

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Programs Action Plan

2019-2020

Tanna Shepherd Chairman

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

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of veterans, military and their families.

What Can You Do?

1. Serve veterans and their families as volunteers at VA health care facilities through VA Voluntary Service (VAVS)

- If you live near a VA facility become a regular VAVS volunteer
 - VA medical centers
 - State veteran homes
 - Fisher houses
 - Other VA health care locations
- Invite others to become a VAVS volunteer
- Track all your volunteer hours

There isn't a VA hospital close to your community? Find other opportunities to serve veterans in your area. These hours will count toward your Service to Veterans pin and hour bars. Our Service to Veterans Chairman will have more details on how you can help.

- 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.
 - Help a veteran use the internet
 - Supply postage for local veterans in nursing homes or assisted living facilities.
 - Organize a clothing drive.
 - Organize transportation for veterans to assist them with essential errand
 - Sew quilts for the Quilts of Valor Foundation
 - Buy school supplies, throw a baby shower, or send care packages to military kids who are headed to college.
 - Find out what is needed and volunteer

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

- Help organize a job fair. This can be done in conjunction with a stand down.
- Mentor female veterans in their job search
- Volunteer to help with a Habitat for Humanity, specifically if house build is supported by the American Legion.

3. Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies. National Veterans Creative Art Festival (NVCAF)

- Raise funds to support this worthy cause
 - Raffles
 - Bake sales
- Donate art supplies to a VA facility
- Volunteer at local creative arts festivals

Our Creative Arts Chairman will have more information and details on how you can help with this program.

4. 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.

- Coordinate with local American Legion post to identify the local service officer.
- Help eligible veterans to use the VA health care system and its services including hospitals, Community Based Outpatient Clinics, Vet Center, etc.
- Invite the local or county service officer to be a guest speaker at meeting a unit
- Participate in and encourage veterans and their family members to participate in townhall meetings organized by The American Legion. Visit the website: www.legion.org/systemworthsaving

5. Assist and support caregivers of Veterans

- Familiarize yourself with the service of the VA caregiver support program
- Familiarize yourself with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network
- Become a veteran caregiver peer support trainer or volunteer.
- Become a Legacy Corps AmeriCorps member
- Volunteer as a VA Voluntary Service volunteer support caregiver if the VA health care system closest to you offers such volunteer opportunity.

6. Assist in activities that help Homeless Veterans

- Give a helping hand to the Legion homeless veteran coordinator in the Department of Indiana and offer to assist that coordinator in responding to request for assistance from homeless veterans or homeless veteran service providers
- Cochet hats, scarves or mittens to be distributed to homeless veterans
- Host or volunteer at homeless veterans' stand downs events where homeless veterans receive free goods and services such as haircuts and medical exams
- Contact your local VA health care center to see if they participate in VA Project Challenge. Project Challenge offers health care to homeless veterans. See if they need personal care items to give to homeless veterans. Make sure they are well stocked with coffee and snacks.
- Compile blessing bags to give local homeless shelter to distribute to homeless veteran. They can also be given to police departments and other organizations that work with homeless veterans.
- Create a "Tree of Warmth" by collecting scarves, mittens, hats, and attaching them to a tree in a location the homeless frequent. Include a sign that says

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, buddy baskets
- Purchasing or securing household items or furniture

Additional Information:

Welcome Home Celebrations

Provide assistance to your local VA health care system in supporting returning servicemembers 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

The initiative salutes America's hero's, 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.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. Homeless Veterans Coalition: www.nchv.org
2. Other "How to Sheets" can be found at ALAforVeterans.org
3. Quilts of Valor: www.govf.org
4. VA Homeless Programs: www.va.gov/homeless/
5. HUD Homeless Assistance Program:
https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/homeless/programs
6. On-Call: Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers
www.Legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook
7. The American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Creative Activities Action Guide,
www.ALAforVeterans.org
8. The American Legion Family Support Network: [www.legion.org/family support](http://www.legion.org/family_support)
9. National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov
10. The national VA & R Committee Facebook group, search ALA Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)
11. Your Department and/or national VA&R committee members (see VA&R program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for National committee members contact information)
12. See Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A guide for Volunteers (available through emblem sales) or download online at www.alaforveterans.org
13. Elizabeth Dole Foundation -www.elizabethdolefoundation.org

VA & R Reporting

Mid-Year Narrative from the Unit chairman to the District chairman are due December 1, 2019.
Reports from the District chairman to the Department chairman are due December 15, 2019.

Year – End Report Forms from the Unit chairman to the District chairman are due April 15, 2020. Reports from the District chairman to the Department chairman are due April 27, 2020.

Please submit a Narrative with your year-end report form and please include pictures.

Taking the time to share the information on the impact members have made on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

VA & R Awards

National

If applying for a National award, please go to www.alaforveterans.org to get details.

A National award application **MUST** be filled out **EXACTLY** as National request.

It must be sent on time and to the correct committee member.

Each award application must include the cover sheet found in the programs action plan.

Service to Veterans

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program

- **Deadline: June 1, 2020**
- **Send to national division chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 pm EST on the deadline listed above.**

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) support recognition

NVCAF Award: NVCAF Support Recognition

- **Deadline: July 31, 2020**
- **Send donations to the ALA Foundation to National Headquarters**

Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)

National Award: VAVS Volunteer of the Year/ALA NAC Nominee

- **Deadline: November 1, 2019**
- **Submitted by the chiefs of voluntary service department chairman to the national VAVS deputy**

Member Award: 10,000 Hour Volunteer Service

- **Deadline: March 31, 2020**
- **Verification of hours must be mailed or emailed to National Headquarters by the first Friday in June**

Member Award: 20,000 Hour Volunteer Service

- **Deadline: March 31, 2020**
- **Verification of hours must be mailed or emailed to National Headquarters by the first Friday in June**

Individual Recognition Award: Volunteer Recruitment & Service Department

- **Deadline: March 31, 2020**

Individual Recognition Award: 100 percent VAVS meeting Attendance

- **Awarded to each representative and deputy who has 100 percent attendance to VAVS committee meetings at her assigned facility.**

James H. Parke Scholarship

- **Deadline: November 1, 2019**
- **See www.va.gov for information on VAVS, James H. Parke Scholarship**

Department

Louise Hyde Hospital Monetary Award: Best narrative report from a Unit based on work accomplished in a hospital submitted by a Unit to the Department Chairman by June 1st, 2020.

Nancy Gunning Monetary Award: District with the best hands -on activities held at a VA or State Hospital submitted to the Department Chairman by June 1st, 2020.

Chairman Personal Award: To the Unit with the best year-end VA&R narrative report

Chairman Personal Award: To the District with the best year-end VA&R narrative report

Chairman Personal Award: To the Junior Unit with the best year-end VA&R narrative report

Tanna Shepherd
V A & R Chairman
15283 W. 150 N.
Dugger In. 47848
Cellphone: 812-243-5248
Email: shep@joink.com