

2019 – 2020 Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R)

Program Action Plan

The Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Program (commonly referred to as VA&R) promotes the American Legion Auxiliary to enhance the lives of U.S. veterans, military and their families

Department Chairman is Mary Jo Stier

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National Chairman is Vickie Koutz, Department of Indiana

Committee Contact Information is va&r@ALAforVeterans.org

Northwestern Division Chairman is Barbara Washburn, Department of Nebraska

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What can you (your unit) do:

1. Assist in activities that help homeless veterans
2. Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts, and hobbies.
3. Help The American Legion, State Department of Veterans Affairs and Chamber of Commerce promote job fairs for veterans and their families.
4. Enroll Auxiliary members as VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) volunteers at VA health care facilities
5. There isn't a VA hospital close to your community? Find opportunities for Auxiliary members to serve veterans in your area. These hours will count toward your Service to Veterans pin and hour bars.
6. Transitioning back to civilian life is one of the biggest challenges veterans face today. Educate yourself about resources so you can help veterans access all their VA benefits not just health care. Work with your local American Legion Post Service Officer.
7. Assist and support caregivers of veterans.

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. Just two simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and VA&R committee contact information may be found on the VA&R committee page on the national website, www.ALAforVeterans.org.

Service to Veterans

A. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit VA&R Program (per division)

- Deadline: June 1, 2020

- Send to national division chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

B. Department Award: Best Department VA&R Program (per division)

- Deadline: June 1, 2020

- Send to national division chairman postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. EST on the deadline listed above.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) support recognition

A. NVCAF Award: NVCAF Support Recognition

- Deadline: July 31, 2020

- Send donations to the ALA Foundation to National Headquarters

Veteran Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)

A. National Award: VAVS Volunteer of the Year /ALA NAC Nominee

- Deadline: November 1, 2019

- Submitted by the chiefs of voluntary service and department chairman to the national VAVS deputy

B. Member Award: 10,000 Hour Volunteer Service

- Deadline: March 31, 2020

- Verification of hours must be mailed or emailed to National Headquarters by the first Friday in June

C. Member Award: 20,000 Hour Volunteer Service

- Deadline: March 31, 2020

- Verification of hours must be mailed or emailed to National Headquarters by the first Friday in June

D. Individual Recognition Award: Volunteer Recruitment & Service Department

- Deadline: March 31, 2020

E. Individual Recognition Award: 100 Percent VAVS Meeting Attendance

- Awarded to each representative and deputy who has 100 percent attendance to VAVS committee meetings at her assigned facility.

F. Department Recognition from The American Legion Award: Michael Guty Homeless Veterans Outreach

- Deadline: January 15, 2020

• Entries must be approved by the department adjutant or department employment chairman and sent to The American Legion National Headquarters

G. James H. Parke Scholarship

- Deadline: November 1, 2019

• See www.va.gov for information on VAVS, James H. Parke Scholarship

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Reporting:

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department and are intended as an opportunity for the units to tell others about the work they do for the veterans, military personnel and their families. The deadline to send mid-year reports to your district president is November 15. They in turn will send me an overall district VA&R report by December 1. The deadline for me to submit a department report is January 5, 2020 to the division VA&R chairman, plus copy the national VA&R chairman.

Year-End Reports - Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Units need to have their year-end reports to their district president by April 15 and district president need to submit their report to me by May 1. Each department VA&R chairman is required to submit a narrative report by May 15, 2020 to the division VA&R chairman, plus copy the national VA&R chairman.

Special 100th Anniversary History Program Facts:

Kris West, PNP 2000-2001, was contacted by John Hampton, a former staff member of The American Legion from the Washington D.C. office and who was later employed by the VA. He was looking for an organization to support The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) that was going to be held in Washington D.C.

Since the very first sponsorship of the NVCAF was a success, she then knew there would need to be money raised each year, if this was going to continue. She decided to approach and enlist the help of the upcoming members of the leadership team (Katherine Morris, Sheri McLaughlin and Elsie Bailey), to ask them to support and commit to continue with the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Kris West wrote a resolution seeking donors and business to support the program. That first year, \$2,500 was donated by Pfizer, \$5,000 by Eli Lilly and \$5,000 from a bank all located in Indianapolis. As a gift she decided to present a scenic book of Washington D.C. with a note on the inside cover thanking the veteran for his/her service to our country and that it was sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary. Some of the previous MC's for the program were: Ernest Borgnine, Jane Powell and Michael Petersen.