

COMMUNITY SERVICE GUIDELINES

Constructive community service is a founding VFW tenet with volunteerism benefiting education, the environment, health sciences and civic projects. Projects must be conducted during the current Community Activity year. The year begins April 1st and ends March 31st the following year, but the reporting window is narrower.

Reports must be received between July 1 and May 1 or else they cannot be considered for competition and award purposes.

Examples:

The following are a few examples of program/projects for a Post. This list of suggested activities is by no means a complete list of projects that can be accomplished. Its sole purpose is to stimulate ideas and provide guidelines in your search for projects to perform.

Veteran Services

- A. Veteran Participation Reports
- B. Buddy Poppy program
- C. Homeless veteran program
- D. Military support activities
- E. Burial & Honor Guard Details
- F. VA Hospital activities
- G. Financial/equipment support of veteran programs or entities

Youth Services

- A. Conduct a Voice of Democracy program
- B. Conduct a Patriot's Pen program
- C. Conduct a Patriotic Art program
- D. Sponsor and support of a Scouting or youth unit.
- E. Conduct a Scout of the Year program
- F. Sponsorship of a youth sporting team
- G. Sponsor a youth event;
 - 1. Easter egg hunt
 - 2. Bike safety program
 - 3. Halloween party
 - 4. Christmas party's
 - 5. Veterans in classroom
 - 6. Flag etiquette instruction
- H. Support of a JROTC unit, Boy Scout Troop, Cub Scout Pack, Young Marine unit

Community Service

- A. Sponsorship of:
 - 1. Blood drive
 - 2. Food drive
 - 3. Recycling program
 - 4. Food distribution programs
 - 5. Safety program
- B. Flag details for public events
- C. Get out the Vote program
- D. Financial/equipment support of public programs or entities

Americanism Guidelines

For credit in Americanism, a project must be of a patriotic nature. We're looking for things like flag presentations, parades, presentation of patriotic literature, patriotic ceremonies in schools or youth groups, and public observances of national holidays. Each project must benefit the greater community not just the Post or Auxiliary. Fundraising projects, even those whose proceeds are earmarked for Americanism programs, are not in themselves creditable Americanism projects. However, the project that receives the funds, when complete and if it meets the Americanism criteria, can qualify for an Americanism credit.

Examples of Disallowed (things that don't count)

- 1. Any project for yourself or member of the VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit or Jr. Girls.
- 2. Reciting the Pledge to the Flag at a Post monthly meeting.
- 3. Sending a "Get Well" card to a member of the VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit, etc.
 - a. Shopping for the "Get Well" card above
 - b. Post office visit to mail the "Get Well" card above
 - c. Providing the car to deliver the "Get Well" card above
- 4. Any activity that is obviously within the scope of another previously reported project (example, see 3a, 3b, 3c above)
- 5. A flag raising ceremony at the Post, unless attended by persons outside the VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit or Jr. Girls
- 6. Purchasing a replacement flag for the Post
- 7. Running an errand for or giving a ride to a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit, etc.
- 8. Honor Guard posting colors at a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit, etc. meeting or ceremony
- 9. Giving a certificate to a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit, etc.
- 10. Donation to a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit, etc.
- 11. Fundraising projects, even those whose proceeds are earmarked for community service projects.

Filling Out and Completing Community Service Activity Report Form

Instruction Sheet

The Department of Texas Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliaries will use the attached Activity Report Form to report all activities carried on in Texas. Many National and Department VFW requirements, including Internal Revenue Service (IRS) policies, rely upon the accurate description and reporting of your Post community service activities.

The Community Service Chairperson will validate and verify each entry to ensure that it meets all requirements for Community Service as outlined in the Texas VFW SOP.

MM/DD/YYYY: Indicate the month, day, and year the activity was completed. If your activity covered multiple dates of the same type of activity – then list the last activity date here. If multiple dates of same activity – then list each date or consecutive dates in the activity description, i.e. 04/2/2018, 04/9/2018 or 05/05/2018 – 05/08/2018.

Name(s) (Last, First): List person or persons supporting this activity

Activity Description: Briefly give a detailed description of the activity each activity.

Check One: Youth, Americanism, Homeless Veteran or Motorcycle (MC) Unit.

Hours: Please indicate the total man hours of **all** volunteers expended on the project. Round up to whole hours- no minutes.

Mileage: Enter the miles from and to the activity (Round Trip) - round up to the nearest whole number – no tenths. If more than one mode of transportation was used – then combine the mileage.

Money: Please indicate the total amount of funds expended to support this activity. Round up to whole dollars. Do not calculate hours into a dollar amount, only list money actually spent.

The IRS will use your meeting minutes to verify you meet the standards of community service for non-profit organizations. To remain within the spirit and intent of the VFW Charter a Post is granted through the VFW 51% of monetary donations should be to VFW programs.

Important Note: Each Post can have their non-profit status revoked by the IRS if they “Fail to maintain adequate records to accurately report your exempt purpose and activities that supports your exemption un-der code section 501 (c) (19).” The first item the IRS will ask for during an audit is evidence of community service. All community service items should be recorded in the Post meeting minutes, which is the second item the IRS will ask for.

Those Posts that have maintained a properly organized and complete Community Service Record Book and produced it for the IRS during an audit have never had an issue in verification of fulfilling the objectives of their charter from the National VFW.

Community Service Reports should be sent by the Post Community Service Chairperson only or the Commander.