**LEADING CANDIDATE**

**Background**

In March of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Legion National Organization, through a resolution duly passed by the NEC, allowed all elected Officers to remain in their current positions, if able, for another year. Most of the officers of the National Organization remained in office; a few did not.

The American Legion Department of Arizona concurred with National’s decision and in April of 2020 the DEC passed its own resolution consistent with National’s. The DEC also recognized that this would be an opportune time to change the process of how our Department Commander is elected and adopted selection procedures similar to those used by the National Organization. The new procedures required (1) an expansion of the role of the Committee on Committees, (2) the creation of the Credentials Committee (a sub-committee of the Committee on Committees), (3) the creation of a Leading Candidate position, and (4) new rules regarding the submission of a candidate’s qualifications for review and consideration for Leading Candidate.

**Committee Responsibilities**

Committee responsibilities are as follows.

*Committee of Committee:*

The role of the Committee on Committees was expanded to provide for oversight of the Credentials Committee and the Leading Candidate selection process.

The Committee of Committees consists of five Past Department Commanders. This standing committee refreshes it membership every year. Each year preceding Department Convention, one member of the committee (the one with the longest tenure) will roll off and the immediate Past Department Commander then becomes the Chair of the committee for the ensuing year.

Members of the Committee of Committees will receive the Credentials Committees' recommendation for Lead Candidate from the Area Credentials Committee Chairmen. The recommended Candidate(s) will receive a notification from the Chair, and a final interview will be scheduled. The committee will evaluate each of the selections and make a final determination of the Leading Candidate.

*Credentials Committee:*

The role of the Credentials Committee is to address and assist in the selection process of the Lead Candidate.

The committee shall not, however, solicit Candidates. This committee consists of three members from Areas A, B, and C who are responsible for (1) prosecuting the new rules, and (2) overseeing the requirements for applying for selection as Leading Candidate; and subsequently running for Department Commander the following year. Each prospective applicant’s resume, endorsements, awards, and other documents shall be delivered to the appropriate Credentials Committee for evaluation. Individual interviews are then conducted with each applicant and evaluated. The Credentials Committee Chairman may, or may not, recommend a Candidate to the Committee on Committees based on their committee’s overall assessment of their applicant’s qualifications.

***Application Process***

Procedures for submission of applications for the Lead Candidate were developed. They are as follows.

*The Candidate:*

Applicants shall contact his/her Area Credentials Committee Chairman and determine where to submit their resume, endorsements, awards, and other essential documents. The candidate must have completed their interview and submitted any documents to the Chairman no later than March 1stof the election year. The Area Credentials Committee Chairmen are as follows:

Area A Chairman: District 2 CMDR Gary Smith

 Phone (214) 431-2187

 **Email:** gary0414@sbcglobal.net

 *Members*: Past Vice CMDR Manny Beltran

 Post Adjutant Frank Hirril

Area B Chairman: District 11 CMDR Roberta Kimelton

 Phone: (623) 738-9755

 Email: roberta1552@msn.com

 ***Members*: District 12 CMDR Mike Simon**

 **Vice CMDR Jesse Fernandez**

Area C Chairman: Vice CMDR John Timmons

 Phone: (928) 864-9774

 **Email:** gimpyoldgolfer@gmail.com

 ***Members*: Post CMDR Ben Gomez**

 **District 7 CMDR, Luis Alvarez**

***Role of the Leading Candidate***

The legionnaire selected as Leading Candidate is also appointed as the Department Membership Director for the following year to support the Department Commander elected at June Convention. As Membership Director, the Leading Candidate will often travel with the Department Commander during his/her year in office. The Membership Director is responsible for coordinating with Department, Area, Districts, and Post Officers with membership recruitment, revitalizations, DMS transfers, transfers from Post 100, and retention. During the year as Membership Director, you will also learn about a Department Commander's duties and responsibilities.

As Membership Director, campaigning for Department Commander is not allowed while on official business. However, if after attending meetings with the Department Commander or while conducting District and/or Post visitations, you are asked a question(s) concerning your upcoming candidacy for Department Commander you may respond to the question(s).

Keep in mind that there is only one Commander of the Department of Arizona; as Leading Candidate, it is not you.

***Campaigning***

While not on official business with the Department Commander (i.e., while on your own personal time) you may campaign for the office of Department Commander for the subsequent year. This is allowed because other Legion members in good standing are ***not*** precluded from announcing their candidacy and campaigning for Department Commander without having an endorsement from the Committee on Committees. Remember, while campaigning you must wear your blue Legion cover.

It can be expensive to campaign for Department Commander. Everyone agrees that the monetary expense to run for Department Commander can be prohibitive and may disadvantage some members running for the position.

The Department encourages individual Campaign Hospitality Rooms. Candidates are also encouraged to combine Hospitality Rooms with other like-minded candidates at Department Conventions and Fall Conferences to help reduce the overall expense of campaigning.

***How to Prepare a Resume***

The Committees decided to allow applicants for Leading Candidate to include leadership positions in The American Legion and any information from work in the military, civilian organizations, and other Veterans Service Organizations on their resumes.

Once your resume is completed, you will be able to enter the number of years you performed those duties in each of the boxes, as appropriate, in the Credentials Worksheet (see below). Experience gained in The American Legion (elected Offices that your served in and/or Committees or Programs that you volunteered on) as well as any information from work in the military, civilian organizations, and other Veterans Service Organizations is accommodated on the Worksheet. You will find the Lead Candidate Work Sheet useful upon completion of your resume.

***Candidate Information***

A resume should contain the following key subject areas.

* Professional Summary
* Skills
* Awards
* Education
* Work History

Resumes should also include military and civilian training that would enhance all individuals' backgrounds and leadership skills.

* Military Training and positions held that would further supplement qualifications that may pertain to any American Legion Position
* Civilian Training/Education
* Civilian Accomplishments
* Years as a Legion Member and leadership positions held
* Positions of leadership in other Veterans or private organizations

Membership will enhance an individual's background in supporting veterans and provide a multitude of management experiences that will strengthen an applicant's knowledge to lead and manage a large American Legion Organization, The Department of Arizona.

Note: If submitting Letters of endorsement from organizations or individuals, make each an attachment to your resume.

**The Leading Candidate Credentials Worksheet is included on the following pages!**

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| **Leading Candidate Credentials Worksheet** |
| **Offices Held** | **Post** | **District** | **Department** | **National** | **Other VSOs** |
| Vice Commander |   |   |   |   |   |
| Commander |   |   |   |   |   |
| Vice Commander |   |   |   |   |   |
| Finance Officer |   |   |   |   |   |
| Executive Committee |   |   |   |   |   |
| Judge Advocate |   |   |   |   |   |
| Adjutant |   |   |   |   |   |
| Sergeant at Arms |   |   |   |   |   |
| Service Officer |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Committee Service** | **Post** | **District** | **Department** | **National** | **Other VSOs** |
| **Americanism Pillar** |   |   |   |   |   |
| Baseball |   |   |   |   |   |
| Scouting |   |   |   |   |   |
| Boys State |   |   |   |   |   |
| JSSP |   |   |   |   |   |
| ALLECA |   |   |   |   |   |
| Public Relations |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Children & Youth Pillar** |   |   |   |   |   |
| Education & Scholarships |   |   |   |   |   |
| Oratorical |   |   |   |   |   |
| **National Security Pillar** |   |   |   |   |   |
| P.O.W./M.I.A. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Emergency Response Team |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Veterans Affairs Pillar** |   |   |   |   |   |
| Uniform Group and Contest |   |   |   |   |   |
| Legislative |   |   |   |   |   |
| Rehabilitation |   |   |   |   |   |
| Employment |   |   |   |   |   |
| Veterans Cemetery |   |   |   |   |   |
| V.A.M.C. Representative |   |   |   |   |   |
| V.A.V.S. Liaison |   |   |   |   |   |
| Homeless Veterans |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Standing Committees** |   |   |   |   |   |
| Convention & Conference |   |   |   |   |   |
| Trophy & Awards |   |   |   |   |   |
| Constitution & Bylaws |   |   |   |   |   |
| Membership & Post Activities |   |   |   |   |   |
| Legion College |   |   |   |   |   |
| Club Committee |   |   |   |   |   |
| Finance Committee |   |   |   |   |   |
| Public Relations |   |   |   |   |   |
| Bingo |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Training Completed** | **Post** | **District** | **Department** | **National** | **Other VSOs** |
| Basic Training/L.E.A.D. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Department Legion College |   |   |   |   |   |
| National Legion College |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Endorsements** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Committee Service** | **Mil Jobs** | **Mil Orgs** | **Civ jobs        Civ Orgs** |
| ENTER CHECK MARK |
| **Americanism Pillar** |   |   |   |   |
| Baseball |   |   |   |   |
| Scouting |   |   |   |   |
| Boys State |   |   |   |   |
| JSSP |   |   |   |   |
| ALLECA |   |   |   |   |
| Public Relations |   |   |   |   |
| **Children & Youth Pillar** |   |   |   |   |
| Education & Scholarships |   |   |   |   |
| Oratorical |   |   |   |   |
| **National Security Pillar** |   |   |   |   |
| P.O.W./M.I.A. |   |   |   |   |
| Emergency Response Team |   |   |   |   |
| **Veterans Affairs Pillar** |   |   |   |   |
| Uniform Group and Contest |   |   |   |   |
| Legislative |   |   |   |   |
| Rehabilitation |   |   |   |   |
| Employment |   |   |   |   |
| Veterans Cemetery |   |   |   |   |
| V.A.M.C. Representative |   |   |   |   |
| V.A.V.S. Liaison |   |   |   |   |
| Homeless Veterans |   |   |   |   |
| **Standing Committees** |   |   |   |   |
| Convention & Conference |   |   |   |   |
| Trophy & Awards |   |   |   |   |
| Constitution & Bylaws |   |   |   |   |
| Membership & Post Activities |   |   |   |   |
| Legion College |   |   |   |   |
| Club Committee |   |   |   |   |
| Finance Committee |   |   |   |   |
| Public Relations |   |   |   |   |
| Bingo |   |   |   |   |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Related Offices Held** | **Mil Jobs** | **Mil Orgs** | **Civ Jobs** | **Civ Orgs** |
| ENTER CHECK MARK |
| Commander |  |  |  |  |
| Executive Committee |  |  |  |  |
| Adjutant |  |  |  |  |
| Service Officer |  |  |  |  |
| Assistant Chaplain  |  |  |  |  |
| Public Relations |  |  |  |  |
| Education/Scholarships |  |  |  |  |
| Emergency Response |  |  |  |  |
| Legislative |  |  |  |  |
| Club Committee |  |  |  |  |
| Bingo |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

***Possible Interview Questions for Committee on Committees***

Have you discussed your desire to run for Department Commander with your spouse/family? Are they supportive of your decision to run for Department Commander?

Are you aware of the Travel Requirements?

Do you have a mentor in The American Legion? If so, who?

How much participation do you provide in your Post?

How much have you participated in at the District and Department level?

Where do you see the American Legion in the future?