



Military Order of the Purple Heart

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS)
Volunteer Training

VAVS – What is it?

V = Veterans

A = Affairs

V = Voluntary

S = Service

www.va.gov/volunteer

The VAVS Mission

- Provide a structured Volunteer Program under the management of VA compensated employees in cooperation with community resources to serve America's Veterans and their families with dignity and compassion.
- VAVS supports VA and VHA strategic goals by recruiting, supporting and retaining a knowledgeable, diverse and engaged supplemental workforce of volunteers.
- The volunteer programs throughout the Country assist management in the delivery of VA health care by improving access to care, assisting with long-term care, improving patient satisfaction and much more.

Purpose of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC)

The committee advises the Secretary of Veterans affairs on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in VA medical facilities, assists in the recruitment and orientation of volunteers and keeps the officers and members of participating organizations informed of volunteer needs and accomplishments.

National VAVS Representative

- Is the official liaison between VA Headquarters and the organization in all aspects of the VAVS Program
- The Representative assists the Region and Department Commanders and the National Certifying Official in the selection and certification of local VAVS Representatives
- Is responsible for providing initial guidance and information to local Reps and Deps

Local VAVS Chief or Program Manager Responsibilities

- Contact all newly appointed local Reps and Deps
- Provide general orientation and training to include:
 - Finger Printing, other local requirements
 - Providing hospital volunteer badge
 - Entering individual into the VSS system
 - Providing calendar of VAVS Committee meeting dates

Local VAVS Rep/Dep Responsibilities

- Contact the local VAVS Chief or designee upon receiving certification
- Complete the orientation at the earliest opportunity, to include getting registered in the VSS System
- Regularly attend the local VAVS Committee quarterly meetings and set up a VAVS Point of Contact at every Chapter to distribute meeting information (i.e. Donation Needs List and Volunteer Assignments)
- Conduct an Annual Joint Review

Local VAVS Committee Purpose and Structure

- Purpose: To assist with the coordination of plans and policies for community participation in the VAVS Program
- Chair: VA Medical Center Associate Director or other senior management official
- Deputy Chair: VA Medical Center Voluntary Service Program Manager
- Membership: One organizational VAVS Rep and up to three organizational VAVS Deps
- VAVS Committee Meetings held quarterly

Local VAVS Reps and Deps Duties and Responsibilities

“Manage the MOPH Volunteers”

- **Assist** with improving the VAVS Program
- **Provide** input/feedback to VA staff and VAVS Committee
- **Recruit** Volunteers
- **Promote** donations of financial and material goods
- **Advise** and inform organizational leadership of VAVS and VA issues and concerns
- **Attend** and participate in VAVS meetings and distribute information to all in the community
- **Assist** in the removal of local volunteers when necessary
- **Serve** on subcommittees and task groups
- **Maintain** records (hours and donations)
- **Coordinate** facility activities and projects
- **Conduct** Annual Joint Review
- **Register** as a regularly Scheduled Volunteer

VAVS Reps and Deps Qualifications

- A sincere interest in the welfare of hospitalized Veterans and a desire to help them
- The ability to work with others
- Leadership: Most Essential trait for selecting Reps/Deps
- Knowledge of Organization and the VA
- Ability to communicate and disseminate information
- Ability to attend the quarterly Regularly Scheduled VAVS Meetings---CRITICAL!!!

Annual Joint Reviews

- **Purpose:** To assess organization's participation in the VAVS Program during the preceding year and to develop goals for next year
- **VAVS Rep Responsibilities:**
 - Know the month the AJR is scheduled
 - Make an appointment with the VAVS Chief or Program Manager
 - Discuss Organization's achievements, issues and concerns and goals – make suggestions for improvement

Why Volunteer?

- To gain work experience
- To learn new skills
- To meet new people
- To give something back
- To be of service to others
- Social Interaction

What Volunteers Do

Traditional Volunteer Assignments

- Patient Escort
- Volunteer Drivers
- Clerical Positions
- Information Desk
- Ambassador Program
- Chaplain Service
- Pharmacy
- Nursing
- Guest Relations Program
- Outpatient Assistance
- New assignments based on need

What Volunteers Do

Non-traditional Volunteer Assignments

- Virtual Volunteers
- Fundraisers
- Managers
- Recruiters
- Corporate Representatives
- Trainers and Educators
- Writers (Newsletters, Recruitment Ads)
- Community Liaisons
- Respite/Hospice Volunteers

Where to Volunteer

- VA Medical Centers – www.va.gov/volunteer
- VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic
- VA Poly Trauma Center – www.polytrauma.va.gov
- Fisher House Foundation – www.fisherhouse.org
- State Veterans Homes – www.nasvh.org/home
- Vet Centers – www.vetcenter.va.gov
- VA Youth Volunteering – www1.va.gov/volunteer/studentprgm.cfm

Types of Volunteers

- **Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers** – work for the VA on a scheduled basis. RS Volunteers are considered employees who work on a “without compensation” basis. These volunteers go through a formal VA orientation and receive individual rewards for hours and service given.
- **Occasional Volunteers (OV)** – work with VA on an infrequent basis and do not have a regular schedule. Organization receives credit for volunteer service given rather than individual.
- **Youth Volunteers (YV)** – At least 14 years old and can be given any VAVS project in concert with older RS and OV who can provide leadership.
- **VA Special Event Volunteers** – VA has many annual 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 OEF and OIF Welcome Home Event Celebrations

Volunteer Now

- For Information concerning individual or chapter participation, contact the Chief of Volunteer Service at your nearest VA Medical Center.
- The Chief of Volunteer Services will arrange an initial screening and help you in choosing the program that best fits your time and interests.
- Information is also available on the Internet at:
www.va.gov/volunteer
- If you have any Organization Volunteer Questions, please contact Patriot Del Turner, VAVS Director, 1-256-837-3474
e-mail: dplusk@aol.com