

## Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

**WELCOME to the 2016-2017 VA& R Year** for the American Legion Auxiliary! It is going to be a busy year with the many ways we can help our military, veterans and their families. Did you know that the VA&R program is the oldest ALA (American Legion Auxiliary) program, based on the concept that it is our obligation to provide the means for assisting veterans and their families? Because you do know how important it is; I know you will continue the wonderful support you gave last year. At the top of your planning list for VA &R there is a dire need to pay your **VA&R Fair Share obligations** as soon as possible. That amount is \$2 for each paid member that your Unit had on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. (Number of members JR and SR x \$2) You will be receiving the information in an upcoming mailing from Department as to what your unit's VA&R Fair Share will be. Remember you can use Poppy monies for this obligation. I would like to encourage you to give a little more than your obligation if you can this year. As you know, these monies are given to the four VA Medical Centers in our state. We must support our Veterans!!!

Other than your VA&R Fair Share obligation there are 7 other goals given to us by National.

1. Serve our veterans and their families as volunteers at the VA health facilities through the VA Voluntary Services (VAVS).

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**If you can volunteer, there is a place for you**, whether it is weekly, monthly, or occasionally. **YOU ARE NEEDED!** Please contact the above for volunteering or donating items. Remember, other than your VA&R Fair Share monies; in kind donations and special fund monies are always needed.

2. There isn't a VA Hospital close to your community? Find opportunities for members to serve veterans in the community. These hours count toward your Service to Veteran's pin and hour bars. We will continue to collect the sleep mats for homeless veterans this year and this falls under Service to Veterans.
3. Assist in activities that help homeless veterans. Stand downs are a great example.
4. Support rehabilitation and healing of veterans through arts, crafts and hobbies. Promote and support Creative Arts festivals both local and the national level.
5. Help the American Legion, State Department of Veterans Affairs and Chamber of Commerce promote job fairs for veterans and their families. Host an information table at a local job fair.
6. Assist and support caregivers of veterans. Good resources for this are the Elizabeth Dole Foundation [www.Elizabethdolefoundation.org](http://www.Elizabethdolefoundation.org) and VA Caregiver Support [www.Caregiver.va.gov](http://www.Caregiver.va.gov)
7. Assist veterans in accessing VA benefits including, but not limited to, health care by coordinating with the local American Legion Post Service Officer. [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers)

There will be much more information coming your way! Please if you haven't started already be sure to track all your activities for Veterans. Hours, money spent now many members participate. Reporting is crucial. All information is compiled and sent to Washington DC by National to show all the work the American Legion Auxiliary is doing for our Veterans and their families.

If you have any questions please call me anytime; if I don't know the answer we will find out together!

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