

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 July 1st and ends June 30th 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 Service

- 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

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

Youth Service

- 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
 5. Veterans in classroom
 6. Flag etiquette instruction
- H. Support of a JROTC unit

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 or Jr. Girls.
 - 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 or Jr. Girls
8. Honor Guard posting colors at a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit or Jr. Girls meeting or ceremony
9. Giving a certificate to a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit or Jr. Girls member.
10. Donation to a VFW, Auxiliaries, Motorcycle Unit or Jr. Girls
11. Fundraising projects, even those whose proceeds are earmarked for community service projects

KEEP IN MIND THAT your project should be reported only once a month. If the project is allowing the Boy Scouts to use the hall for their weekly meeting, then report it as one project for the month with the total hours and monies donated for the month. If a member volunteers at the V.A. hospital four times a week, then report it as one project for the month with the total hours and monies donated for the month.

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 under 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. Each Post should maintain a Community Service Record Book for the purpose of verification to the IRS that the Post is fulfilling the objectives of its charter. These books can also be used very effectively in recruiting and maintaining a history of Post activities year after year as a historical record. **SEE ANNEX**

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.

Please fill out these forms as completely as possible before sending them to Department Headquarters.

REPORTING YEAR: Reports to be credited must have been completed between May 1 and April 30.

DISTRICT #: Indicate the District your Post is located in.

POST #: We need your Post # so we can accurately document the activities for your Post.

DATE COMPLETED: Indicate the month, day, and year the activity was completed.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Please very briefly describe each activity on the lines provided. No attachments.

YOUTH: Place a check mark here if this is considered a youth project.

AMERICANISM: Place a check mark here if this is considered an Americanism project.

HOURS: Please indicate the total man hours of all volunteers expended on the project. Round up, no minutes.

MONEY: Please indicate the total amount of funds expended by the Post on this project. Round up to whole dollars. Do not calculate hours into a dollar amount, only list money actually spent.

MEETING RECORD: It is very important that you fill in all spaces at the bottom of the form. These numbers are kept at Department Headquarters and will be reported to National twice a year as required by the National organization. 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 under 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. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that each Post maintain a Community Service Record Book for the purpose of verification to the IRS that the Post is fulfilling the objectives of its charter. These books can also be used very effectively in recruiting and maintaining a history of Post activities year after year as a historical record. The District Commander, or his designee, during his annual inspection of the Post will ask to see this book from the previous year.

Submit by ONLY ONE of the two following methods - please, so we do not duplicate reports and jeopardize your IRS Non-Profit Tax Status.

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

Mail: Department of Texas VFW * P.O. Box 14468 * Austin, Texas 78761
On-line: www.texasvfw.org



Texas VFW

Community Service Activity Report Form

(Reporting Period: July 1 to June 30)

POST # _____ **DIST #** _____

Briefly describe each activity and **PRINT CLEARLY**, if we cannot read it then no credit will be given. DATE

COMPLETED ******All Mileage, Hours and Money should be entered in whole numbers rounded up!******

1)	MM/DD/YY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Americanism: <input type="checkbox"/> Mileage: _____ Hours: _____ Money: _____
2)	MM/DD/YY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Americanism: <input type="checkbox"/> Mileage: _____ Hours: _____ Money: _____
3)	MM/DD/YY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Americanism: <input type="checkbox"/> Mileage: _____ Hours: _____ Money: _____
4)	MM/DD/YY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Americanism: <input type="checkbox"/> Mileage: _____ Hours: _____ Money: _____
5)	MM/DD/YY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Americanism: <input type="checkbox"/> Mileage: _____ Hours: _____ Money: _____

In accordance with I.R.S. guidelines the community service reported was conducted by VFW &/or Auxiliary members for the benefit of non-members and the community-at-large for which no reimbursement or payment of any kind was received and has been documented in the Meeting Minutes at the monthly Post meeting held on: **MM/DD/YYYY:** _____

Community Service Chairperson: _____ (Print Name)

Contact Information: _____ (Phone Number)

DO NOT FAX! Mail to: Dept. of Texas VFW, P.O. Box 14468, Austin, Texas 78761