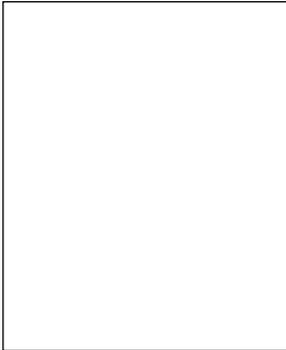


Hospital Ambassador



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The Hospital Program is near and dear to our hearts and brings love and support to veterans and their families in communities we serve. It could be you, your hero, a loved one or a close friend who has had a medical condition and spent time in a hospital or long-term care facility. This Program offers hope and encouragement with compassionate care.

Honors Escort

Have you ever wondered what the veteran's end-of-life protocol is in either a VA or non-VA facility? That is the question I asked myself when my father passed away five years ago.

- Did the non-VA facility know that he was a veteran?
- Was proper respect shown to him after his passing in the facility?

After researching this, I learned that some VA facilities have an Honors Escort Program that is part of the end-of-life protocol for veterans who depart while in their care. The Honors Escort is an opportunity to honor each veteran in a respectful and open manner. It provides a way for a veteran's family and friends, other veterans and medical facility staff to participate in a display of high regard and reverence for the individual at the time of death.

At VA facilities, the ceremony is performed by trained employees, and ensures that the veteran's service, accomplishments and sacrifices are not forgotten as they are laid to rest. The ceremony begins with a bedside Flag ceremony. Afterward, the veteran's gurney is draped with the American Flag and a procession escorts the veteran to the morgue. As the procession moves through the medical facility, veterans who want to pay their respects are encouraged to salute and all others stand while placing their hand over their heart.

While some VA facilities have an Honors Escort Program, others do not. I encourage you to reach out to your local VA facility and find out if they have an Honors Escort Program. If not, speak with Volunteer Services about starting one.

At non-VA facilities, including assisted living facilities, nursing homes and local hospitals, there is an opportunity to educate staff about how to pay respect to veterans who depart while in their care. Share what the VA does and give examples of how the Honors Escort Program can be modified for their facility.

As said by John F. Kennedy, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget the highest appreciation is not to utter words – but to live by them."

Veterans Health Care

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is the largest integrated health care system in the United States, providing care to more than 9 million veterans at more than 1,255 facilities, including 170 VA Medical Centers and 1,074 outpatient clinics.

The MISSION Act gives veterans greater access to health care in VA facilities and in the community. It also expands benefits for caregivers and improves the VA's ability to recruit and retain the best medical personnel. Each veteran is assigned a health care team called a Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). The team is made up of the veteran, their family members and caregivers and the health care providers. The team will also include a primary care provider, clinical pharmacist, registered nurse (RN) care manager, licensed practical nurse (LPN) or medical assistant and clerk. Learn more at missionact.va.gov.

Women Veterans Health Care Program

The VA is dedicated to meeting the health care needs of women veterans which is the fastest growing group of the veteran population. June 12 is Women Veterans Day: She Served, She Sacrificed, She Deserves.

The Women Veterans Health Care Program at VA Facilities provide the following primary care services:

- General Services, such as disease prevention and nutrition counseling
- Female-specific services, such as birth control, preconception counseling and menopausal support

- Screenings, such as cervical cancer and breast cancer tests.
- Mental health services, including free counseling such as military sexual trauma
- Specialty screenings, such as heart disease and diabetes
- Maternity care and other reproductive health services
- Referrals to physical therapy, occupational therapy, and rehabilitation therapy

More services are available and vary by location. Learn more at womenshealth.va.gov and va.gov/womenvet.

National Salute to Veteran Patients

Each year the week of February 14 is your opportunity to thank a special group of men and women who are cared for throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics and nursing homes. The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients program is to pay tribute and express appreciation to veterans, increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center, and encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and become more involved as volunteers. Ways to participate in this annual event include:

1. Host a Valentine's Day party, ice cream social or bingo at a VA or non-VA medical facility.
2. Make Valentine's Day-themed tray favors for veteran patients.
3. Create Valentine signs/banners to hang in medical facility hallways.
4. Organize and/or participate in a community valentine card drive.
5. Organize a student essay, art or coloring contest for children of all ages to share what veteran mean to them.

Our hospital volunteers contribute to VA personnel and patients. It is because of volunteers like you who bring a touch of happiness to those veterans' faces.



Hospital Program

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Support Valentines for Veterans • Women Veterans Health Care • Honors Escort

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.

Where can we serve?

Members, non-members and youth can volunteer in many different types of facilities under this program.

- Local hospitals
- Veterans' homes
- Nursing homes
- Domiciliaries
- Both VA and non-VA medical facilities and clinics

Who can serve?

- Members
- Non-members
- Youth
- Families

What can we do?

Volunteer opportunities are 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 can we earn?

Members can earn Hospital Volunteer Service Pins from National Headquarters for their volunteer hours. More information on hours needed and the proper forms to use can be obtained from Department Hospital Chairmen or at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. 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. See the Hospital Program Guide or ask the Department Hospital Chairman for more information.

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Support

New volunteers are needed every day across the country. Volunteers offset millions of dollars in expenses in health care. They help create a friendly and caring atmosphere no matter where they volunteer. Here are tips for recruiting and keeping volunteers:

- Monthly sign up 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.
- If someone says "no" to the first invitation, be sure to ask again!

For more information on being a volunteer, how to handle a Department Hospital Fund and other topics on this program, download the Hospital Program Guide at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

Valentines for Veterans

Share the love we have for our veterans and service members this Valentine's Day by sending a store-bought or handmade valentine, hosting a party, recognition event or dinner in their honor. Fellow members, individuals and groups in your community can use their creativity to show compassion for our veterans and service members.

Women Veterans Health Care

Women have served our nation for generations and are the fastest growing group within the veteran population. Comprehensive health services are available and tailored to the unique needs of women veterans. Learn about the resources and health care services available and help them receive the benefits and services they deserve.

Honors Escort

The Honors Escort Program is an opportunity to honor each veteran in a respectful and open manner and provides an opportunity for a veteran's family and friends, other veterans and medical facility staff to participate in a display of high regard and reverence for the individual at the time of death.

Hospital and VAVS Programs

The VFW Auxiliary provides volunteers and resources to VA facilities across the country and saves the Department of Veterans Affairs millions of dollars a year.

The table below illustrates how the VFW Auxiliary Hospital Program supports the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program.

HOSPITAL PROGRAM

VFW Auxiliary establishes relationships with:

- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Veterans homes
- VA facilities
- Other medical facilities where veterans are served

PROVIDES NEEDS

How VFW Auxiliary members participate:

- Participate in projects voted on and accepted by the Auxiliary.
- Make items such as lap robes, hats, quilts, cards, etc.
- Fundraise for the Department's Hospital fund.
- Encourage volunteers in ALL medical facilities.
- Promote projects and volunteer opportunities to all members and the community.
- Present Hospital Volunteer Appreciation certificates.
- Order VFW Auxiliary Hospital Pins for total hours earned from all facilities.
- Hours are earned in **ALL** VA and non-VA facilities.

HOURS earn VFW Auxiliary Awards!

VAVS PROGRAM

The Department of Veterans Affairs created the Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program.

For organizations to serve in VA medical facilities:

- Members participate in this government-run program.

COMMUNICATES NEEDS

How VFW Auxiliary members participate:

- Be a Regularly Scheduled (RS) or Occasional volunteer.
- Regularly Scheduled (RS) volunteers:
 - Comply with VAVS Guidelines.
 - Participate on a regularly scheduled basis.
 - Are supervised by a VA employee.
 - May be appointed by the Department President as VAVS Representative or Deputy Representative.
- Occasional volunteers:
 - Do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers.
 - Volunteer with a group or organization occasionally.
- Hours are earned in **ONLY** VA facilities.

HOURS earn VAVS AND VFW Auxiliary Awards!

**TOTAL HOURS FROM BOTH PROGRAMS
EQUAL OUR REPORTED HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER HOURS.**

For more information on the VFW Auxiliary's participation in Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program, please see the VAVS Participation Guide or contact the Department Hospital Chairman.

The VAVS Participation Guide is available online at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

Hospital Program Awards

AWARDS FOR MEMBERS

1. Citation to one member in each of the 10 Program Divisions who recruits the most Hospital (VA and non-VA facilities) volunteers from July 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.
2. "Hospital Volunteer Recruiter of the Year" plaque awarded to one member in the nation who recruits the most Hospital volunteers (VA and non-VA facilities) from July 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.
3. Citation to the Outstanding Hospital Volunteer of the Year in each of the 10 Program Divisions. Entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.

Member entries are due to Department Hospital Chairmen by March 31, 2022. Department Hospital Chairmen are to send all entries received to the National Hospital Ambassador by April 30, 2022 for judging.

AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES

1. Most outstanding implementation of outreach education of the Honors Escort Program.
 - Citation to every Auxiliary that provides outreach education about the Honors Escort Program. Criteria and entry form (required) available at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Hospital Chairman by March 31, 2022.
The Department Hospital Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2022.
Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
 - Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding implementation of outreach education of the Honors Escort Program.

The Department Hospital Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Hospital Ambassador by April 30, 2022 for judging.

AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN

1. Citation to each Department Hospital Chairman for participation in this Program.
2. \$25 VFW Store Gift Certificate to one Department Hospital Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the best promotion of outreach education of the Honors Escort Program.
3. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of Program Goals listed at the top of Page 36.