



NAVY LEAGUE  
2021-2023 GUIDANCE



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*Thanks to the dedication of our members, we have made great strides over the past several years and are well positioned to continue strengthening the Navy League's influence within the maritime space. This has provided us with the continued ability to successfully execute our mission: educate the American population on the need of a strong maritime force; advocate locally and on Capitol Hill for our sea services; and support sea service members and their families, including U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, NJROTC and Young Marines.*

## ORIENTATION AND INTENT

On May 11, 2020, volunteer leadership established an ad hoc committee for strategic planning. This committee asked our volunteers to share with us the areas where they felt the Navy League should focus its efforts to better enable our members in the field to carry out the mission of the organization. This process was designed to be for the field, by the field.

The intent of the Navy League 2021-2023 Guidance is to build on this strategic initiative. We will do this by listening to our membership and focusing on the areas that currently require the most attention during this period. We will do this to ensure the Navy League remains America's preeminent sea service support organization, as we continue to position the Navy League of the United States (NLUS) as the preeminent Military Service Organization (MSO) in the nation.

## PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

1. Navy League Mission: Educate, Advocate and Support
2. Communication
3. Membership Recruitment and Retention
4. Council Success
5. Developing Future Leaders
6. Supporting Youth Programs/Sea Cadets
7. Diversity and Inclusion

We recognize that these focus areas are not all-encompassing and that there are other areas that also require attention. However, we learned from our past that when everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. Therefore, this strategic guidance is not long and overly comprehensive, but it is concise, easily absorbed and executable by every member of the Navy League.

National headquarters' primary mission is to support our members in the field. In doing so, national headquarters has developed a separate strategy in parallel that will fully support the focus area within this guidance and the other requirements necessary to support our membership.

We are proud to publish the Navy League 2021-2023 Guidance. This guidance is designed to facilitate Navy Leaguers' focus in areas that will contribute to making us strong and better able to support and advocate for the sea services. I encourage each of you read the guidance. If you have any questions or ideas that will help others, do not hesitate to call your region president and staff vice president for council support.

I look forward to meeting and interacting with you when I visit your regions.



David Reilly  
National President  
Navy League of the United States



## NAVY LEAGUE'S MISSION: Educate, Advocate and Support

### General Overview

The three pillars of the Navy League's mission overlap, underpin and reinforce one another to form an effective and all-encompassing program for citizen action in service to the nation's maritime forces. It is imperative that leadership see each pillar as dependent on the others rather than autonomous.

### Education

Our educational endeavors promote the value, importance and contributions of the sea services. These operations lay the foundation for more specific advocacy efforts by providing our members with the background, context and current strategic environment of the sea services. This allows membership to accurately articulate the challenges facing America as a maritime nation while reinforcing the necessity of our mission. NLUS's educational products also provide exposure to the sea services for members of the public who have little contact with them and little understanding of the work they do or the opportunities that they provide.

### NLUS educational tools:

- **Seapower:** With a circulation of 40,000, Seapower magazine provides Navy League members, active-duty military, Congress and the maritime industry with relevant and up-to-date news about our maritime services and NLUS activities. The magazine is the main educational outreach tool of the Navy League to provide its members and the public with information on the sea services' latest needs.
- **Navy League Learns webinars:** This important initiative provides a virtual platform so Navy League members and those that care about the sea services can get free access to thought-leaders and decision-makers in the maritime community.
- **Sea-Air-Space:** As the Navy League's authoritative annual event, Sea-Air-Space is a global maritime exposition and provides tremendous exposure to NLUS's educational efforts, ranging from panel discussions to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) events and beyond.

- **Special Topic Breakfast series:** Held in the Navy League headquarters building, these corporate member benefit events provide an avenue for education and networking for the sea services industry and leadership in the Washington, D.C., region.

### Council educational efforts:

- **Council meeting speakers:** Councils routinely invite active-duty and retired sea service members, or other subject matter experts, to speak at their council meetings on matters pertinent to the sea services.
- **Educators at Sea:** As a means of ensuring that every region of the country has exposure to the opportunities provided by the sea services, Educators at Sea allows teachers, principals and other educators to spend time aboard naval vessels to better understand how their students might benefit from seeking a career in the sea services.

### Advocacy

Our Legislative Affairs program is a vehicle through which members' efforts can be channeled into direct advocacy in support of the most pressing needs of the sea services. Its core intent is the simplification of legislative advocacy for our members, both in terms of providing clear policy solutions to complex challenges and in terms of ensuring that every volunteer action is made as easy and user-friendly as possible. The supplemental intent is to coordinate volunteer actions in a manner that provides maximum impact on congressional decision-making, leveraging a passionate volunteer base into a formidable grassroots movement. The means by which we conduct advocacy operations are as follows:

- **Voice to Congress campaigns:** Utilizing the Quorum software platform, we can provide the easiest possible method for volunteers to contact their member of Congress about a particular issue. Voice to Congress campaigns offer prewritten and targeted emails that identify a volunteer's elected officials based on their login information. With the click of a button, they can send a form-based email to multiple officials based on the parameters set in the program.
- **Direct meetings with members of Congress:** The core of legislative affairs training is focused on presenting sea services issues to members of Congress, building and maintain-



ing relationships with members of Congress, and aiding congressional offices by helping with academy board selections.

- **Caucus events:** We support multiple caucuses, most notably the Shipbuilding Caucus and the Navy-Marine Corps Caucus. It should be noted that caucus events are different from direct advocacy. We do not present our “asks” during caucus events. These events are beneficial to our efforts in the sense that influential speakers can discuss our general issues, while our team gets to interact with the members of Congress in attendance.
- **Biennial Fly-In:** The Fly-In not only galvanizes our volunteer base, but it also provides the greatest number of meetings in the shortest span of time. This broadcasts the Navy League name and our primary asks for the sea services across both chambers of Congress, and our message resonates in subsequent budget hearings.

### **Support**

Our support operations provide the most direct mission impact, connecting our members with the people of the sea services in an unambiguous and tangible manner. These efforts provide a clear and quantifiable metric to measure the benefits that our councils provide to the sea services. Our members can clearly see the results of their actions and, therefore, support operations are crucial to member motivation, morale and mobilization. While each council provides different support activities dependent on size and resources, all can contribute in some manner or capacity. These efforts can be divided into the following categories based on motives of member involvement:

#### **Youth programs: Impacting the next generation of the sea services.**

- Local councils support Sea Cadets, NJROTC, MCJROTC, Young Marines and other programs to ensure that young people have exposure to the opportunities provided by service in our nation’s maritime forces.

#### **STEM grants and scholarships:**

- Provide STEM exposure and educational opportunities in the maritime domain for America’s youth.
- Award ceremonies, ship commissionings, birthday balls.
- Local councils present awards, participate in ship commissionings and celebrate the Navy’s

birthday, building esprit de corps and comradeship for our sea services members and their families.

#### **Unit adoptions:**

- Local councils assist our people in the sea services by providing direct support to active duty, reserve units and their families.

#### **Naval Services FamilyLine:**

- Support provided for naval spouses.

## **Member Guidance**

### **Develop**

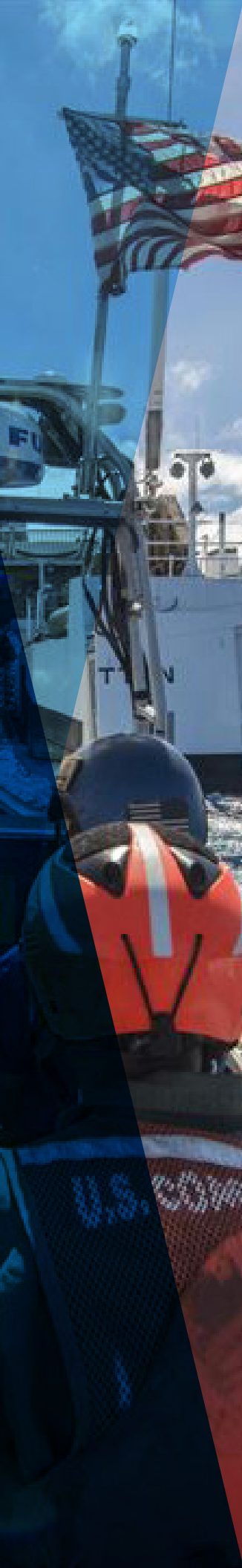
Execute the three pillars of the Navy League’s mission while seeking opportunities to improve. Lessons learned and best practices should be solicited from our successful councils and regions, thoroughly analyzed, and shared with those councils most in need of support. Just as the Navy League adapted and innovated to meet the challenges of operating during a pandemic, our councils are constantly modernizing and overhauling their processes to best achieve the three pillars based on unique circumstances. Any opportunities to better conserve resources, attract members, disseminate educational materials, train legislative advocates or bolster support operations must be considered, shared and, where appropriate, implemented. The three pillars of our mission will never change, but the methods for executing them are constantly evolving.

### **Motivate**

As the three pillars are implemented and improved, every member’s potential must be realized through motivation. These select few have stepped up to support our sea services at a time of increasing threat to the United States and to our people serving on the seas. We must ensure every member and council understands the importance of their work. They are part of something much larger than themselves and even much larger than their councils: They are defenders of the American way of life. This foundational premise has provided a sense of purpose for over a century, and it should not be lost on any members now as we face an era of great power competition in which the future of our nation will be determined to a substantial extent by the strength and capabilities of our sea services.

### **Perpetuate**

We want to instill a long-term mindset in our Navy League leaders. Every leader must remember that this organization and its mission



have been in existence for generations and will continue to grow and thrive for generations to come. These three pillars have always served as our guiding light, but their implementation has changed over time. Leaders are encouraged to consider the needs of their councils and regions far beyond their own tenure. Consider each of the three pillars, and evaluate your council's ability to achieve them in the years to come. Identify weaknesses or areas for improvement. Work with headquarters to develop a long-term plan for overcoming these deficiencies to ensure that your council and your region can achieve their mission long into the future.

## COMMUNICATION

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### General Overview

Even in the very best of organizations, communication can be challenging. Consistency and delivering the right information at the right time is key to our communication efforts. Whether it be between our councils sharing best practices, from volunteer leadership throughout the many tiers of our organization, or between headquarters and the field, getting communication right is vital to our overall success.

### Member Guidance

Building on the precedent set by the 2020 National President's Guidance, it is important that we strive to maintain the sequence of communication that was outlined. It is important that information flows both from the top down and bottom up throughout the appropriate organizational structure. For example, a council issue that concerns the national level should be conveyed to the area president, then region president and then onto the national level, ensuring all parties are working in lock step to properly relay information as required, keeping members and leadership informed at all levels.

Keeping all members of the Navy League well-informed is each of our responsibilities and will benefit our organization. Below are details on tools we currently have in our arsenal to foster communication.

#### *Tools and Methods to Communicate*

- Seapower magazine (Useful for sharing council-, region- and committee-level information. Email [communications@navyleague.org](mailto:communications@navyleague.org) to submit.)

- Seapower website (Useful for informing councils of sea services news)
- Navy League social media sites (Useful for sharing council-related news to our members and those interested in our mission. Email [communications@navyleague.org](mailto:communications@navyleague.org) to submit.)
- Anchor Up newsletter (Used to spread information on deadlines and upcoming events from headquarters to volunteer leaders, including the executive committee; region, area and council presidents; and national delegates and national directors emeritus.)
- Connection's newsletter (Useful for sharing council-, region- and committee-level communication and headquarters news. Email [communications@navyleague.org](mailto:communications@navyleague.org) to submit.)
- Navy League website calendar (where to find information on upcoming events at the national and committee level)
- National president's email messages
- Council annual reports
- Headquarters' annual report
- Council newsletters
- Council meetings
- Council websites
- Council social media sites
- Various committee meetings
- Region meetings
- Region presidents committee meetings (monthly meeting of all the RPs, CEO and the national president to discuss important field matters relayed to the region presidents by area and council presidents)
- Executive Committee meetings (top-tier national leadership discussions)
- National Convention (all-member event)
- Board meetings

## MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

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### General Overview

It is the consensus of Navy League membership across the organization that recruitment and retention has become extraordinarily problematic. Membership is the life blood of the Navy



League. If the organization does not resolve this issue, the future of our institution is at significant risk. Membership recruitment and retention requires a multi-pronged approach. Both Navy League members and headquarters staff will play a critical role in this effort, but ultimately the local council experience is the most effective aspect of attracting and, more importantly, retaining new Navy League members.

Recently, the restrictive language prohibiting active-duty service members from joining the Navy League was removed from our bylaws. The NLUS was the only MSO that did not allow active duty to join its organization. This change presents an incredible opportunity to grow the Navy League's ranks and influence, but only if this change is intelligently and effectively implemented. A successful active-duty membership rollout plan will be carefully studied, discussed and initiated, optimizing our limited resources to ensure we maximize the promotion and effectiveness of this critical change in our organization. It is our hope that early introduction of the Navy League to our service members will not only gain their participation while in uniform, but also, more importantly, once the service member transitions out of the military.

## Member Guidance

### **Collaboration**

Develop a two-part collaborative strategy for marketing and soliciting new members:

- Headquarters will serve as the resource provider for national marketing campaigns. More specifically, marketing campaigns need to be developed for programs, such as active-duty, military spouse, diversity and standard membership, for example.
- Members should serve as face-to-face communicators who make contact and complete the onboarding process with new members who have signed up through the national marketing campaign. Members should also work to retain other members through continued council communication and meaningful local council activities.

### **Best Practices**

- To assist in improving retention, region presidents should ask councils that have a successful retention program to provide an outline on

what they are doing to retain members, so it can be shared across the Navy League.

- If this initiative is to be successful, it will require a reasonable amount of information sharing, interaction and recommendations by the region presidents.
- We have created a members-only Facebook group, where much of this information can be shared between members.

### **Sense of Purpose**

- Retention and engagement will rest on individual councils and their ability to connect with council members through meaningful activities that provide them with a sense of purpose. Getting your local membership engaged in local council activities is the best way to develop future council leaders and to grow your local council.
- Councils should be open to networking and connecting with other councils that were successful in membership retention.
- A well-designed succession and membership advancement program are important for council retention.

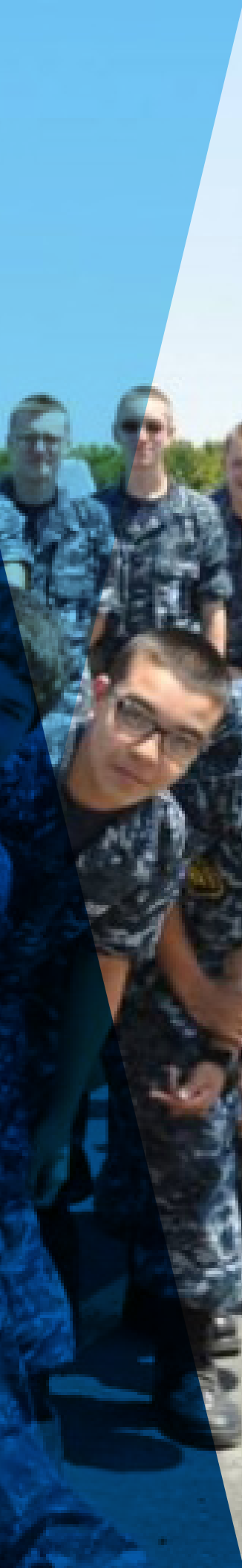
## COUNCIL SUCCESS

### **General Overview**

Our Navy League councils are the collective strength of our membership in any given geographic area. Without strong, viable councils, it is not possible to carry out the mission of the Navy League. Strategic leadership includes the ability to balance vision and execution. Effective leaders possess a strong ability to conceptualize far-reaching objectives, while still being able to take the necessary actions to execute on both long- and short-term goals. Creating a leadership strategy requires a systems approach to identify the qualifications and quantity of leaders needed across the Navy League. In addition, the strategy will include a thorough review of the leadership competencies needed to support the Navy League's culture, strategy and desired leadership style.

### **Member Guidance**

- The leadership of each council must first take responsibility and accountability for the viability of their council. Navy League councils operate with a great deal of independence and autonomy.



Each council is different, but each council should find an aspect of their local area to anchor their council to and leverage that aspect to ensure the growth and success of that council.

- Should a council have issues in a specific area, they should reach out to their area and region president, who can either facilitate information sharing between another council in that area that has overcome a similar problem or that area or region president should facilitate that interaction via headquarters with a council in another area that has overcome a similar challenge.
- Early identification and effective communication of council issues and region metrics is important to effective identification and resolution of problems. Area, region and national senior volunteer leadership all play an important role in this process to include:
  - The national president or national senior vice president will work alongside Field Services to investigate the challenges with councils within each region.
  - The national president or national senior vice president will present data to region presidents on region visits.
  - Region presidents will report data at region meetings.
  - Region presidents mentor area and/or council presidents where needed on council development.
  - While the same formula may not work in different areas of the country, it is still vital that our councils learn from each other some best practices to enhance each other in ways that have found proven success.

## DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

### General Overview

No organization can be successful without good leaders. It is important to recognize future talent early and provide these individuals with opportunities to grow and develop into senior leaders of the Navy League. It is the opinion of the Navy League membership that we need to invest more heavily in leadership mentoring.

## Member Guidance

### Program Development

The Navy League shall develop a clear program that will better assist in identifying, mentoring and training individual council members for council leadership roles. This process should motivate, educate and prepare members for future growth within their councils. This program should also have processes in place that develop and promote council leaders into region leadership positions and then into national leadership roles.

It is the responsibility of current leadership at the council, region and national level to identify, train and encourage future leaders to carry the Navy League torch.

- Developing future local council leaders is critical to the long-term success of each council.
- Local council leadership succession planning should always be part of the current leadership team's thinking.
- Encourage potential Navy League council and national leaders to attend National Convention and participate in Council Presidents Track.

## YOUTH PROGRAMS/ SEA CADETS

### General Overview

Recognizing the importance of youth development in securing our nation's future, the Navy League has a long tradition of supporting a full spectrum of youth development programs. At the national level, the Navy League provides annual funding opportunities to local council youth programs focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through its grant application process. It also remains a strategic partner with the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, by providing both financial and in-kind facilities for program support. The Sea Cadets are the official youth leadership development program of the U.S. Navy. The Sea Cadet's mission is to educate America's young men and women in a maritime tradition with hands-on, experiential training that occurs on naval bases and other military installations to imbue the highest ideals of honor, respect, service and commitment.





## Member Guidance

The strong and meaningful bond between the Navy League and the Sea Cadets is reinforced at the local level where Navy League regions and councils are engaged with Sea Cadet units while providing financial support and enabling access to training facilities. Navy League councils also support the Young Marines, Naval and Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training (JROTC) programs, and other youth organizations. Navy League councils work side-by-side with these organizations to educate our youth on teamwork, diligence, self-awareness, maritime and seafaring careers, history, and the security of our nation.

### New Opportunities

- We encourage exploring and seizing opportunities where Navy League councils can support America's youth and our sea services.
- We encourage local councils to apply for STEM funding through the Navy League national grant application process.

### Engagement

- We encourage graduating Sea Cadets and their families to remain engaged as volunteers and become new members of the Navy League.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

### General Overview

The sea services have made significant efforts in the last few decades to prioritize diversity and inclusion in their ranks. In a recent undertaking by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday, the Navy has focused its efforts into what it has termed Task Force One Navy.

In its guiding document, Task Force One Navy states, "Our Sailors are our asymmetric advantage in a complex and changing environment. ... Mission readiness is stronger when diverse strengths are used and differing perspectives are applied. By embracing inclusion and diversity ... in our day-to-day work and decisions at a fundamental level, we harness the creative power of our differences, putting forward actions and strategies that accelerate and enable our Navy's warfighting advantage."

The competitive advantage provided by America's diversity is not an intangible consideration. It is the catalyzing force responsible for improbable American victories starting from our own war for independence. Since that moment, America has been an unstoppable force in the world, and our ascendancy is due to that diversity in background and thought, compounding to create a sum greater than its parts. This foundational and transformative concept is America.

The Navy League recognizes the vital role that diversity plays in strengthening organizations, upending stagnant thinking, accelerating problem solving and creating competitive advantages. We recognize that people are our greatest resource and, as such, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we are not limiting our talent pool by overlooking any groups or populations within the sea services volunteer community. And we further recognize that we, as an organization, cannot authentically live our values and achieve our mission without a clear and actionable plan for addressing diversity and inclusion within our ranks.

It is imperative that the Navy League implement a whole-of-organization approach to achieving greater diversity and inclusion. The genesis of this effort will be the formation of an ad hoc committee on diversity and inclusion to be chaired by a trusted and respected leader from our volunteer ranks. This committee will develop a bold and transformative plan for the organization to make quantifiable changes in our diversity and inclusion efforts. This will include, but is not limited to, creating a diversity and inclusion statement, developing a diversity-centered outreach plan for our membership recruitment efforts, identifying ways to increase diversity in our publications and communications materials, providing a greater focus on diversity in our volunteer efforts and council events, and utilizing the educational aspect of our mission to more regularly highlight the service and sacrifice of diverse groups of American service members.

We are stronger, more effective and more innovative when our organization reflects the rich diversity of our nation that fosters respect, dignity and equal opportunity. We must continue to increase cultural collaboration and understanding, broaden our community outreach and strengthen our organizational support infrastructure now and in



the future. The sea services have already recognized the critical nature of diversity and inclusion in their future force structures, and we must do the same. These diverse backgrounds, experiences and ways of thinking are essential to optimal performance within the Navy League. Leveraging diversity ensures we maintain our competitive advantage and adaptability, and it will determine the difference between growth and decline within our organization's ranks over the decades to come.

## Member Guidance

### Input

Leadership will seek input from membership for recommendations on a diversity and inclusion statement. Leadership will work with membership and with the ad hoc committee to identify the most practical means of highlighting our diversity efforts in membership outreach, materials, events, etc.

### Develop

The Navy League should review, develop and update these statements to ensure they are relevant. The Navy League should also compile best practices, challenges and concerns, and other relevant developments from the volunteer ranks.

## SUMMARY

In order to complete or make progress in these focus areas, it is imperative that we work together to support and accomplish these initiatives. An organization without a guiding light can accomplish little. If we use this guidance as our compass, we will accomplish much. By doing so, we will heighten the solidity and collaboration between all Navy League members and achieve our mission to support America's sea services.

### To accomplish this, we will:

- Continue to ensure all our initiatives map back to one of our three pillars of our mission: educate, advocate and support.
- Build on a chain of communication with Navy League leadership, with region presidents providing the communication, support and training to council and area presidents and executive leadership providing information to region presidents to pass along to council and area presidents.
- Create greater opportunities for member retention and new memberships through continued emphasis on unit adoption and ship commissioning and other activities that provide an immediacy and sense of purpose to our membership.
- Effectively roll out an innovative active-duty membership initiative that will increase our Navy League membership numbers, provide a more youthful and diverse membership, and provide direct input from our active-duty service members so they can communicate first-hand information regarding the needs of our maritime services to the organization.
- Create cross-collaborative channels for council improvement so struggling councils can get mentorship from their peers on methods of improvement and proven best practices.
- Create a program to identify and develop the Navy League's next generation of leadership to ensure the long-term strength and validity of our local councils and future NLUS national leaders.
- Maintain a strong alliance with the Sea Cadets and continue looking for new opportunities to collaborate.
- Create and implement unified core values and diversity and inclusion statements that will coincide with our mission and vision.

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