

September 2023

Dear Assistance League Member-Volunteers:

Oprah Winfrey once said, “cheers to a new year and the chance for us to continue to get better.” Well, it’s that time of year for Assistance League again – the time where we are winding up the previous fiscal year and reporting while focusing on Operation School Bell and our other programs for the upcoming year. It’s no different at National Assistance League! As such, we are proud to deliver this annual report to the membership pursuant to Section 10.6 of the National Assistance League Bylaws dated March 2023 for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2023.

Our Work Together

National Assistance League’s number one job is to support our member chapters in making it as easy as possible to serve your communities in support of our shared mission and vision. In relentless pursuit of this mission, the organization will continue to shift the paradigm from that of “watch dog” to “service dog”, providing resources, coaching, and support while modeling a new approach and mindset that unifies our organization and its 120 chapters on the issues we all have in common, while continuing to allow for flexibility to meet needs of individual chapters and communities.

Our Mission, Vision, and Purpose

During 2022-2023, the National Board of Directors worked to create new mission, purpose, vision, and DEI statements that better describe who we are, what we do, and what we aspire to become:

Mission Statement

Adopted November 2022

Assistance League Engages and Empowers
Volunteers to Strengthen Our Communities

Purpose Statement

Adopted September 2022

The specific charitable purposes of this corporation are to promote and empower committed member volunteerism in local communities while building relationships that expand brand awareness of National Assistance League and its chapters. National Assistance League supports our chapters with education, coaching, resources, advocacy, and networking.

Vision Statement

Adopted November 2022

To become a recognized leader of community volunteerism.

DEI Statement

Adopted September 2022

National Assistance League strives to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture that ensures every person belongs, is respected, and valued as themselves.

National Assistance League Program

Education and Training – The organization provides chapters with education and support virtually by utilizing the NonProfitReady.org platform and curated Learning Circles that provide discussion forums on relevant topics to chapters. The sessions cover issues related to both the strategic, as well as day-to-day management of a chapter, and new trends in nonprofits. In addition, the educational sessions offer great networking opportunities for attendees to meet members from across the country, compare notes, offer suggestions, share ideas, and support each other. During the 2022-2023 year, the organization saw over 750 attendees at 14 virtual Learning Circle events who completed over 1,300 modules in the online portal.

Member Services – With the hiring of the organization's first ever Member Services Manager, the organization continues to provide support, now managed in a professional capacity, for chapters by partnering with them to carry out the organization's shared mission. Chapter leaders are empowered to understand the basic requirements for managing a 501(c)(3), celebrated for their success in their communities, and kept up to date with the national organization's current initiatives.

Member Services provides chapters with access to live professional and volunteer coaching support on a variety of topics designed to address specific chapter management questions including, but not limited to:

- Board Development
- Membership
- Technology
- Strategic Planning
- Belonging and Inclusion
- E-commerce/Marketplace

Technology Services and Support – The organization offers technology services and support to 92 chapters through their use of a "multi-site" website housed within the organization's website, www.AssistanceLeague.org. Additionally, participating chapters may choose to utilize additional "plug-in" services – Event Manager, Volunteer Signups/Calendar, Volunteer Hours Tracking, and Donor Management – to assist with management of their chapter activities. During the 2022-2023 year, the organization responded to over 1,500 technology related help desk tickets and provided 6 weekly Virtual Help Desk opportunities (over 250 annually) to chapters.

The organization also launched ShopAssistanceLeague.com, an online e-commerce platform, by which participating chapters can sell items donated to their chapter, under the Assistance League brand, to a national audience. To date, the website has had over 80,000 unique hits to the site and is beginning to generate sales and provide data for how the organization can continue to build out the site, in addition to creating overall brand awareness for Assistance League.

Marketing Services and Support – The organization offers marketing services and support to chapters by managing an Awards Program that affords chapters the opportunity to recognize member/community volunteers and outside supporters. Additionally, the organization continues to provide design support for chapter logos. 2022-2023 saw the development of better integrated social media between the organization and chapters and the reimagination of Action Week into a marketing and fundraising campaign that will call the public to action and ask for their support. That campaign will launch in the next fiscal year.

The organization has also been working diligently to finalize plans for additional marketing support for chapters through a tiered service plan also to be deployed in the next fiscal year.

National Partnerships – The organization offers chapters access to nationally developed partnerships and resources to enhance the work they do in their communities, including:

- **AARP Foundation** – Literacy Tutoring Pilot Program
- **BoardSource** – Training and Materials for Boards of Directors
- **RightGift** – Bulk Purchasing, Gift-in-Kind/Cash Fundraising Platform
- **Collidescope.io** – Outsourced Marketing Support for National and chapters
- **Sterling Volunteers** – Background Checks
- **ModernHR** – Human Resources Consulting/Professional Employment Organization
- **GrantStation** – Research Tool for Grants
- **Target, JCPenney, Famous Footwear** – Gift Card Purchasing
- **Hyatt Hotels** – Member Discount Program
- **Shop Redstar** – Assistance League Branded Merchandise

Financial Snapshot

In the wake of the pandemic, National Assistance League's finances continue to remain stable. Cost cutting exercises such as reduction in travel expense related to in-person national conferences and meetings, combined with consistent revenue from dues and contributed income, along with a one-time Employee Retention Credit grant have allowed for a positive change in net assets and been crucial to the organization. Additionally, interest and dividends in the organization's investment portfolio were strong while overall portfolio performance (un/realized gains and losses) were expected based on a portfolio of moderate risk.

Unpredictable membership dues income year to year remains a concern for future stability of the organization year over year. That, combined with inflation and the fact that many vendors are simply passing expenses on to their clients is also causing great concern, especially since the national organization has not seen an adjustment in dues in over eight (8) years and still remain the lowest in the nation among many of our peer organizations (National Charity League, Association of Junior Leagues International, Kiwanis International, Lions International).

We continue to develop contributed income sources from individual and corporate sponsorship and philanthropy as well as continue to pursue grants when we meet criteria.

We are proud of our financial accomplishments for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2023, and we look forward to the investments we will be able to make in the future because of the disciplined strategic and financial approach we have taken over the past couple of years.

Current and past financial information for National Assistance League – Audits and Form 990s – may be found [here](#).

Questions?

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to [Submit A Question](#) or email Member Services Manager, Becky Gimple at Becky@AssistanceLeague.org.

We Hear and Thank You!

We transitioned from a working board to a governance board model and that means that our CEO oversees the day-to-day operations and activities of the organization. Our officers and directors of the board and myself as the board chair, operate at the 30,000-foot level which means we are strategic in our thinking. The operational and transactional activities of the organization are handled by our CEO and professional staff. There are four board committees- governance, finance, advocacy, and the executive committee, and a few committees and task forces staffed with volunteers. The board looks at the organization as a whole and makes decisions on policy and organizational direction. This structure has improved our board focus on national strategic issues, utilizes better and more effective volunteer time and talent, and provides consistency in leadership at the professional staff level. We have consistent chapter support processes based on best practices in nonprofit membership and organization management with clarity and consistency.

We have heard you! We recognize that better communication, deeper engagement, and inclusivity, are tantamount looking ahead to our future together. We will be working to bring greater clarity with additional bylaws revisions which will remove ambiguity. We will be utilizing collaborative and unifying strategies with our member chapters this year.

The national organization is moving with purpose, commitment, and determination, to provide our member chapters with greater success for the future.

In his song "The Coast of Carolina," Jimmy Buffett says "I can't see the future but I know it's coming fast...it's not that hard to wind up knee deep in the past." Assistance League is committed to a future of sustainability and growth. To do that, we will need to continue to transform our organization and meet volunteers where they are. We look forward to continuing our journey with you, our chapters and members.

Thank you for all that you do as volunteers of Assistance League - for the approximately 3 million volunteer hours committed annually in service to more than 1 million people in 26 states. Assistance League would not be what it is without the commitment of people like you! THANK YOU!

Respectfully and Gratefully,



Sandy Ross
National President/Board Chair



Matt Zarcufsky, CFRE
National CEO