

Veterans Administration Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program

Description:

Founded in 1946 by the Federal Government, the Veterans Administration Voluntary Service (VAVS) program assists veteran patients through volunteer work in community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, VA Medical Centers, and veteran outreach centers. VAVS is the organizing force that brings compassionate Americans into veterans' health facilities to improve the veteran life.

JWV's first National Representative was officially certified in 1946 to the National VAVS Advisory Committee, which meets annually to coordinate and discuss obstacles like getting more volunteers. Volunteering offers an opportunity and a challenge to the Jewish War Veteran to put into practice the admonition, "I am my brother's keeper."

VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives

Each VA facility must have four VAVS advisory meetings per year and one Representative or Deputy from each participating VSO must be present at one of every three meetings or the organization risks losing its certification.

JWV's National Certifying Officer (the VAVS National Committee Chair) certifies the local representative (1) and Deputy Representatives (up to 3) for all VA facilities at which JWV volunteers. Their terms run indefinitely. Department Commander's should submit all VAVS Representative nominations in writing to PR/Programs Coordinator Anna Selman.

It is important for the Representative to obtain regularly scheduled volunteers with a specific assignment or occasional volunteers (people who volunteer for special activities). The Representative and Deputies (if possible), meet annually with the Head of the Voluntary Service at the facility for a joint review every November. All Posts that have activities and volunteers at a facility should clear the activity with the Jewish War Veterans Representative.

Purposes:

- To fulfill our mission to help all veterans by volunteering our time at VA facilities.
- To encourage members, patrons, and community supporters to participate in VAVS volunteering and foster community.

**FY16 VAVS Volunteer Hours and FY17 Goal
Volunteer Hours**

Dept	Hours	Mbr Total	% of Total Mbrship	FY17 Goal Hours*
At-Large	44	974	8.23%	2400
CA	5805	751	6.35%	1800
CT	1624	326	2.75%	900
DC	0	55	0.46%	150
DE	55	50	0.42%	120
FL	6897	1234	10.43%	3150
IL	1030	321	2.71%	900
MA	1250	662	5.59%	1800
MD	138	409	3.46%	1050
MI	581	206	1.74%	600
MN	421	95	0.80%	250
MW	497	167	1.41%	450
NJ	297	1503	12.70%	3900
NV	593	218	1.84%	600
NY	2616	2088	17.64%	5400
OH	381	400	3.38%	900
PA	1794	795	6.72%	2100
RI	0	91	0.77%	250
SE	28	352	2.97%	900
SW	1144	276	2.33%	600
TALO	4112	666	5.63%	1800
VA-NC	0	137	1.16%	300
WI	1030	59	0.50%	150
Total	30337	11835		

**Approximate values based on percent of total membership*

Exceeding Target
Hitting Target
Missing Target
No Participation

Date/Duration: Members volunteer year-round

How to Get Involved:

- Contact the VAVS office at your local VA facility:
<https://www.volunteer.va.gov>

- Contact the VAVS Chairman in your Post or Department. If you do not know the individual, email HQ at jwv@jwv.org.
- Activities/project examples. All were suggested at the last Convention:
 - Bingo
 - Excursions off grounds
 - Recreational equipment for living quarters/communal rooms
 - Clothes closets and clothes for homeless vets
 - Care packages/ Comfort packages
 - Office work to augment VA staff
 - Parties
 - Donations of books
 - Arrange for speakers to address patient and/or veteran issues
 - Volunteer drivers to transport patients between clinics
 - Knit and crochet items for patients
 - Greeter for the hospital
 - Camaraderie – simply being there

Program Point of Contact:

- VAVS Chair Ken Ashworth (TALO), ken.smash64@gmail.com
- National Programs/PR Coordinator Cara Rinkoff, crinkoff@jwv.org