



THE AMERICAN LEGION

VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE

VAVS

HANDBOOK



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PREFACE

Securing, protecting and improving benefits earned by our nation's veterans has been a tradition of The American Legion since its founding in 1919. Legionnaires are committed veterans advocates and dedicated volunteers. In April 1946, representatives of The American Legion were joined by colleagues from several other veteran and welfare organizations at a historic meeting with Veterans Administration officials in Washington, D.C. The participants recommended approval of an ambitious plan that called for community volunteer program participation in activities beneficial to veterans using Veterans Administration medical facilities. The plan evolved into what is now known as the Veterans Administration Voluntary Service (VAVS).

Each year, thousands of American Legion volunteers give hundreds of thousands of hours in service to America's veterans. The American Legion's volunteer hours account for millions of dollars annually in savings to the VA and Legionnaires also contribute many hundreds of thousands of dollars in gifts and donations.

GENERAL

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This handbook is based on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations and outlines operational procedures for The American Legion's Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service program.

The guidelines and suggestions contained in this handbook are intended to assist American Legion volunteers who are engaged in VAVS volunteer activities. Specific challenges relating to details at the volunteer work site must be discussed with the VA supervisor or the Voluntary Service Program Manager at that particular VA medical facility.

DEFINITIONS

The American Legion Without Compensation (WOC) Volunteers: Are Legionnaires who volunteer to participate in the VAVS program but do not receive monetary payments or any other form of compensation not authorized by VA policy.

The American Legion Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers: Are Legionnaires who volunteer to participate in the VAVS program on a recurring basis and are assigned a regular schedule. Regular schedule volunteers are under VA supervision and frequency of participation is determined locally. Individuals are officially authorized to serve on a WOC basis as RS volunteers when the individual has:

- (1) Signed the "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement," as contained in VA Form 10-7055, Application for Voluntary Service;
- (2) Been approved for assignment by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, or designee;
- (3) Participated in required interviews and orientations prescribed by the VA facility; and
- (4) Completed a trial period as established by the VA facility.

The American Legion Occasional Volunteers: Are volunteers serving under the VAVS program who do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers. Prior to VA approving American Legion volunteers to serve as occasional volunteers, they must sign a "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement," as required by VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Chapter 2, Section A, Paragraph 4c. This waiver may be incorporated on VA Form

10-5392, Occasional Volunteers Time Sheet. Other than copies of these signed time sheets, no individual records will be maintained on occasional volunteers.

NOTE: Determination of minimum age for regularly scheduled and occasional volunteers is at the discretion of the facility management.

Student Volunteers: Student volunteers under the age of 18 must have written parental or guardian approval to participate in the VAVS program and must have written authorization for diagnostic and emergency treatment if injured while volunteering. The minimum age for volunteers is determined by the facility management.

NOTE: Post secondary students will not be considered volunteers while receiving academic credit under a formal affiliation agreement.

The American Legion Facility Representative: The American Legion VAVS facility representative is an experienced and knowledgeable Legionnaire who is the official liaison between the medical center and The American Legion in all aspects of the VAVS program. The representative will:

- (1) Assist with improving the VAVS program;
- (2) Provide input to VA staff and the facility VAVS Committee;
- (3) Promote the recruitment of volunteers and the donation of financial and material resources in accordance with facility needs;
- (4) Advise members of the policy and procedures of the organization and facility;
- (5) Assist VA staff when an affiliated volunteer must be removed for cause;
- (6) Attend and participate in meetings of the VAVS Committee;
- (7) Serve as a member of a subcommittee or task force as requested;
- (8) Maintain records and make reports as required by the organization and VA;
- (9) Coordinate activities of the organization with the facility; and
- (10) Delegate responsibility and voting privilege to deputy representatives, as needed.

The American Legion Facility Deputy Representative: Legion facility deputy representatives perform duties as assigned by the facility represen-

tative. Assignments could include record keeping, correspondence, and training Legion members on the policies and procedures of the organization and VA. Deputies attend and participate in VAVS Committee meetings and have voting capabilities in the absence of the facility representative. Deputy representatives may serve on subcommittees and task groups.

NOTE: Local representatives and deputy representatives may represent more than one local VAVS committee with approval of the facility director.

The American Legion Facility Associate Representative: An associate representative is a Legion volunteer who lives in an adjacent state from where the VA facility is located. An Associate Representative does not have voting privileges at VAVS committee meetings except when neither a facility representative nor a deputy representative is present at the meeting and the representative has delegated the associate representative the authority to vote. An American Legion associate representative must hold membership in an American Legion post in the adjacent state.

The American Legion Facility Deputy Associate Representative: A deputy associate representative is a Legion volunteer who lives in an adjacent state similar to an associate representative. Duties consist of those assigned by the associate representative. Deputy associate representatives may participate fully in discussions at facility VAVS committee meetings and be appointed to sub-committees and task groups. The deputy associate representative must hold membership in an American Legion post in the adjacent state.

“Associate representatives” and “deputy associate representatives” are not second-class appointees to VAVS Committees. They are simply members of the organization in an adjacent state who represent veterans from that state who participate in the VAVS program in said facility. They are equal partners of “representatives” and “deputy representatives” in the effort to serve veterans. The fact that the “associate representative” does not have a vote in the VAVS Committee is a matter of order. Organizations on that committee can only have one vote and it is given to the representative of the home state organization.

NOTE: Appointments of associate representative or deputy associate representative to the designation of representative or deputy representative are authorized when the home State organization is not represented. The department adjutant in the state where the associate representative or deputy associate representative resides must approve the certification for appointment.

Once approval is obtained, the form must be submitted to the department adjutant in the state where the VA medical center is located for approval. These appointments must be made with the clear understanding that if the respective home state organization later certifies representation, the previous appointment will revert to associate status.

The American Legion Facility Honorary Representative: An American Legion representative who serves at least 10 years on the VAVS Committee may be appointed by a department to serve as an honorary representative. Honorary representatives will serve as advisors to the committee without vote and should receive all VAVS Committee correspondence, as do the other VAVS Committee members. Honorary representatives may serve as members of task groups; however, they may not hold office.

THE VAVS PLAN

PRINCIPLES OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program is a program managed and operated by the Veterans Health Administration. VHA Handbook 1620.01, *Voluntary Service Procedures* provides the procedures for the operation of a structured volunteer program under the management of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). Volunteers (individuals or groups) are not to be permitted to participate in or conduct a program for patients in a VA facility independent of VA direction, control, and supervision.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE AMERICAN LEGION VAVS PROGRAM

- (1) Attainment of the most effective use of American Legion volunteer resources;
- (2) The coordination and integration of American Legion volunteer assistance into the medical facility patient care program;
- (3) Supplementing the work of VA staff in providing health care services to veterans and their families.

Medical centers and independent outpatient clinics are required to have a VAVS Committee.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ROLE

National Level

At the national level, the VAVS plan provides for a VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC). The Committee is headed by the chief communications officer (chairperson), VHA Central Office, and the director, Voluntary Service Office (deputy chairperson). National organizations, such as The American Legion, provide their members. For more information on this topic, please refer to VHA Handbook 1620.01.

The VAVS NAC meets annually to discuss matters of mutual interest and to submit recommendations for program improvements. The principal work of the committee is carried on during the year by appointed subcommittees and study groups, which present their reports at the annual meeting of the VAVS NAC. The national commander of The American Legion has designated specific members of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission staff to serve as national VAVS representative and deputy national VAVS representative(s). These national Veterans Affairs and Reha-

bilitation Commission staff members represent The American Legion in all aspects of voluntary service in working with VA and other members of the national committee.

The National VAVS representative of The American Legion is the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, and has been designated “The American Legion Nationally Authorized Certifying Official.” In that capacity this official certifies to VA medical center directors the names of Legionnaires selected and recommended by department officials to serve as medical center VAVS representatives, deputy representatives, associate representatives, and deputy associate representatives. As the representative of the National Headquarters of The American Legion, this staff member is responsible for giving advice to the Chairperson of the VAVS NAC in planning volunteer service programs, and providing information about the capabilities and problems of Legion departments in their participation in volunteer assistance programs. The National VAVS representative attends VAVS National Advisory Committee meetings; provides orientation to medical center VAVS representatives, posts and departments regarding policies, objectives, procedures, and study projects; and promotes the selection and certification of qualified VAVS representatives and volunteers. The certifying official coordinates volunteer activities and evaluates Legion participation in volunteer programs through review of the minutes of VAVS NAC meetings and the medical center VAVS representative’s Summary of Annual Joint Review.

To accomplish the large volume of work involved in providing national leadership to The American Legion participation in the VAVS program, the national VAVS representative has at least one deputy national VAVS representative. The national representative and the deputy national representative attend the VAVS NAC meetings and when called upon can serve on the subcommittees and study groups at the request of the Chairman of the VAVS NAC. Both the national VAVS representative and the deputy(ies) review recurring reports and directives to identify and recommend any action necessary by the local facility VAVS representative to strengthen The American Legion’s Voluntary Service assistance program, recommend changes in Legion policies and procedures, or provide essential guidance to departments and posts of The American Legion. Additionally, the deputy prepares material for the annual report of voluntary service activities of The American Legion. The certifying official must be well informed and actively involved in order to identify trends and the need for special growth and expansion of volunteer participation to meet the changing needs of voluntary service in support of VA programs.

State Level

A. (State) Department Adjutant

The department adjutant oversees the VAVS program for their state and ensures that the program operates effectively and efficiently and submits an annual report to the VAVS deputy national representative. The adjutant is also responsible for submitting recommendations of volunteers to serve as VAVS representatives, deputy representatives, associate representatives, and deputy associate representatives.

B. (State) Department VAVS Chairman

The department VAVS chairman is responsible for the overall successful operation of the VAVS program on the state level. This chairman sees that all VAVS representatives and deputy representatives and post commanders are aware of their responsibilities.

Medical Facility Level

At the VA medical facility level, The American Legion's facility representative serves as the official liaison between the medical center and The American Legion in all aspects of the VAVS program. The medical facility associate medical center director, or other senior management official, is responsible for the overall voluntary service program, and serves as chairperson of the medical center VAVS committee. The Voluntary Service Program Manager administers and operates the program under the supervision of the associate medical center director or other senior management official, and serves as deputy chairman of the committee. The membership of the medical center VAVS committee includes one certified local representative and up to three certified local deputy representatives (exclusive of satellite clinic appointments) of each voluntary organization, which is a member of the VAVS NAC. The number of deputy VAVS representatives is based on the demonstrated need of the organization. Where appropriate, an associate representative and a deputy associate representative may be included on the rolls of the committee. For more information on this topic, please refer to "VHA Handbook 1620.01."

Each VAVS representative of The American Legion is the connecting link between the medical facility and all of the Legion posts which have members participating in that medical facility voluntary service program. The VAVS representative works with the medical facility staff in planning the best use of The American Legion's resources in the community. The VAVS committee holds regularly scheduled meetings quarterly, at which time the need for volunteers, as determined by using VA staff services, is brought to the attention of VAVS representatives. Each VAVS representative is respon-

sible for bringing this information to the attention of the local Legion posts and assists in recruiting volunteers to fill the volunteer needs. Special VAVS committee meetings are held as determined by the chairperson.

The main purpose of the medical center VAVS committee is to coordinate the plans and policies for community volunteer efforts, bringing these efforts together, and making them a meaningful part of the VAVS program for veteran patients.

DEPARTMENT VAVS CHAIRMAN ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES

As the principal spokesperson of The American Legion for the state, the Department VAVS chairman is certified by the Department Adjutant and assists the Adjutant with:

- (1) Developing and maintaining a database of department VAVS representatives and deputy representatives.
- (2) Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with American Legion VAVS representatives and deputy representatives, VAVS program managers/chiefs, local post members, the public, other governmental jurisdictions, contractors, and community agencies.
- (3) Ensuring VAVS representatives and deputy representatives are aware of their responsibilities.
- (4) Coordinating with national and the state/department level to effectively distribute VAVS program information.
- (5) Submitting annual Department VAVS Summary to National Headquarters with recommendations for program enhancement or improvement.

QUALIFICATIONS

To be effective, the department VAVS chairman must have the following basic qualifications:

- At least two years of related Voluntary Service experience and a genuine interest in the welfare of veterans.
- Experience in how to become a volunteer, recruitment and retention strategies, VAVS hospital quarterly meetings, and/or experience as a VA hospital VAVS representative or deputy representative.
- Sufficient time available to attend department VAVS functions and build relationships with VAVS Program Managers, American Legion VAVS representatives and deputy representatives, local post communities/members, the public, other governmental jurisdictions, contractors, and National Headquarters.

- Leadership ability to obtain the respect and support of the members of the state/department represented, and to promote and organize volunteer activities regularly.
- Ability to effectively use a personal computer, Microsoft Office software, email, and the internet to accomplish job functions.
- Current registration as a VAVS volunteer, with completed training on TB testing, Identification, signed Statement of Commitment and Understanding, HIPAA Privacy Act and current Personal Identification Verification Card (PIV).

MEDICAL CENTER VAVS REPRESENTATIVES ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the principal spokesperson of The American Legion at the medical center, the certified medical center VAVS representative is personally responsible for:

- (1) Attending all scheduled VAVS committee meetings regularly or arranging for the certified medical center VAVS deputy representative to take the representative's place.

NOTE: Organizations will be removed from the VAVS committee when none of the certified members is in attendance at three consecutive meetings. Membership can be renewed with a letter of certification to the facility director indicating the attendance requirement will be met. Notification to the respective national certifying official is required when an organization is removed from a local VAVS committee;

- (2) Actively serving on VAVS subcommittees and discussion and work/study groups;
- (3) Providing representation at VAVS committee meetings for all of The American Legion Posts from their Department which have members participating in the medical facility's volunteer program;
- (4) Keeping themselves and the medical center Voluntary Service Program Manager informed on the policies, procedures and activities of the posts and the Department they represent;
- (5) Informing the posts and their Department about the medical facility, its policies, procedures, and patient treatment programs, and mailing copies of the minutes of medical facility VAVS meetings to key members of the posts and the Department;
- (6) Inviting, or arranging for the invitation of, officials of their Department and the posts to attend special events, orientation tours, and volunteer recognition ceremonies at the medical facility;
- (7) Sharing their responsibilities with, seeking the advice of, and keeping the medical center VAVS deputy representative(s) fully informed;
- (8) Recruiting, screening and training Legion volunteers from the posts they represent;

- (9) Arranging for speakers from the medical facility to appear before Post and Department meetings; and
- (10) Participating in the VAVS Annual Joint Review (AJR) (see section VIII of this handbook as well as “VHA Handbook 1620.01” for more information on Annual Joint Reviews).

QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be effective, the medical center’s American Legion VAVS representative must have the following basic qualifications:

- Sufficient time available to attend the VAVS committee meetings regularly, participate in VAVS committee activities, and a genuine interest in the welfare of veterans.
- Leadership ability to obtain the respect and support of the members of the Legion posts they represent and to promote and organize volunteer activities regularly.
- Knowledge of the policies, organizational structure, operational procedures and manpower resources of The American Legion posts and Department they represent.
- Ability to comprehend and explain to The American Legion post they represent and to their Department the VAVS program, the need for volunteers and the role of The American Legion in aiding and carrying out the purposes and attaining the objectives of the VAVS program.
- Initiative and health to engage energetically in all aspects of participation in the VAVS program by The American Legion.
- Official recognition by The American Legion and certification by the nationally authorized certifying official, to act as its spokesperson on the medical center VAVS committee.

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF THE RIGHT LEGIONNAIRE TO SERVE AS A VAVS REPRESENTATIVE

High on the list of criteria for the selection of Legionnaires to serve as VAVS representatives is attendance at VAVS meetings. The failure of certified representatives to attend meetings regularly limits their effectiveness in the work of the medical center VAVS committee, as well as participation of The American Legion in the support of veteran patients. Organizations

will be removed from the VAVS Committee when none of the certified members is in attendance at three consecutive meetings. Membership can be renewed with a letter of certification to the facility director indicating the attendance requirement will be met.

Prior to recommending a Legionnaire as a VAVS representative, the recommending Department official should arrange for a conference of the individual being recommended with the Voluntary Service Program Manager at the medical facility, to be sure that the selectee understands thoroughly what their new assignment entails and what their responsibilities will be. Mutual agreement among the certified VAVS representative, the medical facility Voluntary Service staff, The American Legion Department involved, and the participating posts will do a great deal to enhance the effectiveness of the Legion's contribution to the VA Volunteer Service program.

Since The American Legion, by VA regulations, may not have more than one Department representative as a spokesperson with voting privilege on the medical center VAVS Committee, despite the number of Legion Posts and Legionnaires they represent, it is essential that great care be taken by the Department to select the best qualified Legionnaire available to serve as the medical center VAVS representative. A brief summary of qualifications for a medical center VAVS representative is included in this handbook.

The VAVS representative, deputy representative, associate representative and deputy associate representative are looked upon by the medical facility staff and other members of the medical center VAVS Committee as representatives of the strongest and most influential veterans' organization. They are looked to for advice on methods for improvement in volunteer recruitment, as well as for the effective utilization of community volunteer resources in behalf of veteran patients. By their appearance, conduct, and oral statements, they either enhance or impair the image of The American Legion.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

The Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission is the nationally authorized certifying official of The American Legion. This official is responsible for certifying to the VA medical center Directors the names of Legionnaires, selected and recommended by an appropriate official of the Department, to serve as medical center VAVS representative, deputy representative, associate representative and deputy associate representative.

It is emphasized that certifying action is based primarily on the recommendation submitted by the Department officials. A copy of the certifying

letter to the medical center director will be sent to the Department. VA medical facilities, by VA regulations, are authorized to accept Legionnaires to serve on the VAVS Committee from certification emanating only from the Legion's authorized certifying official.

If a representative becomes ill, moves out of state or wishes to resign, the representative must forward his/her letter of resignation first to the department concerned. Correspondence should not be sent directly to the national authorized certifying official in Washington, DC.

In order to facilitate implementation of the certification program, the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission periodically circulates a Memorandum to Department Adjutants, and Department Service Officers/Rehabilitation Directors, which describes the procedures as outlined above. Sample forms for use by department officials recommending the certification of VAVS representatives and a list of qualifications are attached. The forms include a request for the minimum information needed by the certifying official. A copy of this form is included in the appendix of this handbook. The appointment of VAVS representatives by the Department and certification by the National Certifying Official remain in effect until a request from the Department requesting termination of certification is received by the certifying official.

POST COMMANDER

RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) The commander designates a post VAVS chairman to assist in the coordination of all VAVS activity.
- (2) The commander supports and promotes the VAVS activities at meetings and in newsletters. The commander will provide activity reports to the hospital VAVS representative on the activities of his post.

POST VAVS CHAIRMAN

- (1) The post VAVS chairman will recommend ways for the post to support the veterans based on the information provided by the VAVS representative.
- (2) The post VAVS chairman coordinates all activities with the VAVS representative.
- (3) The post VAVS chairman presents the VAVS program to the post and provides status reports to the members and the VAVS representative.
- (4) The post VAVS chairman provides newsletter articles regarding the activities of the post.

THE VOLUNTEER WORKER

THE VALUE OF THE VOLUNTEER

The key individual in the VAVS program is the volunteer worker. The coordination of all available community volunteer workers at the national and the community level to bring this volunteer effort together, and apply it effectively under the supervision of VA staff in medical facility programs to aid in the motivation and early recovery of veteran patients, is the objective of the VAVS plan. Without individual men, women and youthful members of the community who have a sincere interest, and the time to be of service to others, and for which no monetary payment is expected, there would be no VA Voluntary Service program.

The volunteer worker brings a unique interpersonal contribution to the VA medical care program, which cannot be provided by the other members of the medical facility team. Most significantly, the volunteer reflects the atmosphere of the world outside of the medical facility. The volunteer

represents community interest and happenings, and surrounds the patient with a normal, rather than a medical facility, environment. The volunteer worker creates a bridge between the medical facility and the community. A special closeness tends to develop between the patient and the volunteer, especially where there are similarities in their background.

NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

The need for volunteers is growing with the influx of wounded troops from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many active duty servicemembers have entered the VA health-care system for long-term rehabilitation.

RECRUITMENT GUIDELINES

The most successful recruitment technique has been personal contact by VAVS representatives and medical facility staff members, with potential volunteers at organizational meetings where medical facility needs for volunteers can be pointed out. Concentrated programs for the recruitment of volunteers require increased personal contacts with high schools, churches, senior citizen and youth groups, and radio and television spoken appeals. The programs should stress personal appeals by VAVS representatives at meetings of non-VA affiliated organizations. These presentations should emphasize that the medical facility staff really wants the services of volunteers; that the VAVS volunteer worker is making a sorely needed contribution; that the volunteer's association with VA staff are pleasant; and that the volunteer will receive valuable training, careful placement, and good supervision. Above all, in most instances, the volunteer has a need to be wanted and appreciated. Volunteer participation furnishes opportunities to fill those needs.

RECRUITMENT ASSISTANCE

VA staff members can be enlisted to speak at meetings, conduct orientation programs and give special medical facilities programs and medical facility tours.

The fundamental purpose of programs for recruitment of volunteers is to fill the requests for assistance of the Using Services of the medical facility. Recruitment procedures should stress the nature of the work to be done by volunteers in supplementing the work of the VA full-time staff, in direct and indirect patient care programs. Volunteers are needed in practically every category of medical facility, and in almost every level. Volunteer assignments include satisfying assignment opportunities for men, women, youth, senior citizens, family teams (husband-wife, father-son, mother-daughter, etc.), and assignment opportunities for medical facility-based volunteers and community-based volunteers.

One of the major factors which influenced VA Central Office in its approval of additional deputy medical center VAVS representatives was the need for assistance for VAVS representatives in fulfilling their responsibilities in special aspects of the volunteer activities of the voluntary organizations, such as youth volunteers and community care programs. Deputy representatives provide improved leadership and representation at VAVS Committee meetings, and meaningful participation in the VAVS program.

RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer, having been recruited, has indicated a genuine interest in participating in programs for the betterment of the morale and welfare of veteran patients. The retention of the volunteer, therefore, is of prime importance. The volunteer is dependent on the continuance of his/her feelings of being needed and appreciated by the patients, the medical facility staff and the other volunteers. Evidence that the volunteer is making a needed contribution and that their efforts are being well utilized, is dependent upon his/her correct assignment, proper supervision by VA staff, satisfactory training, and adequate recognition. These factors are primarily under the control of the medical facility, but they should be subjected to continuing evaluations and critical review of the VAVS representative, if the voluntary assistance program is to be successful.

INITIAL SCREENING AND TRAINING

The VAVS representative of The American Legion on the medical center VAVS Committee will screen out any of the individuals recruited who appear obviously unsuited to medical facility volunteer work, and will provide a general VAVS orientation for the individual men and women who are initially selected as potential VAVS volunteer workers. Further screening is accomplished by the medical facility staff during the initial interviews, their orientation and indoctrination.

Prospective volunteers are required to participate in orientation and indoctrination by the medical facility staff, as arranged by the medical center Voluntary Service Program Manager. The orientation includes the medical facility organization, policies bearing directly on the volunteer program, and the volunteer's role in patient care.

Depending on the volunteer's assignment, prospective volunteers must meet all VAVS requirements established by national and local policy. This includes successful completion of any requirements, training and orientation, which may include the following: fire and safety, infection control, TB

testing (PPD), identification, confidentiality/patient rights, patient abuse/sexual harassment, hazardous materials, suspicious/threatening individuals, personal suitability and investigations determinations (VA Form 2280), inventory of background investigations, cyber security training tracking and statement of commitment and understanding, HIPDB Privacy Act training/tracking, varying levels of background checks based on local facility, WOC appointment documentation and Non-PIV card.

CLASSIFICATION OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are interviewed by the Voluntary Service Program Manager and the supervisor of the medical facility service where the volunteer is most interested and will be assigned to a mutually agreeable role. Based on the interview, the individual volunteers are divided into two general groups, Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers and Occasional Volunteers. RS Volunteers have a regularly scheduled assignment, which they carry out under VA supervision. All others are classified as Occasional Volunteers.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will be officially authorized to serve on a “without compensation” (WOC) basis as RS volunteers when they:

- (1) Sign the “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement” as contained in VA Form 10-7055, Application for Voluntary Service.

Volunteers accepted in the VAVS program are considered WOC employees. WOC precludes monetary payments or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy;

- (2) Have been approved for assignment by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, or designee;
- (3) Have participated in required interviews and orientations prescribed by the VA facility;
- (4) Have met all of the necessary volunteer requirements; and
- (5) Completed a trial period as established by the VA facility

OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS

Occasional volunteers are those individuals serving under the VAVS program who do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers. Occasional volunteers must sign a “Waiver of Claims to Remuneration Agreement.”

NOTE: Determination of minimum age for regularly scheduled and occasional volunteers is at the discretion of the facility management.

ASSIGNMENT OF VOLUNTEERS:

The final selection or rejection, and the assignment of volunteers is made by the VA facility staff, based on the medical facility's greatest need for volunteer assistance, the best use of the volunteer's capability and time and the volunteer's area of interest. Changes in assignment are normally made only by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, after thorough coordination with the volunteer and the VA staff supervisor concerned.

Volunteers should understand their assignment and should receive individual supervision from the VA employee responsible. The supervisor is responsible for providing detailed guidance, continuing on-the-job instruction and task assignments.

The volunteer is responsible to report regularly at the time directed, seek the advice of the supervisor whenever in doubt concerning what is to be done, discuss any problems with the supervisor, and keep the supervisor and the Voluntary Service Program Manager informed as to his/her inability to meet a scheduled assignment, if such a situation should arise.

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

In order to provide guidance to the voluntary organizations in the recruitment of volunteers, to aid VA staff members in their orientation and supervision of volunteer workers and to guide volunteers working with patients, the chiefs of the medical facility divisions and services utilizing volunteers prepare volunteer assignment guides which are coordinated with the Voluntary Service Program Manager. These guides contain a description of each "volunteer position" in each Using Division and Service in the medical facility which, includes the title of the position, designation of the VA supervisor by title and service, the duties and responsibilities of the volunteers, the days and hours of duty, any special skills necessary, and the training requirements of the position.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Volunteer assistance is rendered to meet the needs of the medical facility as specifically expressed and supervised by the Using Services of the medical facility. That assistance is considered generally to be provided by individual volunteers. However, much of the volunteer effort is expended by groups of trained volunteers sponsored by the voluntary organizations.

Group activities are supervised by the Using Services of the medical facility and are planned, scheduled, and carefully coordinated by Voluntary Ser-

vice to avoid conflict with other activities of the patient care and treatment program such as bathing, shaving, medications, X-ray, and physical medicine and recreation therapy clinics. Group programs, which are arranged as requested by the treatment staff to meet the patients' needs, must conform to all of the patients as approved by the ward physicians. Activities sponsored by groups include picnics, bingo games, card parties, bowling, dancing, birthday parties, coffee hour, off-station trips, and Holiday parties.

COMMUNITY SERVICE VOLUNTEER

The Department of Veterans Affairs has extended its programs of care beyond the medical facility to the community. Opportunities to serve veterans in the community include volunteering in Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS), Vet Centers, VA national or state veterans cemeteries, Fisher Houses, state veterans homes and community living centers. Some older veterans live alone and need assistance and companionship and volunteers can visit and assist them from their homes.

SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER LOCATIONS

VA Polytrauma System of Care: The VA maintains a polytrauma system of care around the country. These centers are receiving an influx of Iraq and Afghanistan wounded warriors that are treated for traumatic brain injury, amputation, blindness, or other visual impairment, complex orthopedic injuries and mental health concerns. There are many needs these wounded soldiers and their family members have and you can ask your local VAVS program manager how to help. (<http://www.polytrauma.va.gov/>)

VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC): Community Based Outpatient Clinics were designed to improve veterans' access to care by offering primary care in local communities. Volunteer opportunities include: making coffee, answering phones and scheduling appointments. Each CBOC has a VA Administrative officer that can certify your volunteer hours.

Fisher Houses: The Fisher House Foundation offers support and provides lodging for families while they are visiting the hospital for extended periods of time due to patients receiving care. Assistance is needed in donations of paper goods, linens, food, books and videos, assisting in fundraising efforts to support existing houses and to promote development of new Fisher Houses. Please confer with the local VAVS program manager for more information. (<http://www.fisherhouse.org/>)

State Veterans Homes: Volunteers at State Veterans Homes can help plan social events, assist with transportation, direct patient care, provide food

and beverage services and answer phones. State Veterans Homes' volunteers receive the same recognition and credit for volunteer hours as VAVS volunteers. (<http://www.nasvh.org>)

Vet Center: Vet Centers serve veterans and their families including professional readjustment counseling, community education, outreach to special populations, work with community organizations and are a key link between the veteran and other services available within VA. Opportunities to serve veterans include answering phones, making coffee, providing transportation and planning holiday and social activities. (<http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>)

VA Cemeteries: VA Cemeteries provide military funeral honors to those who served. Opportunities for volunteers include rifle salute performances, American flag folding at gravesites, and the annual Wreaths across America placement and retrieval. (<http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/>)

VA Special Events

VA has many major events where volunteer support is needed. Some of these include: National Wheelchair Games, National Golden Age Games, National Creative Arts Festival, National Winter Sports Clinic, Homeless Stand Downs, Annual Red Cross Blood Drive and the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom Welcome Home event celebrations.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

The ever increasing need for both senior and youth volunteers in the care and treatment programs for veteran patients has caused the voluntary organizations to seek greater numbers of potential volunteers in youth groups.

The concerted and joint action of the members of senior citizen groups and garden clubs as well as church, civic, ethnic, social and high school groups and scouting organizations is of significant assistance to the medical facility medical team in providing the human warmth and understanding needed by the veteran patient. It promotes his/her hope during the long and lonely hours of their rehabilitation. The VAVS program provides an opportunity for youth to unite with senior citizens and the handicapped as well as the able-bodied men and women of the community in one integrated program which conveys to the veteran patient the love of the community and its interest in his/her early rehabilitation and return to his/her family and community.

The combination of enthusiasm and ambition of young people with the wisdom of age is of significant benefit in the development of new and effec-

tive programs capable of meeting today's challenge in our medical facilities, Posts, and communities.

VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIPS WITH VA STAFF

The VAVS volunteer, as a participating member of the medical facility team, must abide by all of the rules of the medical facility. These have been established for the welfare of the veteran patient and the enhancement of relationships among the staff. Volunteer workers must seek the advice and direction of the medical facility staff and cooperate fully in the implementation of policies, procedures, and regulations prescribed by the medical center Director. It is essential that the confidence of the patients and the staff be respected and that all aspects of the prescribed treatment programs and individual patient's problems be treated as matters which are strictly within the purview of the professional staff. Volunteers as "without compensation" workers are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a and 38 U.S.C Sections 5701 and 7332). Unlawful release of such information could result in prosecution in a court of law and the imposition of a substantial fine.

The volunteer has the right to be assigned a work task reasonably suited to his/her preference, experience, and education; to receive needed training and direction in the task to be accomplished and periodic refresher in-service training; to be given opportunities for training for greater responsibilities and challenges; to participate in planning pertinent to volunteer programs; and, to be given recognition for work well done.

The relationship between the medical facility staff and the volunteers is one of full partnership. Operational leadership is provided by the staff. However, the frequent turnover of the staff and changes caused by the upgrading of patient treatment and management programs and the responsibility of the staff in directing volunteers and effectively utilizing their services require a continuing program of evaluation and education.

VA SERVICES AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEERS

To facilitate the services of VA volunteers and to provide them the health services and other benefits afforded VA employees, the medical center director is authorized to provide the following benefits and services:

MEALS

Meals may be furnished without charge to RS volunteers provided their scheduled assignment is at least 4 hours and/or the value of the service is commensurate with the value of the meal. Meals may be provided to others at the discretion of the facility Director if the facility director determines that the individuals render a service which will benefit VA in discharging its responsibilities to patients.

PARKING

Facilities will make every effort to provide free parking for RS volunteers.

TRANSPORTATION

The VA facility may furnish transportation to those volunteers whose presence at the VA facility is necessary for complete medical and hospital service. Necessary transportation can be furnished by means of commercial or government transportation.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

Volunteers are considered “without compensation” (WOC) employees and are provided health services and medical benefits in accordance with established policy for employees as outlined in VA Handbook 5019. Specifically this means that:

New volunteers not normally required to have a physical examination, when deemed necessary for the protection of VA patients or volunteers, will be provided a physical examination without charge. A physical examination may be required based on the requirements of the volunteer position or to determine fitness for duty. emergency outpatient treatment for injuries sustained while performing assigned volunteer service will be provided to volunteers. Voluntary Service, in cooperation with the facility’s Infection Control Committee, will determine the need for tuberculin tests and examinations, including chest X-rays, for RS volunteers. These procedures will be provided without cost to the volunteer. Volunteers will receive other employee benefits and/or services as determined locally, including cholesterol testing, blood pressure screening, and influenza vaccinations.

COMPENSATION BENEFITS

All volunteers serving in the medical facility VAVS program are considered employees and are eligible for compensation benefits as provided under the Injury Compensation Laws (5 U.S.C., Chapter 81). All volunteers who are injured in the course of their assigned duties are authorized medical

services by the Office of Workers' Compensation. As determined locally, volunteers may use facilities authorized for employee use.

IDENTIFICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

All VA facilities will issue identification to RS volunteers. Facilities are encouraged to provide smocks and/or jackets to aid in the identification of volunteers.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

All VAVS volunteers will be provided orientation and pertinent information about their VA facility and assignment; additionally, volunteers will receive training for their assignment and may be able to participate in other ongoing training/educational programs as determined by the local facility.



The American Legion Volunteers from Stevensville, MT dropping in on a veteran at the Ft. Harrison, MT VA Medical Center.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEERS

VA AWARDS IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

It is VAVS policy to provide appropriate recognition for contributions of the VAVS volunteers and their organizations to the VAVS program. Volunteers have a significant impact on VA healthcare and should be recognized for their contributions. Recognition is the responsibility of all staff and may consist of tangible awards, such as certificates, pins, plaques, etc. “Without compensation” (WOC) employees under 38 U.S.C. 513 and 7405 may participate in the VA employee Recognition and Awards Program. Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgement and the sense of belonging to the health care team (see Office of Finance Bulletin 00GA2.05, Award Payments for Residents, Without Compensation, Fee Basis and Purchase and Hire Employees).

Individual Awards: VAVS awards will be presented to volunteers who have met the eligibility standards. Awards are typically presented based on the previous fiscal year. They include:

VAVS Pins for Adult and Student Volunteers

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. 50 hours | 14. 8,750 hours |
| 2. 100 hours | 15. 10,000 hours |
| 3. 150 hours | 16. 12,500 hours |
| 4. 300 hours | 17. 15,000 hours |
| 5. 500 hours | 18. 17,500 hours |
| 6. 750 hours | 19. 20,000 hours |
| 7. 1,000 hours | 20. 22,500 hours |
| 8. 1,750 hours | 21. 25,000 hours |
| 9. 2,500 hours | 22. 30,000 hours |
| 10. 3,750 hours | 23. 35,000 hours |
| 11. 5,000 hours | 24. 40,000 hours |
| 12. 6,250 hours | 25. 45,000 hours |
| 13. 7,500 hours | 26. 50,000 hours |

Certificates: VA Form 10-7031d, Voluntary Service Award for Hours and Years of Service, is presented to volunteers who have previously earned the 1000 hour pin and who have served at least 100 hours during the previous calendar year. This award will not be given during the years in which the volunteer qualifies for another award.

Other Awards:

Dedicated Service Award Plaque	7,500
Outstanding Merit Award Plaque	8,750
Honor Award Bowl	10,000
Outstanding Service Award Pyramid	12,500
Exceptional Honor Award Medallion	15,000
Superior Service Award Plate	17,500
James H. Parke Achievement Award Tray	20,000
Mantle Clock	22,500
Angular, 6" x 8" Jade Crystal	25,000
Angular, 7" x 9" Jade Crystal	30,000
Angular, 8" x 10" Jade Crystal	35,000
Octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with wood base	40,000
Octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with crystal base	45,000
7" x 10" Jade Crystal Tower	50,000

NOTE: VA pins denoting equivalent hours of service will be awarded in conjunction with the preceding items listed.

Group Awards: VA awards may be presented by the facility Director, or Voluntary Service Program Manager, to individuals and groups in recognition of exceptional service, special contributions, or continued outstanding service in VAVS. These awards need to be processed through the facility Voluntary Service for coordination and verification.

- (a) VA Form 14780C, Certificate of Appreciation, may be given in support of outstanding participation during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.
- (b) VA Form 10-7042, Outstanding Service Award, may be presented on a selective basis.

NOTE: Locally developed awards may be presented to augment national awards.

Secretary's Volunteer Service Award: The Secretary's Volunteer Service Award is an 11-inch by 14-inch embossed certificate, signed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, presented with a blue and gold diamond enamel pin. This award may be issued only once and should not be given indiscriminately or during the year in which the volunteer qualifies for another award. Nomination for the Secretary's Volunteer Service Award should be submitted at least 3 months in advance of the anticipated presentation. For additional criteria, see VHA Handbook 1620.01.

Voluntary Service Leadership Award: VA Form 10-1208, The Voluntary Service Leadership Award and associated pin may be presented to any member of the local VAVS committee who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and abilities, benefiting VA and/or its beneficiaries. For more details, see "VHA Handbook 1620.01."

Awards by The American Legion in Recognition of Volunteer Service: At the 2008 national convention, Resolution 323 was approved to clarify VAVS volunteer award information.

Department adjutants submit the request of VAVS awards after the Chief of Voluntary Service of the VA hospital facility has certified with his/her signature the number of hours accrued by the volunteer and both request and certification are forwarded to the National Headquarters at 1608 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006, to the attention of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division.

The National Headquarters will send bars that represent the highest number of hours earned if the Departments request said awards. The request for those awards for which the VA is responsible is done directly to VA from Department Headquarters.

Student volunteers are awarded a 8-inch by 11½-inch certificate, pin and bars once they have met the conditions set forth in the Voluntary Service Handbook.

Volunteers in VA medical centers receive 100 hour 8-inch by 11½-inch certificates; 300 hour 8-inch by 11½-inch certificates, pins and bars; 500 hour 8-inch by 11½-inch certificates and bars; and, after this, a Volunteer Hospital Worker pin when they meet 1,000 hours, with a corresponding bar, and thereafter, bars in increments of 1,000 up to a maximum of 20,000 hours.

The 100, 300, and 500 hour certificates are signed by the Chairman of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission and then mailed to the respective volunteers local VA medical center for signature by the VAVS Program Manager and presentation to the volunteer.

Service Stars are to be ordered directly from Emblem Sales by the Department Headquarters.

If you have any questions, please contact The American Legion National Headquarters VA&R Division at (202) 861-2700.

Pins and bars are awarded by the director of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division through department headquarters, based on a written request from the department. The request will state the name of the volunteer worker, the total number of hours served and the signature of the medical center Voluntary Service program manager who has certified to the department the number of hours served by the volunteer.

This is a national program. The Volunteer Hospital Worker pins and bars are not available for sale to individual Legionnaires or departments. Replacement of a lost or broken pin or hour bar will be made in the same manner as described above. The department's request should indicate that the item requested is a "replacement" item in order to avoid confusion in pertinent records or interpretation of request as a duplication.

PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

The American Legion is also a recognized certifying organization for delivering the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) to volunteers. These awards are issued to volunteering Legionnaires who achieve a specific minimum number of hours of service over a 12-month period or cumulative hours over the course of a lifetime. American Legion volunteers require a minimum of 100 hours to receive an award and can be awarded at one of three levels (bronze, silver or gold).

The American Legion can choose from the following options to recognize its volunteers;

- The official President's Volunteer Service Award pin, coin or medallion
- A personalized certificate of achievement and letter signed by the sitting President of the United States
- All award elements listed above in a complete package

Information concerning the PVSA can be found at the following website:
<https://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/>

To request awards, American Legion departments should compile a list of their volunteers and the total number of hours volunteered covering a 12-month period and forward the list to the national VAVS deputy representative in the Washington DC office.

Upon receipt of the list, the national VAVS deputy representative will place an order for the appropriate award packages. Once the award packages are received in the Washington DC office, the national deputy representative will mail the complete package with awards to the respective department adjutant for distribution to the appropriate posts.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS FOR STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Student volunteers are an important part of the VA medical centers' treatment team. Students receive valuable experience and training which can benefit them when applying for college and jobs. The James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship provides scholarship opportunities to students who volunteer at VA medical centers (nomination criteria can be obtained from your local VA health care voluntary service staff). Student volunteers are liaisons between their communities and the medical facility and provide a valuable element of care to veterans. The VA Voluntary Service program offers students excellent opportunities for: exploring health care career options, gaining experience in a health care environment, learning new skills, making new friends and acquaintances and qualifying to be nominated for the James H. Parke Memorial Scholarship.

www.volunteer.va.gov/studentprogram.asp

VA MEDICAL CENTER MEMBERS

Student volunteers are recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs and The American Legion as full-fledged members of the VA "Medical Center Team." Although they are given special orientation and training, they are subject to the same medical facility restrictions and ethical requirements, and are entitled to the same benefits and services, as are the senior volunteers.

Student volunteers approach their duties as volunteer workers with much the same attitude as do senior volunteers. The student volunteer is assigned to fill a specific vacancy for volunteer assistance as determined by one of the Using Services of the medical facility, and approved by the medical facility VA Staff Advisory Committee. Whenever feasible, assignments are geared to the interests and abilities of the individual volunteer. In general they have been fully integrated into the voluntary service program, and participate successfully with the senior volunteers in the accomplishment of meaningful work, under the supervision of VA staff members, to aid in the recovery and rehabilitation of sick and disabled veterans.

IDENTIFYING INSIGNIA

Except in special cases when it has been deemed medically inadvisable by the medical facility treatment staff, and so announced by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, youth volunteers are expected to wear an insignia which identifies their organizational affiliation. Upon selection and enrollment of the student volunteer, the medical center Voluntary Service Program Manager furnishes the volunteer a VA medical center volunteer name tag for wear during periods of volunteer service in the medical facility or other place of official volunteer service. The tag is usually of a color or design different from that of the regular medical facility staff members.

THE AMERICAN LEGION STUDENT VOLUNTEER CERTIFICATE AND PIN AWARD

On completion of the medical facility prescribed course of instruction and five (5) hour probationary period of volunteer service, and having served satisfactorily for 25 hours as a medical facility volunteer under VA staff supervision, the student volunteer is entitled to receive The American Legion Student Volunteer Certificate and to wear the Student Volunteer Pin.

The certificate and pin are available without charge from the Director of the National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, The American Legion, 1608 K Street, NW Washington, DC 20006. The certificate and pin are issued to the Department Adjutant in response to the department's request and certification of the medical center VAVS representative and the medical center Voluntary Service Program Manager that the named individual is entitled to the certificate and pin. The intended recipient must have successfully completed the medical facility prescribed course of instruction, the required probationary volunteer service and served reliably for 25 hours as a volunteer worker at the medical facility.

The American Legion 50-hour bar, the 100-hour bar, 500-hour bar, and a bar for each 500 hours of service thereafter will be issued as a gift through the Department Adjutant and the medical center VAVS representative to any student volunteer who has earned such volunteer service award and whose service is certified by the medical center VAVS representative and medical center Voluntary Service Program Manager.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS JAMES H. PARKE MEMORIAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

James H. Parke was the founder of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). The James H. Parke Memorial Fund was created in 1976 as a non-profit source of funds for a VAVS youth scholarship. Organizations, volunteers, VA staff and others contribute to this fund.

The annual youth award consists of a certificate and monetary scholarship. The James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board yearly sets the amount of the primary award and any secondary scholarships. Any organization wishing to submit a candidate must complete and send a nomination form to the President of the Fund. Each medical center may nominate one VAVS student volunteer for receipt of the award. The VA medical facilities will incorporate the following guidelines in selecting the candidate to be nominated:

1. The youth volunteer is outstanding (for example, leadership ability, dependability, inspiration to patients), and is recommended by the medical center Service in which the volunteer is serving; and
2. The youth must have completed at least 100 hours of regularly scheduled service during the calendar year prior to September 1; be a student in the 10th grade or above and has not reached their 19th birthday.

PROGRAM EVALUATION: THE ANNUAL JOINT REVIEW

The VAVS Annual Joint Review (AJR) is the means by which the National VAVS representative of The American Legion is informed annually of the effectiveness of Legionnaire participation in the VA Voluntary Service program at each VA medical facility. The AJR indicates any major problems encountered and meaningful plans developed for the utilization of The American Legion volunteer resources.

The Summary of the VAVS Annual Joint Review is prepared jointly by the medical center VAVS representative, the deputy(ies), and the Voluntary Service Program Manager. It covers all aspects of Legion Department volunteer service and all Posts of The American Legion participating in the medical facility VAVS program. The associate representative is entitled to a separate Annual Joint Review.

The specific items to be reviewed and reported on in the VAVS Summary of the Annual Joint Review are coordinated with the members of the VAVS National Advisory Committee and are then published by the Director, Voluntary Service, VA Central Office, in Washington, DC, to VAVS representatives on the medical center VAVS Committee.

In order to participate effectively in program development and planning of the VAVS National Advisory Committee, the National VAVS representatives and deputy representative(s) of The American Legion need reliable information from the medical center VAVS representatives concerning the specific goals established for the year, whether the goals were met, and any major problems encountered. It is essential for the National VAVS representatives and deputy representative(s) to know what national action is felt to be necessary to strengthen The American Legion volunteer participation and what policies and procedures should be revised to promote increased participation.

Although this Annual Joint Review procedure has been established to provide a recurring annual constructive analysis of the voluntary assistance program of The American Legion and other voluntary organizations, this is a mutual effort which will yield greater results by the free flow of information between medical center VAVS representatives, the Posts and Department officials, and the National VAVS representatives and deputy representative(s).

The primary objective of all voluntary assistance programs of The American Legion is to assist the VA team, in accordance with the instruction of the VA staff supervisors, with programs concerning the welfare of and service to our sick and disabled veteran patients.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1



VA&R CERTIFICATION FORM DEPARTMENT VAVS REPRESENTATIVES

Information Sheet

Each Department of Veterans Affairs medical facility has a Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Committee made up of organizations whose members participate in the VAVS program for the benefit of veteran patients. Each organization may certify one representative and up to three deputy representatives to serve on the committee.

To develop and coordinate volunteer services from adjoining states, one associate representative and one deputy associate representative for each concerned state, may be certified to the VAVS committee for out-of-state members participating in a medical center VAVS program.

The actual certification of an American Legion representative to the director of the VA medical facility is done by the National Certifying Official, the Director of the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division in Washington, DC. The VA&R Director, however, relies on department officials to recommend effective local leaders for this important committee assignment.

The caliber of participation in the VAVS program is often directly related to the caliber of the leadership provided by the VAVS representatives. Therefore, departments must place due emphasis on the proper selection of these individuals.

Qualification for a VAVS Representative is outlined in The American Legion Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Handbook. Enclosed is the certification form.



The American Legion

RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION OF DEPARTMENT VAVS REPRESENTATIVE, DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE, ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE, AND DEPUTY ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVE

Dear National VAVS Representative:

We are recommending to you our Department VAVS Representative, Deputy Representative, Associate Representative and Associate Deputy Representative:

- VAVS Representative VAVS Deputy Representative
 *VAVS Associate Representative *VAVS Deputy Associate Representative

This appointment is:

- New Re-Certification Replacement

Medical Facility: _____

Address of Medical Facility: _____

Name of Recommended Representative: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Effective Date: _____

**Note: Designation only for individuals from an adjacent state to the facility*

Length of Appointment _____ Indefinite

Legion ID #: _____

Post #: _____

(If this appointment replaces an existing Representative Deputy Representative or Associate Deputy Representative, please provide the following information about the replaced Representative)

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Legion ID #: _____

Post #: _____

***ADJACENT DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT CONCURRENCE**

Signature

**Note: Concurrence of an Adjacent Department Adjutant is only required when an Associate or Deputy Associate Representative is appointed to serve at a VA Medical Center from an adjacent state.*

DEPARTMENT OF

DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL

Signature

Mail to:
Director, VA&R Division
The American Legion
1608 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Inquiries to:
Deputy National Representative
Phone: (202) 861-2700
Fax: (202) 679-5943
Email: va&r@legion.org

Rev. 08/2017

Appendix 2

AMERICAN LEGION AWARDS

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROGRAM

_____ Medical Center/Clinic Date _____

NAME OF VOLUNTEER	TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS TO DATE

_____ Voluntary Service Program Manager

_____ Department Adjutant

_____ VAVS Representative

Appendix 3

Drivers Information

American Legion volunteers can also serve as drivers for veterans who may need transportation to medical appointments at VA medical centers or clinics. Specific rules apply for anyone volunteering as a driver.

Necessary Drivers Training

All drivers are expected to meet the following minimum driving training requirements. These requirements are similar to the requirements specified by the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS).

- Appropriate licensure to operate the type of vehicle used
- Basic Life Support training (to include defibrillator usage and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training)
- Safe Patient and Equipment Handling (to include appropriate handling of wheelchair lifts and lock down of wheelchairs in vehicles)

All drivers should be prepared to produce documentation as proof of the above training in either electronic or printed format.

Other Driver's Awareness Issues

Volunteer drivers also must be aware of the following:

- Under normal circumstances transporting veterans in a power scooter is prohibited. The scooter may accompany the veteran under the following conditions:
- The veteran must ride in an ambulatory seat and use the seat belt and the vehicle has the capacity to lift and securely strap down the scooter.
- Volunteer drivers may be subjected to criminal background checks.
- Individuals who are registered sex offenders are prohibited from serving as drivers.
- Drivers are prohibited from making cellular phone calls (unless a hands-free device is used) or texting while driving.
- Other requirements as directed by the VA Medical Centers or Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN).

Notes



THE AMERICAN LEGION
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

1608 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

■ www.legion.org