



HOW TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

How to Increase Donations to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

Committee: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Contact Information for Questions: va&r@alaforveterans.org

Objective: Support rehabilitation of veterans through art therapy by fulfilling the Auxiliary's annual financial obligation as a presenting co-sponsor of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF).

Step-by-Step Instructions:

- Check with your department VA&R chairman to see what your unit goal is, and develop a plan to meet that goal.
- Once you have your goal, share it with your unit and keep them informed about your fundraising progress.
- Assign a small committee to ask local businesses for in-kind donations for a special NVCAF raffle. With the items collected, you can create special baskets to raffle. Don't forget to ask your friends and family to purchase raffle tickets. Take the February 2013 issue of the *Auxiliary* magazine. Take the attached fact sheet with you to help explain the festival. When you visit local businesses, be sure your committee is well informed. For additional information visit www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov/.
- Hold your raffle at a special fundraising dinner for NVCAF. Invite the local business leaders who contributed and community leaders to the event (mayor, police and fire chief, Chamber of Commerce plus the others who are important in your community).
- If you have a veterans hospital or veterans home in your area, check with your hospital or home representative to see if they have local Creative Arts program. Check to see if they have any medal winners (gold, silver and bronze). If they do, invite the participants to your fundraiser and ask them to bring their art and talent. You might ask if they are willing to donate a piece of art for your fundraiser. Perhaps the performing arts medal winners would provide entertainment.
- Don't forget to include your Legion Family in your event. The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion are a great help, and getting them involved helps build a strong Family relationship.
- Remember to promote your event. Send information to your local newspaper, write a letter to the editor, and invite local reporters and news stations to your event.
- A great and simple way to raise funds for NVCAF is to incorporate it into your poppy program. Check with your department VA&R chairman or Poppy chairman for your department's approved dates to distribute poppies (i.e., Memorial Day, Veterans Day, etc.). Select a small group of volunteers who are willing to distribute poppies one day just for the NVCAF. Select a good spot—Target, Wal-Mart, local market, liquor store or anywhere in your community that has lots of traffic. Be sure to get approval from the location before you go so your hard work will be successful. Bring materials with you that reference NVCAF and what it does for participants.
- Does your local veterans hospital or veterans home have a Creative Arts Festival? If not, it's a great opportunity for your unit members to work with your local VA hospital or home to get one started.

How to Facilitate a Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival how-to sheet, found in the Members Only Area on the VA&R program page of the National website, will help you get started. Work with your hospital representative to see how you can get this project started. If you don't know who your representative is, check with your department VA&R chairman. This year, a grant fund has been set up to help your local VA hospital or VA home with its Creative Arts Festival and/or workshop. The fund is also available for hospitals that want to start a new local Creative Arts Festival or Creative Arts Workshop. You can find the application for the mini-grant www.ALAforVeterans.org.

- Once you get your local Creative Arts Festival started, or if you have one in your area, why not host a mini Creative Arts Festival at your post home or at a facility at your hospital/home? Your Unit can supply art supplies, volunteers and refreshments. Be sure to work with the recreational therapist at your local hospital/home, and don't forget that you can use poppy funds for this event.
- Don't forget to promote your local Creative Arts Festival to all veterans in your area (i.e., letter to the editor, flyers in local posts, your VA hospital/home—just to name a few).
- Did you know that awards are presented to departments, Units and individuals that donate money to NVCAF? Awards are presented for Bronze (\$1,000 to \$2,499), Silver (\$2,500 to \$4,999), and Gold (\$5,000 to \$14,999) by close of books of the administrative year.
- As unit chairman, you can create a special awards program for your members' participation in the Creative Arts program. Your awards program might include awards for different levels of contributions or the most creative fundraiser.
- The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is a week of learning, exploring fellowship and celebration of the healing power of the arts. Each dollar you raise helps a veteran in his or her quest for healing. Be creative in your fundraising and please pass on your success and struggles to your department VA&R chairman with a cc to your division chairman.