

LOCATIONS & GROUPS

LARGE LOCATIONS PLANNING GUIDE

(5,000+ Veterans)



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

2026

Planning Your Wreath-Laying Ceremony



At a large location, success starts long before National Wreaths Across America Day.

- ★ **Create Your Leadership Team:** Identify lead volunteers for the major pieces of your event so one person isn't trying to manage everything.
- ★ **Map Out Your Timeline:** Work backward from National Wreaths Across America Day and set deadlines for volunteers, cemetery coordination, wreath logistics, ceremony details, and community outreach.
- ★ **Stay Connected With Sponsorship Groups:** Keep supporting groups informed about your needs, progress, volunteer opportunities, and important deadlines.
- ★ **Engage Community Partners:** Identify businesses, organizations, public safety agencies, transportation partners, and others who may be able to provide volunteers, equipment, services, or in-kind support.
- ★ **Use Your WAA Page & Communication Tools:** Keep event information current and use Page Alerts and Dashboard Messaging to share important updates with volunteers and supporters.

Section Planning & Wreath Staging



What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Stage by section:** Pre-sort based on section needs and coordinate with cemetery staff on section rotation and any veteran graves on their Exceptions List.
- ★ **Use multiple distribution points:** Avoid one central pickup area; limit volunteers to 1-2 wreaths at a time to keep things moving.
- ★ **Assign a dedicated wreath team:** Have specific volunteers manage unloading, counts, staging, distribution, and proper placement.
- ★ **Keep Grave-Specific wreaths separate:** Clearly identify and protect them from general placement.
- ★ **Plan the placement flow:** Allow families with loved ones interred there to place first, then fill designated sections.
- ★ **Hold back a small buffer:** Keep extra wreaths available for shortages, missed graves, or last-minute needs.

One Question to Ask

If a large crowd arrives at once, can volunteers get wreaths and reach their sections without creating a backup?

Wreath Delivery & Storage



What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Plan for a flexible delivery window:** Wreaths can arrive anytime in the 2 weeks before Wreath Day. Because WAA provides delivery at no cost, we work around our trucking partners' routes and schedules, which can shift due to weather, traffic, road closures, or emergencies.
- ★ **Have an unloading team ready:** Assign volunteers in advance and keep a call list for extra help. Delivery drivers are not responsible for unloading.
- ★ **Count and verify everything:** Count boxes as they come off the truck, compare totals with the Bill of Lading, and report any discrepancy to your Regional Liaison Team.
- ★ **Secure storage before delivery:** Identify a dry, secure space large enough for your wreaths — such as a National Guard unit, fire station, VFW Post, warehouse, or other community partner.

One Question to Ask

If your truck arrived tomorrow with little notice, do you already know who would unload it and verify counts — and where the wreaths would go?

Wreath, Box & Pallet Information

Wreath Box Information

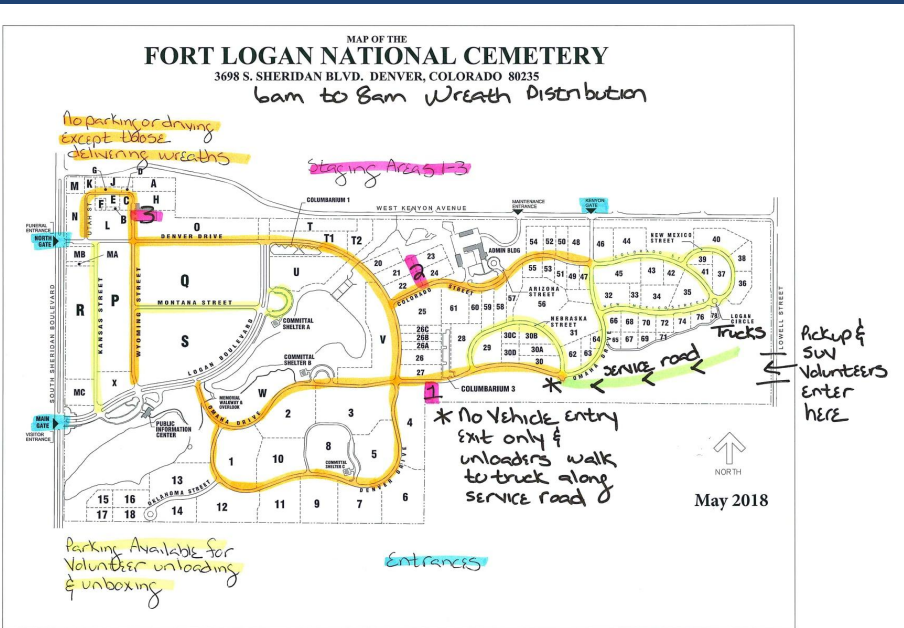
- **Box Size:** 16"W × 26"L × 32"H
- **Box Weight:** ~40 lbs.
- **Wreaths per Box:** 12
- **Boxes per Pallet:** 18
- **Wreaths per Pallet:** 216
- **Typical Full Truck:**
~5,400–6,400 wreaths



About the Wreaths

- **Size:** 22" diameter
- **Greens:** Fresh balsam fir from Maine
- **Frame:** 10.5" steel frame
- **Ribbon:** 7" wide × 14" long
- Each wreath is hand-crafted, making every one unique.
- *Some needle loss is normal due to the perishable nature of the wreaths.*

Volunteer Arrival, Traffic & Safety



What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Map the arrival flow:** Plan vehicle entrances, parking areas, pedestrian routes, drop-off zones, and exits before event day.
- ★ **Prepare for overflow parking:** Identify nearby schools, businesses, or other lots that could help if cemetery parking is limited.
- ★ **Use shuttles when needed:** For remote parking, consider buses, vans, or golf carts — especially for elderly guests and those with mobility needs.
- ★ **Assign traffic & parking teams:** Use clearly identifiable volunteers at key intersections, entrances, and parking areas to keep vehicles and people moving.
- ★ **Coordinate with local partners:** Work with cemetery staff, law enforcement, public safety, or transportation partners when the size of your event requires additional support.
- ★ **Tell volunteers what to expect:** Share parking, arrival, shuttle, and check-in instructions ahead of time through your WAA page, Page Alerts, Dashboard Messaging, social media, and other local communication channels.

One Question to Ask

If hundreds of vehicles and volunteers arrived within the same 30-minute window, would everyone know where to go — and could traffic continue moving safely?



Grave-Specific Requests



What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Organize requests after cutoff:** Download and sort the Grave-Specific list by family placements vs. volunteer placements.
- ★ **Clearly mark grave-specific markers:** Coordinate with cemetery staff on a system so general volunteers know which graves to leave for families or assigned volunteers.
- ★ **Separate and organize the wreaths:** Keep grave-specific wreaths out of general distribution and group them in a way that makes pickup or volunteer assignment easy. Set aside extra general wreaths as a buffer for any issues.
- ★ **Give families clear instructions:** Communicate where and when to pick up their wreaths, where to park, and who to ask for help.
- ★ **Assign a dedicated placement team:** Use Sponsorship Groups or trusted volunteers to complete volunteer placements and check for anything missed.
- ★ **Close the loop:** When possible, take photos of volunteer-placed wreaths and provide them through the Grave Specific Report for families and sponsors.

One Question to Ask

Can you account for every Grave-Specific Request from the time the wreath arrives until you know it was placed on the correct grave?

Communication Plan



What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Send key details early:** Share date, time, address, parking, arrival instructions, placement timing, and what volunteers should expect.
- ★ **Use every WAA tool available:** Update your WAA page and use Page Alerts and Dashboard Messaging for sponsors, volunteers, and Sponsorship Groups.
- ★ **Create a day-of contact plan:** Make sure section captains, parking teams, wreath teams, cemetery staff, and volunteers know who to contact.
- ★ **Prepare specific messages by audience:** Families with Grave-Specific Requests, Sponsorship Groups, general volunteers, elected officials, and community partners may need different details.
- ★ **Repeat important information:** Large crowds need reminders — especially parking, arrival time, where to report, and when placement begins.
- ★ **Follow up afterward:** Thank volunteers and supporters, share photos and wreath retirement details, and communicate any help needed for the coming year.

One Question to Ask

If someone only read your messages, would they know when to arrive, where to park, where to go, and who to ask for help?

Ceremony Timing & Flow

What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Keep the ceremony focused:** Use the current WAA Ceremony Script from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#) as your foundation and avoid making the program so long that volunteers are standing and waiting.
- ★ **Plan the transition to placement:** Decide in advance when placement begins and how volunteers will be released or directed to sections.
- ★ **Make sure everyone can hear:** Use an appropriate sound system and additional speakers if the crowd extends beyond the main area.
- ★ **Think through seating & accessibility:** Reserve seating or nearby viewing space for veterans, Gold Star families, elderly guests, and others who may need it.
- ★ **Coordinate speakers early:** Coordinate non-controversial speakers, color guard, ceremonial wreath presenters, bugler, and special guests ahead of time.
- ★ **Prepare for delays or weather:** Have a clear plan for shortening, moving, or adjusting the ceremony if conditions require it.

One Question to Ask

When the ceremony ends, do thousands of people know exactly what happens next and where they should go?



Cleanup & Wreath Retirement



What Works for Large Locations

- ★ **Plan early with cemetery staff:** Confirm wreath retirement timing, access, cleanup expectations, and any cemetery-specific requirements.
- ★ **Assign sections and teams:** Divide the cemetery into manageable areas and give volunteers clear ownership for removal.
- ★ **Secure disposal or recycling support:** Arrange dumpsters, trailers, trucks, recycling bins, or other approved disposal options in advance. Ask for in-kind donations, and ensure they will assist with disposal once filled.
- ★ **Plan how wreaths will move:** Position collection points throughout the cemetery and use carts, trailers, or backhoes to compress and move wreaths efficiently.
- ★ **Consider reuse or recycling:** Separate metal frames, greens, and bows when practical, and identify local recycling, composting, or repurposing options.
- ★ **Communicate the plan:** Share with volunteers the date, time, supplies needed (gloves, broomsticks, or ropes to transport wreaths), and removal instructions.

One Question to Ask

If thousands of wreaths had to come off the graves tomorrow, do you know who would remove them, where they would go, and how they would leave the cemetery?

Final Planning Reminders



Tie It All Together

- ★ **Build a planning committee:** Assign leads for sections, wreaths, volunteers, parking, ceremony, communications, and cleanup.
- ★ **Use the Wreath Day Logistics Template:** Customize it so every lead knows their role, deadlines, and day-of responsibilities.
- ★ **Ask for in-kind support early:** Think chairs, water, first aid, port-o-potties, gloves, safety vests, printing, signage, dumpsters, carts, trailers, and equipment.
- ★ **Plan your media/photo support:** Assign someone to greet media, coordinate photos/video, and confirm any drone approvals needed.
- ★ **Use WAA-approved resources:** Find templates, tutorials, press releases, order forms, and planning materials on the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).
- ★ **Thank your supporters:** Recognize businesses, partners, volunteers, and community members who helped make the day possible.

One Question to Ask

Does every major part of your event have a person assigned, a plan written down, and a backup option?

Veteran Grave Count vs. Sponsorship Goal



RESULTS

2026 SO FAR

9,788 Wreaths Sponsored

78.3% to Goal

2,712 To Go!

Veteran Grave Count = Your Shipping Maximum

- ★ WAA ships wreaths based on the **Veteran Grave Count** you provide.
- ★ This prevents more wreaths from being sent than your location can place.
- ★ Your Veteran Grave Count should reflect the number of veterans laid to rest at your location. If you need to receive more or less wreaths, contact your Regional Liaison Team to make special arrangements.

Sponsorship Goal = Your Fundraising Goal

- ★ Your Sponsorship Goal can be higher than your Veteran Grave Count. Once your location is fully covered, additional sponsored wreaths can still support the mission.
- ★ You can choose to credit extra wreaths to another participating location in need or carry them forward to the next year.

One Question to Ask

Are your Veteran Grave Count and Sponsorship Goal set intentionally — and does your team understand what each one controls?

Make the Most of Your WAA Location Page

Customize Your Location Page

- ★ **Banner Image:** Add a recognizable image of the cemetery or memorial.
- ★ **Logo:** Feature the cemetery's logo.
- ★ **Page Text:** Share ceremony details, volunteer instructions, parking information, or other location-specific notes.
- ★ **Sponsorship Goal:** Set the goal that feeds your public **Wreath-O-Meter** and shows supporters your progress.

Use Your Dashboard

- ★ **Run Reports:** Track sponsorship activity and progress throughout the year. Access the reports you need for planning and follow-up.
- ★ **Keep Supporters in the Loop:** Send re-order requests, thank-you messages, reminders, and volunteer information. Update registration ceremony details with specifics.
- ★ **Set Page Alerts:** Post important or time-sensitive notices on your location page.

One Question to Ask

Does your public page tell people what they need to know — and are you using your Dashboard tools to stay ahead of what's happening?

CAMRNC - MIRAMAR NATIONAL CEMETERY

Please help us Remember, Honor, and Teach on December 19, 2026 at 09:00 am (PST) (Wreath Placement Immediately Following Ceremony) by sponsoring wreaths, volunteering, or inviting friends to help.

RESULTS
2026 SO FAR
1,570 Wreaths Sponsored
73% to Goal
20,030 To Go!

REMEMBER the Fallen... HONOR those who Serve... TEACH our children the value of Freedom.

Welcome to the Miramar National Cemetery's Wreaths Across America Page.

On December 19, 2026 (Wreath Placement Immediately Following Ceremony), Wreaths Across America will be at Miramar National Cemetery to Remember and Honor our Veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud.

Please review these announcements:

1. ALL volunteer parking will be offsite, unless you have a CURRENT DMV issued handicap placard. Handicap parking will be in the cortège lane behind the administration building. Vehicles will be available to transport you to the ceremony. Please arrive at the cemetery no earlier than 8:15 am, and remember to allow time for heavy traffic.
2. Offsite parking is the Northrop Grumman lot at 7330 Miramar Road. Aria Charter busses will shuttle you to the cemetery from 7:30 am and will conclude with the last bus leaving the cemetery at 11:30 am.
3. If you have a loved one for whom you want to place a wreath, and you did not sponsor a grave specific wreath before Thanksgiving, 2026, you will be able to place it after the ceremony. Next year, make sure to sponsor grave specific before Thanksgiving for early family placement.
3. We are expecting a very heavy turnout, so please respect those who are working hard to ensure everyone has wreaths to place, and each veteran's name is said aloud.

Thank you so much for supporting Miramar National Cemetery and Wreaths Across America!

CAMRNC - Miramar National Cemetery
5795 Nobel Dr
San Diego, CA 92122, United States

Veteran Graves: 21,600
Coverage Goal: 21,600
Wreaths So Far: 1,569

Ceremony On: December 19, 2026 at 09:00 am (PST)
Wreath Placement: Immediately Following Ceremony
Grave Specific Placement: December 18, 2026 at 03:30 PM (PST). We can take 200 vehicles on Friday, Dec 18. You will be contacted for a time slot. The remainder will be Saturday the 19th prior to the public entrance beginning at 7:30 AM. You will be contacted with your time slot.
Wreath Clean Up: January 09, 2027 at 08:30 AM (PST). Removal and Recycling - Registration link will be posted on the web page on Dec 19, 2026
Location Coordinator: Brenda Kaesler, Jaimie Marzan
Contact Location: [Phone Icon]

Directions to Cemetery
Parking Instructions
Ceremony and Volunteer Information

Final Preparations: Two Weeks Before Wreath Day



Final Checks

- ★ **Finalize Grave-Specific Requests:** Confirm the list, family instructions, and volunteer placements.
- ★ **Confirm your working teams:** Touch base with section captains, parking, unloading, wreath distribution, ceremony, and cleanup leads.
- ★ **Recheck location logistics:** Confirm sound, seating, restrooms, traffic control, first aid, signage, equipment, and supplies. Print the Proper Wreath Placement Instructions to be posted around the cemetery for volunteer guidance.
- ★ **Watch for delivery updates:** Wreaths may arrive anytime during this 2-week window, so monitor email and keep your phone close.
- ★ **Confirm unloading & storage:** Make sure volunteers, equipment, and secure storage are ready when the truck arrives.
- ★ **Update your public information:** Add a Page Alert or send messages if parking, timing, volunteer instructions, or other details have changed. Reply quickly to emails and questions from the general public.

One Question to Ask

If Wreath Day were tomorrow, is there anything you would be scrambling to confirm?

Wreath Day & After



On National Wreaths Across America Day – December 19, 2026

- ★ **Arrive early:** Give your leadership team enough time to walk the site, confirm setup, and fix last-minute issues.
- ★ **Start on time:** Keep the ceremony and placement schedule on track.
- ★ **Keep key leads connected:** Make sure section captains and logistics leads can quickly reach the right person if something changes.
- ★ **Be ready for media:** Have one person assigned to greet reporters, provide press kits, answer basic questions, and direct them where they need to go.
- ★ **Document the day:** Capture photos, volunteer stories, community partnerships, and special moments you can share afterward.

After Wreath Day

- ★ **Thank your people & share next steps:** Follow up with volunteers, Sponsorship Groups, businesses, cemetery staff, and community partners—and include wreath retirement details.
- ★ **Share the impact:** Email event photos and stories to pr@wreathsaacrossamerica.org or for radio features, email WAAradio@wreathsaacrossamerica.org.
- ★ **Debrief while it's fresh:** Note what worked, what didn't, and what to change next year.

And then we do it all again! After the new year, your Regional Liaison Team will reach out to reinstate your location and start planning for another year.

Social Media Tips



Use social media to keep your community informed, build excitement, and make it easy for people to get involved.

- ★ **Share the need:** Use your Wreath-O-Meter to post sponsorship progress, volunteer needs, and any specific areas where help is still needed. Hold a Facebook Fundraiser.
- ★ **Make logistics easy to find:** Share parking, arrival time, placement details, and last-minute updates as Wreath Day gets closer.
- ★ **Show the mission in action:** Use photos and short stories from volunteers, families, Sponsorship Groups, and community partners.
- ★ **Tag and thank partners:** Recognize businesses, organizations, and volunteers who are helping make the event possible.
- ★ **Keep posts simple and visual:** One clear message per post works better than packing everything into one update. The Monthly Messaging Guide is a great tool for this!
- ★ **Use approved WAA resources:** Start with WAA-provided graphics and templates, and follow approval guidelines for custom materials.

One Question to Ask

If someone saw just one of your posts, would they know what you need them to do next?

Media Coordination & WAA PR Support



Local media can help you reach more volunteers, sponsors, and community members — especially when they have clear information & a local story to tell.

- ★ **Invite local media early:** Reach out to TV, radio, newspapers, and community outlets with your ceremony details and local impact.
- ★ **Use WAA media resources:** Start with approved press release templates and talking points from the [Volunteer Resource Page](#).
- ★ **Identify a media contact:** Assign one person who can greet reporters, answer questions, and connect them with the right people.
- ★ **Share strong local stories:** Veterans, Gold Star families, youth volunteers, Sponsorship Groups, and community partnerships can help bring the mission to life.
- ★ **Plan photo/video access:** Decide where media can safely capture the ceremony and placement without interfering with volunteers or families.

Need Help?

Email pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org for media questions, interview support, or local PR guidance.

One Question to Ask

If a reporter showed up tomorrow, would someone know where to take them, what information to share, and who they could interview?



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Regional Map

Region 1 Liaison Team

Emily Carney & Terra Delong

207-578-6277

region1@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Region 2 Liaison Team

Janelle Eveld & Miesa Bland

207-578-6283

region2@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Region 3 Liaison Team

Ana Diaz & Macie Parker

207-578-6287

region3@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Region 4 Liaison Team

Rikki Long & Ashley Gatewood

207-578-6284

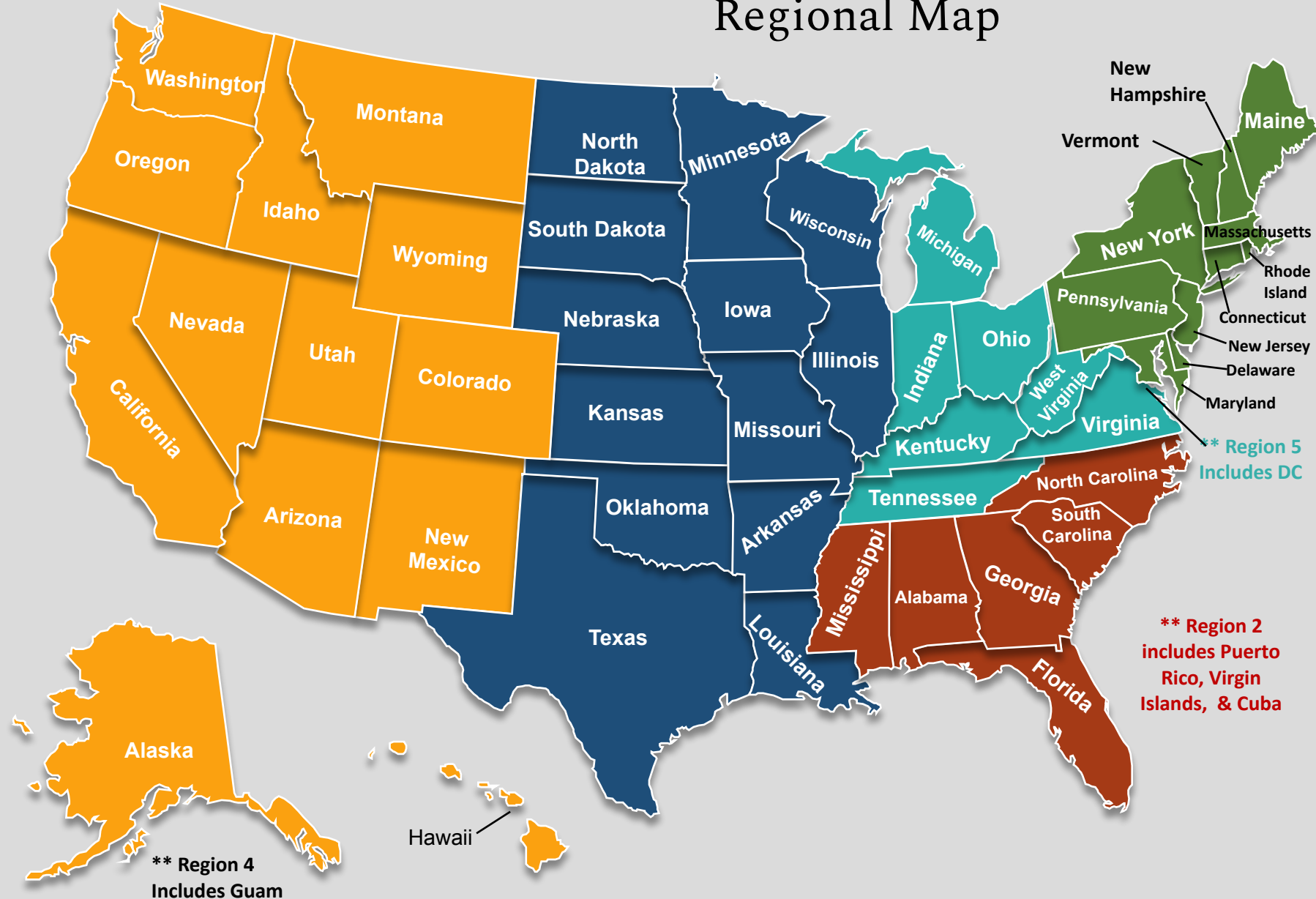
region4@wreathsacrossamerica.org

Region 5 Liaison Team

Annie Brooks & Claire Gadomski

207-578-6289

region5@wreathsacrossamerica.org



Meet the WAA Locations & Groups Team!



Julie Bright
Director of Locations &
Groups



**Meagan
Erickson**
Assistant Director of



Terra Delong
Region 1 Liaison



Emily Carney
Region 1 Liaison



Miesa Bland
Region 2 Liaison



Janelle Eveld
Region 2 Liaison



Richelle Bergeson
Finance Liaison



Molly Nunley
Regional Liaison
Assistant



Ana Diaz
Region 3 Liaison



Macie Parker
Region 3 Liaison



Rikki Long
Region 4 Liaison



Ashley Gatewood
Region 4 Liaison



Annie Brooks
Region 5 Liaison



Claire Gadowski
Region 5 Liaison



THANK YOU!



WREATHS *across* AMERICA