



**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY  
DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA**

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## **2021-2022 Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)**

The VA&R program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of U.S. veterans, military, and their families.

For more information, please go to the Department of Arizona website [www.aladeptaz.org](http://www.aladeptaz.org) or the National website [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org).

Most National programs now have Facebook pages, including VA&R, it can be found at American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. These groups are for members only and they ask questions to make sure you are a member. **The hope is that members will find this easier to use, and National is able to update resources quickly.**

Enclosed in this packet is information to assist you in reporting all your activities for a successful year. Remember to include mileage, volunteer hours, dollars spent, number of veterans assisted, and number of active-duty military service men/women assisted. **Remember when donating to your VA Medical Center, State Veterans Home, VA Gift Shop, and/or Creative Arts to write those checks to ALA Department of Arizona and include an explanation in the memo section/separate letter to ensure your Unit receives credit.**

Rules for Department Awards can be found on the Department website, under Member Resources.

**There are NO Mid-Year reports this year.** Instead, please send me photos of Unit VA&R activities with a note telling me what your Unit is doing. (These will be forwarded to Western Division and National Chairmen.

**Year End Reports and Narratives for awards are due to me On or before May 1, 2022.** Make sure you attach a report form to your narrative.

**Question? Call or email me, I am here to help you.**

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## **2021 – 2022 Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program Action Plan**

### ***Department of Arizona***

***Chair: Rose Ficklin***

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### **WHAT IS THE PROGRAM AND WHY DO WE HAVE IT?**

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program promotes our mission to enhance the lives of veterans, military, and their families. Initiate, sponsor, and participate in programs and services that assist and enhance the lives of veterans and their families, ensuring restoration and/or transition to normally functioning lives physically, mentally, socially, and vocationally.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

#### **A) Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.**

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) is the national, annual competition and festival that recognizes the progress and recovery made through recreation therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's veterans after disease, disability, or life crisis. As the national presenting sponsor, the American Legion Auxiliary should strive to increase monetary support by encouraging departments to sponsor fundraisers that will contribute

#### ***Ideas for Individual Members and Units:***

- Obtain and become familiar with the ALA Guide for Volunteers.
- Help your unit and department earn recognition at National Convention through donations to support VA Creative Arts Festivals. Volunteer individually, with a fellow member, or as a unit at a local Creative Arts Festival.
- Identify arts, crafts and hobby projects targeted to veterans (such as writing, oral history recording, visual and performing arts, quilting, and gardening). A unit may organize a project of its own or introduce a unit to veteran arts, crafts, and hobby projects already operational in the community.
- Contribute donated supplies to help supplement visual veteran artists' needs for their projects.

- How to Guides located at: [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
  - How to Support the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival
  - How To Facilitate a Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival

**B) Assist and support caregivers of veterans.**

***Ideas for the Individual Members and Units:***

- Collaborate programs supporting National President area of emphasis '***Caring For Those Who Care For Others***'
- Familiarize yourself with the service of the VA caregiver support program.
- Familiarize yourself with the Military and Veteran Caregiver Peer Support Network.
- Become a veteran caregiver peer support trainer or volunteer.
- Invite the VA caregiver support coordinator in the VA healthcare system closest to you to make a presentation to your unit, or community-wide meeting.
- Coordinate a Buddy Check program.
- Be creative in your efforts supporting caregivers of veterans: care of pet – clearing the driveway if caregiver and veteran are away for a extended period of time, cook a meal once a week, sit with veteran allowing caregiver to go step away for few hours.

**C) Recruit members as VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) Volunteers at VA health care facilities.**

***Ideas for the Individual Members and Units:***

- If you live near a VA facility or , become a regular scheduled, (RS) VAVS volunteer appointed by the Department President, invite others to become VAVS volunteers with you.
- Send notes and provide supplies to support those who volunteer at VA facilities and CBOCs (Community-Based Outpatient Clinic) within communities without VA facilities.



**D) Assist in activities that help homeless veterans.**

***Ideas for an Individual Members and Units:***

- Give a helping hand to the homeless veteran coordinator in your community or offer to collaborate with Legion Family in responding to requests for assistance from homeless veterans or homeless veteran service providers.
- Crochet hats, scarves, or mittens to be distributed to homeless veterans. Use information provided by your department chair to contact the homeless veteran coordinator at the VA health care system nearest you to explore what the unit or you can do to help homeless veterans in your community.
- Collaborate with your local post and offer your assistance if requests for help come through the Legion's Family Support Network (FSN).
- Raise funds for local American Legion posts to help veterans and their families through the Family Support Network for veterans at risk of losing their housing or homeless veterans transitioning to permanent housing.
  - Make payments of overdue rent, utility payments or deposits and security deposits.
- Host or volunteer at homeless veterans' stand downs, events where homeless veterans receive free goods and services such as haircuts and medical exams.
- Contact homeless veteran emergency shelters, transitional housing projects and permanent housing projects in your community and identify the organization's volunteer and in-kind contribution needs, including:
  - Meal preparation and serving
  - Clothes collection and distribution
  - Assembly of hygiene kits and delivery to local organizations in need
  - Purchasing or securing household items or furniture
- Reach out to specific homeless veterans, such as residents of projects mentioned above to provide her/him practical, social, and moral support.
- Compile "blessing bags" to be provided to the local police department, local community patrol service or other organizations that deal with the homeless veteran population.
- Create a "Tree of Warmth" by collecting scarves, mittens, hats and attaching them to a tree in a location the homeless frequent. Include a sign that says, "Please Take if Needed," "Free if Needed," or something similar.
- How to Raise Awareness in Your Communities About the Ever-Increasing Number of Homeless Veterans

**E) What if there is not a VA hospital close to your community? Find opportunities for Auxiliary members to serve veterans in your area.**

Service to Veterans recognizes volunteers who provide service to veterans, service members and their families outside a VAMC. A Guide for Volunteers available for download at [www.alaforveterans.org](http://www.alaforveterans.org). To purchase a printed copy, please visit [www.emblem.legion.org](http://www.emblem.legion.org)

***Ideas for the Individual Members and Units:***

- Read the *Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers*
- Sew quilts for the Quilts of Valor Foundation, for more information visit [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org)
- Help a veteran use the Internet.
- Supply postage for local veterans in rest homes or assisted living facilities.
- Collaborate with the Legion Service Officer at your post and offer to be on the list of people to call when a military family needs help.
- Buy school supplies, throw a baby shower, or send care packages to military kids who are headed to college.
- Encourage units and individual members to participate in the Quilts of Valor project through the Quilts of Valor Foundation: [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org).
- Support an Honor Flight where applicable.
  - Arizona: [honorflightaz.org](http://honorflightaz.org)
  - Assist a Veteran in completing an application
  - Be a Guardian to a Veteran on an Honor Flight – upon approval.
- Report your Service to Veterans hours to your unit VA&R chairman.
- Organize transportation for veterans to assist them with essential errands or medical appointments.

**VA&R – Caregiver Initiatives:**

- Hour Bars – Caregivers can now be awarded “Service to Veterans” hours which may accumulate for hour bars for time spent providing care and assistance to Veterans within their families if they do not receive PROFESSIONAL compensation for doing so. If the caregiver lives with the Veteran, they may be awarded 10 hours a week. If they do NOT live with the Veteran then they may be awarded 5 hours a week. The onus is placed upon the caregiver to report these hours through the existing structure within their units and departments.
- Only the highest earned hour bar will be awarded.
- The change will have bearing on how we ask Impact Numbers to be reported- specifically what is included, and that information will be updated on the National website soon.

## **VA&R Reporting**

### **Mid-Year Reports – There are NO MID YEAR REPORTS this year!!!!**

Encourage Unit Chairs and Members to share photos and stories of events as they happen.

**Year-End Reports** - Annual reports reflect the program work of the Units throughout the Department, and may result in a national award, if award requirements are met. Each Unit is required to submit a report form to the Department VA&R Chairman by **May 1, 2022**.

### **VA&R Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements:**

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

### **Department Awards:**

Rules for all VA&R awards can be found on the Department website: **[aladeptaz.org](http://aladeptaz.org)**

Under member resources Department Awards and Narratives.

### **National Awards**

Rules for National awards can be found on the National Website: **[alaforveterans.org](http://alaforveterans.org)**

### **Additional Resources You Can Use**

- Looking for Ideas? VA&R Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR/>
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: A Guide for Volunteers: [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
- Handbook for the Homeless Veterans and Service Providers: [Homeless Veterans Handbook | The American Legion](#)
- National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, [www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov](http://www.creativeartsfestival.va.gov)
- Quilts of Valor: [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org)
- VA Homeless Programs: [www.va.gov/homeless/](http://www.va.gov/homeless/)
- On-Call: Handbook for Homeless Veterans and Service Providers [www.legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook](http://www.legion.org/publications/168493/homeless-veterans-handbook)
- American Legion Auxiliary Veterans Creative Activities Action Guide, [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)