

Hello Auxiliary Family!

Autumn is here and it is my favorite time of the year. The weather gets cooler, the leaves change colors, and we enter into the holiday season. We take time to practice gratitude towards all of the blessings in our lives and we remember what is most important to us. What better time to build relationship in our communities!

A few key reminders about the Auxiliary Outreach Program from our National Program Book:

- Sponsoring, planning, funding or arranging for activities concerning the event are NOT reportable under the Auxiliary Outreach Program
- Partnerships are to be approved by vote of the Auxiliary and recorded in your minutes.
- Auxiliary Outreach is not to be reported under any other Auxiliary Programs
 - I have received a number of reports that qualify under Veterans and Family Support or Americanism so be sure to think about what program is the best fit for your report.

Ideas for Auxiliary Outreach Activities

- Community beautification events – park or beach clean up
- Volunteer at the local animal shelter
- Serve food and/or help with set up or take down at community events
- Work with the police or fire department on safety training classes

Find local groups or organizations in your community and ask how you can help. Then bring the idea to the floor at your next Auxiliary meeting to get approval. Go out and execute the approved activity then be sure to share about your experience at the next meeting.

Let's get out there and do great things in our communities! I appreciate the hard work of all of our members, and I am thankful for my Auxiliary Family!!

Please see below, I have included the guidelines from the National Auxiliary Outreach Ambassador, Laurie Lukas, out of the National Program Book.

Best Wishes,

Melissa Kreutz

VFW Department of California Auxiliary Outreach Program Chairperson

AUXILIARY OUTREACH AMBASSADOR



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The VFW Auxiliary Outreach Program is your Auxiliary's vehicle to partner with local groups and organizations. This Partnership assists those groups to help them achieve their program goals and objectives. Our communities are hungry for volunteers. Show them we are here to help!

The VFW Auxiliary has been a leader in community volunteerism since our founding. What better way to show we care by continuing to step up and lend a hand? By building partnerships, we strengthen ourselves, those we assist and our communities.

Reaching out into your community to assess the needs of others is key to launching your successful Auxiliary Outreach Project. Remember these basic steps:

- Seek out local groups and organizations in need of assistance.
- Ask what your Auxiliary can do to partner with them.
- Vote on your Auxiliary floor to accept the challenge to volunteer.
- Execute the partnership.
- Record the details and report your success.

How do you find partnering opportunities?

- Mine your members, family, friends and neighbors. Find what their interests are and what they do.
- Check local community bulletin boards and city/county/neighborhood calendars.
- Look for opportunities in your local newspapers and magazines.
- Reach out to find the right contacts and ask if their groups or organizations need assistance.
- Develop ideas and present the possible partnership to your Auxiliary at a meeting for approval.
- Put the plan into motion under the direction of your partner.

- Finally, when your partnership is complete report your success.

It's a win-win for all concerned.

Suggestions for VFW Auxiliary Outreach

Local Community Center

- Youth sports, classes and enrichment
- Senior center activities
- Informational events (Spring fair, recycling events)
- Adult class assistance
- Community beautification event

Schools

- Parent/teacher groups
- Library, office, field day, carnivals

Community Food or Shelter Programs

- Intake, distribution, serving

First Responders

- Police or Fire Department safety fair

Animal Shelters and Adoption Events

Important Reminders

- Auxiliary Outreach is not to be reported under any other Auxiliary Programs.
- Auxiliary Outreach participation by our members is completely under the direction of the sponsoring organization. Remember you are the volunteer!
- Partnerships are to be approved by vote of the Auxiliary and recorded in your minutes.
- **Sponsoring, planning, funding or arranging for activities concerning the event are NOT reportable under the Auxiliary Outreach Program**
- Events may only need a handful of Auxiliary members at a time. If the partnership is a regular activity (e.g., monthly intake volunteer at the blood bank), only one member may be scheduled or needed to volunteer. Keep track throughout the year of those long-standing partnerships.
- Can your Post Home or meeting location be the site of your partnership? Yes, under certain circumstances. If the event is completely under the control of your sponsoring partner and all other requirements of the Program have been met, you may volunteer and report this partnership.
- Partnerships in Auxiliary Outreach may be a single event or regular ongoing events throughout the year.

- Make sure you wear something that signifies you are a member of the VFW Auxiliary. For example, a membership pin, shirt, hat, jacket or vest.
- Be prepared to answer questions about our organization. Have some written information about your local Auxiliary if someone is interested. However, you should avoid active recruiting. Your volunteering is the best advertising to give potential members a taste of how great our organization is.
- You do not need to have formal verification from the group you are volunteering for. Just remember your partnership was already approved by your Auxiliary.

What Does Qualify VS. Does Not Qualify as Auxiliary Outreach

QUALIFIES

- Spending time in a local homeless shelter kitchen serving meals, bussing tables or cleaning up.
- Working with the police or fire department on bicycle or home safety training class.
- Your Auxiliary approves helping a local cancer group setting up their event or manning a booth.
- Volunteering with the garden club to clean up local parks.
- Help a youth group collect food donations for the local food pantry.

DOES NOT QUALIFY

- Taking comfort items to the local USO.
- Donating trophies to a youth sports group.
- Hosting a luncheon/dinner for a local community club.
- Sending an Auxiliary check to support a charity that organized a walk-a-thon or run.
- Collecting clothing and comfort items for homeless Veterans at the Post Home. (This would be Veterans & Family Support.)
- Passing the collection basket at church services.

Remember who we are. We are members of an organization that takes pride and pleasure helping our veterans, their families, our communities and our nation. Volunteering does make a difference in our communities. It enriches our lives and the organizations that receive our help through partnerships.



AUXILIARY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Building Partnerships Outreach • Auxiliary Participating in Outreach

Auxiliary Outreach is volunteer work performed by one member, a group of members or an Auxiliary for the benefit of their community or its institutions. Auxiliary Outreach can:

- Be performed by people of any age, skill set or ability level.
- Benefit any group of people such as children, senior citizens and those with disabilities.
- Benefit animals, the environment and public spaces.
- Be done in communities of all types and sizes – rural, suburban and urban, small and large.

We volunteer to make a difference in our community, but we receive benefits including:

- Helping others
- Learning new skills
- Career advancement
- Increased confidence
- Meeting new people
- Fighting stress and depression
- Developing a stronger sense of purpose
- Personal growth

Outreach and the VFW Auxiliary

While emphasis is placed on our core VFW and Auxiliary Programs, we realize Auxiliaries also participate with other community organizations. Auxiliaries can now report and be recognized for such community work through the Auxiliary Outreach Program.

Projects may be done by the Auxiliary alone or with the VFW Post.

Collectively, all of our volunteer hours need to be counted to effectively show the importance of the local VFW and VFW Auxiliary to the community.

Be visible and show your pride in the VFW Auxiliary by wearing Auxiliary-branded attire when you participate in Auxiliary Outreach. A shirt, jacket or hat with the Auxiliary emblem can start a conversation about the Auxiliary and what we do. It is also a great way to show members volunteering out in our communities and not just in our Post homes.

What's Considered Auxiliary Outreach

When an entire Auxiliary volunteers for an organization outside our own, it should be considered Auxiliary Outreach **if the project was approved by the Auxiliary and recorded in the meeting minutes prior to the project.** (When the entire Auxiliary volunteers and only one member is able to show up, it still counts as Auxiliary Outreach.)

Examples include:

- Participation in walks that benefit other organizations as an event spotter, water station volunteer, timekeeper, etc. (Walking or running in the race is not part of Auxiliary Outreach.)
- Working with local police on child ID kits.
- Working with firefighters on fire safety and prevention.
- Working with EMTs to host CPR training.
- Working with parks and recreation departments to plant trees, adopt-a-park initiatives and develop community art installations.
- Volunteering at an animal shelter.
- Serving food at soup kitchens.
- Delivering food for Meals on Wheels.

When we participate in Auxiliary Outreach we become better citizens of the communities in which we live.

What's Not Considered Auxiliary Outreach

- **Auxiliary Outreach is for projects NOT AFFILIATED with VFW or VFW Auxiliary Programs.**
- Volunteer work that is performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary is NOT considered outreach service. Examples of projects that do not qualify include:
 - Repairs or maintenance to the Post home.
 - Cooking or serving a meal for a Post or Auxiliary fundraiser.
 - "Buddy"® Poppy distribution.
 - VFW or Auxiliary meetings, conventions, conferences or schools of instruction.
 - Church activities for one specific congregation and not the entire community (e.g., usher, elder, deacon, minister, etc.)