

American Legion Auxiliary  
Department of California  
Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation  
September - October Bulletin



We are off and running on another year of service to our Veterans. National Convention has conclude and we are ready to get down to work. Our mission states that the Veterans Affairs Program is to enhance the lives of U.S. Veterans, military and their families and there are many ways we can fulfill this.

There are several aspects of this program, below is a brief outline of what our National Organization is focused on. In the upcoming months we will highlight one or two areas as information is received from our National Chairman.

**Homeless Veterans:** Learn about the homeless veterans in your community through local food banks, homeless shelters, community outreach centers, homeless shelters, if allowed post hotline numbers for services available in your area. There will be detail information in the next bulletin.

**Creative Arts Festival:** Rehabilitation and healing of Veterans through Arts, crafts and hobbies. Many local VA Hospitals and clinics may have festivals planned, get involved, they are always looking for volunteers. Awards for monetary contributions are made by the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Bronze Award (1,000.00 - 1,999.00), Silver Award (2,000.00 - 4,999.00) and Gold (5,000.00 and above) Contributions can be made by individuals, Units or Districts.

**Job Fairs:** Many communities hold job fairs for Veterans, and are always looking for volunteers. Consider working a table to provide our Veterans with the information needed to get back into the workforce. This may also be an opportunity to locate homeless veterans and their families.

**Volunteer at VA Health Care Facilities:** If there is a facility near you, volunteer your time when possible. Become a scheduled volunteer through the VA Voluntary Service department at the facility. I know we are busy but remember why we have the luxury to do what we do. Many

veterans in these facilities don't want you to spend the afternoon with them, but appreciate the few minutes you devote to them.

Service to Veterans, formally known as Field / Home service: We are all aware that taking a Veteran to doctor appointments, shopping, cleaning their house, doing laundry is a form of field service, but there is more. Have you taken a Veteran on a picnic, stroll in the park, lunch, dinner, a movie, a drive along the coast, these are also forms of "service to Veterans"

Transitioning back to civilian life can be a challenge for some of our veterans. Be sure you are aware of resources available in your community in order to assist our men and women in accessing all of the benefits available to them, not just the health care.

Caregivers need care too. Make sure we give those that are caring for our veterans some care as well. It can be difficult caring for a veteran day in and day out, without relief. Treat them to a day at the spa, take them to a movie, give them an afternoon off while you care for the veteran. A simple act of appreciation goes a long, long way.

Reporting: It is critical for you to track all of your time and expenses. We all do so much for our Veterans and don't think twice about how much time, effort and money we spend, we just do the work. There are several areas that our National Organization needs to know about. As a Unit member not assigned to any facility your hours do not get reported unless you report. I have included forms for members, Units and District. These forms cover your contributions to multiple programs and will make it much easier for you to report at Mid-year and year end. Please utilize them as I will be asking for some of the information for the mid year report and then again at year end.

In addition to the numbers I will be asking what you, your Unit, your District has done during the first half of the year. Did you participate in the caregiver program, did you facilitate or participate in a stand down. Do you have that special member that went over and above in Service to Veterans? These are some of the points Nation is asking about so please send me something, just a brief paragraph is better than nothing. The most important thing is to record and report EVERYTHING you do.

#### Awards:

Service to Veterans: Recognition to volunteers at hour milestones (50, 100, 300, 500 and 1,000). After the first 1,000 hours recognition at each 1,000 hours up to 20,000 hours

Unit: Most outstanding V A & R Program,

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) Award: Recognition to Individuals, Units, Districts, and Department for contributions made during the period of August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2018.

Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS): Volunteer of the year award presented to the individual selected by National VAVS deputy. Nominees are submitted by the Chief of Voluntary Services at your local facility. Individual must be a regularly scheduled volunteer.

Member awards for 10,000 and 20,000 hours of voluntary service.

Individual Recognition Award:

Volunteer Recruitment & Service Department - Awarded to the hospital rep that shows and increase in both volunteers and volunteer hours from April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018

100 % VAVS Meeting Attendance - Awarded to the Representative and Deputy after verification by the National VAVS representative.

Michael Gutty Homeless Veteran Outreach: Awarded by the American Legion to the Department that demonstrates American Legion "Family" involvement in homeless veterans initiatives showing outstanding support for activities in the areas of volunteerism, prevention, supportive housing, advocacy or fundraising.

James H. Parke Scholarship; Awarded to a student in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, who has not reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and who have completed 100 hours of regularly scheduled VAVS Volunteer service during the calendar prior to September 1. Nominations are submitted by the Medical Center Director

If you would like a copy of the V A & R Guide for Volunteers or our Mission statement please let me know and I will send it via e-mail. As always please feel free to contact me with any questions. If I do not have the answer I will get it for you.

Yours in Service.

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