



Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Q2 Checklist

We have concluded the first quarter of our administrative year and are fully engaged in the initiatives of our Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation program. There is still much to be accomplished on behalf of those we serve. Do you have your “To Do” List together for 2023? Here is our “Top Ten” + ONE Initiatives for 2023! Get your team together and get on board!

-  1. Plan a **fundraiser** to benefit the National President’s special project. Our ask this year is that every American Legion Auxiliary Department make a generous donation supporting the companions to our veterans at the National Creative Arts Festival. **Mail your donations to:** American Legion Auxiliary, 3450 Founders Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46268. Please put National President’s Project on the memo line of your check.
-  2. **Salute to Veteran Patients Month 2023** – Valentine’s Day is a great time to say thanks to America’s Veterans. During the week of February 14, VA facilities across the nation honor the men and women who have served us. There are special ceremonies and activities at VA medical centers so get unit members and departments involved with supporting the VA and our veterans during their special week.
-  3. **Adopt a Veteran this Holiday Season**– There are many opportunities to support veterans during the holiday season. Adopting a veteran and family members is a great way to let our veterans know they are valued and appreciated. Contact the Voluntary Service Officer at your local VA facility for more information or gather information on who may need assistance from local resources like faith-based organizations and homeless shelters.
-  4. Get Ready, Get Set and start planning for **April 2023 and the Creative Arts Festival**. Supporting veterans with supplies and craft kits is an easy way to get veterans active in the arts. Want more information? Download the free “Arts Deployed: An Action Guide for Community Arts & Military Programming” at www.americansforthearts.org
-  5. Did you know that **aligning with other organizations** to support the VA&R program in your community is a great way to locate a network of people who share a passion to support our nation’s veterans. The American Red Cross, Psych/Armor, Honor Flight Network and the National Coalition for the Homeless are just a few organizations who share a like mission and vision with the American Legion Auxiliary. Volunteer and connect with other organizations to gain a new perspective and meet new people. Who knows, you just might find some eligible ALA members too!
-  6. **Send pictures**. What activities are going on in your department? Be sure to send photos to the ALA National VA&R team. You may just see your department up on the big screen in Charlotte! Our program email address is: VAR@legion-aux.org
-  7. It’s time to **Get Educated!** Explore the external resources the ALA VA&R team recommends and assemble materials that will help members gain greater understanding of the VA&R Program. Material is available for free on the ALA website at www.ALAforVeterans.org and on the VA&R program page. The American Legion also has free resources available. Visit them at www.legion.org i



8. Got an idea for a project? **Apply for an American Legion Auxiliary Foundation Grant**. The American Legion Auxiliary Foundation positively impacts the lives of veterans, military, and their families by funding programs of the American Legion Auxiliary. ALA units, departments, or districts/counties may be eligible to receive funds through an ALA Foundation grant that will help meet the needs of those we serve.



9. If you haven't already, join the **ALA's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Facebook Group**. It's just a click away! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAVAR>



10. **BE THE ONE** - Support The American Legion in changing the narrative. Instead of talking about the staggering number of daily suicides, **BE THE ONE to save ONE veteran**. **ASK** veterans in your life how they are doing. **LISTEN** when a veteran needs to talk. **REACH** out when a veteran is struggling.



11. Do you have friends or neighbors in your community who are eligible for the Sons of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary? Gift them a **membership** to your unit or squadron this holiday season! We are better able to support our veterans with a strong and committed group of members. Enhance our ability to serve by building and growing membership.

VA&R Success Story: Feeding Our Veterans *(Department of New York)*

Well Done and Bravo to Valhalla, American Legion Family #1038 who partnered with My Brother Vinny to provide food starter kits for formerly homeless veterans transitioning to new homes. My Brother Vinny is a 100% Volunteer 501(c)3 organization that has provided furniture and housewares to over 1800 formerly homeless U.S. veterans "Free of Charge" since June 2013. Proudly assembling their 700th "Welcome Home Bag" destined for veterans facing food insecurity, this team has helped alleviate hunger for vulnerable veterans in the Hudson Valley Region, NYC, and Northern New Jersey areas. This is a great example of how partnering with an organization who share the ALA's mission of service to veterans can exponentially positively enhance the impact to those we serve.



VA&R Success Story: Healing Arts *(Department of Maryland)*

It takes an entire community to help a veteran heal! Thank you to Starr Purnell and Department of Maryland members who volunteered their time and talent in support of MCVET. The soda and paint party was a complete success and everyone had a great time, especially our veterans! The Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training, Inc. mission is to provide homeless veterans and veterans in need with comprehensive services that will enable them to rejoin their communities as productive citizens.



VA&R Success Story: Adopting Veterans *(Department of California)*

Individual members of American Legion Auxiliary Bradley Keffer Unit #138, Holtville, California adopted veterans in the assisted living home. Additionally, they deliver holiday and birthday gifts throughout the year. What a great way to say "Thank You" to those who served in the name of freedom. These members make sure that veterans are remembered, not only on holidays but on their special day as well.



VA&R Success Story: Giving Thanks *(Department of Texas)*

Thank you to American Legion Auxiliary Unit #19 in Midland, Texas who stepped up and out in a big way over Thanksgiving! This team shopped and packed holiday food gift bags for 7 veteran families (35+ people). Not only did they do the shopping...but they did the delivery too! The team assembled and then delivered everything to the Midland Vet Center. Great Job Unit #19! Thanks to you, 7 families had an awesome Thanksgiving.



Q2 Holiday Calendar

December 2022

1	Civil Air Patrol Birthday
7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
13	U.S. National Guard Birthday
15	Bill of Rights Day
16	Ugly Sweater Day
17	Benjamin Franklin Day
17	National Wreaths Across America
18	Hanukkah Begins
21	National Homeless Persons Memorial Day
24	National Eggnog Day
25	Christmas Day
26	Kwanzaa Begins
28	Pledge of Allegiance Day

January 2023

1	New Year's Day
15	Martin Luther King Birthday (Actual)
16	MLK Day of Service (Observed)
21	National Hugging Day

February 2023

1	National Freedom Day
2	Groundhog Day
3	Four Chaplains Memorial Day
4	USO Birthday
5	Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day
11	Make a Friend Day
14	National Salute to Veteran Patients: Week of 2/14
14	St. Valentine's Day
17	Random Acts of Kindness Day
19	Coast Guard Reserves Birthday
20	Presidents Day

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Important Communication Update from the VA!

The Department of Veterans Affairs established 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411) in 2020 to help Veterans, their family members, caregivers, and survivors understand and access the broad spectrum of VA benefits and services. VA's previous information number, 1-844-MyVA311, was **retired** at that time.

Since that transition, MyVA311 has been repurposed by a non-federal entity claiming to be a medical equipment provider. Veterans may try to call VA using the retired MyVA311 number and unintentionally divulge personal information.

Please make sure to communicate the correct number where referenced which is: 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)

The 1-800-MyVA411 Number is the appropriate number to call for information pertaining to:

- COVID-19 Updates
- Health care eligibility and enrollment
- VA Benefits, such as disability, compensation and pension, education programs, caregiver support, insurance, home loans, and burial headstones and markers among others
- The nearest VA medical centers, benefits offices or cemeteries to Veterans, VA Medical Center operational updates and connection to VA Medical Center operators
- Directory assistance and technical support for www.VA.gov
- Debt and payment options

Thank you for helping us communicate this important information to our veteran community.

Wise Words from Past Leaders

"Maximum Service for those who served will continue to be the goal of the American Legion Auxiliary until the last sick and disabled veteran has all the aid that medical and surgical skill and kindly nursing can give him, and all ex-service men and women have a square deal from the country for which they put their lives in jeopardy." Spoken by ALA National Rehabilitation Chairman Laura Goode (Oregon) in December 1947, these words still ring true today. Chairman Goode continues, "The first concern of The American Legion after its organization in 1919 was the care of the disabled veteran, The plight of the veteran needing hospitalization and compensation was self-evident. Out of the suffering and deprivations of our war-disabled came the development of a national-wide service, which we know now as the rehabilitation program (renamed Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation in 1971). The American Legion Auxiliary, working side by side with The American Legion, has developed a program which is bringing happiness and contentment to the hospitalized veteran. Daily, all over the nation, the personal attention of our members to the needs of the veterans' families have lifted the heart-breaking burden of sickness, unemployment, and poverty." As was true in 1947 and remains true today, the purpose of our committee is "not to strive for originality or to present innovations, but to make every effort to further the vast program of service to the disabled with renewed enthusiasm and activity." Although some things change, some things stay the same. As she concludes her comments, "The need for trained hands and understanding hearts was never greater." Thank you, Chairman Goode, for these inspiring words. Even though it's been 75 years since her original article was printed in the ALA National News, we couldn't have said it better ourselves.



Laura Goode (Oregon)

National Rehabilitation Chairman
1947-1948
National President
1948-1949