



AUSA 2025

Building a bigger, better, brighter future.

A STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

On July 5, 1950, our Association was officially established in the District of Columbia with a clearly outlined purpose: “The particular business and objects of THE ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY as reincorporated shall be wholly educational, literary, scientific, fostering esprit de corps, dissemination of professional knowledge and the promotion of the efficiency of the Army components of the Armed Forces of our Country.” For nearly 70 years, AUSA leaders, our governing body and our members have remained focused on achieving that purpose.

This Strategic Plan, “AUSA 2025,” defines our Vision and Mission, our Guiding Principles and the goals we seek to achieve in the next five years. It is our roadmap to continued success. It is also a living document, requiring periodic assessment and reevaluation by both management and the board. The staff will use this plan to develop a more detailed implementation plan, with measurable actions and timelines. AUSA’s Board of Directors will provide oversight to ensure the Association remains consistent with our purpose and to assure the responsible application of resources for the benefit of both mission and members.

We are committed to the success of our Association and to the achievement of the Goals outlined in this Strategic Plan. We commend the work of the team who has worked so diligently for AUSA to continue our growth, further the interests of our members and to strengthen our support for America’s Army.



Phebe N. Novakovic
Chairman



Carter F. Ham
General, U.S. Army Retired
President & CEO

ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY



OUR TASK

In June 2019, AUSA's Council of Trustees – since renamed the Board of Directors – requested development of a strategic plan to guide the future efforts of the association. While expressing no urgent concerns with the management, operations or activities of the association, they felt strongly that it was necessary to have a clearer outline of mid- and long-term goals and objectives.

Our senior management team enlisted AUSA staff to prepare a Strategic Plan aimed at 2025 based on some assumptions you can read on Page 6.

2025 is a symbolically important target because the United States Army will mark its 250th birthday that year. This will also be the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Association of the United States Army.

From a planning standpoint, 2025 is far enough into the future that the effort was not overly constrained by nearer-term fiscal or operational matters, yet it is not so far into the future to be impossible to predict.

The operative question, and the focus for the Strategic Plan became: Where do we want AUSA to be in 2025? The answer is on the following pages.

OUR HISTORY

Born on July 5, 1950, the Association of the United States Army had a clear purpose. America's foundational military force needed to speak with one voice.

In a joint message, a group of World War II wartime leaders accustomed to protecting their service branch showed they were ready to lock arms for a loftier cause.

"Let us put our resources and efforts into an association that can keep in the forefront the importance and requirements of the cutting edge of our national defense – in particular, the needs of the soldiers and their families that are the Army," declared top Army leaders from the Infantry Association and Field Artillery Association.

AUSA's first president was Gen. Wade H. Haislip, an infantry officer serving as Army vice chief of staff. President Harry S. Truman, a former artilleryman, was the honorary president. Seventy years later, AUSA has expanded, but its purpose hasn't changed. As an educational nonprofit, AUSA aims to be the Army's professional association, dedicated to educational development, advancing national security and promoting greater recognition of the Army's vital role in American life, past, present and future.

AUSA is a growing organization, tripling its membership since 2017, with plans to continue expanding its size, reach and influence.



Gen. Wade H. Haislip, AUSA's first president



President Harry S. Truman, AUSA's first honorary president

OUR VISION

To be recognized by the Army, Congress, our industry partners and communities across the nation as the Army's premier association and the foremost supporter of the Total Army.



OUR MISSION

AUSA supports soldiers, their families and Army civilians, provides a voice for the Army, and honors those who have served.

As the Army's premier, nonprofit, educational and professional association, we:

- **Educate** those we serve (soldiers and their families, Army civilians, retired soldiers and veterans, and the businesses and industries that support the Army) with programs, products, resources and events...
- **Inform** our members, Congress and the American public about issues affecting America's Army – Regular Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve, and...
- **Connect** America's Total Army, its industry partners, like-minded associations and other supporters at the national, regional and chapter levels.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

DEDICATION

We are dedicated to our mission and to our members, displaying it through our service and commitment.

EXCELLENCE

We value, encourage, recognize and reward excellence.

INTEGRITY

We expect integrity within ourselves and our stakeholders.

INNOVATION

We value innovative approaches to programs and technology.

INCLUSION

We are inclusive and embrace diversity.

NONPARTISAN

In all we do, we are nonpartisan and apolitical.

OUR STARTING POINT

We began our strategic planning effort by taking a closer look at ourselves. What are we really good at? What distinguishes AUSA from other associations and organizations? How can we do better to fulfill our mission and support our members? Are there actions, changes in the environment or other conditions that might adversely impact AUSA? What opportunities should we be seeking to advance our association? In the parlance of strategic planning, this is a SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Strengths

- AUSA has a well-earned reputation and name recognition within the Army, particularly among senior leaders. The relationships and trust established over many years result in a high degree of collaboration and partnership.
- Our events, from the Annual Meeting to smaller, more focused seminars, are supported and appreciated by AUSA's industry partners.
- Owning our building affords a stable platform for staff and events, and provides an important source of revenue.
- AUSA is financially stable, with a history of strong annual performance where revenue exceeds expenses. Our investment account provides strength to withstand an economic downturn and flexibility to take advantage of emerging opportunities.
- The cohort of talented, dedicated volunteer leaders at the Region, State and Chapter levels connects AUSA at the community level.

Weaknesses

- Beyond the senior levels of the Army, many soldiers, Army civilians, family members and veterans do not know what AUSA is or what we do.
- While membership is growing overall, the renewal rate for individual members is not where it ought to be.
- Community Partner memberships have been declining.
- Some AUSA Chapters have a low level of activity and engagement within their communities.
- While the AUSA National staff is fairly diverse in the aggregate, we are less diverse than desired at the director and above levels.



Opportunities

- Capitalize on AUSA's unmatched support for the National Museum of the United States Army.
- Focus on mid-career soldiers and Army civilians.
- Seek more events conducted in partnership with other like-minded associations.
- More effectively leverage the incredible success of the AUSA Annual Meeting.
- Improve outreach to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.
- Plan AUSA events at more locations outside of the Washington, D.C. area.

Threats

- Legal and fiscal risk with the current organizational structure of having AUSA National, Regions and Chapters operating under a single IRS Employer Identification Number.
- Any significant decrease in defense or Army funding will likely adversely affect corporate support, memberships and sponsorships.
- Generational differences in communications complicates AUSA's marketing, membership and messaging programs.
- IT threats create cyber vulnerabilities.
- Proliferation of veteran-focused nonprofit organizations diffuses effort and can create unhelpful competition.

OUR ASSUMPTIONS

We made nine assumptions to guide our planning effort:

1. AUSA's tax status will not be significantly affected by federal or state changes in law or policy.

AUSA is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the U.S. Code, a status recognized by all U.S. states and territories. We have vigorously defended our tax-exempt status.

2. Financial investments will yield annual growth of 4% to 6%.

AUSA enjoys a strong financial posture due to wise governance and investment decisions. While there could be market fluctuations, we anticipate continued growth.

3. One full year of operating expenses will be retained in investment accounts.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that resulted in lost revenue from the downsized 2001 AUSA Annual Meeting, the governing body of AUSA directed that enough money be retained in investment accounts to sustain one full year of operations without any revenue.

4. Unplanned contingencies and emergencies will not exceed \$5 million before 2025.

This assumption is not intended to limit the use of funds from the investment accounts for other purposes approved by the Board of Directors.

5. AUSA will continue to operate from its current building through 2025.

AUSA is fortunate to own its national headquarters building, a facility that hosts many events for the association and outside clients, making it a major source of revenue.

6. Operating expenses will increase 3% to 5% annually.

AUSA anticipates annual salaries will remain commensurate with market analysis and raises will match military pay increases. Other expenses such as insurance, utilities and medical benefits are projected to increase 3% to 5% through 2025. This assumption does not limit new programs or staffing growth.

7. Substantial Army support will continue for the Annual Meeting.

AUSA's designation by the Department of Defense as the Army's National Military Association authorizes the Army under federal law to use appropriated funds for the exclusive purposes of our Annual Meeting.

8. AUSA will retain federal contractor status.

AUSA gained federal contractor status in 2019 as a result of revenue from the Army for exhibit space, a designation that requires compliance with many legal, financial and human resource requirements in law. This status may also afford opportunities to compete for contracts in areas such as professional development.

9. Regional and Chapter structure is retained.

AUSA operates with a small professional staff at the national level and an extensive and committed cohort of volunteer leaders at the Chapter and Region levels. This structure is not expected to change.



OUR GOALS . . . AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

PAGE 10

Grow Membership

Increase new members and renewals across all categories, including individual and life members, industry partners and association members.

PAGE 12

Invigorate Events

Replicate the success and high standards of AUSA's Annual Meeting in all events, big and small.

PAGE 14

Stimulate Chapters

Improve effectiveness, efficiency and management of chapter programs and membership, and consider revising structures, resources and policies.

PAGE 16

Broaden Educational Value

Extend the reach of our publications, forums, books, podcasts and programs to educate, inform and expand our audiences.

PAGE 18

Enhance Marketing

Modernize marketing efforts and refresh the AUSA brand and logo while broadening awareness of the association, its products and programs.

PAGE 20

Strengthen Advocacy

On behalf of the U.S. Army and our members, AUSA champions policies, programs and budgets to promote and support the Total Army and national security.

PAGE 22

Maximize Financial Health

Manage, monitor and control costs while maintaining revenue streams and pursuing new revenue sources, including imaginative and alternative opportunities.

PAGE 24

Boost Facility Value

Maintain a safe, attractive and usable building for employees and an efficient, marketable building for all occupants.

PAGE 26

Optimize Human Resources

Attract and retain the best talent, motivate, mentor and reward staff and be recognized as an Employer of Choice.

PAGE 28

Embrace Innovation

As an overarching strategy, AUSA should maintain a strong commitment to technology and seek innovative solutions.

PAGE 30

Communicate with One Voice

Establish a cross-functional team to work on external communications across all AUSA departments.



GROW MEMBERSHIP

Increase new members and renewals across all categories, including individual and life members, industry partners and association members.

OBJECTIVES

Redesign and refine membership categories to boost individual and life members, grow National Partner and Community Partner membership and renewal rates, and add more association members.

STRATEGIES

- Transform and simplify system for joining, renewing and managing members.
- Through marketing and communications, increase brand recognition and perceived value of membership.
- Revise membership structure to encourage joining.
- Survey current and potential members to determine value proposition differences by demographics.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Limited brand awareness
- Few member-only benefits
- Industry mergers
- Chapter volunteer engagement
- Political and economic environment

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- Membership must have value
- Members must feel appreciated

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Simplify the online join and renewal process for all membership categories.
- Study membership value and incentives by demographic group and membership category, particularly for underrepresented groups like young soldiers and spouses.
- Identify new ways to communicate brand awareness to various membership categories.
- Consider additional support for chapter membership drives.



INVIGORATE EVENTS

Replicate the success and high standards of AUSA's Annual Meeting in all events, big and small.

OBJECTIVES

Annually increase attendance and revenue for events while exploring new topics, new audiences and new locations, particularly outside the National Capitol Region. Strengthening post-event assessments and applying lessons from the responses is critical.

STRATEGIES

- Reassess rate structures for all event revenue streams and evaluate expenses without compromising the quality of the events.
- Study events of other nonprofits and associations to learn new ideas and fresh perspectives.
- Research possible implementation of an accreditation program for AUSA professional development events to increase Army attendance.
- Determine the best way to collect, analyze and implement lessons learned to improve future events.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Getting customers to complete surveys
- Government funding
- AUSA staffing shortfalls
- Number of events
- Weather
- Terrorism

CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS

- Army participation

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Continue coordination with the Army to ensure and maintain participation.
- Implement deep-dive reviews of post-event surveys and reports.
- Study large-scale trade shows and conventions to discover new innovations in programs and crowd management.
- Host new events and evaluate performance to establish benchmarks.
- Consider an NCO/soldier-led Hot Topic or similar type of event to increase enlisted soldier visibility.
- Review overseas shows for viability.



STIMULATE CHAPTERS

Improve effectiveness, efficiency and management of chapter programs and membership, and consider revising structures, resources and policies.

OBJECTIVES

Conduct chapter events to increase awareness of AUSA, support the Army and meet the professional development needs of members. Create more programs to encourage more volunteers. Consider restructuring chapters when conditions warrant.

STRATEGIES

- Motivate and resource chapters to conduct local programs that support the Army.
- Develop a training strategy to identify needs, the best means for delivering training and an assessment of the training.
- Provide chapters the tools and incentives to meet membership objectives.
- Develop a strategy for identifying, assisting and assessing low performing chapters.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Motivated, skilled and resourced chapters
- Inadequate assessment of incentives and needs
- Changing Army policies and political environment
- Staffing and funding to support chapters

CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS

- Qualified volunteer leadership

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Identify programs for chapters that best support the Army and professional development of soldiers. Provide resources and incentives for chapters to use those programs.
- To aid chapter leaders, create a new chapter officer orientation handbook and seek other means of providing and encouraging training.
- Determine recruiting and retention needs for chapters by consulting with our most successful groups.
- Investigate potential indicators of low chapter performance that can be used to provide help and motivation at an early stage and establish a formal improvement plan that includes an end date.



BROADEN EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Extend the reach of our publications, forums, books, podcasts and programs to educate, inform and expand our audiences.

OBJECTIVES

Discover new audiences, explore new relationships with like-minded organizations and thought leaders, increase awareness of our products, and find new, innovative delivery means for our products and message.

STRATEGIES

- Tailor programs and publications to target audiences.
- Address evolving Army needs by implementing innovative education strategies.
- Create opportunities for collaboration to increase AUSA's footprint.
- Encourage additional funding streams to support education programs.
- Foster strong relationships with Army leaders to build access, credibility and trust.
- Seek cross-department collaboration to improve program quality.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Shifting priorities for the Army
- Time demands on target audiences
- Competition from other thought leaders
- Changing interests of younger audiences

CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS

- Having relevant programs and publications

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Create a policy for managing external collaborations.
- Establish regular AUSA-wide meetings to coordinate programs and funding.
- Expand networks and contacts to develop new relationships and material.
- Benchmark education strategies of similar nonprofits.
- Identify new target audiences and their interests.
- Experiment with new methods of extending audience reach.
- Expand collaboration with thought leaders, attachés, and representatives of allied and partner armies.



ENHANCE MARKETING

Modernize marketing efforts and refresh the AUSA brand and logo while broadening awareness of the association, its products and programs.

OBJECTIVES

Define and understand priority audiences, increase brand awareness year over year, and refresh the brand and logo before AUSA's 75th anniversary in 2025.

STRATEGIES

- Develop and execute a multichannel brand marketing campaign.
- Tailor communications to specific audiences.
- Create an AUSA brand ambassador program to help chapters advertise on a local level.
- Track and report on relevant marketing metrics to measure growth and return on investment.
- Research rebranding opportunities and implications, preparing a timeline for launch.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Shifting demographics of member populations
- General decline in nonprofit associations, particularly for younger generations
- Unreliable membership data to target difference audiences
- Staff and financial resources

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- AUSA-wide buy-in
- Establishment of priority messages
- Production of AUSA unique content
- Members-only exclusive value

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Analyze needs, expectations and outreach for priority audiences.
- Prepare national brand campaign, with focus on priority audiences.
- Identify volunteers to become AUSA brand ambassadors and determine a framework for outreach efforts.
- Develop marketing metrics to measure audience growth.
- Prepare a rebranding timeline, focusing on opportunities and risks.



STRENGTHEN ADVOCACY

On behalf of the U.S. Army and our members, AUSA champions policies, programs and budgets to promote and support the Total Army and national security.

OBJECTIVES

Build support for Army and AUSA priorities in Congress, with the public, other associations and international partners. Encourage mutual support and understanding between the Army and industry. Mobilize support for Army priorities and budgets within AUSA's chapters.

STRATEGIES

- Develop focus areas to convey AUSA priorities.
- Meet with members and staff of congressional defense oversight committees to build support for Army and AUSA priorities.
- Provide analysis and recommendations on defense and Army policies.
- Create opportunities for Army and defense industry leadership to meet for discussions on topics of mutual interest.
- Connect Army leaders with AUSA chapters to organize programs to build American public support for Total Army initiatives.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Compliance with IRS 501(c)(3) lobbying activity requirements
- Release of Army budget
- AUSA alignment with Army issues

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- Having approved AUSA focus areas
- Army leaders remain engaged with industry

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Review budget and posture statement to identify and develop Total Army legislative priorities for AUSA to support.
- Meet and correspond with Congress to build support for Army- and AUSA-supported initiatives.
- Invite members of Congress and congressional staff to AUSA events and seek new opportunities where Army and Congress can meet with industry.
- Continue to host a congressional staff breakfast at AUSA's Annual Meeting.
- Build support for Army and AUSA initiatives with AUSA regional, state and chapter leaders.



MAXIMIZE FINANCIAL HEALTH

Manage, monitor and control costs while maintaining revenue streams and pursuing new revenue sources, including imaginative and alternative opportunities.

OBJECTIVES

Maintain a strong, sustainable financial position, continue prudent management of assets and liability, conduct reporting and analysis on new revenue streams, and improve productivity and efficiency through investment in information technology and refining processes.

STRATEGIES

- Train staff in new systems and standards.
- Create cross-functional team to explore new revenue-generating options.
- Explore new financial reporting systems to improve productivity and efficiency.
- Maintain expertise and compliance with standards to uphold 501(c)(3) status.
- Manage assets and liabilities to maximize short-term profitability and long-term success as an association.
- Ensure Finance team inclusion in revenue- and expense-related endeavors.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Economic variables
- Change in legal or compliance standards
- Deficiency in internal processes
- Staff turnover

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- Abide by compliance standards
- Generate revenue to fully cover operating expenses

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Meet quarterly with leadership to review financial posture.
- Develop, administer and evaluate staff to determine productivity and efficiency of current and potential systems and processes.
- Meet with tax consultants twice a year to ensure compliance.
- Conduct internal review on financial systems and processes to evaluate alternatives.
- Develop and continuously update finance and accounting policy manual.
- Create a diverse exploration team by April 2020 to begin brainstorming new revenue-generating endeavors.



BOOST FACILITY VALUE

Maintain a safe, attractive and usable building for employees and an efficient, marketable building for all occupants.

OBJECTIVES

Reduce operations and maintenance costs, achieve full occupancy and determine the best approach to achieving Class A building status, signifying the highest quality of building in the market area.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to improve and renovate the building in a cost-efficient way.
- Conduct engineering and cost analysis to prepare a project plan leading to Class A building status for AUSA's national headquarters.
- Continuously review service contracts to ensure the best service and competitive pricing.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Abundance of leasable space in surrounding area
- Improvements or new building are expensive

CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS

- Maintaining a safe, secure building to enable staff productivity

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Review Class A building criteria and requirements to determine feasibility of action.
- Solicit new bids from service companies supporting AUSA building.
- Determine potential renovations for maximum building marketability.



OPTIMIZE HUMAN RESOURCES

Attract and retain the best talent, motivate, mentor and reward staff and be recognized as an Employer of Choice.

OBJECTIVES

Create, implement and monitor professional development programs, establish formal leadership and staff training, improve onboarding process for new hires, improve employee satisfaction and maintain competitive compensation, benefits and the work-life balance of employees.

STRATEGIES

- Widen outreach for talent acquisition to schools, employment agencies and special hiring groups for veterans, older workers, disabled workers and others.
- Monitor compensation and benefits programs to ensure competitiveness.
- Find meaningful ways to reward staff for over-and-above performance.
- Comply with federal contractor affirmative action requirements and establish diversity and representation goals throughout AUSA.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Competition for talent in a tight job market
- Staff perception of compensation and benefits
- Expanded HR programs can be costly

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- Must have talented staff to meet strategic plan
- Must meet federal, state and federal contractor requirements
- Staff must feel prepared, well-trained, rewarded, motivated and fairly compensated

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Engage legal counsel to develop affirmative action program and create required reports.
- Create performance management system to provide meaningful feedback and defend compensation and personnel actions.
- Update market pricing for AUSA staff positions.
- Develop a new system to create accurate job descriptions.



EMBRACE INNOVATION

As an overarching strategy, AUSA should maintain a strong commitment to technology and seek innovative solutions.

OBJECTIVES

AUSA should form a cross-functional team to proactively seek and enable solutions to support any department, goal or team while sustaining best practices in information and data security.

STRATEGIES

- Identify “idea” people from within AUSA community who are willing to be on the team.
- Invest in technology education for AUSA staff.

POTENTIAL BARRIER TO SUCCESS

- Funding for innovative solutions

CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS

- Ability of AUSA staff to commit time

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Establish a cross-functional team.
- Identify people to invite to join, including chapter members and Army fellows.
- Routinely brief all departments on innovations and ideas.



COMMUNICATE WITH ONE VOICE

Establish a cross-functional team to work on external communications across all AUSA departments.

OBJECTIVES

Develop, promulgate and train AUSA staff on using consistent messages to build and strengthen the AUSA brand. A national headquarters working group would create a system to provide quality assurance and accountability for communications products and determine messaging priorities.

STRATEGIES

- The cross-functional team would develop 5 to 10 messaging priorities and determine the best platforms to reach the target audience.
- Audit AUSA communications methods and products to measure effectiveness and growth potential.
- A communications guide would be designed to deliver cohesive guidance for all external messaging.

POTENTIAL BARRIER TO SUCCESS

- AUSA-wide buy-in to universal messaging policies

CRITICAL FACTOR FOR SUCCESS

- Agreement on priorities

ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

- Prepare a “one voice” guide.
- Conduct external communications audit.
- Outline priority audiences and priority messages.



As we set our course to 2025, focused on strengthening the Association of the United States Army, our commitment remains unaltered. We will contribute our full resources and capabilities to support America's Army, the indispensable foundation of our nation's security. We will support a national security strategy that promotes peace and stability throughout the world while promoting greater recognition of the Army's vital role now and in the future. We will advocate on behalf of the Total Army – Regular Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve and Army civilians – as an institution and tirelessly advance policies to enhance the well-being of and opportunities for those who have served, those in service today and those preparing for future service.

Association of the United States Army

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