

VAVS REPRESENTATIVE & DEPUTY HANDBOOK

Veterans Administration Voluntary Services (VAVS) operates the largest volunteer program in the federal government supplementing staff and resources in all areas of patient care and support.

VAVS Purpose and Structure

Purpose: To assist with the coordination of plans and policies for community participation in the VA's Programs, and provide support for its needs.

Membership: 1 Representative and up to 3 Deputy Representatives per certified Organization.

Member Selection Process

The source for appointment nominations may vary in each Organization. Many originate at a local level, or at other levels of the Organization that are deemed responsible for a VA territory or region.

- Individuals are nominated using that Organization's nomination forms at the local and state-level unit as defined by that Organization.
- Final Certification is by the National Certifying Official of the Organization.

VA is not involved in the nomination process unless nominee is known and is considered unacceptable. Appointments are not official or in effect until notice is received by the specific VA Voluntary Service Manager from the Organization's National Certifying Official by letter.

Membership Qualifications

- Be a Registered Regular Scheduled (RS) Volunteer at the VA facility.
- A sincere interest in the welfare of hospitalized Veterans, the welfare of patients, and a desire to help them
- The ability to work with others
- Knowledge of your organization and the programs of the VA
- Ability to communicate and disseminate information
- Ability to attend Regularly Scheduled Quarterly Meetings

Representative/Deputy Responsibilities

- Recruit Volunteers from your Organization and its Branches
- Promote within your Organization the donations of financial & material goods
- Advise and inform your organization of VA issues, concerns, and needs.
- Attend and participate in Quarterly VAVS/Community Council meetings
- Assist in the removal of your Organization's volunteers when necessary
- Maintain Organization's records provided to you by the VA (hours, donations)
- Promote, coordinate, and involve your Organization in VA activities & projects
- Conduct your Organization's Annual Joint Review with VA Staff.

VAVS/Community Council Meetings

- VA Voluntary Service/ Community Council meetings are attended by VA Leadership and Program Managers, and all Certified Organizations VAVS Reps and Deps. The purpose is to have a flow of information between the VA and the Organizations as to what the status, needs, and issues of the VA are, what the partner Organizations can and are doing to support the VA.
- How many VAVS meetings are held a year? **Four**
- Who must attend the meetings? Any certified representative or deputy representative of the organization.
- What happens if an organization is not represented at 3 consecutive meetings? Consideration should be made by the Organization to replace their members, and the VA Facility has the right to terminate the Organization's Membership.
- For what reason may a member be excused from a regular scheduled meeting? Members will only be excused when the VAVS Committee meeting conflicts with their presence at their affiliated organization's state or national convention.

VAVS/Community Council Minutes

- Issued to each Organizations Representatives and Deputies by mail. Read and understand them
- Follow up on open agenda items
- Share information reflected in the minutes with members of your organization

Annual Joint Reviews

Purpose: To assess the organization's participation in the VAVS Program during the preceding year and to develop goals for next year.

Representative Responsibilities:

- Know the month your organization is scheduled for their AJR, VA facility will typically notify the Representative
- Make an appointment with the Voluntary Service Program Manager to conduct your AJR (Even if they didn't contact you!)
- Have the information required for the AJR available
- Discuss organization's achievements
- Discuss issues, concerns, goals – make suggestions for improvement

Quarterly Reports

Purpose: To track volunteers and volunteer activity monthly by organization, and to provide information on donations made by the Organization and its Branches. Information will be provided to Representative which includes volunteer names, assignment(s), number of visits, number of hours and FY totals (to date) as well as students (under 21 years of age) and occasional volunteers.

Representative and Deputy Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Offer suggestions for improvement
- Report back to your organization with important information, events, needs, and activities of the VA facility
- Volunteer on a regular or periodic basis at the VA facility
- Stay informed
- Represent your organization with pride
- Act professional at all times

Don't:

- Make assumptions
- React before getting the facts
- Be rude and disruptive
- Act unprofessional
- Be uninformed

Types of Volunteers

- Regular Scheduled Volunteers – Individuals that participate on a regularly scheduled assignment under VA supervision.
- Occasional Volunteers – Those that do not meet the requirements of Regular Scheduled, ie; special events or patient activities.

Traditional Volunteer Assignments Usually Available

- Patient escort
- VTN drivers
- Friendly visitors
- Clerical positions
- Information desk
- Pharmacy
- Recreation therapy

Non-Traditional Volunteer Assignments Sometimes Available

- Fundraisers off station
- Respite/Hospice volunteers
- Gardening CLC
- Writers (newsletters, recruitment ads, recognitions)
- Community liaisons
- Recreation therapy
- Volunteer programs

Functions Not Credited to Volunteer Hours

- Services rendered other than those assigned by the VA
- Veteran benefits counseling
- Time spent completing projects at home – sewing lap robes, baking, etc.
- Assignments performed without VA supervision
- Travel time to/from volunteer site

