



SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTING GUIDELINES

1. Community Service, as defined by the National Community Service Trust Act, encompasses “any human act serving the common good; in the interest of the community”. Elsewhere, community service is further defined as “ a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions”. The VFW subscribes to the above, but adds that for the purpose of volunteer recognition, VFW Community Service must be performed by and as a representative of the VFW and identified as a VFW Member for an organization or individual outside of the VFW and its Auxiliaries. These are activities approved by the Post to support the community, local veterans and other non-profit organizations.

2. Below are but a few examples of valid community service activities:

- Hosting a welcome home party for a military unit at the Post and providing a free meal
- Driving a fellow veteran to the local VA facility or delivering meals to a shut in
- Building a handicap ramp for a veteran or making home repairs for them and their family
- Hosting a Quilts of Valor ceremony and providing meals to veterans and family attendees
- Serving on a town committee to help plan Memorial and/or Independence Day activities
- Placing flags on graves for Memorial Day, Veteran's Day or Wreath's Across America
- Sponsoring a local Little League, Boy/Girl Scouts or Cheer Squad
- Donating use of Post Home/Facilities to Community groups

3. Community service is not an activity performed for the sole benefit of the Post or Auxiliary. Examples would include maintenance, upkeep or beautification of the Post home, cooking or serving a meal for a Post fundraiser, or working on bingo night. Any activities that are part of the normal requirements of a Post or Auxiliary would not be considered community service. Examples of this would include attending a Post or Auxiliary meeting or making a donation to your Post. Events performed by Post and/or Auxiliary members that raise funds to benefit the Post are not community service activities. Other examples not considered community service include:

- Passing out Buddy Poppies
- Hours working on a Post fundraiser, such as Post Bingo or a raffle
- Serving meals at the Post to members or guests when there is a charge for those meals
- Flying the flag at home OR at the Post
- Mowing the lawn or helping to maintain the Post
- Providing Post facilities for a pool or dart tournament or a for profit company
- Paying a member's dues
- Providing classes to Post or Auxiliary members
- Use of the hall for Post or Auxiliary meetings

4. A particularly controversial area in VFW community service is service to one's church, the local volunteer fire department, or other community organization. Many VFW members are also members of

other organizations. It would be easy to double or triple count a person's activities if we did. Examples include handing out flags for your local American Legion Post or visiting ailing fellow church members. Generally, these activities are NOT considered community service for two reasons: 1) they are not performed for the community at large, and 2) they are part of an individual's service to their faith or another organization and not to the VFW. Other examples of activities not considered as community service include:

- Supporting your local church fund raising activities
- Serving as a church deacon or on various boards and councils
- Assisting veterans as part of your work with other organizations like the Legion or DelVets
- Attending meetings as a representative of another organization
- Performing emergency services as a firefighter or first responder
- Making personal donations to another organization

5. Four Categories of Community Service for Reporting:

a) COMMUNITY SERVICE includes activities within your community which help to benefit local veterans, the community, community organizations, other nonprofits, including use of the post home/facilities by other community groups etc. This also includes our Safety programs.

b) AMERICANISM/CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION is demonstrating support for our country and veterans, such as ceremonies and military funerals. It is also about taking the time to teach others about flag etiquette, the Constitution, military service, etc. All veteran and holiday related activities should be reported here.

c) YOUTH ACTIVITIES include Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, Scout of the Year Program, Post Scholarships, Patriotic Art, Veterans in the Classroom, JROTC, etc.

d) VETERANS AND MILITARY SUPPORT - In our Delaware Dashboard, this activity area is only for donations to the categories list such as Adopt-A-Unit, National Home, VFW Mental Wellness, Unmet Needs/Relief, etc. Do not report support given to a military member, a military family, a veteran, ceremonies, welcome home, or other activities here. These activities should be reported under community service.

6. Community Service is important. At the end of each reporting year, VFW National reports the number of hours and the monetary value of all of our donated time and money to Congress. These total numbers demonstrate the importance of the VFW to our government, the savings we provide to the government and the Veterans Administration, and why we should continue to maintain our tax exempt status.

7. Community Service must be "honest and accurate." The VFW and its Posts are always subject to an audit by the Internal Revenue Service. Reports that are inflated or are not within report guidelines can jeopardize your tax-exempt status. Posts in Delaware with Charitable Video Lottery Machines are also subject to a State audit based on your annual charitable donation submission to the State Lottery Office.

8. Every Post must have a Community Service (CS) chairman who will be the only comrade designated to complete the Post's CS reports. This comrade will then provide those reports to the Post Adjutant who is authorized to login to the Department of Delaware's website at vfwde.com. The Post Adjutant is the only comrade authorized to enter Post's CS report. This is to help maintain equitable and verifiable reporting across the Department. PLEASE PROVIDE A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF EACH ACTIVITY AND EXPLAIN HOW IT MEETS THE CATEGORY THAT YOU HAVE SELECTED. The categories are explained on the website just above the Program Reporting link. Keep Individual Community Service Report forms on hand at your Post for your members to complete and leave for your Post Community Service chairman. Some Posts maintain a binder with blank forms for comrades to take home and complete. Some Posts put the Community Service Report Form for Individual Comrades on their post web site. Comrades can then download their report forms directly from the website, complete the report form, and send it electronically or physically return the report to the Post for the chairman to review. The chairman should consolidate reports at the Post level. They must also gather reports from your Post's Auxiliary President and report Auxiliary hours, miles, money along with the Post's reports on our vfwde.com website. Adjutants should try to send reports in AS THEY OCCUR or, at least, on a monthly basis. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL APRIL.

9. Please think "CUMULATIVE" when you submit reports for your Post. If 5 comrades worked to install a handicap ramp on a veteran's home and each worked 2 hours, then CUMULATIVE TOTAL for your report is 10 HOURS. Enter "10" in the HOURS block. And don't forget the mileage for EACH comrade to get there and back! Enter that in the MILES block. Do not "double report". Don't report the same activity under more than one category and claim the dollars, miles, comrades and hours again and again. Example: your Post marches in the local parade (which would be Americanism) and invites the local Scout organization to participate (which would be Youth Activities). You had 10 comrades march in the parade and the parade lasted three hours. Report 30 hours, 10 members, and the mileage for each of the 10 comrades under Americanism. BUT HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN ALSO DO: Send a different report for the Youth Activity but DO NOT INCLUDE HOURS, COMRADES, MONEY, MILEAGE etc. again. The Post will get credit for a Youth Activity. But don't include the hours, money, mileage as that would be double reporting if you claimed those hours again. Also, you can't take credit for what the Scouts did as they are a separate organization.

10. Four individual activities require specific reporting on the National Dashboard.

a. Three of these are Voice of Democracy, Patriot Pen, and Citizenship Education Teacher's Award. These programs have specific requirements that must be reported under "Program" on the National Dashboard. These include: Auxiliary Participation, Number of Participants (Students or Teachers), Number of Winners Advanced, Monetary Awards (\$), Additional Money Expended (Other gifts or banquet cost, etc). Please wait until your Post judging is over to complete this. Other activity information about these three programs must be reported via the Department website. However, do not repeat the monetary information on the Department Dashboard, only on National Dashboard.

b. As part of his 2022-2023 National Membership Program, our National Commander in Chief wants each Post to conduct two recruiting events during the year. Once completed, these activities are

reported on the VFW National Dashboard as well. Under "Program", select "Recruiting Events." Complete the required information to include details about the event in the Notes section. You should consider waiting at least a few days to complete this because it asks for a "Recruiting Total:." If you are following up with several prospects, you may not know this information up front.

11. Social Media, Partnering Event and Action Corp Program are also a part of the VFW National Dashboard. However, they are all reported through the Department Dashboard.

a. The Social Media requirement is to have a Social Media presence to inform the public as to the VFW Mission and maintain those information portals through out the year. For example, the Post maintains a Facebook page and a website. This only has to be reported once for the year. Do not report to the dashboard that you held online classes or report posts made on face book to the dashboard. Only report that your Post has the required social media outlets in place, operating and updated regularly.

b. The Partnering Event is the requirement to partner with an entity outside the VFW/VFWAUX for an event that benefit's the community and or veterans. Only report when the event is completed i.e. How much money was raised, how many members were involved, the purpose of the event, the organization you partnered with and the impact on the community. Do not report meetings leading up to the event as they are not a partnering event until it is complete, then those meeting hours can be added. Examples include when the VFW partners with other veteran service organizations, local town/city, and other non-profit organizations. Do not report that your post hall was used by another organization for their meeting/event as this is not a partnering event.

c. The Action Corp Program is the signing up of VFW members and outside individuals for the Action Corp Newsletter. VFW National sends out a weekly newsletter to all members signed up for Action Corp. When an important bill is coming up for a vote in Congress, VFW National will also send out an Action Corp Alert to get people to send an email to their representatives with a recommended action on that legislation. Do not report to the Department Dashboard that you helped members with an online claim or helped a veteran with their login info under Action Corp Program. Maintain a list of those you added to Action Corp and include their names in your report. Anyone can sign up for Action Corps. They don't have to be VFW or Auxiliary members. You can add as many individuals as you want, but you only have to report this once a year.

12. There are so many different activities that we cannot cover them all. However, please remember the basics. Report what you do outside of your Post, not within. Do not double report what others have done for other organizations. Include all your Post Auxiliary activities that apply. Provide enough information in your report so that others outside your Post understand what the activity was and how it meets the criteria for that category. There must only be one person per Post that reports on the Department website. Each District Adjutant must review and approve Post activities reported. Your Department Community Service Chairman is the final approving authority for all reports. Don't forget to report on the VFW National Dashboard all reports that are required to make a Post an All-American Post.

14. The current Department Dashboard website page does not yet depict all this guidance. We are working to change to the dashboard and its elements to actually reflect what we do and how we do it. As an example, do not report assisting a veteran under the VMS category. Report it under Community Service. Honor Guard and other veteran or patriotic related events should be classified under Americanism. We will continue to advise everyone as we fix the website and potentially make some additional changes to the guidelines.