Publicity Guide The tools you need to get the word out.

Unwavering Support



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION WEBSITE

Website: www.vfwauxiliary.org Email address: info@vfwauxiliary.org

The VFW Auxiliary website is a resource not only for our members, but also for students and the general public who want access to information on items such as National Officer bios, Facts Leaflet and scholarships.

Use our site to...

- Check daily membership statistics
- Print cancer grant applications
- Check dates of national meetings
- Register by credit card or request information on the National Mid-Year Conference or National Convention.
- See photos after national events.
- Stay informed on the latest news of our organization.
- Get information from news releases on people and events. (For example, the news release on the student who won the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest).
- Print out brochures and membership applications.

Non-members can learn about the VFW Auxiliary, what we do to assist veterans and active duty military and their families, obtain information about scholarships we offer, and find out how to contact us if they would like to become a member.

All these activities can be done when it is convenient for the user, including late-evening or early-morning hours when National Headquarters is closed for business. You may e-mail us at your leisure, and we will respond as quickly as possible during the next business day.

If you have any suggestions about the content or ideas for new services that could be provided through the website, please contact the Programs & Communications Department at info@vfwauxiliary.org.

PROVEN METHODS OF GENERATING PUBLICITY

- Introduce yourself and the organization to members of the media.
- Submit news releases to the media on a regular basis (i.e. monthly).
- Contact the media when something unique or unexpected happens.
- Be the contact person the media calls to get information related to the VFW Auxiliary and its area of expertise.
- Maintain contact via e-mail with various TV stations, newspapers and other publications.
- Attend related news conferences and events where there will be TV and newspaper coverage.
- Recognize media who have published articles by giving them a Communications Award, available for free on the Resources page of the VFW Auxiliary website.
- Be excited about all your activities, events and programs.

HOW TO KNOW IF AN ACTIVITY OR EVENT IS NEWSWORTHY

Our organization conducts so many activities and events that you may not know if the one you're hosting is newsworthy. Making sure an activity or event is newsworthy is one key to whether or not information about it will be published in your local media. Answer the following questions prior to contacting media about your activity or event.

- Are local people involved? (yes or no)
- Is the event happening in the near future within the next month? (yes or no)
- Will non-members be interested in attending or hearing about the event? (yes or no)
- Will the event help the local community? (yes or no) If yes, how? (describe)
- Is the activity or event unique? (yes or no)
- Does the activity or event promote a new idea or concept? (yes or no)

If you answered "YES" to all but one or two questions, proceed with plans to contact local media about your activity or event. If you answered "NO" to a majority of the questions, you may want to think about how you can make your activity or event newsworthy (i.e. involve local community members, a portion of proceeds will be donated locally, etc.)

WHAT AUXILIARY ACTIVITIES & EVENTS ARE NEWSWORTHY?

- Publicizing what your Auxiliary has done to help natural disaster victims.
- Meeting troops at the airport as they return from deployment and helping them complete their journey home.
- Collecting supplies for deployed troops.
- Presenting veterans or active-duty soldiers with Operation Uplink™VPNs (virtual personal identification numbers) for making free long-distance calls.
- Assisting families of deployed troops in other ways.
- Adopting a Unit through the VFW's National Veterans & Military Support Program.
- Members and youth who are participating in a "Buddy"® Poppy Drive or POW/MIA remembrance ceremony.
- Award winners such as the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Winner.
- Flag presentations to community groups.
- Events hosted by an Auxiliary at a VA facility.

Unique Programs - Opportunities for Publicity

- The Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarships provide an opportunity for students in grades 9-12 to express their patriotism and display their artistic talents. The \$10,000 scholarship provides the first-place student with a financial head start toward his or her education, while the recognition via our website and the VFW Auxiliary Magazine can be helpful in launching a career. There are also monetary scholarships for second through eighth-place.
- Celebrating America's Freedom Event is an annual patriotic event to celebrate the freedoms we enjoy as Americans thanks to the sacrifices of our military heroes. Hosted by the VFW Auxiliary at a different location each year, the event is free and open to members of the VFW, VFW Auxiliary, military personnel and their families, and the general public.
- VFW National Home for Children Awareness Week.
- Parades and/or programs to commemorate Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Patriot Day and Loyalty Day.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT?

- At the weekly newspaper, ask for the editor.
- At the daily newspaper, ask for the City or Metro Editor, or the editor or columnist for the section or column where you want your article to run.
- (Special note: some newspapers want you to send information to a specific editor and the information will be channeled to the proper person. Others want you to contact the editor and the appropriate columnist(s). Find out your local newspaper's preference.)
- At radio stations, ask for the News Director, if it is newsworthy; Program Director, for a talk show or the calendar.
- At TV stations, ask for the News Director or Assignment Editor if you want the station to cover an event.
- For a TV talk show, ask for the Program Director or the Producer of the show.

The size of the radio or TV station dictates how many of the above-mentioned positions they have. If you don't know whom to contact, ask the person answering the phone.

Keep a list of contacts at local newspapers, radio stations and TV studios:

Contact Name	Name of Media	Phone Number	Email Address
Ex: John Smith	The Kansas City Times	816.555.5555	jsmith@kctimes.com

HOW FAR IN ADVANCE SHOULD I MAKE CONTACT?

The amount of time prior to an event that the media should be contacted may vary. However, a general guideline is to follow the timeline listed below:

Two Months Prior:

- Call and email to secure public service time on TV or radio.
- Call and email to arrange interviews on TV or radio talk shows.
- Email be included on TV or newspaper community calendars.

Two Weeks Prior:

• Email news release to newspapers, TV and radio.

One Week Prior:

• Email second release and Fact Sheet to Assignment Editors at TV and radio stations to encourage them to cover the event.

3-5 Days Prior:

• Follow-up phone calls and emails to Assignment Editors at TV/radio and Editors at newspapers to see if someone will cover the event. *Only do this if it is really an important event, and if there is something that is particularly newsworthy about it.* If you know of a photo or video opportunity, mention it.

WHAT IS THE FORMAT FOR A NEWS/PRESS/MEDIA RELEASE?

A news release (also called "press release" or "media release") follows a specific format. Releases should:

- Be typed on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper.
- Include your first and last name, phone number, cell phone number and e-mail address.
- Be as brief as possible, but if it is necessary to go to two pages, type (MORE) on the bottom of the first page and identify the release on top of Page 2.
- Three number signs (###) indicate the end of a release. Please use this at the end of your release.
- Note the correct use of quotations. If quoted material is spread over two paragraphs, there are no quotation marks at the end of the first paragraph. The closing quotation marks are used at the end of the quoted material.
- On first reference, a company name is entirely spelled out, but if it is going to be repeated, it is abbreviated in parentheses: Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). Do not use VAVS or VOD; instead use the complete title to make it clear to the reader.
- You are encouraged to end your releases with a statement explaining who we are, such as:

The VFW Auxiliary is one of the nation's oldest veterans' service organizations and our members are the relatives of those who have served in overseas combat. We have nearly a million members nationwide who volunteer millions of hours and fundraise millions of dollars for charitable projects that benefit veterans, military service personnel and their families. We assist the VFW pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families, and provide nearly a million volunteer hours in the VA medical system each year. Learn more at vfwauxiliary.org.

Note: This statement will go AFTER the three number signs (###).

Sample news releases are included in this guide.

Please note: These are samples. Please use the format and localize them for your area/Auxiliary.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL FACTS LEAFLET?

The National Facts Leaflet provides general information about the VFW Auxiliary in a succinct format. It provides the prior program year's statistics from our National Programs and explains eligibility for the organization. It's suggested that you have several with you in the event someone wants to know more about the Auxiliary. Year-end results are available in July. Contact National Headquarters at info@vfwauxiliary.org for copies.

A sample is included in this guide.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL FACTS SHEET?

It is suggested that you develop a local facts sheet to provide to your local media. The following information should be included:

- Auxiliary President's name, address, phone number, cell phone number and email address
- Your name, address, phone number, cell phone number and email address
- Total membership
- · What your Auxiliary is doing to assist veterans and active duty military and their families
- Other local program statistics
- The date of your next upcoming three events for your Auxiliary

A sample local fact sheet is included in this guide.

Please note: This is a sample. Please use the format and localize them for your area/Auxiliary.

YOUR AUXILIARY RECEIVED COVERAGE! NOW WHAT?

The goal of developing relationships with the media and sending out media releases is to obtain publicity for your activity or event. What are the steps you should take once you've received coverage?

- Write a thank you note or email to the person who covered the activity/event.
- If photos were taken at the event, ask for them to be emailed to your or the appropriate person at your Auxiliary.
- Obtain the online link to the newspaper story or television/radio interview and post it to your Auxiliary's website and/or Facebook page.
- Email the online link to the newspaper story or television/radio interview to your Department President. If you received photos, email or mail those as well.
- Email the online link to the newspaper story or television/radio interview to info@vfwauxiliary.org. If you received photos via email, please email those as well. Your local coverage might get posted to National Headquarters' Facebook page and shared with more than 100,000 people!
- Print out a copy of the story for your Auxiliary's Historian

Please review the sample Facebook posts below. Please note these are just samples and should be formatted to the activity/event and city/state for your Auxiliary. See the Facebook How-To and Best Practices Guide for detailed information about starting a Facebook page for your Auxiliary.

Sample #1:

The BBQ fund-raiser Saturday afternoon was a great success! More than 300 members of VFW and Auxiliary Post 23456, family and community supporters enjoyed delicious food, music by the East High School band and we raised \$1500 to assist local veterans! Read the story here (insert a link to the story here).

*include a photo if possible

Sample #2:

We had a great time handing out our annual Community Awards Saturday at the Springfield library. Susan Smith, Tim Jones, and Ethan White were among those we presented awards to. Read more about the event and award-winners here (insert a link to the story here).

*include a photo if possible

Sample #3:

Thanks to everyone who came out and enjoyed Friday's Fish Fry! We ate a lot of great food, enjoyed each other's company and raised \$500 to buy Boy Scout Troop 987654 two new tents for their upcoming summer campouts. Read about the event here (insert a link to the story here).

*include a photo if possible

Sample #4:

We delivered the handmade valentine's we created to veterans at Charles George Veteran Affairs Hospital in Asheville on Thursday. The veterans were happy to see us and we enjoyed talking and playing cards with them for a few hours. Read the story here (insert a link to the story here).

*include a photo if possible

NATIONAL FACTS LEAFLET - SAMPLE

Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary

UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

WWW.VFWAUXILIARY.ORG

We are the nation's oldest veterans' service organization auxiliary.
For more than 100 years, we have been serving veterans, the military and their families in countless ways.
Million of hours, millions of dollars and millions of tributes.

THIS IS WHO WE ARE.

VFW Auxiliary members are the relatives of those who have served in verseas combat.

Unwavering Support



I am an Auxiliary member because our programs **help verains in need**, preserve our nation's **patric ic trulitio.** sand ducate youth.

- Jeanene B.

VETERANS & FAMILY SUPPORT



Total moneta, aid providud to veterans, actived duty military,



Auxiliaries provided aid to veterans, active-duty military, and their families in all 50 states



The majority of Auxiliaries took part in military suicide awareness and prevention education



Thousands of Auxiliaries nationwide participated in or sponsored events or projects for homeless veterans

HOSPITAL

\$4.0

Amount spent by Auxiliaries on all Hospital projects and items



878,349

Number of hours served in VA Medical Centers, Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Veterans Homes



2,937

Number of Auxiliaries that hosted or sponsored events at VA Medical Centers, Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Veterans Homes



62,045

Number of Auxiliary members who volunteered for the Hospital Program

LOCAL FACT SHEET - SAMPLE

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary

Unwavering Support for Uncommon Heroes™

VFW Auxiliary 9999 Springfield, IL

2017-2018 FACT SHEET

VFW Auxiliary 9999 President:

VFW Auxiliary 9999 Publicity Chairwoman:

 Susan Smith
 Janet Smith

 1224 Veteran Way
 8769 Spring Dr.

 Springfield, IL 12345
 Springfield, IL 12345

 Phone: 555-555
 Phone: 555-555

 Cell Phone: 555-555
 Cell Phone: 555-557-555

Cell Phone: 555-557-5555 Email: jsmith@aux.com

About Us/Program Statistics

Email: ssmith@aux.com

VFW Auxiliary 9999 Membership: 76

Amount raised to assist local veterans and military families: \$1,500

Number of American Flags given locally: 81

Number of patriotic programs conducted locally: 2 Number of local Buddy Poppy Drives hosted: 3

Amount raised locally for Cancer Aid & Research: \$1,036

Upcoming Events:

WHAT: Independence Day Patriotic Rally & Parade sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars 9999 Post and Auxiliary #9999.

WHO: Sgt. Harry Black, who has just returned from Iraq, will be Grand Marshal of the parade. Keynote speaker at the rally will be Major George Smith.

WHERE: Springfield High School Auditorium, 123 Lombard, Springfield, Ill.

WHEN: Thursday, July 4, 2018, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

WHY: To demonstrate pride in America and honor those from the surrounding area who are serving our country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Free $3\frac{1}{2}$ x 5" American Flags will be given to all who attend. Kindergarten children from four area schools will recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Jones and other city officials will dedicate the recently constructed Women's Memorial in honor of all those from this area who have made the ultimate sacrifice for America. Several area bands will perform.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Janet Smith, Publicity Chairwoman, Phone: 555-553-5555, Cell Phone: 555-556-5555, Email: jsmith@aux.com.

NEWS RELEASE #2 - SAMPLE

Contact: Betty Jones 238 Penny Lane Sun Beach, Florida 92345 Phone: 555-555-5555

Cell: 555-556-5555 Email: jj@aux.com

NEWS RELEASE

VFW AUXILIARY SEEKS HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUN BEACH, FLA. - OCTOBER 15, 2017 - Kim Jones of Tuna Beach, Hospital Chairman for Sun Beach Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary #345 in Sun Beach, Fla., is seeking volunteers for the Beachtown VA Medical Center.

"Currently we have 35 volunteers in the Hospital and Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service program sponsored by the VFW Auxiliary, but we need five additional helpers," she indicated. "Our volunteers provide extra services that the medical staff do not have time to perform such as reading mail or books to the patients, writing letters for them, playing games or simply providing companionship.

"You don't have to be a member of the Auxiliary to participate," she said. "In fact, we welcome anyone who wants to volunteer, from teenagers to senior citizens, because we know that everyone has a unique way of helping patients."

If you are interested in volunteering for this program, call Kim Jones at 000-884-1222.

Nationwide, 1 in 10 (56,000) Auxiliary members volunteer more than 815,000 hours each year in VA Medical Centers, nursing homes and other hospitals.

The VFW Auxiliary also offers youth scholarships and helps active-duty personnel connect with loved ones at home by providing VPNs (virtual personal identification numbers) for free long-distance calling.

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About the VFW Auxiliary:

The VFW Auxiliary is one of the nation's oldest veterans' service organizations and our members are the relatives of those who have served in overseas combat. We have nearly a half million members nationwide who volunteer millions of hours and fundraise millions of dollars for charitable projects that benefit veterans, military service personnel and their families. We assist the VFW pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families, and provide nearly a million volunteer hours in the VA medical system each year. Learn more at vfwauxiliary.org.

RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) - SAMPLE

Contact: Julie Jones Phone: 555-555-555 Cell: 555-556-555

Email: jj@aux.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

START DATE: JUNE 15, 2017

STOP DATE: JULY 4, 2017

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (15 SECONDS)

LOCAL KINDERGARTENERS, SEVERAL AREA BANDS, AND THE MAYOR WILL HEADLINE A
VERY SPECIAL INDEPENDENCE DAY PATRIOTIC RALLY & PARADE SPONSORED BY THE
DEER CREEK VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS POST AND AUXILIARY #1234. JOIN IN THE FUN
AND RECEIVE A FREE FLAG AT THE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM ON JULY 4 AT 1 P.M. FOR
MORE INFORMATION, CALL 555-555-5555.

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TV PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) - SAMPLE

Contact: Julie Jones Phone: 555-555-555

Cell: 555-556-5555 Email: jj@aux.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

START DATE: JUNE 15, 2017

STOP DATE: JULY 4, 2017

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

(10 SECONDS)

VIDEO:

HEAD AND SHOULDERS

SHOT OF EVENT CHAIRMAN,

PHOTO OF CHILDREN PRACTICING,

AUXILIARY LOGO.

(Note: Logo/Emblem is available from the

VFW Auxiliary Emblem Branding Center behind

Member Login)

AUDIO:

JOIN IN THE FUN THIS FOURTH OF JULY

AT A VERY SPECIAL PATRIOTIC RALLY

AT 1:00 P.M. IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

AUDITORIUM FOLLOWED BY A PARADE

AT 2:00 P.M. FREE FLAGS TO ALL WHO

ATTEND.

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***Note: Most TV stations would prefer to get their own promotional footage; however, occasionally stations will use photos. Check with your local station.

SAMPLE MEDIA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Below are questions that may be asked during an interview with the media. Please review the questions and answers prior to being interviewed.

WHO BELONGS TO THE VFW AUXILIARY?

(The complete list is on the website, but you may wish to shorten it as follows): We are the relatives of veterans who served in overseas combat.

ARE THOSE WHO ARE SERVING IN AFGHANISTAN OR IRAQ ELIGIBLE?

Yes, they are. Anyone who serves under hostile fire or imminent danger is eligible for the VFW, and that means their spouses and other relatives are eligible for the Auxiliary.

HOW MANY MEMBERS DO YOU HAVE?	
in the state and	nationwide. (Obtain this from MEMSTATS section of website.)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BELONGING TO YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Our common goal is supporting veterans and their families. Some join because of their desire to help others through our community service programs; in addition to helping others, there are many personal benefits to an individual who joins such as:

- **Networking** Through local and national events, members have the chance to meet people from all walks of life and many career backgrounds, creating a vast network of people who are passionate about veterans, active-duty military and their families.
- **Veteran & Military Support** Anyone with a heart for veterans can count their membership as an important way to stand with veterans and the military community on Capitol Hill an in local legislative battles affecting them.
- Cancer Grants After one year of continuous membership, members who must undergo chemotherapy and other procedures to fight cancer are eligible for a grant to cover expenses.
- Friendships The camaraderie gained from serving together for a cause that is close to everyone's heart leads to lifelong friendships and a strong network of support.
- Personal Fullfillment Longtime volunteers will be the first to tout the benefits of serving others and the sense of personal fulfillment it brings. The organization offers multiple avenues for service, such as hospital volunteering, adoption of military units and sponsoring of youth groups.
- **Personal Growth & Development** We offer multiple ways for members to aquire many skills, including organization, leadership, fundraising, event planning and community outreach.

LET'S START BY DISCUSSING WHAT YOU DO FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

We've been collecting supplies to send care packages to our troops stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar. We also provide Free Call Days at Internet cafes to active-duty personnel overseas, as well as VPNs (virtual personal identification numbers) for free long-distance calling to veterans who are hospitalized. It gives them the opportunity to talk to their loved ones, so we call it Operation Uplink $^{\text{TM}}$.

DON'T YOU HAVE A VERY ACTIVE PROGRAM IN THE VA MEDICAL CENTERS?

We certainly do. Our Hospital Program is a very important program. We have more than ______ volunteers throughout the state who help hospitalized veterans by reading mail or books to them, writing letters for them, providing companionship, or holding a holiday or birthday party for them. We also volunteer at nursing homes and other hospitals.

SAMPLE MEDIA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU SPONSOR SOME SCHOLARSHIPS?

Yes, we do. The Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarships give high school students an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotic feelings through art. An annual contest takes place at the local level, with the winning entry entered in the state contest, and the first-place state winners entered at the national level. There are eight scholarships awarded nationally, ranging from \$500 to \$10,000.

It's an exciting program for us as well as for the students. When people see the winning entries, no one can believe the remarkable talent displayed by these students in grades 9-12.

DON'T YOU WORK WITH YOUNGER STUDENTS AS WELL?

Yes, we connect with elementary students through schools and Scout troops to teach them about patriotism. We visit classrooms to present Flags and instructions on Flag etiquette, and to teach young people the Pledge of Allegiance. Our "Veterans in the Classroom" program introduces children to our military heroes who have taken part in serving the democratic ideals of this country. We also have a program to recognize the efforts of local teachers by nominating them for "Teacher of the Year" awards. And we recognize any youth group who serves our military or their families with citations from the National President.

WOW, YOU CERTAINLY SEEM TO CONDUCT A LOT OF PROGRAMS.

As a matter of fact, we conduct six (6) different community service and patriotic programs. (Membership and Chief of Staff/Extension are internal programs.)

MANY OF THE THINGS YOU'VE MENTIONED PROVIDE A SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY. WHAT OTHER TYPES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PERFORM?

We participate in projects like (list projects that your Auxiliary participates in).

DON'T WE USUALLY SEE YOU MARCHING IN PARADES?

Yes, we observe patriotic holidays such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. We present American Flags to community groups, support efforts to account for all POW/MIAs, and host Celebrating America's Freedom Event.

ARE YOU THE ONES HANDING OUT THE RED POPPIES TO THE PUBLIC ON VETERANS DAY EVERY YEAR?

We participate in "Buddy" Poppy campaigns to remind citizens of the blood shed by American service members. All donations received for the poppies go to the welfare of veterans or their dependents. These "Flowers of Remembrance" are made by disabled, hospitalized and aging veterans in VA Medical Centers and domiciliaries and in state veterans' homes.

We can always use	•	ers as well as individuals	who are interested in helping with our youth (mention a local upcoming event.)
INFORMATION ABO	OUT YOUR ORGANIZA	TION?	H TO BECOME MEMBERS OR WANT MORE
They may contact _		at	, or visit our website at: www.vfwauxiliary.org.
	(CONTACT NAME)	(CONTACT PHONE)	