



## Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Membership –December 2025 - January 2026

[www.vfwauxmi.org](http://www.vfwauxmi.org)

Facebook Page: Membership- Michigan

**National Theme: *From Sea to Shining Sea Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free***  
**Department Theme: *We Don't Know Them All, But We Owe Them All***

From sea to shining sea...let the Michigan VFW Dept Auxiliary be the lighthouse in the safe harbor. A safe harbor for our veterans and their families to go to when needing help, asking questions, or just wanting to come and talk.

Each one of us joined because of our own, personal "Why". While the reason **you** joined is likely different from others, but at the core of your "why" likely is that all of us wanted to honor our Veterans. There are numerous ways in which we support our Veterans. **We** write letters to our congressmen, **we** visit them in the VA Hospitals, **we** march in parades, **we** celebrate patriotic holidays; just to name a few.

But, let's take a moment and reflect. **Who** would do all that work for our Veterans if our organization, the VFW Auxiliary, wasn't around to do all these things?

Let me lay out some eye-opening statistics for the VFW Auxiliary. This information comes from Mr. Michael Maruszak, the Membership National Ambassador:

- There are 3,279 VFW Auxiliaries. As an FYI, there are 41 Auxiliaries in that number have yet to be officially removed from the total.
- 310 Auxiliaries are at 100% membership.
- 2,040 Auxiliaries have between 70% to 90% membership.
- 647 Auxiliaries have between 50% to 60% membership.
- 241 Auxiliaries have between 10% to 40% membership.
- Eight, **8** Auxiliaries are in **single digits** with membership!

Hearing these statistics was like a slap in the face to me. Scary, concerning, alarming. These statistics simply underscore the need for **us**, the members of the VFW Auxiliary, to band together as a unified team so we can grow our organization. I think we would all agree that we want the VFW Auxiliary to be here well into the next century.

Not only is attracting new members into the organization critical, we also need to focus on **retaining** the members we already have. You worked hard on recruiting them, now we can't let them simply walk out the door. Like the Fresnel lens in the lighthouse focuses the light so it can be seen for **miles** away, we need to focus and actively work to keep our members in the fold.



Show your hard-working members how you appreciate them:

1. Maybe spotlight a member on social media.
2. Send hand written thank you notes via mail.
3. Thank them publicly...at your meetings.
4. Small gift...showing gratitude goes a long way.
5. Bring in cake or cupcakes to celebrate events...birthdays, anniversaries, promotion at work...etc.



Above all, **listen** to your members. If you practice basic “active listening” skills (like paying attention, asking questions, paraphrasing, and so on), it shows the members that you care enough to honestly listen. Of course, we all need to be mindful of the words that we choose to use. Remember that there’s “nonverbal communication” happening when you communicate and that is far more than “words”, however. Did you realize that about 95% of the message you deliver in communication comes from your tone **and** from your body language?!

Make sure your members have a clear sense of the long-range goals of your Auxiliary. Keep them updated on the progress and always ask for their feedback. After all, it’s **their** Auxiliary too, not just the Presidents or Line Officers. Let them “take the wheel” with new ideas. Encourage the new members to step up and give their opinions.

A great team is like a puzzle where every piece is important. All of us are a team, we are all just a piece of a puzzle that makes all of us important. Our Auxiliary needs all the pieces to work together to recruit and retain members for this organization if we want to be here another hundred years for our Veterans.



Please continue to keep working on converting those Annual members to Life members. Many have been converted so far, which makes the treasurer’s job a lot easier by not sending dues notices. Remember...the per diem will be going up to \$10 beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> for Department. National already raised theirs.



Hard to believe we’re already racing toward 2026! To each one of you, I wish you a very, **very** Merry Christmas and a joyous 2026! I hope you have a holiday season spent with family, friends, and, of course **presents**! Lots and lots of presents.

God Bless you, our Veterans and the United States of America.

Marian Belaire  
17384 Doris St.  
Livonia, MI 48152  
248.345.2442  
[mbelairemvf@yahoo.com](mailto:mbelairemvf@yahoo.com)

