

**Veterans of Foreign Wars
Department of Pennsylvania
Community Service Contest (CSR)**

CONTEST #1 - START DATE: July 1, 2024-April 30, 2025

There will be four (4) divisions

- Division 1 - Posts with membership over 551
- Division 2 - Posts with membership of 351 to 550
- Division 3 - Posts with membership of 151 to 350
- Division 4 - Posts with membership under 150

Qualifying posts must turn in a report every month with entries in all four (4) categories:

Community Service, Americanism, Safety, And Youth Activities.

The top three (3) VFW Posts in each division to properly have their reports in by the deadline date of April 30, 2025, with the most cumulative total of dollars and hours for all categories will be awarded a gift certificate for the VFW Store in the amount of \$100.00.

Contest #1 ends on April 30, 2025

CONTEST #2: The **FIRST TEN (10)** District VFW Chairmen who have their District reported at 100% will receive a Special Gift from State Commander Barbara Loncar at the Department of PA VFW Convention in June 2024.

Community Service Reporting via the Department Website Portal

1. **NEW!** Post may submit their Community Service Entries for All-State via the Department of Pennsylvania website. These entries will be uploaded to the All-American Dashboard. No More duplicate entries necessary. This is the preferred method.
 - i. www.vfwpa.org
 - ii. “Login” – “Members Only” – enter your VFW ID #, Password is your LAST NAME
 - iii. “Program Reports”
 - iv. Enter your community service! You can only enter one activity at a time. (Americanism, Safety, Youth Activities, Community Service)
 - v. There will be a lag time for the entry to filter to the All-American dashboard. Be Patient, but check back often.
2. A Post may choose to submit using the fillable pdf form on the vfwpa.org website, or the hardcopy included in this booklet.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Robert Emerick, 302 Wildwind Drive Rostraver Twp. PA. 15012

E-mail: robert.emerick5566@yahoo.com **Phone:** 412-992-6580





All-State Criteria

A Post Community Service Report must be on file with the department chairman as such:

At least two reports during the period of 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2025.

At least two reports for the period of 1 January 2025 to 30 April 2025.

Option 1: If you are submitting the old form, either hard copy or fillable pdf, it must be emailed or postmarked NLT the **seventh day of the following month to submit a CSR**. i.e the October CSR is due by November 7. All reports must be filed on the current service year CSR form.

www.vfwpa.org “programs” “community service” download the CSR, complete and return to Bob Emerick

Option 2: (preferred) – use the new CSR portal on the Department website. (see page 35)

Robert Emerick, 302 Wildwind Drive Rostraver Twp. PA. 15012

E-mail: robert.emerick5566@yahoo.com **Phone:** 412-992-6580

COMMUNITY SERVICE BEST PRACTICES

How a VFW Post interacts with its community determines the relevancy of the VFW. Someone once said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” The VFW and its Auxiliary’s ability to impact veterans, youth, political issues, patriotism, civic pride, volunteerism and almost anything you can name, is directly dependent upon our Posts being recognized as caring and involved participants in their communities.

It is our goal that this guide will provide ideas to aid Posts as they develop and expand the kind of reputation that will benefit their community and themselves. The impact on the community is immeasurable. The benefit to the Post is new members, more effective fundraising, greater participation in events and tremendous goodwill. The Post is, for most Americans, the only thing they know about the VFW. It’s up to us to make sure our communities have a favorable opinion of our great organization and our veterans.

Definition of Community Service – The National Community

Service Trust Act defines community service: “encompasses any human act serving the common good; in the interest of the community.” Community service is further defined as “a service that is performed for the benefit

of the public or its institutions.” Since 1899, community service has been a cornerstone of the VFW and reporting the millions of hours our members spend each year is important. It not only helps us ensure proper recognition for our members, but it helps showcase to the public our hard work and dedication.

Reporting – For the purposes of volunteer recognition, VFW community service hours must be performed by and as a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. As it is the intent of VFW community service to impact a broad spectrum of the local community, the work must also be performed for an organization outside of the VFW and its Auxiliary and must be verified by an authorized representative of that organization. In addition, efforts performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary should not be considered as community service. This kind of effort could be maintenance, upkeep, or beautification of the Post home, cooking or serving a meal for a Post fund raiser or working on bingo night. Please keep in mind that efforts that are part of the normal requirements of a Post or Auxiliary would not be considered community service. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, flying the American flag or the POW flag, conducting flag retirement programs, placing flags on graves, building memorials, hosting bingo, Post dinners, “Buddy”® Poppy drives, or anything that only benefits the Post. A particularly controversial area in VFW community service is service to one’s church. Generally, these efforts are not considered community service for two reasons: They are not performed for the community at large; and they are part of an individual’s service to their faith and not to the VFW.

The [national] community service year is July 1 - June 30 annually. Events should be reported 365 days a year and not weekly, monthly, or quarterly. This will prevent forgetting the specific details of what events happened. All events should be reported online through VFW Department (state) online reporting websites or through the VFW Programs Dashboard Tool for those Departments who do not have an online solution. Lastly, do not forget that Posts can – and are highly encouraged – to report their Auxiliary community service events also. However, this is not mandatory because the Auxiliary has their own community service report which will only be submitted at the Post level.

Ways to Support Your Community – In many cases, the brainstorming process of planning community service can be the most difficult. We’ve compiled a list of both good and non-qualifying events to help you plan the perfect community event.

Examples of Good Community Service

Assisting of veterans within the community:

- Scholarships to youth
- Sponsoring of youth teams
- VA hospital work on behalf of the VFW
- Blood drives
- Legislative town halls
- Care packages for troops, homeless etc.
- Register to Vote campaigns.
- Food Bank support
- Building of ramps for disabled veterans
- Hosting job fairs
- Visiting VA Homes & nursing facilities
- Community Clean Up activities

- Natural Disaster Relief support
- Clothing Drives
- Donations to civic organizations within the community that align with our values

Examples of Non-Qualified Community Service Events

- Flying the US Flag
- Flying the POW Flag
- Post dinners
- Bingo
- Building memorials
- Paid VFW Service Officer work
- Personal efforts of a member volunteering at a church or other non-profit organizations
- Buddy Poppy Drives
- Membership Drives
- Anything that directly benefits the post
- Reciting the pledge of allegiance at a post meeting
- Charging, renting or loaning the Post hall to their Auxiliary or Cootie Pup -Tent

Please note: These lists are not all inclusive but rather a frame of reference of what is good to host and report versus what events should not be reported.

