

## STATE of MICHIGAN VFW

### 2025-2026 COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

The VFW Community Service Program is dedicated to promoting, encouraging, and recognizing community service efforts by our members and Posts. Engaging with our communities strengthens the VFW's impact, fosters relationships with local leaders, and enhances public awareness of our mission.

Each Post is expected to actively participate in and report community service projects through the Department on line Activity Report form, following the guidelines set by the Activities Evaluation Director.

#### **Defining Community Service:**

As defined by the National Community Service Trust Act, community service includes “any human act serving the common good and in the interest of the community.” Since 1899, the VFW has led countless service efforts, reinforcing its role as a pillar of support for veterans and civilians alike.

Reporting these efforts is critical - it helps secure proper recognition, strengthens our advocacy efforts, and showcases the VFW’s dedication to serving others.

#### **Program Timeline & Reporting:**

- Reporting Period: May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026
- Award Consideration Deadline: April 30, 2026
- Divisional Awards Based on Membership (June 30, 2025 Report):
  - **Division I:** 10 – 65 members
  - **Division II:** 66 – 125 members
  - **Division III:** 126 – 225 members
  - **Division IV:** 226+ members

#### **Examples of Qualified Community Service Projects:**

##### **Veteran & Community Support:**

- Assisting veterans in need
- Building wheelchair ramps for disabled veterans
- Visiting VA hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities
- Supporting homeless veterans with care packages, meals, and shelter resources

##### **Youth & Educational Outreach:**

- Scholarships and educational support for youth
- Sponsoring youth sports teams or mentorship programs
- Hosting “Register to Vote” campaigns for students and first-time voters

##### **Civic Engagement & Public Good:**

- Blood drives and health screenings
- Community clean-up initiatives and environmental conservation projects
- Organizing or participating in legislative town halls to advocate for veterans' rights
- Disaster relief and emergency response efforts

##### **Other Meaningful Activities:**

- Hosting job fairs for veterans and community members
- Supporting local food banks and clothing drives

- Partnering with civic organizations for joint service projects

### **Non-Qualifying Activities:**

- Routine organizational functions (e.g., flying flags, membership drives, Post dinners, bingo)
- Activities that primarily benefit the Post rather than the broader community
- Volunteer work done outside of the VFW (e.g., church or unrelated non-profits)

(While these activities are valuable, they do not qualify for community service reporting.)

### **Awards & Recognition Opportunities:**

#### **Post Division Awards:**

The first place Post in each membership division with the most credited community service reports as of April 30, 2026 will receive a plaque from the State Commander at the 2026 State Convention.

The second and third place Posts in each membership division with the most credited community service reports as of April 30, 2026 will receive a citation from the State Commander at the 2026 State Convention.

#### **Outstanding Community Service Post Awards:**

Three Posts will be honored as Outstanding Community Service Posts with citations from the State Commander based on: 100% reporting in the following categories:

- Community Activities
- Hospital Service
- Youth Programs
- Drug & Safety Awareness
- Legislative Engagement
- Participation in Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Teacher of the Year
- Active involvement in the community
- Support for the Commander's Special Project

### **VFW Community Service Outreach Social Media Reward Plan for Posts & Districts:**

#### **Program Overview:**

This plan incentivizes outreach efforts that effectively spread awareness, engage the community, and encourage involvement in VFW service projects through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

#### **1. Qualifying Outreach Activities:**

Posts, Districts and members can earn recognition and rewards for the following outreach efforts:

- Promoting upcoming community service events (e.g., food drives, veteran support programs).
- Encouraging community participation in VFW initiatives.
- Sharing success stories and impact testimonials.
- Educating the public on veteran-related issues.
- Partnering with local businesses and organizations for joint community service projects.

#### **Criteria for Recognition:**

- Posts & Districts must provide screenshots to the VFW Department Community Service Director for visibility.
- Engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) will be considered.

## 2. Post & District Reward Tiers & Incentives:

Selected Posts & Districts will receive the following recognition:

Tier	Criteria	Reward
Bronze Outreach Badge	1 outreach post per month	Conference/Convention Shoutout
Silver Outreach Badge	3+ outreach posts per month	Printed Citation
Gold Outreach Badge	5+ outreach posts per month or a highly impactful campaign	Department Commander Challenge Coin and Printed Citation

## Special Recognition Categories:

- “Most Engaging Post” – Awarded to the Post with the highest engagement in a given month.
- “Most Engaging District” – Awarded to the District with the highest engagement in a given month.
- “Best Post Outreach Campaign” – Given to a Post or member who consistently demonstrates exceptional community service promotion.
- “Best District Outreach Campaign” - Given to a District which consistently demonstrates exceptional community service promotion.

## 3. Monthly & Annual Recognition:

- The VFW Department’s social media pages will reshare top outreach posts weekly.
- A “Post VFW Community Service Outreach Champion” will be announced monthly and recognized with a special Department social media post.
- At the end of the year, a Post Grand Champion will be selected based on consistent engagement and outreach efforts. The winner will be honored at the Department Convention

## National-Level Awards:

### Fred C. Hall Memorial Award for Community Service:

Recognizes top-performing Posts based on their total community service impact (Dollars Donated + Volunteer Hours + Mileage).

Winner receives:

- A plaque at the VFW National Convention
- A \$1,000 scholarship for future community projects
- Travel accommodations for the Post Commander (or representative) and a guest to attend the convention

### National Outstanding Community Service Post Award:

One Post from each Department is recognized at the VFW National Convention.

Winner receives:

- A plaque and street sign to display in their community
- A \$599 stipend to assist with travel expenses to the National Convention
- Featured recognition in the VFW National Convention program

## How to Get Involved & Report Community Service:

**Step 1: Plan & Participate** – Engage in community service activities that align with VFW values.

**Step 2: Document & Share** – Take photos, record volunteer hours, and track donations.

**Step 3: Report Online** – Submit activities via the Department on line Activity Report Form before April 30, 2026.

*Tracking and reporting are crucial to ensuring your Post receives the recognition it deserves!*

### **Final Thoughts**

Your dedication to serving veterans, families, and communities is what makes the VFW an invaluable force for good. By engaging in meaningful service, sharing our impact, and inspiring others to get involved, we continue to strengthen our mission and legacy.

Let's make 2025-2026 a record-breaking year for VFW community service and outreach!

### **Contact for Assistance**

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