once proper knowledge and training is established.

**Proposal** – Establish a sub-committee for this area which will seek consultant resources for selected areas with some services (i.e.: nutrition, exercise, and prescription advice) delivered at the post. There should also be a resource document for those individuals who wish to pursue options beyond the post, and this should include associated costs to the individual, as well.

**No Cost/Modest Cost**

## **7. Education**

- a. Basic Computer & Internet Skills**
- b. G.E.D. Classes**
- c. Personal Accounting**
- d. Other**

**Rationale** – The computer generation is barely thirty-five years old which means a good many of our members missed the phenomenon by thirty to forty years. Consequently, many have little or no knowledge of the potential inherent in the Internet, e-mail and other basic applications which would enable them to better and more economically communicate with family and friends as well as become more informed on current events. Other areas of need may include certification and diploma courses for those who need credentialing.

**Proposal** - Our post members are a rich resource of skills and expertise in many areas. We certainly could establish an in-house cadre of individuals who could provide classes or individual instruction in requested areas. A brief questionnaire could be developed which would assess members' areas of interest, if any, and programs/classes could be developed accordingly. Depending on numbers and the need for an official certificate/diploma, outside providers could be secured with those taking the classes/instruction bearing the cost of the offering(s). **No Cost**

## **8. Housing**

**Rationale** – Many of our members live alone because of the death of a spouse, divorce, or the relocation of their children. Often, they remain in the same residence which can accommodate other individuals. They have more room than they need or can use. Upkeep, in this instance, can become a burden for a single individual, as well as the cost to maintain a residence on one income.

**Proposal** – Develop a means for those who are interested in sharing living space with other post members to make this situation known. Conditions such as age, gender, expected costs, and living expectations could be stipulated. This could be done with the homeowner remaining anonymous, if requested, with only the general locale (James Island, Folly Beach, etc.) referenced. This would eliminate any undue pressure or embarrassment if the homeowner does not wish to honor an application. This proposal could be a significant benefit to both parties and the economic impact significant. **No Cost**

## **9. Sale of Goods**

**Rationale** – As we age or our marital status changes, we often find ourselves almost “overwhelmed” with our possessions. This can also occur when we wish to downsize or completely relocate. When inventorying one’s possessions it may be practicable to assemble a list, with prices, and offer items for sale rather than just donate unwanted household goods for a tax credit.

**Proposal** – Design a means by which post members can alert others to what is available for sale. Sale items could consist of just about anything and it is possible to also list automobiles. This would enable estate items to be made available without the need of yard sales or any moving or relocation of sale items. This could be accomplished online or with a brochure (prices noted) with an expiration included. **No Cost**

## **10. Library – Book Swap**

**Rationale** – Most members have a quantity of books which they no longer read or want. As people consider more functional living space, removing dated books from the home is a practical option. It also can be a gradual process (culling) that can be done piece-meal which will enable careful consideration to be exercised when undertaking this process. It can be a casual activity which potentially could lead to book clubs. It certainly would provide a no cost, enhanced reading option for all.

**Proposal** – Designate a certain amount of space with the canteen to accommodate a book repository. Members do not have to list their submissions, just bring books, and shelve or table them as determined. The caveat being, however, that once books are placed, they will be free to all members. Of course, members may return books after using them if they desire. This service could be advertised in the monthly bulletin for a number of editions and then “word of mouth” should be enough to sustain the process. **No Cost**

\*Check in could be by phone or e-mail as determined when a member enrolls in this service.

## **Summary:**

As this is a planning document designed for consideration, it is understood that some items may not be deemed pertinent to the needs of post members. What is proposed is that we consider the

areas noted and determine if we wish to go forward in some, all or none of the areas presented herein. This could be assessed with a general questionnaire to all constituencies. If the choice is to move forward, it is suggested that the following goals be used as a guide which would culminate within a year with programs being established and a brochure of resources and options being prepared which would be made available in paper and electronically to all members.

### **SMART GOALS**

| <u><b>Specific</b></u>                       | <u><b>Measurable</b></u> | <u><b>Attainable</b></u>                       | <u><b>Realistic</b></u>            | <u><b>Timeline</b></u>       |
|--|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>1. Dev. Questionnaire</b>                 | <b>Product Available</b> | <b>In-House</b>                                | <b>Info Needed</b>                 | <b>Immediate</b>             |
| <b>2. Establish Sub-committees</b>           | <b>6 Committees</b>      | <b>Seek Volunteers</b>                         | <b>Requires 12 -18 individuals</b> | <b>1 month</b>               |
| <b>3. Committees meet</b>                    | <b>Reports</b>           | <b>Space Available</b>                         | <b>1 – 2 per month</b>             | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> month</b>  |
| <b>4. Resources accessed</b>                 | <b>Reports</b>           | <b>Use local agencies<br/>And Post members</b> | <b>Existing resources</b>          | <b>2-8 months</b>            |
| <b>5. Information assembled &amp; shared</b> | <b>Documented</b>        | <b>Committee Work</b>                          | <b>Reasonable Outcome</b>          | <b>9<sup>th</sup> month</b>  |
| <b>6. Brochure developed</b>                 | <b>Product available</b> | <b>Work in house</b>                           | <b>Expertise on hand</b>           | <b>10<sup>th</sup> month</b> |
| <b>7. Disseminate Info.</b>                  | <b>Member Feedback</b>   | <b>Comm. means in place</b>                    | <b>Available resources</b>         | <b>11<sup>th</sup> month</b> |
| <b>8. Implement</b>                          | <b>Subscription #s</b>   | <b>Work Completed</b>                          | <b>Documented</b>                  | <b>12<sup>th</sup> month</b> |

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen R. Driscoll  
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