

## Defining Your Purpose

### Step 1: What's the context?

Evaluate your context, or environment. Look at the community setting, demographics of your Post, local programming that already exists, any military presence, and the overall Jewish community. You want to consider the people, groups, and businesses in your area that relate to veteran, active duty, JWV member, and community needs. By learning **who your audience is** and **what the community values**, you will be able to build programs that directly meet their needs.

### Step 2: What's the mission?

The mission of JWV is lengthy, covering a range of values. Will your echelon focus on one or two of these values? All of them?

**Consider your context - what mission could you fulfill with the people, groups, and businesses in your area?**

The Values and Mission of JWV

Values	Mission Statement Excerpts
<b>Perpetuating Americanism</b>	Instill love of country and flag; maintain true allegiance to USA; foster education of all veterans in ideals and principles of Americanism
<b>Fostering Community</b>	Preserve the spirit of comradeship; mutual helpfulness to vets and their families; honor the memory and protect the graves of fallen heroes
<b>Preserving Jewish Legacy</b>	Uphold the name of the Jew; fight for Jews wherever unjustly assailed; preserve the memories and records of Jewish American servicepeople
<b>Supporting Education</b>	Support, cooperate with, and establish educational institutions; foster the teaching of Americanism
<b>Protecting Justice &amp; Equality</b>	Combat bigotry; encourage the doctrine of universal liberty, equal rights, and justice for all; combat whatever tends to impair the efficiency and permanency of our free institutions
<b>Promoting Wellness</b>	Promote sound minds and bodies in members and youth

### Step 3: Research and Develop Relationships

At this point, you should be able to answer:

- Who is in your echelon? What is their interest/ability to participate in programming?
- Who is in your community? What are your community values?
- What is the mission of your echelon? (HINT: It should resemble the National JWV mission.)

Now you need data and personal contacts. Research answers to these main questions:

1. What programs benefitting military families already exist in your community?
2. What programs benefiting Jewish families already exist in your community?
3. What organizations are prominent in the community that JWV could partner with? (other VSOs, JCC, Federation, other religious groups, non-profits like United Way)
4. Do any members of your echelon already have relationships with any of these organizations or notable community members that you could leverage?
5. Are there any grants your echelon may be eligible for?
6. What does the current research say about active duty and veteran needs? For example, *The State of the American Veteran* is a 2016 report by Loyola, analyzing surveys of Chicago-based veterans. ([http://cir.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CIR\\_ChicagoReport\\_double.pdf](http://cir.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CIR_ChicagoReport_double.pdf))
7. What programs are your Council, Department or National running? Could you expand on that work?

### Step 4: What's the purpose?

You are probably seeing where the greatest needs are in your community and who would benefit from your presence. So time to define your program's purpose - what will it do for the community?

### **The purpose should state:**

- **Audience:** who are you serving?
- **Mission:** why are you serving them?
- **Result:** what do you plan to do?

*Examples:*

- The purpose of our program is to foster community and support equal rights by supporting homeless female veterans enrolled in the Support Our Soldiers program.
- The purpose of the Care Package program is to promote mental health wellness by sending supportive items and literature to US service members deployed to Syria and Iraq.
- The purpose of our Girl Scout Program is to foster Americanism in the young women of our community through long-term volunteer projects.