

VFW Auxiliary Community Outreach



Why Your Auxiliary Should Develop a Community Outreach Team

- Raise public awareness about the veterans and veterans' issues.
- Increase visibility of the VFW Auxiliary in the community.
- Increase understanding of what the VFW Auxiliary does, clear up misconceptions and educate the public about our services.
- Form relationships and partnerships with other organizations, groups and businesses in your community.
- Recruit new members and volunteers. There may be people who aren't eligible to join our organizations, but are happy to offer a helping hand!

Form Your Community Outreach Team

Form a team of members within the VFW Auxiliary to educate and inform the public and other groups about the VFW Auxiliary, our programs and how we can help. The community outreach team can send an individual member, or several members (no more than five), to speak to another group. Think about members in your Auxiliary who are:

- Comfortable speaking in front of others
- Knowledgeable about the VFW Auxiliary
- Passionate about the VFW Auxiliary and what we do
- Friendly/outgoing

Ask them if they would be interested in being part of the community outreach team.

Who Should Your Community Outreach Team Contact?

We suggest contacting other established groups as they share the same desire to support one another and those in the community. These groups include:

- Churches and faith-based groups
- Rotary, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, Gold Star parents and other service-oriented groups
- Professional organizations and associations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local businesses
- Local public safety departments (police, fire, EMS)
- Clubs and service groups at local schools, college and universities
- Youth groups including scouts and sports teams
- Veterans centers, CBOCs and VA medical facilities
- Military recruitment centers, armories and military bases

Contact Groups to Speak To

- Develop a contact list of groups to reach out to.
 - Check local Yellow Pages (both in print and online) for contacts.
 - Need an address or phone number? Google it!
- Once you've developed the list, mail a letter to or call each group on the list.
 - A sample letter is available for download at www.vfwauxiliary.org/resources.
- In the letter, and/or during the phone call, be sure to introduce yourself, the VFW Auxiliary and explain why you'd like the opportunity to speak at an upcoming service or meeting.
- Follow up with a letter and/or email, refer to the phone call and ask if specific times and dates work for you to speak to the group.
- Once a time, date and location has been set, follow up with a phone call and/or email confirming this information. Include the speaker's name(s) and contact information.

Planning and Preparing Your Community Outreach Presentation

- Once your team is formed and a time and date has been set for your team to speak to another group, select the Programs you believe will have the most impact on the group you will speak to, such as:
 - Veterans & Family Support
 - "Buddy"® Poppy/VFW National Home for Children
 - Legislative
 - Scholarships
 - Hospital
- Develop your presentation.
 - Be creative! Use video, PowerPoint, display boards and/or handouts.
 - You can find all the information, tools and resources you need for your presentation at vfwauxiliary.org/resources.
 - Utilize the National VFW Auxiliary Fact Sheet.
 - National Membership Ambassador Nicole Koutz has a project requesting each Auxiliary to make its own Auxiliary Fact Sheet listing information and accomplishments from your own Auxiliary.
- Practice! Get your team together and practice your entire presentation in the order it will be given.

Tips for Speakers

- Know when and where you are supposed to speak.
- Dress for your audience.
 - Speaking at a church during a Sunday service?
 - Speaking to a police department?
 - Speaking to a group of teachers?
- Arrive 10 to 15 minutes ahead of time. Introduce yourself!
- Be prepared.
- Start and finish on time.
- Use visual aids such as video, PowerPoint, display boards and/or handouts.
- Avoid using abbreviations, jargon (VOD, etc.) and complicated language.
- Look at the audience you're speaking to.
- Leave some time for Q&A.
- Be sure to say thank you and/offer other words of appreciation.

Follow-Up

- Send a thank you note to the organization for allowing you to speak to their members. Extend an invitation to your Auxiliary's next public event or volunteer opportunity.
- With any public relations/media opportunities and Auxiliary newsletters.
- Send a report with any photos and/or media coverage to the Department Historian/Media Relations Chairman.

Community outreach teams are a low cost, high impact way to share the wonderful projects and programs your Auxiliary works on in your community. Start your community outreach team today!

“It seems to me that we have a lot of *Story* yet to tell.”

Walt Disney