

# **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

## **Sophia Dmoch, Chair**

It's been an honor and a privilege to serve as your membership chair this past year under Department Commander Dan Channel's leadership and Team Channel. I sincerely thank him for this opportunity and appointment. Team Channel did an excellent job focusing on their roles as the membership experts throughout their districts.

As of April 16, 2026, our department reported 27,364 members, representing 91.52% of the 2026 target of 29,900. Our retention rate stands at 85.17%. We are ranked 34th nationally among 55 departments and seventh in the Northeast. Unfortunately, we have only achieved four of our target goals and are unlikely to reach our final goal of 100 percent by May 13, 2026. What does this mean? It suggests that posts relied solely on their current membership rosters to renew members and did not actively pursue outreach opportunities within their communities.

If we continue at this rate, our membership will keep shrinking each year, making it even harder for posts to sustain their programs. As of September 30, 2024, there were 295,749 veterans living in New Jersey, but we still can't reach our yearly goal, which is significantly lower than the actual number of veterans in our state. We need to think outside the box and contact our team for assistance.

Does membership ever stop? The answer is "NO." Although we won't reach our final goal by May 13, please continue processing memberships until the end of June, so our numbers look good by the time of the National Convention. Can we make 100 percent by June 30? Absolutely, if we pick up those phones, hit the streets, and use your elevator speech to explain why you should belong to The American Legion.

Remember, during the October 18, 2025 DEC meeting, we approved and voted to increase our department membership dues, effective July 1, 2026. The membership per capita will rise by \$5.00 for the 2027 membership year. The breakdown is \$23.50 for National and \$16.50 to the Department. The Department of New Jersey had one of the lowest per capita rates in the nation. This gave all posts ample time to notify their members before receiving their post data report, enabling them to raise their current dues as needed. The minimum amount that must be sent to the department starting July 1, 2026, is \$40.00. If your post data report did not reflect at least \$40.00, it was corrected.

Your posts should have received the National Strategic Plan for membership via email from either your County Commander or your County Adjutant. This plan outlines the overall objective to progressively increase membership over the next five years and beyond using the following strategies: Be The One; Training/Education/Leadership Development; Communication; Post Development and Revitalization; Membership Recruiting & Retention; and Community

Engagement. You don't have to do everything but start developing a plan based on the National Strategic Plan. How can you implement some of the strategies?

It's also that time again for CPRs submission. Last year, five counties submitted all their CPRs. What's the importance of your CPR? It shows everyone all the great work your post is doing, including your SAL and Riders. The data extracted from these reports empowers our national leadership to advocate for veterans, service members and their families with factual information, strengthening their testimony to Congress.

The report is live on MyLegion.org. I will track every CPR for the department and issue certificates again for 100 percent submission by a county. The fillable PDF for this year's CPR has been posted to legion.org and is now available for download. You can check the updated forms on the following page: CPR: <https://www.legion.org/information-center/in-the-media/publications/organization-membership-awards>

To the department office staff—Adjutant Baker, Tammie, Lois, Tricia, and Judith: You ALL play a vital role in ensuring we have the information and guidance needed to assist our leadership, veterans and posts. I could not do my job without your help. Your unwavering dedication to our organization does not go unnoticed.

For further assistance or training needs, don't hesitate to contact the Membership Team. Upon request, we will come to you. We are making a collaborative effort to support every post through additional workshops and district revitalizations. Additional resources are available on mylegion.org, and materials can be obtained from emblemsales.org.

In closing, remember: BE THE ONE to break the chain of veteran suicide

- ❖ To ask a veteran in your life how they are doing.
- ❖ To listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- ❖ To reach out when a veteran is struggling.

It takes just one person to help save a veteran's life. You can be the one. To learn more, go to [www.betheone.org](http://www.betheone.org)