



SERVICE TO VETERANS

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Service to Veterans is a component of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program which promotes the American Legion Auxiliary mission to enhance the lives of veterans, servicemembers and their families.

Service to Veterans focuses specifically on direct service to any veteran not in a VA Medical Center and who is not a relative of the member who is providing the service.

Whether organizing a stand down, assembling care packages/tray favors/greeting cards, assisting with a veteran's burial or graved site upkeep, sewing, cooking, or shopping for active-duty military/veterans and/or their families, member volunteers are at the heart of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program structure.

Service to Veterans Volunteers are American Legion Auxiliary members who provide service to veterans outside a VAMC.

***Note:** VA Healthcare facilities' volunteer-hour-tracking system is different from the tracking utilized for ALA hour bars. Hours volunteering at a VA center are not to be counted as part of Service to Veterans hours.*

Most members do not live close to a VA hospital, so what can be done?

Units:

- Identify veterans/servicemembers who live in the area or at local nursing/assisted care facilities.
- Determine needs and encourage members to help veterans/military families in the community.
- Promote volunteer opportunities available in community settings or from home.
- Distribute information to members to help them understand the opportunities to volunteer through ALA's Service to Veterans program, and how to report such service hours.
- Sponsor informational programs and recruitment tables at meetings, post and unit functions and at community events.
- Utilize and share Department and National website information, District, County and/or Unit newsletters and other forms of media.
- Post information and events promoting Service to Veterans to a social media page.
- Organize transportation to assist veterans with essential errands or medical appointments.
- Supply postage for local veterans in nursing homes or assisted living facilities.
- Provide hospitality for a job fair for veterans.
- Buy school supplies or throw a baby shower for a military family.
- Send care packages to military kids who are headed to college.
- Contact members, including those who never or only occasionally attend meetings and events; invite them to participate for specific limited duration projects that would help area veterans.
- Coordinate with local quilt shops to help sponsor a quilting event in support of Quilts of Valor.
- Host a unit event with members and Juniors to make tie blankets for veterans.
- Educate members and community partners about volunteer opportunities available at VA medical centers, state veterans' homes, Fisher Houses, and other VA health care locations.
- Invite the local, county or state Service Officer to be the guest speaker at a unit/county event.
- Compile and record Service to Veterans hours provided by members.

Members

(Volunteers maintain their own record keeping and dollars spent using the forms attached):

- Check with the unit or post for opportunities to serve area veterans.
- Write articles/letters to the editor telling what unit members are doing for veterans.
- Visit home bound veterans or veterans in care facilities.
- Read to and/or write letters for veterans.
- Help a veteran use the Internet.
- Sew quilts or host a quilting party for the Quilts of Valor Foundation. For more information, visit www.govf.org/.
- Assist with yard work or housework.
- Cook or bake and deliver to veterans or military families.
- Care for a veteran to give the caretaker a break or some free time.
- Contact the Legion Service Officer at the post and offer to be on the list of people to call when a Veteran or military family needs help or transportation.
- Learn about resources to help veterans access all their VA benefits, not just health care.
- Contact legislators with veterans/military concerns/issues to be addressed.
- Report "Service to Veterans" hours to the unit VA&R chairman or Department chairman.

"Service to Veterans" recognizes volunteers who provide service to veterans, service members and their families outside a VAMC. Time and money spent serving area veterans count toward "Service to Veterans" pins and hour bars. 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.

Service to Veterans Member Award:

Hour Bar Recognition for Service to Veterans Volunteers -

Volunteers are recognized when specific hour milestones are reached: 50, 100, 300, 500, and 1,000. After the first 1,000-hour bar is awarded, the next bar will be earned in 1,000-hour increments up to 20,000 hours. Hour bars are also offered in increments of 25,000 and 30,000 hours. After achieving 35,000 hours ALA National Headquarters will issue a separate Lifetime Service to Veterans pin.

In addition to earning pins and bars, take time to record a favorite story about the positive impact as a result of member and/or unit activities/projects to serve veterans and submit to the unit VA & R chairman for award entries. Shared stories help tell the world "who we are, what we do, and why we matter" and the unit could receive the "Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program" award. The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words. Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc. to enhance the story.

Resources:

1. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers is available online for download at www.alaforveterans.org. To purchase a printed copy, please visit www.emblem.legion.org.
2. Department Service to Veterans and VA & R Programs on website: www.amlegionauxwi.org
3. VA Health Care Hotline for women veterans 1-855-VA-Women (1-855-829-6636) explore.va.gov/health-care/Unit/Department

Mid-Year Reports

There are no required Mid-Year reports this year. However, if you would like to keep me informed of your activity, please send me a report that reflects the program work of units and its members. Email a short narrative report and include any pictures to ALA Department Service to Veterans Chairman maggieg4ala@gmail.com.

As part of the narrative report, please include applicable answers to the following questions or give details of other acts of service provided to a/the Veteran/s:

- How did the unit/members provide support to veterans, their caregivers and/or military families?
- What unique event/project did your unit/members do to support/celebrate our veterans?
- Describe exceptional efforts members made earning their Service to Veterans hours.
- Did your unit/members hold or participate in a Stand Down.
 - What did the unit/members learn about hosting a Stand Down?
 - What went well; what would be done differently?
- Did you include Junior members in a project that involved service to veterans?
- What was your most effective way to provide service to veterans/military?

Year-End Reports

Annual reports, **due on April 15, 2023**, reflect the program work of units and members. Submit "Service to Veterans" hours and narratives about projects and activities members participated in while serving our veterans and/or our military and please include pictures. Forward to: maggieg4ala@gmail.com.

Help the unit compete for the "Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program" award. The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words. Include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc. to enhance the story. Complete the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet by published deadlines and provide details/examples about the activity. Submit this report to Department VA&R Chairman Maggie Geiger at maggieg4ala@gmail.com.

Additional Resources:

- How to Organize a Job Fair for Veterans and/or Military and Veteran Spouses www.uschamber.com/hiringourheroes / www.ementorprogram.org/militaryspouse-ementor/
- The American Legion and Habitat for Humanity Volunteer involvement toolkit - www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/habitat.pdf
- VA Caregiver Support - www.caregiver.va.gov/
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation - www.elizabethdolefoundation.org
- Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network - milvetcaregivernetwork.org



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

Service, Not Self

2022-2023 SERVICE TO VETERANS VOLUNTEER AWARD

****DO NOT LIST COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS****

50-hour pins and attachable hour bars for 100, 300, 500, 1,000 volunteer hours increasing in increments of 1,000 hours up to 20,000 will be awarded to qualifying applicants. After 20,000 hours, increments increase to 5,000 hours (ie 25000, 30,000, 35,000). Lifetime Service to Veterans pin is awarded after 35,000 hours. Hours are recorded each year and continue to accrue with the appropriate award being distributed.

Note: In the 2021-2022 hours claimed have been changed:

- If you are a caregiver of a veteran that lives with you, you may claim 10 hours a week.
- If you are a caregiver of a veteran that does not live with you (ie nursing home) you may claim 5 hours a week.

**Please mail this completed form NO LATER THAN APRIL 15, 2023 to:
Department Headquarters, Attn: Andrea Stoltz
PO Box 140, Portage WI 53901**

****Awards will be mailed to the Unit President no later than August 31st ****

Unit City Location: _____

Unit #: _____

Date: _____

Dist #: _____

EXAMPLES OF COUNTABLE VOLUNTEER SERVICE TO VETERANS HOURS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Volunteer at any VA facility or Camp American Legion | Make and send/deliver tie blankets and/or afghans to veterans |
| Help wounded warriors | Create and donate items from VA&R pattern book |
| Help elderly veterans at home | Volunteer to call Bingo or serve snacks at Veterans' facility |
| Provide transportation for a veteran | Assemble and send pocket flags to active-duty military |
| Distribute poppies – report amount collected | Send letters, cards and packages to soldiers |
| Call on local businesses to put out a poppy can | Make and send Camo quilts/deliver Quilts of Valor |
| Record veteran histories/assist Post with their history | Create and send Toasty Toes to soldiers |
| Raise/Donate money for the Veterans Creative Arts Festival | Donate to the USO |
| Assist with fundraising events for local unit or post | Buy Girl Scout cookies and send to soldiers |
| Assist with veterans' job fairs | Shop for and prepare care packages |
| Attend or help with a Memorial/Veterans Day program | Write emails, letters, or contact legislators about military issues |
| Make tray favors for nursing homes on patriotic holidays | Help with send-offs, stand-downs, and welcome home events |
| Give gifts and cards to Veterans in nursing homes | |

Qualifying Member Information (MEMBER ID# REQUIRED) **DO NOT LIST COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER HOURS** LIST NAMES ALPHABETICALLY		# of Hours Volunteered for 2022-2023
Name:	Member ID#	
Name:	Member ID#	
Name:	Member ID#	
Name:	Member ID#	
Name:	Member ID#	

Person submitting this form: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____



Service to Veterans Tally Sheet for Volunteers

Name _____ SR _____ JR _____ Non-Affiliated _____

DATE	SERVICE	HOURS	\$ VALUE

TOTALS Dollars _____ Hours _____

