



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 to those attendees. -driving a fellow veteran to the local VA facility.
- Building a handicap ramp for a veteran -delivering meals to a shut in
- 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 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.

- Passing out Buddy Poppies
- Hours working on a 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 and at the Post
- Mowing the lawn or helping to maintain the Post
- Providing Post facilities for a pool tournament or a for profit company
- Paying a member's dues
- Providing classes to Post or Auxiliary members
- Providing your Post facilities to another VFW Organization, ie. VFW Aux., Cooties etc.

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 that do not qualify 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 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. Categories of Community Service for Reporting:

a) COMMUNITY SERVICE includes activities within your community which help to benefit the community, community organizations, other nonprofits, use of the post home/facilities by other community groups, Community Events, clean a highway, civic improvement projects etc, Post Donations (other than VMS), Aid to Individuals, National Home, UNMET/MAP. This also includes our Safety and youth programs.

b) AMERICANISM/CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION is demonstrating support for our country and veterans, think parades, ceremonies and military funeral, Patriotic Events, Veteran holidays. It is also about taking the time to teach others about flag etiquette, the Constitution, Citizenship Education, military service, etc.

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. The total numbers, especially the monetary value, 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 the 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. Post 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. The blank report is there for you to complete. 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. He/she 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. Post Adjutants should try to send reports in AS THEY OCCUR or, at least, on a monthly basis.

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 it took 2 hours for EACH of the comrades, the 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 3 hours, 10 members, and the mileage for each of the 10 comrades under Americanism. BUT HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN 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 in the Community Service category. 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. There are so many different activities that we cannot cover them all. There is some overlap within the categories try to report as close as possible to the category that fits best. 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 Adjutant 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.

11. The VFW National dashboard. Activities that are reported on the National Dashboard (some that were reported on both the Department and National dashboards) are now reported only on the National dashboard as it was redundant to report on both Dashboards. Those activities are Buddy Poppy, VOD/Patriots Pen and VMS donation.

a. To make a report about VOD/Patriots Pen on the VFW National Dashboard at vfw.org. by the post Adjutant Go to the dashboard and select "Entries." Then select "+Create Entry." Under Program, select the category you are making to report on." Complete the required information to include details about the event in the Notes section. The Department AQ will report Buddy Poppy to National after

your Post purchases their required amount of Poppies. VMS reporting is automatically once the Post's VMS Donation is received at VFW National through the National Dashboard or the website.

b. Please note that once reports for VOD/Patriots Pen Events are reported on the National Dashboard, they then need to be approved by your District Adjutant, then the Department Adjutant and finally the National Community Service Chairman. It may require a few weeks to be credited on the National Dashboard.

12. For additional guidance on Community Service Look at the VFW National Best Practices on vfw.org