

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitations 2018-2019

This year, with Department President Michele theme, we will have fun for we are “**ALL IN**” for our veterans throughout Florida. Guiding us along the way will be the “**HIGH ROLLERS**” for the Department. So, this year, throughout Florida we will be “**ALL IN**”.

The mission of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program is to enhance the lives of veterans, military and their families. Included in this Program Action Plan, you will find ideas and information on things we can do to accomplish the mission.

- This year, I am asking you to please be “**All IN**” for our veterans and to our hospitalized and homeless veterans and especially our Female Veterans. Women who are separating from service are 3.6 times more likely to become homeless than their non-military counterparts.
- Many women Veterans face challenges when returning to civilian life, including raising children on their own or dealing with the aftereffects of military sexual trauma. Without intervention, these and other issues can put women Veterans at greater risk of homelessness.

Each District will be working together as a **TEAM** to collect collecting items for the VA Hospital (VAMC). VA Nursing Homes or Homeless Shelter for Veterans of their choice. And reaching out especially to our **Female Veterans** through Final Salute witch is President Michele special project, or by changing a **Female Veterans Life**.

We are ready, so let’s make the commitment, to be “All In” and “Strike It Rich” for our Veterans.

For God and Country

Wanda

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Your Committee members for 2018 - 2019, are here for you, please do not hesitate to call and ask.

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2018-2019 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

What is this program, and why do we have it?

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of veterans, military and their families. It also provides our members opportunities to serve in volunteer leadership roles within their local Veterans Affairs hospital with the veterans themselves.

What can you do?

1. Assist in activities that help homeless veterans.

Ideas:

Members and Units

- Give a helping hand to the Legion's homeless veteran coordinator in your district and offer to assist in Local Homeless Veterans Stand Downs in your community. Events where homeless veterans receive free goods and services such as haircuts and medical exams
- Work with local VA Hospital or clinics to assist our VA system with Veteran's needs.
- Work with the local Post, S.A.L. and Riders to assist the Veterans in repairing their homes or modifying their homes to a handicap home as needed.
- Contact homeless veteran emergency shelters, transitional housing projects and permanent housing projects in your community and identify the organization's volunteer and in-kind contribution needs, including:
 - Meal preparation and serving
 - Clothes collection and distribution
 - Assembly and delivery of hygiene kits, and buddy baskets
 - Purchasing or securing household items or furniture
- Reach out to specific homeless veterans, such as residents of projects mentioned above to provide his/her practical, social and moral support.
- Compile "blessing bags" to be given to the local police department or other organizations that deal with the homeless veteran population.

2. Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)

NVCAF is the national, annual competition and festival that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's veterans after disease, disability or life crisis. As the national presenting sponsor, the American Legion Auxiliary will strive to increase monetary support by encouraging Units to sponsor fundraisers that will contribute to the increased awareness and support of this program.

Ideas: *National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF)*

- Obtain and become familiar with the *ALA Guide for Volunteers*.
- Work with the local VA Hospitals, Veterans Retirement homes, Florida Veterans Retirement Homes, ETC. to Identify arts, crafts and hobby projects targeted to veterans (such as writing, oral history recording, visual and performing arts, quilting and gardening). A unit may organize a project of its own or introduce a unit to veteran arts, crafts and hobby projects already operational in the community.
- Contribute donated supplies to help supplement visual veteran artists' needs for their projects. Contact your local VA hospital representative or duty for a list of items.
- Donate, through department, funds that help local veterans attend state and national Wheel Chair Games, Veterans Creative Arts Festivals, Paralympics, etc.

Florida Creative Arts, which is held early

- Lake City VA
- Bay Pines VA
- Miami VA Center
- Orlando VA Medical Center
- West Palm VA

3. Help the American Legion, State Department of Veterans Affairs and Chamber of Commerce promote job fairs for veterans and their families.

Associates Ideas:

- Take part in a veteran job fair by organizing or working at an informational table. Other opportunities include helping implement a Legion-sponsored job fair and/or co-hosting a Legion Family information table at a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation-sponsored job fair. Additionally, Auxiliary members may initiate and host a job fair for veterans in their community.
 - Serve as a career e-mentor for women veterans.
 - Host an informational table at a local job fair.

4. Enroll Auxiliary members as VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers at VA health care facilities.

Ideas: All In

- If you live near a VA facility, become a regular VAVS volunteer and invite others to become VAVS volunteers with you.
- Enter all of your VAVS hours into the VAVS tracking system. Note: VA Healthcare facilities volunteer hour tracking system is different from the tracking utilized for ALA hour bars. Please keep track of your individual hours if you are some non-schedule volunteer hours. Report to your VA&R Chairman.

VA Facilities

- Lake City VA Medical
- Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville
- North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health
- Bay Pines VA Healthcare System
- Miami VA Healthcare System
- Orlando VA Medical Center
- James A Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa
- West Palm Beach VAMC
- For more sites
- www.va.gov/directory/guide/state.asp

5. If there is not a VA hospital close to your community. Find opportunities for Auxiliary members to serve veterans in your area. These hours will count toward your Service to Veterans pin and hour bars.

Service to Veterans recognizes volunteers who provide service to veterans, service members and their families outside a VAMC. Volunteers conduct projects and work for military/veterans and/or families from their homes and in their communities. Service to Veterans volunteers maintain their own recordkeeping and dollars spent. The Service to Veterans pin has been designed to reflect the work of those who volunteer in their communities and at home for veterans. Hour bars, which attach to the pin, are also available to earn. More information may be in the *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers* available online for download at www.alaforveterans.org. To purchase a printed copy, please visit www.emblem.legion.org.

Ideas: For Reps

- Become the catalyst to find needs and encourage members to help veterans in their community
- Read the *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers*
- Help a veteran use the Internet.

- Organize and volunteer to transport for veterans to assist them with essential errands or medical appointments; many live far from a VA facility and shouldn't be driving if they don't feel well.
- Contact the Legion Service Officer at your post and offer to be on the list of people to call when a military family needs help.
- Report your Service to Veterans hours to your unit VA&R chairman community.
- Compile and record hours provided by your members.
- Coordinate with your Public Relations Chairman to keep them informed of the work your unit members are doing for veterans. Write articles to the paper to keep your community informed of activities that your unit is doing.

6. Transitioning back to civilian life is one of the biggest challenges veterans face today. Educate yourself about resources so you can help veterans access all their VA benefits, not just health care. Work with your local American Legion Post Service Officer.

Planning Ideas:

- Coordinate with local American Legion posts to identify the local Service Officer or see list at www.legion.org/serviceofficers.
- Help eligible veterans attain benefits through referrals.
- Have available used clothing/suits to assist Women Veterans looking for jobs.
- Encourage eligible veterans to use the VA health care system and its services, including hospitals, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Vet Centers, etc.
 - www.legion.org/systemworthsaving.
- **Resource:**
 - VA Health Care Hotline for women veterans
 - 1-855-VA-Women (1-855-829-6636); explore.va.gov/health-care

7. Assist and support caregivers of veterans.

Viewpoints:

- Familiarize yourself with the service of the VA caregiver support program.
- Familiarize yourself with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network.
- Assist a friend in need.
- Volunteer as a VA Voluntary Service, supporting caregivers, if the VA health care system closest to you offers such volunteer opportunity.

Additional Information

Welcome Home Celebrations

Provide assistance to your local VA health care system in supporting returning service members and their families in the community. VA supports this initiative by providing information about the opportunities available to them through the VA. Every VA health care system sponsors welcome home celebrations in their facilities and community.

National Salute to Veterans

This initiative salutes America's heroes, the more than 98,000 veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who are cared for every day in VA Medical Centers during the week of **February 14** annually.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Reporting

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: Deadlines and Submission Requirements:

Take the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or your Unit has done for your Veteran has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps, to inform the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

1. Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
2. Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
3. Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Program Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet may be found on the VA&R committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did the units participate in the caregiver support program?
- Describe any exceptional efforts members made in earning their Service to Veterans hours.
- What assistance did units give at a stand down in your department? What did units learn about hosting a stand down? What went well; what would they do differently?

Mid-Year Reports

- Mid-Year reports reflect the activities of your unit. Each unit VA&R chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **December 1, 2018** to the District VA&R chairman,
- District VA&R chairman please mail narrative report to Department chairman by **December 15, 2018**.

Year-End Reports

- Annual reports reflect the activities of your unit. Each unit VA&R chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **April 1, 2019** to the District VA&R chairman.
- District mail narrative report by **April 15, 2019** to the Department VA&R chairman.

HOW DO I WRITE A NARRATIVE

Narrative essay writing can be more fun than writing other kinds of essays simply because they are far more open to your interpretation. Essentially, writing a narrative essay is the same as writing a story, except the story you're telling is true.

- Prepare to write your narrative essay

Before you write, take some steps to decide what you're writing about and how you will tell the story.

- Brainstorm ideas. No one wants to read a boring story, and certainly you don't want to write one. Come up with a few ideas that fit the parameters of your assignment first, and decide which one is most appealing to write. It will almost certainly be the same as the most appealing one to read, too.
- Decide on an angle and create an outline. If you're writing an essay about your first dog, for example, will you focus on describing a single memory, or will you write about the entire time you had him? Decide on how you will write your narrative and make an outline. This may seem like a trivial step, but if you sit down to write your essay without any direction, that sloppiness will reflect in your writing.
- Include all story-telling elements

Once you've created your outline and are ready to write, remember that you are narrating, you are telling a story in essay format. Therefore your essay should contain all the elements of a story.

- Create a setting. Whether your narrative essay takes place in your childhood home or at an ice skating rink, let the reader know where and when your story takes place. Feel free to use colorful language to paint a picture in your reader's mind.
- Give enough detail about characters to allow your readers to have an opinion. Most stories are ultimately about the characters in them, so you'll want to describe just enough about each character to let your reader decide what he or she thinks of that character. Don't overdo it, though: leave it to the reader to make his or her own decision. Don't tell your reader what to think of anyone.
- Let the plot drive itself. Very simply put, tell the story. Don't rush anything along, explain too much about any plot point, and just tell it like it is.
- Review and revise

The first draft will almost always need lots of correction and revision. Take a little time away from the first draft, a few days if you can but even as little as fifteen minutes is helpful, and then come back to your draft.

- Edit for plot consistency, sloppiness, structure and overall feel. It will help to have a friend involved as a second set of eyes. Read through your essay out loud to be able to immediately detect mistakes.
- Proofread for small grammar errors, misspellings, typos, etc.

**American Legion Auxiliary
Veterans Affair & Rehabilitation
Unit Mid-Year Report
2018 – 2019**

Unit # _____ Unit President's Name _____

Chairman's Name: _____ Phone # _____

1. How many members participated in Caregiver Support? _____
2. Describe any exceptional efforts members made in earning their Service to Veterans Hours. _____.
3. How many members participated in or organize a Stand Down. _____
4. What went well _____
5. What would they have done differently? _____
6. Total hours members volunteered _____
7. Total dollars spent _____
8. Total number of Veterans/military assisted _____

Unit VA&R Chairman, please include a narrative with the above information to District VA&R Chairman by **December 1, 2018**

**American Legion Auxiliary
Veterans Affair & Rehabilitation
District Mid-Year Report
2018 – 2019**

District # _____ District Chairman's Name _____

Chairman's Email: _____ Phone # _____

1. How many Units participated in Caregiver Support? _____
2. How many units did exceptional efforts in earning their Service to Veterans Hours

3. How many units participated in or organize a Stand Down. _____
4. What went well _____
5. What would the units do differently? _____
6. Total hours units volunteered _____
7. Total dollars units spent _____
8. Total number of Veterans/military assisted _____

District VA&R Chairman, please include a narrative with the above information to Department VA&R Chairman by **December 15, 2018**.

**American Legion Auxiliary
Veterans Affair & Rehabilitation
Unit Year-End Report
2018 – 2019**

Unit # _____ Unit President's Name _____

Chairman's Name: _____ Phone # _____

1. How many members participated in Caregiver Support? _____
2. Describe any exceptional efforts members made in earning their Service to Veterans Hours. _____.
3. How many members participated in or organize a Stand Down. _____
4. What went well _____
5. What would they have done differently? _____
6. Total hours members volunteered _____
7. Total dollars spent _____
8. Total number of Veterans/military assisted _____
9. How many members Supported our Female Veteran “**All in for Women Veterans**”

10. How many members donated to the “**VIP Women Veterans**” _____

Unit VA&R Chairman, please include a narrative with the above information to District VA&R Chairman by **April 1, 2019**.

**American Legion Auxiliary
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
District Year - End Report
2018 – 2019**

District # _____ District Chairman's Name _____

Chairman's Email: _____ Phone # _____

1. How many Units participated in Caregiver Support? _____
2. How many units did exceptional efforts in earning their Service to Veterans Hours.
_____.
3. How many units participated in or organize a Stand Down. _____
4. What went well _____
5. What would the units do differently? _____
6. Total hours units volunteered _____
7. Total dollars units spent _____
8. Total number of Veterans/military assisted _____
9. Total units Supported our Female Veterans n "**All in for Women Veterans**":

10. Total units donated to the "**VIP Women Veterans**" _____

District VA&R Chairman, please include a narrative with the above information to Department VA&R Chairman by **April 15, 2019**.