VFW Auxiliary members have been volunteering in hospitals and medical facilities since the organization’s inception in 1914. The Hospital Program was one of the first nationally adopted programs for the organization

The VFW Auxiliary Hospital Chairman is appointed by the Auxiliary President.

His/her duties and responsibilities are to:

- Assure support for the Hospital Program by communicating to Auxiliary members the importance of hospital work.
- Recruit hospital volunteers.
- Raise funds for hospital work.
- Report to members needed items for the hospital and work with members in making those items.
- Plan activities/projects for VA and non-VA facilities to be approved by the VFW Auxiliary.
- Work closely with the VAVS Representative or other facility Representative and report any pertinent information to them.
- Work closely with any non-VA facility and report any pertinent information to your VFW Auxiliary.
- Order service pins for ALL VFW Auxiliary volunteers in both VA and non-VA facilities, found on the VFW Auxiliary website, www.vfwaux.org or by contacting VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters.
- Request the number of members working and the number of hours worked from the VAVS Representative in order to complete an annual report to reflect information required on the Department Report Form.
- Request the number of members and hours worked from the Supervisor of Volunteers at non-VA medical facilities. Members preparing items for a facility party, making lap robes or other items for hospital and patient use, should report their hours and cost of materials used to the VFW Auxiliary Hospital Chairman for reporting purposes.

**EXAMPLE:** If four (4) members work four (4) hours each making lap robes, the VFW Auxiliary may claim credit for 16 hours spent in preparation of items for hospital and patient use. These hours are not counted toward the National VFW Auxiliary hospital pins.
Where we serve:
Members, non-members and youth can volunteer in many different types of facilities under this program.
- Local hospitals
- Veterans’ homes
- Nursing homes
- Both VA and non-VA medical centers and clinics

Working with Facilities:
Many hospitals, medical buildings, nursing homes, hospice programs and veterans’ homes have volunteer programs in place. Members should do their best to adhere to the guidelines given to them. Before hosting an event at or with a facility, the VFW Auxiliary Hospital Chairman, should get permission from that facility. Be sure to ask what is and is not allowed for the patients. There are some facilities that do not allow home-baked goods due to dietary restrictions. The best thing to do is to ask that facility’s volunteer coordinator what they need. All projects done by a VFW Auxiliary should be voted on at a regular meeting and recorded in the minutes. Documentation should be kept on funds expended, the number of volunteers, and the hours volunteered throughout the year for reporting on the year-end report.

Who can serve:
- Members
- Non-members
- Youth
- Families

What we can do:
Volunteer opportunities are different based on the facility where you are volunteering. Some facilities will have a volunteer program in place with specific jobs, events and needs. Many facilities will have varying types of opportunities to suit different ages and abilities. Be sure you follow all the guidelines given by that facility and regularly ask how you can assist them.

What we can earn:
- Members can earn Hospital Volunteer Service Pins from National Headquarters for their volunteer hours. Auxiliary Hospital Chairmen should track total hours (both VA and non-VA) and submit an application for the pins.
- Members can also be named an Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year in their Program Division. Applications are available from the Department Hospital Chairmen.
- Non-members can also earn a one-time only volunteer pin for 100 hours.

Recruiting Volunteers:
Volunteers are needed every day across the country. Volunteers offset millions of dollars in expenses in health care, and they help create a friendly and caring atmosphere no matter where they volunteer. Here are tips for recruiting and keeping volunteers:
- Monthly signup sheet for regular events
- Emails and phone calls for special events
- Public recognition of current volunteers
- Be specific about what volunteers will be doing, including the time commitment
- Find out how each person best communicates, whether by phone, email, Facebook or texting sure to ask again! All members shall help in recruiting new volunteers. Successful recruiting is an art in itself.
A volunteer must:
- Have a willingness to accept hospital standards and orientation, conduct and supervision.
- Cleanliness and neatness in appearance.
- Physically be able to perform assigned tasks.
- Sense of responsibility, dependability and stability on the job.
- Friendly, business-like approach to volunteer work, with honest sentiment and not sentimentality, maintaining the veteran’s dignity and pride.

Other Tips for Recruiting:
- Know the Hospital Program and be able to answer information regarding the VFW Auxiliary.
- Know your facility. Make certain that any information you give regarding your facility is accurate.
- Be prepared to describe various assignments and what is expected. Explain that volunteers are trained and supervised by facility personnel.
- VFW Auxiliary meetings at all levels and activities beyond our organization should seek out new areas for volunteer recruitment.
- Create incentives that will attract and interest different generational groups.
- Work with the facility to create incentives for volunteers.
- Publicity release about an outstanding volunteer or an interesting hospital/facility project can aid in getting that public attention which can promote recruitment.
- A good reason to volunteer is to gain work experience, learn new skills, and meet new people and most importantly to give something back.

**Veterans Voices Writing Project (VVWP)**

The Veterans Voices Writing Project (VVWP) was founded in 1946, and has long been connected with the VFW Auxiliary. It is a therapeutic writing program that helps veterans express themselves and communicate in a creative way. Members can become involved with a local VVWP representative and assist veterans in writing, recording or typing. Training and resources are provided. Three times per year, VVWP publishes “Veterans Voices”, a magazine that prints a selection of submissions. To learn more about the program and how to become involved, go to [www.veteransvoices.org](http://www.veteransvoices.org), call 816-701-6844 or write to volunteer@veteransvoices.org.

**Veterans and Military Suicide Awareness:**

Make a difference in the life of a veteran or service member in crisis by educating yourself and others about the warning signs of suicide.

Look for the blue teardrop as the icon on the National website. Know the signs of depression in our veterans and others around you. Life is precious and taking one’s own life is a very serious condition. Let us get help for these individuals. Work with your local Suicidal Coordinators in our medical centers, they need our volunteers.

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll free hotline, online chat, or text.

Veterans and their loved ones can call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available. [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)
The Veteran & Military Suicide Awareness Blue Teardrop Sticker is the VFW Auxiliary's symbol to give this issue the attention it so desperately needs. Wear the teardrop to open a conversation; when asked what the teardrop is, share that it's to create awareness for veteran and military suicide.

All VFW Auxiliaries should donate to the Department Hospital Fund to assure continued strong support for this important program. Money donated for hospital work and all funds raised for hospital work should be earmarked “Hospital Projects.” Your VFW auxiliary donations should be sent to the Department in October and February; earmark “Department Hospital Fund.” VFW Auxiliaries should not make checks payable directly to VAVS and/or Hospital Representatives or Medical Facilities.
**Awards Sponsored by the National Advisory Committee**

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) Volunteer of the Year is awarded annually to recognize one male and one female who have given extraordinary service at a VA Medical Center where he/she serves as a regularly scheduled volunteer. Entry forms and guidelines are available from National Headquarters. **This is due to me by December 1st.**

**The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship**

Is awarded annually by the VAVS National Advisory Committee to an outstanding student volunteer and could be an excellent incentive or recruiting tool for youth. Information and material may be obtained from the VA Chief of Voluntary Service. Deadline is Nov 1 to the James H Parke Board. If you know of an Outstanding Youth Volunteer, contact me and I will assist you how to get this student written up. They are eligible for $20,000 scholarship.

**All VAVS Representative, your AJR is due in November:**

The VAVS Representative should keep a copy of the Annual Joint Review for her files and shall see that copies are also sent to the Department Hospital Chairman. The designated National Headquarters Employee will acknowledge receipt of the Annual Joint Review to the VAVS Representative. Since the Review is of importance to the VFW Auxiliary, as well as the VA, the Representative should feel free to remind the Supervisor of Voluntary Service about scheduling an appointment in November.

**HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:**

The form to select the Hospital Volunteer of the year is provided for you in the program book. The Due date is February 28, 2018. The criteria to look at for the volunteer of the year are from March 1, 2017 to February 28, 2018. Be sure to have other recommendation letters from the medical facilities to be attached to the form when sending it to the Department chairman. YOU NEED TO USE THIS FORM or it will not be judged.

**MISSOURI SEW AT HOME PROGRAM**

This is a program just for the Department of MO VFW Auxiliary. It was started in 1994. Many of our sisters/brothers are not able to go to the hospital and volunteer. The Sew at Home program is a way to participate and give the VFW Auxiliary credit for helping our hospitalized veterans. You have to be a member in good standing and the items you make has to go to a Medical Center.
HOSPITAL AWARDS AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEERS:

1. Charm to each member recruiting one or more volunteers between July 1, 2017, and March 31, 2018.
2. Beginning with 150 hours, a pin or pin/bar to each Auxiliary member reaching hours as stated in the “Hospital Program Guide.”
3. A pin to each sponsored non-member volunteer, including youth volunteers, who serves a minimum of 100 hours under Auxiliary sponsorship at any hospital.
4. “Catch The Dream For Our Veterans” Keepsake and signed picture of the National President to “The Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year” in each Program Division. To be presented at the Department Convention.

Department Awards to be given out at the Department Convention:

1. A Citation to each VFW Auxiliary who submits an applicant for the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.
2. A monitory award and citation for the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year.
3. A monitory award to the best promoted and participated in Veterans Voices in each membership group.
4. A monitory award to the best use of publicity and/or media to recruit volunteers in each membership group.
5. A monitory award to the best volunteer program that your VFW Auxiliary provided to recognize your volunteers in each membership group.
6. A monitory award to the best overall Hospital program of volunteering, recruiting, and holding special projects with in your Medical Centers and MO Veterans Homes in each membership group.
7. A monitory award to the best overall Suicidal Awareness program that you did in our medical facilities.
8. The Sew at Home pins will be given to each VFW Auxiliary Member that has participated in the Sew at Home program from May 1, 2017 to April 1, 2018.

RECRUITER AWARDS FOR VFW AUXILIARY MEMBERS AND STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

A charm from the VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters will be awarded to each member recruiting one or more volunteers between June 1 and May 15.