

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES PROGRAM REPORTING 2016-2017

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Community Service is the primary justification for the VFW's tax exempt status. As such, the reporting of projects under this program is critical to our organization. As a means of providing continuity to the Community Activities Program, the following suggestions are provided to supplement the printed program in the program book. Beginning this year the program at a Department level is an awards program. At the post level it is an audit program and it is highly recommended a Community Service Record book is kept in case you are audited. Over the past couple of years a few KS VFW posts have been audited.

As District Chairperson, you should study this information and apply it on the Post level to promote better programs during your term of office. **You should be prepared to fully review this information with the Posts at your District School of Instruction, and then follow up with them periodically during your term as Chairperson.** If a post does not have the ability to enter Community Service data; they will send the information to the District Chairperson and the chairperson will enter the data. At the end of your term, pass this information to your successor so he/she, too, can have a successful year.

The first thing you should do is identify the Community Activities Chairperson in each Post in your District. Although the Post Jr. Vice Commander is typically appointed as the Community Activities Chairperson, this is not a requirement. The reporting procedure will also be changed somewhat. Please familiarize yourself with the programs by reading all materials you receive. The Post will submit a copy of their reports with verification to the District Chairperson (you) if they do not have the ability to enter the data. It is your best interest to ensure the post as a person who can enter the data online. The State Community Activities Director will prepare monthly summaries for both the Posts and the Districts. Monthly summaries will be available online by going to: <http://ks.vfwportal.net/public/> and clicking on the link. The first of these summaries is already available on the web site.

HOW POSTS REPORT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- Plan and conduct the Community Service Project. If there will be costs incurred for the project, a vote approving these expenditures must be taken at your Post meeting.
- Determine whether the project was **Veterans Service, Legislative Action, Community Service or Youth Development** (some projects may fall into more than one area. You may decide which area to credit with all the hours, members, money or you may apportion hours, members, money, etc. to more than one area, i.e. split them into two reports. If you do split the project into two reports, remember that you must also split the hours, members, money, etc.).
- Fill out the appropriate project in the online tool (**Veterans Service, Legislative Action, Community Service or Youth Development**) and document the project entirely. Documentation is necessary to maintain the integrity of the program, and at the local level it should include copies of receipts, checks, programs, news clippings, letters or emails related to the project. Also, include photographs wherever possible. For the time being we will still accept coupons at the District level, but be prepared for that to go away in the next couple of years. For projects without documentation; the must be verified and signed by the Post Commander, but this should be the exception rather than the rule.
- Make a copy of the coupon (or take a screen print of the system) and all related documentation, which should be kept in the Post Community Service Record book. If your project also falls under additional categories, such as Americanism, Safety, Homeless Vets, and POW/MIA, mark the box or boxes that are appropriate and notify the appropriate Department Chairperson for that you have entered the information and they can pull the information from the Community Service System.
- If your report falls under one of the following categories, mail a copy to Department Chairperson:

POW/MIA/Homeless Vets

Scouting

Military Services

Americanism

- If this project is to be considered toward 100% reporting status and All-State eligibility, ensure the project is appropriately documented. The Department Community Service Chairperson will be able to see the projects in the CS tool. (The Post should keep the original documents as part of the Post records.).

REMINDERS:

- If the Post wants the project to count toward All-State or 100% reporting status, they must fully complete and document the project. Also, keep in mind the focus should be on the quality of projects, not the number of reports.
- Contest dates and other information are included in the Department Program Book and the Commander's Manual. Additional information will also be mailed to Post Commanders. Remember that while there are no monthly quotas or reporting deadlines other than March 31st (end of the reporting year), please, do not forward large numbers of reports to be entered at the end of the year. Promptly enter the reports on a monthly basis or as soon as the project is completed.
- Advise all Post and Auxiliary Community Activities Chairmen to start collecting their record book data at an early date. The consistent top contenders keep files of all newspaper clippings, copies of pertinent letters, photographs, expenditures, and etc.
- In reporting Community Activities projects, the style of reporting is not as important as the facts about the project.
 - Remember to remind the Posts that these reports are read and evaluated. If the person reviewing the report does not have enough facts to get a clear picture of what was done, we can only disregard or return the report for more information.
 - If the Post does well in the community, the Post will benefit from these activities. Good community service plus publicity will attract new members.
 - If an individual or a Post grumbles about the paperwork, remind them that Community Activities paperwork accompanied by solid documentation is important to maintain the VFW's tax-exempt status. If no record is kept, it could jeopardize their Post's tax exempt status. Reporting is telling the story of the good work done by the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary. We should be proud of our good work in the community.
- As a Chairperson, you should be aware of non-acceptable types of reports.
 - Examples:
 - Buddy Poppy distribution is not a Community Activities project. The use of the funds collected from Buddy Poppies to assist a needy veteran is a Veterans Service project.
 - Individual efforts, which would be done anyway, are not projects. One person mowing a neighbor's yard, recycling or donating blood is not a project. Although it is a good deed, the entire Post should work together on projects voted upon at a meeting. Donating the use of the Post for the blood drive, helping set up equipment and/or providing refreshments are projects. The Post members organizing and mowing the lawns of elderly people in town or organizing a recycling collection point are projects.
 - The two important questions to answer are: Did the Post vote to participate in the project and did the project benefit people other than the Post or its members? If you can answer those two questions with a yes, it is probably a valid Community Activities Project.

The New Community Service System

On April 1, 2012, we went live with our new Community Service reporting system. The feedback has been real positive and I believe the system is very easy to figure out. You will know instantaneously where you stand for your reporting. No more waiting monthly or till the end of the year to know where your CS programs stands. The site is available at the link (<http://ks.vfwportal.net>), please save this in your favorites or you can access it from our department web site.

The post account login is your post number (123 for example) and your password is (post123). The District CS chairperson is still responsible to log in on behalf of the posts that have chosen to not embrace the online tool and submit reports for them. The reports will be approved by the Department Community Service Chairperson numerous times during the week. You will see a red flag next to the report if you report is not approved. Then until you fix the report the total will not be adjusted.

Why the new system? What is a Dashboard?

Based on the pain that many posts have experienced during the close of the 2011-2012 year; because of being disqualified during the All -State for audits being late, not being adequately bonded and missing a District meetings, we have taken action to change the way things will operate. We will integrate a Dashboard into the Community Service System.

Posts and Districts will submit their audits to the State Quartermaster; in accordance with the By-Laws the Quartermaster is our financial gatekeeper. The Quartermaster will log in your Audit into the Dashboard system the date that it is post marked or when received by email to HQs. You can email your audits now (Big Change). We heard from the posts they would like this ability. This feature will automatically update your dashboard and you will see when it has been received and it will be annotated on time or not on time. Once the audit has been logged, the Quartermaster will then forward the Posts and District Audits to the appointed State Inspector. The State Inspector will then analyze the audit and bonds. Next the Inspector will provide a report to the Quartermaster monthly. This report will be shared like we do the Community Service report so that the District Commanders will receive monthly updates on their posts status. Now by applying this process everyone will know where they stand and no more finding out bad news after March 31st.

Your District meeting attendance, buddy poppy purchases, and bonding will also be inputted by the State Quartermaster and in turn will populate your Post Dashboard. You will see it instantly when the Quartermaster does your Bond you will get credit. The bonds will be the Inspectors responsibility to determine whether or not the post and/or district are properly bonded. This report will then be forwarded also to the State Quartermaster (Same as the Audit monthly) which will then update your dashboard and will see whether or not you're properly bonded when you login.

It is very important to remember, although we are tracking this data, it is the POST's responsibility to do things timely. If you do not submit audits and inspections, are not properly bonded or do not attend District/Department meetings; you will be disqualified from All State consideration.

-----COMMUNITY ACTIVITY RECORDBOOK PROMOTION-----

Urge Posts to participate in the Community Activities Record book Contest. Start early. The Community Activities record book year covers the period from April 1 to March 31. Successful participants in the Department contests maintain files year round. Advise all Post and Auxiliary Community Activities Chairmen to start collecting their record book data at an early date. The consistent top contenders keep files of all newspaper clippings, copies of pertinent letters, ceremony programs, photographs, expenditures, and etc... Alert Post Community Activities Chairmen will see that someone has a camera to take a few pictures of projects in progress.

In order to get more participants, it's best to provide some sort of motivation on the District level to show Posts and Auxiliaries the advantage of keeping and entering a record book of their Community Activities. Your role as Community Activities Chairperson will be, in part, to motivate others to keep record books. Explain to Posts the benefits of participation in the record book contest. Some of these benefits are:

- By recording the Community Activities of your Post and Auxiliary, you establish a visual standard on which you are judged in the community.
- You are constructing a permanent record of the years' activities.
- You will have a Post record book which can be used in membership promotion and recruitment.

Further motivate Posts and Auxiliaries by providing information on the Department record book Contest. Each year Department provides awards for the top Post contest winners. (See the Department Program Book).

The Community Service record book, if properly done, could be the main proof to hand the IRS in case of an audit. If it has copies and checks and expenditures and visibly shows that they were spent on viable community service projects.

-----Department Community Activities Awards-----

Outstanding Community Service Post – 1st place \$100.00 check, framed citation, 3 runners up will receive a citation

Requirements for above:

- Must be 100% reported
- Must complete at least 8 projects - including (2) each of the following:
- * Voice of Democracy * Patriots Pen
 - * Eagle Scout Award * Teacher Award
 - * Adopt-A-Unit Program * Hospital Pin Program
 - * EMT, Law Enforcement and/or Firefighter Award
 - * Community Service Volunteer Pin Program

Outstanding Community Service District – 1st Place receives a \$100.00 check and a framed citation: 3 runners up will receive citations.

Outstanding Community Service Post Project Award - 1st Place receives a \$100.00 check, and a framed citation

NATIONAL AWARD (Post and Ladies Auxiliary):

National Outstanding Community Service Award - (Plaque, Street Sign and \$599 stipend for representative to VFW National Convention)

DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
VFW COMMUNITY SERVICE RECORDBOOK CONTEST

Show your VFW and Ladies Auxiliary Pride
Through Community Service

Community Service Record books are permanent records of one year's community service work. After the contests they may be put to practical use in promoting membership, proof of charity expenditures, and display in the community

CONTEST GUIDELINES

1. Record books should contain community service projects that are completed during the period April 1 through the following March 31.
2. FASTENERS and COVER: If books have metal posts, steel is preferable to brass or aluminum. If covers have decals, place self-adhesive clear plastic over the decals so they will not be damaged during shipping and handling. Please use superior quality page dividers and index tabbing, the extensive handling that the record books experience must be considered.
 - o A CD or Thumb Drive with the data is also acceptable to save on the cost of paper
3. CLIPPINGS and PHOTOGRAPHS: Show dates and captions. Include supporting information.
4. ARRANGEMENT OF BOOK: Enter each project by category. (Chronological or month by month listing makes your entry more difficult for the judges to evaluate.)
5. ENTRY FORM: Complete and fasten inside front cover of Volume I.
6. MAIL OR SHIP RECORDBOOK ENTRY FOR THE DEPARTMENT CONTEST to Department Headquarters or the address designated.
7. NON-COMMUNITY SERVICE related items SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED in any record books. Pictures of Post officers, installation of officers, meetings, etc. will not be credited. (This material should be assembled in a separate section and kept by the Post until the record book is returned after the competition. Then it can be added to the record book for permanent reference.)

PREPARING A RECORDBOOK

Posts and Auxiliaries carry on many projects which are of public service. The best way to tell the story of your Post and Auxiliary's work in the community is through a Community Service record book that contains evidence of the many projects and programs your Post and Auxiliary perform.

The contents of your record book should be so arranged and in such detail that it tells the story of each project, clearly and completely, to those who may read and judge it.

Posts and Auxiliaries should combine their community service programs into one book or one set of books. *The Post and its Auxiliary are judged as a unit*; Auxiliaries may not submit a record book on just their own programs.

Creditable community service projects will usually fit into one or more of the categories that are listed in the Community Service Program Chairman's booklet.

Remember, compile your book so that the judges can easily read and evaluate the facts. Do not assume the judges are familiar with your Post or area.

In other words, make your record book as complete as possible for it must "Tell the Story" of your community service.

Attach all entries in the book securely. Make bindings strong yet flexible so the books may be opened easily and fully. Index or summarize the activities and projects that are included in the book. The index summary should be placed in front of the record book or at the front of each category or section. Apply titles or captions to photos, and datelines to newspaper clippings.

The entry form provides vital information to the judges concerning the number of members in your Post and Auxiliary; the number of projects you have completed; the amount of money and time that has been spent and the size of your community.

Top winners in the Department are those Posts and Auxiliaries who have *performed, recorded and entered* evidence of their community service. JUST PREPARING A RECORDBOOK WILL NOT WIN ANYTHING UNLESS YOU ENTER THE BOOK IN THE DEPARTMENT CONTEST FOR JUDGING.

Immediately following the close of the contest year (March 31), send your Community Service record book to Department Headquarters unless otherwise designated for judging. *DO NOT SEND YOUR RECORDBOOK TO NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS*

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW and WHY are very important words in telling any story. By answering these questions you will help yourself in preparing an award winning record book.

Consistent winners start early in gathering data to place in the record book. They maintain a file of newspaper clippings, pictures, photo stats, etc.

If you live in an area where it is difficult to obtain newspaper articles of your Post or Auxiliary's community service projects, keep a camera handy. ONE PICTURE CAN REPLACE A LOT OF WORDS.

Record books are judged solely on the contents of the community service projects that are reported. It is not necessary to prepare an expensive or costly book. Record books are judged by their contents and not by their cover.

EVALUATING A RECORDBOOK

Department Headquarters uses a "check sheet" in processing and evaluating community service projects that are reported in the record books.

Listed on the "check sheets" are the principal categories which are found on the Department Programs Report Form. Each category can be further subdivided into additional subheadings.

Each record book is evaluated thoroughly. A detailed study is made of the entries therein. Each creditable activity or project is recorded and scored. Points are given for each acceptable project that is reported. Several factors determine the point value that is awarded each project. They include (1) the extent to which the project is developed; (2) the effort, time and funds that have been expended; and (3) the completeness of detail in which the project has been described. When all of the projects have been evaluated and recorded on the check sheet, the points are then totaled to establish the final rating of the record book. Sometimes entries are reexamined several times to make certain they have been properly evaluated.

Judges are briefed prior to the final judging to aid them in evaluating projects.

CATEGORIES FOR RECORDING PROJECTS

The Community Service Record book is divided into four general categories:

1. Veterans Service
2. Legislative Action
3. Community Service
4. Youth Development

When making up a record book it is advisable to group your projects and programs into one of the above categories. If a project qualifies for more than one category, select and list it under just one category. It will be given credit, regardless of whether it is listed under the proper category. THEM IN EACH OF THE CATEGORIES.DO NOT DUPLICATE YOUR EFFORTS BY PLACING

Remember, when compiling your community service record book you are telling a story of your work to judges who generally are not familiar with your efforts or community. The easier it is for the judges to read the facts, the easier it is for them to evaluate your work.

DEADLINE

The contest period for the Department is April 1 through March 31 of the current year. All record books must be submitted to and REACH DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS NO LATER THAN APRIL 10 for judging.

AWARDS

Framed citations will be awarded to the top three entries. Each Post and/or auxiliary participating will receive a Citation from the Department Commander. ALL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS will be presented at the joint awards program during our Department Convention in June.

Department of Kansas, VFW
115 SW Gage Blvd, Topeka, KS 66606-2029 or P.O. Box 1008, Topeka, KS 66601-1008

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
RECORD BOOK ENTRY FORM**

1. This form must be filled in and attached to the inside cover of the Community Activities Record Book that your Post enters in the Department Community Activities Record Book Contest.
2. Be sure to provide the name, address and zip code of the person to whom the Record Book should be returned following the judging. (Please use a mailing address that is not a Post Office Box. Prompt delivery is more certain when made to a street address.)
3. This form must be signed by the Post Commander.

Send your entry to your VFW Department Headquarters by April 10th.

Post No. _____ **City** _____

Total Projects Since 4/1/16 _____ **Total Hours (Volunteered)** _____ **Total Funds Used/Donated** _____

Total Post Members as of 1/1/17 _____ **Total Auxiliary Members as of 1/1/17** _____ **City Population** _____

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES CHAIRMAN:

Post _____ **Auxiliary** _____
(Name of chairperson) (Name of chairperson)

JUDGES, NOTE THE FOLLOWING LEADING PROJECTS

Page _____, _____

Page _____, _____

Page _____, _____

Page _____, _____

RETURN RECORD BOOK TO: (mailing address)

Name: _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Signature Post Commander _____

Post Commander's Name (print) _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____