



Poppy Funds Usage

POPPY FUNDS COLLECTED BEFORE/AFTER AMERICAN LEGION RESOLUTIONS OF 2013 AND 2014

In accordance with The American Legion Poppy Program and Poppy Fund Rules, as revised in 2013 and 2014 by The American Legion National Executive Committee, Poppy Funds may only be used for:

1. The rehabilitation of veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917.
2. The welfare of the families of veterans of the above-named period.
3. The rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals.
4. The welfare of veterans, active military personnel, and the families of veterans and active military personnel of the above-named period where financial and medical need is evident.
5. For the purpose of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy Fund.

All funds collected prior to the passage of this resolution be solely used for the intent and purpose of prior resolutions and not for active-duty servicemembers or families.

New funds collected after approval of this resolution may be used for active-duty military and families as outlined. All efforts be made to manufacture the poppies or poppy symbol items by veterans first, but in the event that demand is greater than this supply source, use of a commercial vendor which conforms with the restrictions on the use of The American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary name and emblem may be used.

Updated rules offer new ways to increase donations. We now have much greater flexibility to use the symbolic red poppy in many ways, shapes, and forms to raise money to support veterans, military, and their families. We're no longer limited to using crepe paper poppies, and poppy labels no longer need to include the calendar year. How do these updated rules affect public awareness of the poppy? Auxiliary member can now distribute the poppy symbol in non-traditional displays — think poppy buttons, balloons, stickers, pencils, temporary tattoos, T-shirts, cookies, cupcakes, wreaths, Christmas decorations, notecards — all fun ways to share the poppy story and significance so that nonmembers can show their support for our military and veterans too. Many of these items are popular, inexpensive options to produce, and they give members flexibility to link the poppy item to the occasion.

What about those who make the traditional artificial/paper poppies? How do the Legion's revised rules affect production? The new rules still state a preference that poppies or poppy items be handmade by veterans. But since many parts of the country have a shortage of veterans available to make the traditional paper poppies, artificial poppies can now be assembled by unit members and volunteers. Consider holding a poppy-making event for your Junior members! Remember: Only veterans or those serving in the military can be paid to make the traditional poppies.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why did The American Legion adopt its May 2013 and May 2014 Poppy Resolutions? What's the background and rationale?

A: Over the years, Auxiliary National Headquarters staff have researched and explored using different vendors and materials for poppy kits, but the options available had always been very limited given the restrictions of the previous Auxiliary Poppy Program resolutions and the limited number of vendors offering solutions. Departments have long been reporting that fewer veterans are available to make poppies, and that younger veterans generally are not interested in making poppies. Other departments have reported that veterans are willing to make poppies, but that they did not reside in areas where the Auxiliary has poppy production. As of 2013, only half of ALA departments had programs in place to coordinate the production of veteran-made poppies.

The American Legion Internal Affairs Commission submitted Resolution No. 20, adopted in May 2013, in response to a reported shortage of veteran-made paper poppies which the Legion buys from departments or units and sells through Emblem Sales to other members for distribution. Other significant obstacles facing departments include

- a) quality issues with poppy kits — from limited availability of the red crepe paper produced in China that the kit maker imports;
- b) that fewer veterans are able and willing to make the crepe paper poppies;
- c) that departments have trouble getting Legion Family members to commit the time needed to oversee poppy production for their department; and
- d) fewer members participate in distributing the paper poppies.

In 2014, American Legion Resolution No. 3 was passed to allow American Legion Family members to use Poppy Funds to purchase poppy kits and supplies for making symbolic poppies and poppy items.

Q: How do The American Legion's updated Poppy Program rules affect the American Legion Auxiliary, and what is the Auxiliary doing to address the updated rules?

A: The new Legion Poppy Program rules still require that poppies or poppy items be made by veterans when possible, but when veterans are not available or willing to make poppies, poppies or poppy items can be commercially made or made by volunteers. Poppy flowers can now be made from any material, and other poppy items can now also be produced for distribution to raise funds for the Poppy Program.

Q: How do the American Legion Poppy Program rules impact existing Auxiliary or department poppy resolutions?

A: The American Legion Auxiliary exists to support the Legion, so any Auxiliary poppy resolutions that are in conflict with the Legion's 2013 and 2014 poppy resolutions are no longer valid. The new Legion resolutions supersede all previous Legion and Auxiliary Poppy Program resolutions. The national organization also officially removed all obsolete Auxiliary poppy resolutions

Q: Do the updated Legion Poppy Program rules change who can make poppies?

A: Yes, the new rules broaden who can make poppies; however, the resolution clearly states all efforts [should] be made to manufacture the poppies or poppy symbol items by veterans first, but in the event demand is greater than this supply source, use of a commercial vendor who conforms with the restrictions on the use of The American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary name and emblem may be used. It is now an option for volunteers to make poppies, or for commercial vendors to make poppies or poppy items that conform with the proper use of the names and emblems of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary.

Q: Can American Legion Auxiliary members make poppies?

A: Yes, Auxiliary volunteers may now make poppies if it is necessary due to a shortage of veteran poppy makers, but Auxiliary volunteers are not to be paid. If poppies are not made by veterans, the label

should not state "Handmade by Veterans." Members have also sent photos of iced cookies and tiny red spritz cookies with a chocolate chip in the center. The possibilities are endless.

Q: What types of material in addition to the traditional red crepe paper can be used to make poppies?

A: For many years, the Illinois American Legion has used a fabric poppy manufactured by a veteran-owned business. This poppy looks different than the traditional Auxiliary red crepe paper poppy, but it is attractive, conforms to the Legion's specifications, and it is easy to assemble. The new Legion Poppy Program rules also state that items other than the crepe paper poppy can be made for distribution to promote and raise funds for the Poppy Program. See the ALA blog at ALAforVeterans.wordpress.com for information on poppy craft ideas.

Q: Can Auxiliary departments print their own poppy labels?

A: Yes, but only if the labels conform to emblem use guidelines and standards. The new labels are available through Emblem Sales.

Q: Can we still print and use dated labels since veterans make our crepe paper poppies?

A: Yes. There is a template for the traditional poppy label that includes the year. It is available on the national ALA website at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Q: Will we have to get approval each year from ALA National Headquarters for poppy items we distribute?

A: It depends. There are two types of poppy items — branded and nonbranded: Branded items are those that include the ALA emblem. Use of this image and any other poppy graphic design that incorporates the ALA emblem requires approval from the national secretary, the same as any other permission needed to use the ALA emblem. Any graphic of the poppy should be used respectfully for the purpose of raising Poppy Funds through distribution by Legion Family members and friends. If using the copyrighted graphic, the quality of the image must be maintained, and there should be no alteration of the image, other than size. Note: Using poppies created from the crepe paper poppy kits sold by Emblem Sales does not require prior approval from the national organization. Use of the copyrighted image or any other poppy graphic design that incorporates the ALA emblem requires approval from the national secretary. Special orders placed through Emblem Sales using the Auxiliary's emblem do not require special approval, as Emblem Sales has responsibility for protecting Legion Family trademarks. Non-branded items are simply those that include images of red poppies, whether a license to use the image has been purchased or the image is offered free. Other than the In Memoriam ALA poppy image, the Auxiliary does not own other particular poppy images, so approval from National Headquarters is not necessary. The poppy image should always be red since it symbolizes the blood sacrificed for our freedom, but previous rules governing the number of petals and leaves no longer apply.

Q: Who is considered part of "a veteran's family"? Can Poppy Funds be spent to assist family members who do not live with the veteran? What if the veteran is deceased?

A: When reference is made to "veterans and their family," it means immediate family and dependents. Immediate family consists of wife, husband, daughter, and son who live with the veteran. If a grandchild lives with the veteran, that child could be considered immediate family. A case can be made for a sibling or parent who lives with and is caring for the veteran.

Remember: Poppy Funds are to help veterans and their families and active-duty military and their families where financial and medical need is evident. If the veteran is deceased, then Poppy Funds cannot be used for his/her family. In such circumstances, other avenues to pursue include department funds, special Auxiliary or Legion Family fundraising projects, or, if applicable, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund. Poppy money cannot be used for a family member who does not live with the veteran.

Q: Can Poppy money be used for scholarships?

A: The Legion set forth five criteria for the use of poppy funds:

1. For the rehabilitation of veterans honorably discharged from the United States Armed Forces after April 6, 1917;
2. For the welfare of the families of veterans of the above named period;
3. For the rehabilitation of hospitalized military service personnel returning home and awaiting discharge who require treatment in service hospitals;
4. For the welfare of veterans, active military personnel, and the families of veterans and active military personnel of the above named period where financial and medical need is evident or;
5. For the purpose of poppy kits and supplies used to make symbolic poppies and poppy items that will be distributed for donations to the Poppy Fund.

Therefore, scholarships (or funds to aid with higher education) would have to be for a veteran or their immediate family member who demonstrates an immediate financial need. For example, if a unit is met with a situation in which a student meets Poppy Fund eligibility and demonstrates a financial need (e.g., delay in delivery of post 9/11 GI Bill funding impacting their academics), the unit may decide to use Poppy Funds to assist the student. If units wish to create their own scholarship(s) as a way to use their Poppy Funds, please keep in mind the criteria that must be met by recipients in order to stay within the guidelines for proper usage.

Q: Are there commonly requested examples of how the money cannot be used?

A: Poppy Funds CANNOT be used for:

1. Any general operating fund of a department, unit, or post.
2. Any community service project that does not strictly benefit the welfare of an individual veteran/military servicemember or the welfare of his/her family.
3. General maintenance, beautification, or improvement projects of American Legion or Auxiliary facilities, including adding ramp(s) to a post home.
4. Investments, even those that would bring profit to the unit or post.
5. POW/MIA programs.
6. Memberships, including other veteran support organizations such as Gold Star Mothers.
7. Contributions to, or payouts from, the Auxiliary Emergency Fund.
8. ALA Girls State/ALA Girls Nation fees.
9. Flags or flagpoles.
10. Scholarships which do not restrict eligibility solely to military servicemembers or their children, or where financial need is not evident.
11. Mileage, travel, or lodging expenses; registration of conference fees; or costs incurred by a person – including ALA members, volunteers, and staff to attend any meeting, conference or event, even if it is about veterans, military, or any other topic.
12. Attire or uniforms used by volunteers or staff in promoting or conducting ALA program activity or business.

Use of Poppy Funds is allowable for care packages only when it is for a welfare need (such as first aid topical treatment or vital hygiene items), as opposed to a comfort need, and not comfort/leisure items (such as baked goods or books).