

vfwauxva.org
2025-2026

Auxiliary

DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Promote Patriotism - Celebrating Patriotic Holidays

Patriotic Holidays are an opportunity to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. When fun family events are presented to the community, prospective new members will walk through your door.

QR Codes

Program QR Codes are used on just about everything. Members can use it as a talking point to explain about the VFW Auxiliary

*Unity Brings
Victory*

UNITY BRINGS VICTORY.



Hello Auxiliary Brothers and Sisters -

I am honored and humbled to begin this next step, as Department President. For me, this isn't just about a title; it's about a renewed commitment to our shared purpose. I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to those who have paved the way and led us forward - your hard work and dedication have been an inspiration to us all, and I am truly thankful for your service.

From Sea to Shining Sea - Honoring *Veterans* Who Keep Us Free

The heart of our Auxiliary lies in our unwavering commitment to our Veterans, through our programs, events, visits, donations and so much more. We are a diverse group, but we are all united by a single, powerful mission: to support our nation's Veterans, active-duty military, their families and our communities.

Unity Brings Victory

Unity isn't about always agreeing on every small detail. It's about recognizing that our combined strengths far outweigh any individual effort.

This coming year, I ask that we all be mindful of our actions, to lift each other up and speak with kindness. Gossip and negative talk can be incredibly destructive. They take away the trust and camaraderie between us. Let's foster an environment built on respect and open, honest conversation. Every person should feel their voice is heard and valued.

I want to encourage every member to find their niche and actively participate! Whether it's through volunteering, joining committees, or simply attending meetings, there's a place for YOU to contribute your unique talents and passion. It's about remembering why we all joined in the first place – what is that reason for you?

Let us move forward with a united spirit, honoring those who have given so much, and strengthening the important relationship we have with our VFW Comrades. Together, we truly make a difference.

With your dedication, enthusiasm, and unwavering commitment, I have confidence that our Auxiliary will continue to grow and achieve great things.

Let's get started!

Loyally,
Kelli Levitt

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"We deeply appreciate your membership and commitment. Together, we're making a difference in the lives of veterans and ensuring no one is left behind."



EXTENSION & REVITALIZATION CHAIRMAN DEPARTMENT CHIEF OF STAFF (COS)



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Chief of Staff (COS) Responsibilities

The COS may serve as the Extension, Revitalization and Mentoring Chairman. So, just how important is the COS to the success of the Department? The COS plays a major role by providing guidance and resources to the VFW Auxiliaries to ensure they are healthy and successful.

The COS (1) serves as an assistant to the Department President; (2) must be knowledgeable in all facets of the Auxiliary including the Bylaws, Programs and Mentoring for Leadership, and (3) works closely with the Department President and with the Auxiliary organizer who is appointed by the Department President to establish new Auxiliaries.

NATIONAL VFW AUXILIARY REQUIRES FIVE (5) ESSENTIAL THINGS OF AN AUXILIARY.

We need to make certain that current Auxiliaries are in good working order by meeting the below five essentials.

1. Auxiliaries shall hold at least ten (10) business meetings per year between July 1 and June 30th. (Bylaws, Sec. 210). Note: Five (5) Auxiliary members, in good standing, constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business at any Auxiliary meeting. (Bylaws Sec 212)
2. Dues are paid on at least ten (10) members on or before February 1 of the current year. (Bylaws, Sec. 207). (This is required to maintain the Auxiliary's Charter).
3. Approved quarterly audits conducted by the Trustees must be submitted. (Bylaws, Sec. 814).
4. Officers elected, installed and reported to National Headquarters no later than June 30. (This generates the bond application via email).
5. The offices of President and Treasurer MUST be bonded by August 31st.

Building on the VFW Auxiliary Foundation and MALTA Member Resources are two of the most valuable tools available to members on all levels to learn about the organization, understanding the programs, taking over leadership roles, and understanding the duties of each officer.

ESTABLISHING NEW AUXILIARIES

Whether a VFW Post decides that it wants an Auxiliary, or whether an Auxiliary member or nonmember sees the potential for an Auxiliary, the steps for creating an Auxiliary to the Post are the same.

A VFW Post must by 2/3 majority vote of the membership present at a regular meeting (or special meeting) to have an Auxiliary. An Auxiliary can never exist on its own without a Post, and can never be started without the Post's permission.

The Department President appoints the official organizer, and the organizer must be a VFW Auxiliary member. Positive and knowledgeable Auxiliary presenters are important when addressing a Post regarding the benefits of having an Auxiliary.

Extension tools and resources are available in MALTA Member Resources.



MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN CURRENT AUXILIARIES.

REVITALIZATION

Since District Presidents have first-hand knowledge of their Auxiliaries, it is important that they communicate with the Department President and the COS to identify areas of concern regarding the Auxiliaries in their District.

The Healthy Auxiliary Tool Kit includes seven (7) resources to assist in identifying and solving issues including the Healthy Auxiliary Checklist, Auxiliary Meeting Clinic and much more suggestions.

Additionally, auxiliaries look for guidance from the COS. Since each Auxiliary is different, the COS must understand that "A ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL" plan. We need to ensure that Auxiliaries are conducting business in a way that works for them and that their members feel empowered and engaged.

FUTURE EXTENSION AND REVITALIZATION COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

Look for more detail guidance to be provided in the upcoming Department Communications. The guidance will cover identifying the warning signs of an auxiliary in trouble, how to recognize "yellow flags (struggling auxiliaries)" or "red flags (auxiliaries to be put on suspension)", the benefits of a Performance Improvement Plan v. placing an auxiliary on suspension, and mentoring and encouraging our members. Training and educating members to be future leaders is why we mentor.

YEAR- END REPORT FORM

This program does not require a year-end report form.

Americanism

"Americanism is an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity"



Chairman

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The definition of Americanism was established by the Commanders-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, United Spanish War Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Commanders of the American Legion, and the Disabled American Veterans of the World War at a Conference held in Washington, D.C. in February 1927.

A large part of showing our Americanism is helping our Veterans and their Families, showing respect for our Flag, promoting Patriotism, recognizing our Star families and our exceptional Citizenship teachers as well as educating others about the meaning and importance of patriotic symbols and traditions.

1

Flag Education in Schools

Educating our youth about patriotism is an important step on the path to good citizenship. Encourage members of your Auxiliary to volunteer in schools and educate youth about the importance of respecting our Flag. Volunteers can visit individual classrooms or give a presentation at a school assembly.

2

Recognition of Outstanding Community Flag Display

When a community member, business or organization takes the care and time to display our Flag, it reinforces patriotism to the entire community. You may recognize this display by presenting a certificate of appreciation from your Auxiliary.

3

Flag Retirement Ceremonies

The ceremonies honoring our Flag serve as one of the most beautiful forms of respect for our country. This is the perfect way to involve the whole family of

Auxiliary and VFW members. Flag retirement ceremonies can also serve as an event involving the entire community. For more information, refer to MALTA Member Resources.

4

Promote Patriotism - Celebrating Patriotic Holidays

Patriotic Holidays are an opportunity to involve the whole family and bring community attention to your Auxiliary. When fun family events are presented to the community, prospective new members will walk through your door. Patriotic Holidays are the perfect way to show that your Auxiliary supports patriotism, veterans and their families as a top priority. For more information about patriotic holidays and ways to celebrate,

5

Smart Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Program

Each year the VFW recognizes three exceptional teachers - one each from the elementary, middle school and high school levels - for their outstanding commitment to teach Americanism and instill patriotism in their students. For more information visit <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year>.



Auxiliary Outreach

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Auxiliary Outreach a partnership formed by an Auxiliary with another organization, for the benefit of their community or its institutions. It is a donation of time, not in-kind or monetary donations. It's about partnering with other organizations in our communities to help improve where we live and to make their event successful. When an entire Auxiliary partners with another organization outside our own, it is considered Auxiliary.

Outreach provided the project was approved by the Auxiliary and recorded in the meeting minutes prior to the project. It involves a donation of time, not money. You are representing the Auxiliary in your volunteer work while wearing Auxiliary attire that lets others know you are representing your Auxiliary.

I will give examples of what does and does not qualify in each Communication.

Basic Steps:

- Find local groups and organizations in need of assistance, ask what your Auxiliary can do to help
- Discuss the project and vote at your meeting to accept your volunteer hours.
- Some organizations may have ongoing activities that only require a motion at the beginning of the year (such as a food bank), others would need a motion for each new event (such as a local 5K run). It must be recorded in the Auxiliary's minutes.
- Form the partnership with at least one Auxiliary member working the event.
- Wear your Auxiliary attire (shirt, hat, name badge, lanyard, jacket, etc.)
- Report the details and report only what does not fit under any other Program.
- Auxiliary work (e.g., Outreach, Americanism, Veterans & Family Support, etc.) is to be reported to your local VFW Post Adjutant so it can be added to their report. • This will help your Post with eligibility for the National Outstanding Community Service Post Award.

Finding partnership opportunities:

- Ask members about other organizations they belong to and do not forget to ask members who are not able to attend meetings. They may be willing to partner with an organization and report their hours to you.
- Prepare a letter of introduction and send it to all groups or organizations in your community. Let them know who we are and what we do. Invite them to reach out to us if they need volunteers at upcoming events.
- Search for upcoming events on social media or in the local newspaper or check out community bulletin boards.
- Create a flyer that can be posted to social media, or handed out during county fairs or other community events or publish in your local paper.
- Hand out business cards with your contact information as well as the Program QR code so that potential partners can learn more about who we are and gives them an easy way to contact you.

Examples of Auxiliary Outreach:

- Participation in walks that benefit other organizations as an event spotter, water station volunteer, timekeeper, etc. (Walking or running in the race is not part of Auxiliary Outreach.) Working with local police on child ID kits.
- Working with firefighters on fire safety and prevention.
- Working with EMTs to host CPR training.
- Handing out food at soup kitchens.
- Partnering with an animal shelter to hold a spay and neuter clinic.
- Partner with a local community theatre to provide the house volunteers (ushers, concessions, etc.) for one weekend of performances.
- Working with parks and recreation departments to plant trees, adopt-a-park initiatives and develop community art installations.

What is NOT considered Auxiliary Outreach (must not be reported in other Programs):

- Making a donation to an organization.
- Repairs to, maintenance or beautification of the Post home.
- Cooking or serving a meal for a Post or Auxiliary fundraiser.
- “Buddy”® Poppy distribution. (Buddy Poppy, Americanism)
- Providing an honor guard at a member’s funeral.(Veterans & Family Support, Americanism)
- Flying the American Flag. (Americanism)
- Conducting Flag retirement programs. (Americanism)
- Church activities for one specific congregation and not the entire community.

Monthly/weekly volunteerism opportunities:

August 5, 2025	National Night Out
September 11, 2025	National Day of Service and Remembrance
October 4, 2025	Be the Change Day
October 25, 2025	National Make a Difference Day



POW/MIA Remembrance

Prisoner of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) Remembrance Day is a solemn occasion dedicated to honoring the bravery and sacrifice of those who have endured captivity or remain unaccounted for while serving our nation. This day is crucial for recognizing the profound hardships faced by POWs, who suffered extreme conditions and personal anguish while separated from their loved ones.

It also highlights the ongoing commitment to account for those who are still missing, ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten. By observing this day, we reaffirm our collective responsibility to remember these heroes, support their families and uphold the values of honor and respect for all who have served in the defense of freedom.

Tools

Social Media Campaigns: Use social media platforms to share stories, events and patriotic messages. Use the current hashtags associated with the VFW Auxiliary to show other members how your Auxiliary is promoting patriotism. #AuxiliaryPatriotism.



Program QR Codes are used on just about everything. Members can use it as a talking point to explain about the VFW Auxiliary Americanism and patriotism. Most people will open it up and then they will find important information on the Americanism Program.

Auxiliary_Department of VA



"Buddy"® Poppy

Buddy"® Poppy Education/Outreach National Display Contest

The "Buddy"® Poppy is the official memorial flower of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). It represents the blood shed by American service members. It is a symbol of both remembrance and hope for a peaceful future as well as a reiteration that the VFW will not forget the sacrifices of our country's service members. It has been an integral part of the VFW community since 1922.

The Poppy movement was inspired by the poem, "In Flanders Fields," written by Canadian Army Col. John McCrae. Poppies were originally distributed by the Franco-American Children's League to benefit children in the devastated areas of France and Belgium following WWI.

In 1922, VFW conducted a campaign and got Poppies from France. Members soon discovered it took too long to get the flowers in from France and they produced a better idea. Disabled, hospitalized and aging veterans could make the paper flowers and ship them out to the members for distribution. And so, it was known, for veterans in VA hospitals and domiciliaries and in state veterans' homes, every day would be VFW "Buddy"® Poppy Day.



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These veterans assemble the Poppies, tie them in bunches of ten and pack them in boxes of 500, 1,000 or 2,000 for shipment to the Posts and Auxiliaries. VFW pays the disabled veteran for the work. In most cases, this extra money provides additional income for the worker to pay for the little luxuries which make life more tolerable. Furthermore, Poppy assembly is often used as a therapy program to provide exercise for fingers and hands crippled by wounds, disease, and the effects of old age.

Another reason Poppies are so important is because all proceeds from distribution are used for veteran's welfare or for the wellbeing of their needy dependents and the orphans of veterans. More than 2,300 children of veterans have been or are being cared for in the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, thanks to a portion of Poppy funds. Reiterate to your fellow members the two-fold importance of Poppies. It is truly all about veterans helping veterans and living up to VFW's motto of "No One Does More for Veterans."



Contact your VFW Post to order Poppies. Brochures, "Buddy"® Poppy distribution supplies and promotional items can be purchased from the VFW Store at vfwstore.org or by calling 1-833-VFW-VETS.

Tips

"Buddy"®

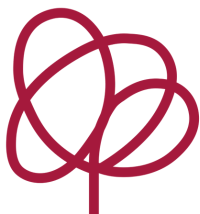
Poppy Distribution

Tips:

- Meet with your VFW Post and discuss holding a joint drive and splitting the proceeds.
- Contact the clerk's office in your city/town to see if a permit is required to hold a distribution event.
- Get permission from store managers/owners in the desired distribution location(s) prior to promoting your event.
- Share the information about your distribution event with your community by utilizing PSAs on local television channels, radio stations, local paper, and on social media. Post flyers in high traffic areas around the community.
- Ask for assistance from youth groups in the area such as VFW and/or Auxiliary youth, JROTC, after-school, Scouts, Young Marines, and faith-based clubs.
- Ask your volunteers to wear Auxiliary and/or VFW-branded clothing to both promote the Auxiliary and VFW and connect the distribution of poppies to the organization.
- Remind your volunteers that they are not selling **"Buddy"® Poppies**. They are distributing them for donations.
- Never refuse someone a **"Buddy"® Poppy** because they are unable to donate. A **"Buddy"® Poppy** honors all veterans.
- See the VFW's **"Buddy"® Poppy** Chairman's Guide for further assistance in setting up a **"Buddy"® Poppy** drive, as well as other helpful resources. The guide can be found in MALTA Member Resources.

AT both the Auxiliary and Post level, all proceeds from Poppy drives are to be placed in the Relief Fund with receipts and expenditures in accordance with the Treasurer's Guide and the Podium Edition: Bylaws and Ritual. (Sec. 904)

"Buddy"® Poppy drives can be hosted at any time during the year – not just Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Make a goal of holding one once a quarter. If you have enough people to volunteer, host a monthly "Buddy"® Poppy drive.



V F W N A T I O N A L H O M E

As June ended, people gathered to honor a remarkable milestone in our history: the centennial anniversary of the VFW National Home located in Eaton Rapids, Michigan. Born from the belief that America needs to care for the children and families of people who sacrificed for our country, the VFW National Home is a place of support, growth, and community for veteran and military families. It has helped military and veteran families needing a fresh start. Families can live there up to four years in no cost single-family homes with access to licensed childcare, professional case management, tutoring, life skills, classes, secondary financial assistance, recreational and community service opportunities all on-site.

The Health & Happiness Fund supports the following at the National Home:



- Christmas Gifts
- Graduation Gifts
- Maintenance of Auxiliary-sponsored buildings
- Emergency repairs and renovations.



Military & Veteran Family Helpline

Be Heard. Be Helped.

800-313-4200

Call for any reason.

Chairman

Pamela Kotz

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It was founded in 1925 as a place where the families left behind by war could remain together, keeping the family circle intact even when their service member did not come home. Today's families face different challenges — reintegration, post-traumatic stress, and high unemployment — and the VFW National Home continues to evolve to meet these needs. Over the decades, it has adapted programs and services to provide the essential support that these families need to grow and thrive. The VFW National Home remains dedicated to ensuring that military and veteran families have the support, resources, and community they deserve.

One way the Auxiliary supports the National Home is through gifts of ten cents per member to the Health & Happiness Fund. Contributions are critical since the campus and its programs receive no government funding.

Donations can be made online in MALTA or by mail:

DONATE



Making a gift is easy on MALTA. Gifts can be made by an Entity (Auxiliary, District, Department) or by individuals.

- The Treasurer can log into MALTA.
- Go to the Duties tab for the entity you are making the gift on behalf of.
- Select Make a Gift shortcut icon.
- Click on Make a Gift blue box.
- Choose program and enter amount. Click on "I hereby agree to the terms and conditions of purchase."
- Click on Pay Now to donate.
- By Mail send a check earmarked Health & Happiness to: VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters ATTN: Health & Happiness Donations 406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64111

HISTORIAN & MEDIA RELATIONS



This member keeps a written report of the history of their Auxiliary or District and submits this to their respective President at the end of the year.

Supplemental material can include photographs and newspaper clippings that document special Auxiliary events.

What is newsworthy?



Consider these questions:

1. Does it involve local people?
2. Does it Interest non-members?
3. Is it timely?
4. Does it help the community?
5. Is it unique and new?

If the answer is "yes", this is a chance for you to pitch a story with an "angle" that will showcase your Auxiliary's hard work and accomplishments.

Let's show our communities, and our nation, everything we do to improve the lives of our Veterans, our service members, and their families.

Who Should you Contact About Auxiliary News:

Local Newspaper- Radio Station - Social Media Platforms

Learn the names of reporters who cover stories most similar to yours and tailor your own list of media contacts.

Send information directly to these contacts rather than the editor. News staff who specialize in relevant areas, like society and calendar page editors, are more likely to be receptive to including Auxiliary events. Feel free to send a reporter or editor a personal email and be sure to include your contact information.

Chairman

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The member responsible for Historian & Media Relations duties is a memory keeper, and collectors of the

Five (5) W's:

Who, What, When, Where & Why
of your Auxiliary.

These individuals compile and chronicle memories and events in written and digital format, including photographs, memorabilia, print news, audio and/ or video clips and social media posts. The Historian & Media Relations member captures the narrative of the Program Year.

At the Auxiliary, District and Department levels, these members are the people who get the word out about the Auxiliary to our communities.

The Historian & Media Chairman is also the member who gets the word out about the VFW Auxiliary to our communities. They inform the public about activities, events and our valuable National Programs.

Reels:

This year, I would love to focus on Auxiliaries using and creating Reels to spread the word about our Programs and what you are doing in your communities! I bet you are thinking to yourself, "What the heck is a Reel?"

Reels are full-screen vertical videos up to 90 seconds long. They feature a suite of editing tools and audio tracks, as well as trending voice/sound snippets. Reels allow you to add captions, stickers, and backgrounds; upload multiple video clips; use a range of filters and loads more!

Reels can be made up of a single video, several clips edited together, still photos or some combination of photos and video. Reels can be posted to both Instagram (which has more than 1.3 billion users!) and Facebook.

Reels have outstanding visibility and usually appear at the top of the feed.

Media

Social media platforms are the BEST and fastest way to get your word out about our Programs, our Auxiliary's and what we do for both our veterans and their families. Many of our seasoned members prefer Instagram. So, what is stopping your Auxiliary from utilizing these two social media platforms?

Did you know that those two platforms can "talk" to one another, and you can cross-post to both platforms by linking your two profiles together?

Communicating through traditional media outlets is also important. This includes our newspapers, TV, radio, and newsletter.

It is so important to keep our current members up to date on what's happening with our Auxiliaries!

Newsletters (both digital emails and printed) are a fantastic way to spread the information about what is happening at your Post and around your communities, and that is OK. So, what can you do to spread the word and connect with your membership?

- PREPARE A MONTHLY OR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER to be mailed and emailed out for your members. Also include some copies at your Post home as well.

RECOGNIZE MEMBERS WHO ARE CELEBRATING birthdays, anniversaries, volunteer work, etc.

- DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE UPCOMING EVENTS!
- YOU CAN ALSO CREATE AND INCLUDE AN EVENTS CALENDAR.
- UPDATE YOUR AUXILIARY/POST FACEBOOK PAGE(S) REGULARLY AND CROSS-POST ON INSTAGRAM.