

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROCEDURES

1. REASON FOR ISSUE. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook is a completed revision and update of Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Procedures.

2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES. This revision of VHA Handbook 1620.1:

a. Incorporates recommendations of 2001 through 2004 of the VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC).

b. Eliminates the guidance for the Volunteer Transportation Network, noted in paragraph 12, Transportation. Guidance is now contained in VHA Directive 1620.2.

c. Incorporates the acknowledgement and recognition of volunteers in State Veterans Homes that is now contained in VHA Directive 1620.3.

d. Incorporates procedures and guidelines for security, privacy, and liability issues.

3. RELATED DIRECTIVE. VHA Directive 1620.

4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE. The Voluntary Service Office (10C2) is responsible for the contents in this VHA Handbook.

5. RESCISSIONS. VHA Handbook 1620.1, dated July 19, 2001, and VHA Handbook 1620.1/1, Transmittal Sheet 2, Change 1, dated July 19, 2001.

6. RECERTIFICATION. This document is scheduled for re-certification on or before the last working day of July 2009.

S/Jonathan B. Perlin, MD, PhD, MSHA, FACP
Under Secretary for Health

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 7/18/05
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 – E-mailed 7/18/05

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROCEDURES**

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
1. Purpose and Scope	1
2. Goals	1
3. Authorization to Serve in the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS)	2
a. Without Compensation (WOC) Employees	2
b. Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers	2
c. Occasional Volunteers	2
d. Student Volunteers	2
e. Volunteers from Community Organizations	3
f. Non-citizen Volunteers	3
g. Volunteer Assistance by Physicians, Dentists, Nurses and Other Professionally Licensed Persons	3
h. Volunteer Assistance by VA Employees	3
i. Volunteer Assistance by Salaried Employees of Organizations	3
j. Volunteer Assistance by Patients, Outpatients and Former Patients	4
k. Research and Education Corporation WOC Employees	4
4. Termination of Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers	4
5. Security, Privacy, and Liability Issues	4
6. VAVS Committees	5
a. VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC)	5
b. Facility VAVS Committee	7
c. Facility VAVS Subcommittees and Task Groups	9
d. Facility VAVS Staff Advisory Committee	10
e. VAVS Committee Funds	10
7. Responsibilities in VAVS	10
a. VHA Central Office Staff	10
b. VAVS Member Organizations (National and Facility)	10
c. National Representative	11
d. Deputy National Representative	12
e. Facility Staff	12
f. Facility Representative	14
g. Facility Deputy Representative	15

CONTENTS Continued

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
h. Facility Associate Representative	15
i. Facility Deputy Associate Representative	15
j. Facility Non-affiliated Representative	15
k. Facility Representatives-at-large	15
l. Facility Honorary Representative	15
8. Recognition	16
a. Award Eligibility	16
b. Awards	17
c. Presentation of Awards	22
d. Voluntary Service Award for Excellence	22
e. NAC Volunteer of the Year	23
f. American Spirit Award	24
9. Other Services and Benefits Available to Volunteers	25
a. Meals	25
b. Quarters	25
c. Parking	25
d. Transportation for Volunteers	26
e. Identification for Volunteers	26
f. Medical Treatment	26
g. Use of VA Facility Services	26
h. Compensation Benefits	27
i. Space, Equipment, Data and Reasonable Accommodations for Volunteers	27
10. Donations	27
a. Delegation of Authority for Acceptance of Gifts and Donations	27
b. General Post Fund (GPF)	28
c. Disposition of Donations	28
11. Records and Reports	29
a. Records Retention	29
b. Facility Reports of Service	30
c. National Reports of Service	30
d. Records Disposal	30
e. Automated Information System Records	30
f. Annual Narrative Report	31
g. Report of National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting	32
h. Annual Joint Reviews	2

CONTENTS Continued

PARAGRAPH	PAGE
i. Report on National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Activities	33
j. VAVS National Advisory Committee Recommendations	33
k. Expendable and/or Non-expendable Donation Report by Category	33
12. National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans	33
a. Background	33
b. Responsibilities	34
13. References	34

APPENDIXES

A Cumulative Attendance Listing A-1

B Suggested Format for National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Facility
Evaluation Report B-1

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VOLUNTARY SERVICE PROCEDURES**

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

a. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides the procedures for the operation of a structured Volunteer Program under the management of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). VAVS operates the largest Volunteer Program in the Federal Government supplementing staff and resources in all areas of patient care and support. Its mission is to provide a structured Volunteer Program under the management of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensated employees in cooperation with community resources to serve America's veterans and their families with dignity and compassion.

b. VAVS volunteers assist veterans by augmenting staff in such settings as hospital wards, nursing homes, ambulatory care, domiciliaries, community-based volunteer programs, end-of-life care programs, veterans outreach centers, national cemeteries, and Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Offices. VAVS volunteers and their organizations annually contribute millions of dollars in gifts, donations and time. Monetary estimates aside, it is impossible to calculate the amount of caring and sharing VAVS volunteers give to veteran patients. Volunteers are a priceless asset to these veterans and to VA.

2. GOALS

The VAVS goals are to:

- a. Ensure that the VAVS Program is supportive of VA's mission.
- b. Provide veterans served by VA with a comprehensive range of services which are supplemental to budgetary appropriations.
- c. Provide supplemental services in a timely manner through a Volunteer Program that is professionally managed by a Voluntary Service Program Manager. This is done in cooperation with individuals, veterans' service organizations, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations through human resources, gifts, and donations.
- d. Ensure all volunteers are informed of VA's primary responsibilities.
- e. Provide a working environment that is safe, clean, and comfortable.
- f. Promote cooperation among employees and volunteers.
- g. Earn the respect and gratitude of those served.
- h. Ensure volunteers are given assignments that provide satisfaction, utilize knowledge and skills, and offer opportunities for learning.

- i. Maintain a volunteer recognition system to ensure that volunteers are appropriately recognized.
- j. Maintain interaction of volunteers with patients in ways that foster the healing process.
- k. Ensure that all volunteers serve under the supervision of VA compensated employees in authorized assignments which meet identified needs.
- l. Ensure that participation in the VAVS Program does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, non-disqualifying handicap, and national origin.

3. AUTHORIZATION TO SERVE IN VAVS

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs is authorized by Title 38 United States Code (U.S.C.) 513, 38 U.S.C. 7405, and VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Chapter 2, Section A, Paragraph 4c, to accept uncompensated services of persons as deemed appropriate. VAVS volunteers are appointed under 38 U.S.C 513. VAVS volunteers are covered under this provision. The services of VAVS volunteers are for supplementing, not replacing, VA compensated staff. Volunteers (individuals or groups) are not to be permitted to participate in or conduct a program for patients in a VA facility independent of VA direction, control, and supervision.

a. **Without Compensation (WOC) Employees.** Volunteers accepted in the VAVS Program are considered WOC employees. WOC precludes monetary payments, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy.

b. **Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers.** RS volunteers are individuals who participate in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled assignment under VA supervision. Frequency of participation is determined locally. Individuals are officially authorized to serve on a WOC basis as RS volunteers when the individual has:

- (1) Signed the "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration and Appointment Agreement," as contained in VA Form 10-7055, RS Volunteer Application;
- (2) Been approved for assignment by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, or designee;
- (3) Participated in required interviews and orientations prescribed by the VA facility; and
- (4) Completed a trial period as established by the VA facility.

c. **Occasional Volunteers.** Occasional volunteers are those individuals serving under the VAVS Program who do not meet the requirements of RS volunteers. They must sign a "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration and Appointment Agreement," as required by VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, Part II, Chapter 2, Section A, Paragraph 4c. This waiver may be incorporated on VA Form 10-5392, Occasional Volunteer Time Sheet. Other than copies of these signed time sheets, no individual records will be maintained on occasional volunteers.

d. **Student Volunteers.** Student volunteers under the age of 18, or those that satisfy the state's definition of underage, must have written parental or guardian approval to participate in the VAVS Program, and must have written authorization for diagnostic and emergency treatment if injured while volunteering. *NOTE: Post-secondary students will not be considered volunteers while receiving academic credit under a formal affiliation agreement (see subparagraph 3k).*

e. **Volunteers from Community Organizations**

(1) Acceptance of volunteer services from members of community organizations in connection with VAVS is authorized provided the organization:

(a) Is in a position to provide volunteers or other resources.

(b) Agrees to VA supervision of its affiliated volunteers while participating in the VAVS Program.

(c) Agrees that its volunteers will participate in all VA facility-required volunteer orientation and training.

(2) Individuals are not required to be affiliated with a community organization to participate in the VAVS Program.

f. **Non-citizen Volunteers.** Persons who are not United States citizens are eligible to participate in the VAVS Program; however, a non-citizen must provide a copy of a visa prior to accepting a volunteer assignment.

g. **Volunteer Assistance by Physicians, Dentists, Nurses, and Other Professionally Licensed Persons.** Volunteer assistance by physicians, dentists, nurses, and other professionally licensed persons to assume full responsibility for professional services in their respective fields may be accepted under certain circumstances. All such volunteer assignments must first be approved in advance by the facility Chief of Staff, or designee, who must ensure that any resulting volunteer appointment is first processed through all applicable credentialing and privileging procedures as described in VHA Handbook 1100.19. Any volunteer serving in this capacity must have appropriate training, work under the supervision of a VA compensated clinical staff member, and meet the other criteria for acceptance as a volunteer in the VAVS Program. Limited health care procedures, not requiring certification, can be approved as volunteer assignments by the clinical service involved. Any volunteer serving in this capacity must have appropriate training, work under the supervision of a VA compensated clinical staff member, and meet the other criteria for acceptance as a volunteer in the VAVS Program. The assignment must be in the area of supplementary assistance, and may be performed by either a lay or professionally-licensed person working as a volunteer.

h. **Volunteer Assistance by VA Employees**

(1) VA-compensated employees may serve as VAVS volunteers, if their volunteer assignments are unrelated to their employment responsibilities and are outside their normal working hours.

(2) VA-paid employees may not be certified to serve as Representatives or Deputy Representatives on the VAVS National Advisory Committee or local VAVS Committees.

i. **Volunteer Assistance by Salaried Employees of Organizations.** Compensated employees of non-VA organizations may serve as volunteers. *NOTE: Veterans Service Officers representing veterans' claims may not serve as VAVS volunteers in that capacity.*

j. **Volunteer Assistance by Patients, Outpatients, and Former Patients**

(1) Facility inpatients will not be permitted to serve as VAVS volunteers.

(2) Individuals who are prescribed or encouraged to volunteer as part of their VA medical care will not serve as VAVS volunteers.

(3) To hasten rehabilitation, to encourage former inpatients to resume normal home and community involvement, to discourage and avoid possible facility dependence, a 6-month waiting period prior to initial acceptance of a former inpatient as a VAVS volunteer is to be considered.

k. **Research and Education Corporation WOC Employees.** Research and education corporation WOC employees will not be considered as VAVS volunteers. Their activities must be coordinated through the Office of Academic Affiliations.

4. TERMINATION OF RS VOLUNTEERS

The Voluntary Service Program Manager may remove a VAVS volunteer for unsatisfactory performance, inability to perform the assignment, or violation of established policy and/or procedures.

a. The utilizing service must provide detailed documentation demonstrating that the volunteer, after appropriate orientation and training, has been counseled and sufficient cause for removal exists.

b. Written notification of termination must be sent to the volunteer and, if affiliated, the VAVS Representative.

5. SECURITY, PRIVACY, AND LIABILITY ISSUES

a. To ensure security and safety of patients and patient information, a Special Agreement Check must be performed on volunteers assigned duties in the following categories: *NOTE: Volunteers must be informed of this prior to receiving their assignments.*

(1) Assignments associated with home health care;

(2) Assignments involving the provision of patient care or working alone with a patient;

- (3) Assignments involving contact with pharmaceuticals or other biological agents;
- (4) Assignments that provide access to patient records;
- (5) Assignments that provide access to any VA computer system;
- (6) Assignments that provide access to any sensitive information not identified above (e.g., Privacy Act protected information); and
- (7) Assignments involving clinical research.

NOTE: *Volunteers with assignments above the low risk or non-sensitive levels must also receive the appropriate level of investigation required by Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 732 and VA Handbook 0710.*

b. Volunteers, as WOC employees, are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a and 38 U.S.C. Sections 5701 and 7332) and all VA regulations implementing that statute. Accordingly, volunteers must assist VA staff in safeguarding the privacy of patient information accessed during the course of their duties at the VA facility. Volunteers are not exempt from prosecution or fine in the case of unlawful release of patient information.

c. Volunteers serving on a WOC basis are regarded within the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) when they are working within the scope of their assigned duties.

d. Veterans benefits counseling is not a VAVS assignment. VAVS volunteers are not to discuss veterans' benefits eligibility information with patients.

e. VA staff will not request volunteers to cash patients' checks or to act as intermediaries in cashing patients' checks. Volunteers may shop for patients provided accountability is established for all transactions. Volunteers are not to be held liable for losses if established procedures are followed and no apparent negligence exists.

6. VAVS COMMITTEES

a. **VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC)**. The VAVS NAC, established in 1946, operates under Public Law (Pub. L.) 92-463, the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), enacted on October 6, 1972. It became a Federally-chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1973, and operates within its current charter. **NOTE:** *Application for charter renewal must be made every 2 years to the General Services Administration (GSA).*

(1) The VAVS NAC advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, through the Under Secretary for Health and other members of VHA Central Office staff on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within VA health care facilities and on matters relating to volunteerism. The members are responsible for:

- (a) Promoting the VAVS Program.

(b) Communicating VA policies to their constituencies.

(c) Making recommendations to improve volunteer services to veterans.

(2) The Chief Communications Officer, VHA Central Office, serves as the NAC Chairperson. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, serves as Deputy Chairperson.

(3) The membership of the Committee is composed of national organizations. Organizations may designate one National Representative and up to two Deputy National Representatives for representation. Additional deputies, up to a total of eight, may be appointed when the need is justified and approved by the Director, Voluntary Service Office. VAVS NAC membership policies and procedures are maintained in the VAVS NAC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Organizational membership categories are as follows:

(a) Service Member. Service Member (voting) organizations are those which maintain the provision of volunteers and VA recognized participation on local VAVS committees at a minimum of thirty VA facilities;

(b) Associate Service Member. Associate Service Member organizations maintain the same requirements as Service Members, but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities;

(c) Donor Member. Donor Member organizations donate significant funds or materials to assist or benefit veterans at a minimum of thirty VA facilities.

(d) Associate Donor Member. Associate Donor Member organizations maintain the same requirements as Donor Members, but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities.

(e) Honorary Member. Honorary Member status recognizes past service of organizations, with a minimum of 10 consecutive years of VAVS NAC membership, which are no longer able to meet current minimum criteria for active membership.

(4) The Chairperson of the VAVS NAC appoints the members. Organizations are appointed on a 2-year basis. Reappointment of current VAVS NAC members begins, based upon minimum criteria, at every Annual Meeting held during an odd numbered year.

(5) Organizations seeking a new membership or a change in membership category may submit a written application and documentation at any time to the Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

(6) Meetings of the VAVS NAC are held annually.

(7) Reports of the Committee's Annual Meetings are prepared and distributed according to subparagraph 11g.

(8) The VAVS NAC Executive Committee is a subcommittee composed of service member organizations of the VAVS NAC. The Chairperson and members are appointed by the NAC Chairperson from the NAC membership. The Executive Committee's purposes are outlined in the VAVS NAC SOP.

(9) VAVS NAC Task Groups may be appointed as needed. Membership on a task group is not restricted to members of the NAC.

(10) FACA requirements apply to the meetings of the NAC and its Executive Committee. These requirements include the following:

- (a) Detailed minutes;
- (b) A record of persons present;
- (c) A complete and accurate description of matters discussed and conclusions reached;
- (d) Copies of all reports received, issued, or approved; and
- (e) The accuracy of all minutes certified by the NAC Chairperson.

b. **Facility VAVS Committee.** Each VA medical center and independent outpatient clinic must establish a VAVS Committee.

(1) **Purpose.** The Committee assists with the coordination of plans and policies for community participation in the VAVS Program.

(2) **Chairperson.** The Associate Director, or other senior management official, serves as the Chairperson.

(3) **Membership.** The facility VAVS Committee is composed of the following representatives from each organization accepted by local management for representation:

- (a) One Representative.
- (b) Up to three Deputy Representatives, exclusive of satellite clinic appointments.
- (c) Deputy Representatives for satellite outpatient clinics; i.e.,:

1. When medical center management determines the need for VAVS support at satellite clinics for which they have administrative responsibility, organizations may appoint an additional Deputy Representative for the satellite outpatient clinic (a clinic situated at a distance from the medical center).

2. The appointment is to the parent (medical center) VAVS Committee.

(d) One Associate Representative and Deputy Associate Representative per service Organization.

(e) One Non-affiliated Representative.

(f) Representatives-at-large.

(g) Honorary Representatives.

***NOTE:** Local Representatives and Deputy Representatives may represent more than one local VAVS committee; if the Facility Director believes accepting the appointment is in the best interest of the facility. An individual may only represent one organization.*

(4) **New VAVS Committees.** Voluntary Service Office (10C2) approval must be obtained to establish a new VAVS Committee. The request must demonstrate need and that the necessary leadership and support will be provided to justify the establishment of a VAVS Committee.

(5) **Community-based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) VAVS Committees.** Voluntary Service Office (10C2) approval must be obtained to establish a VAVS Committee at an outpatient clinic affiliated with a medical center. The request must demonstrate that the necessary leadership and support will be provided to justify the establishment of a VAVS Committee.

(6) **Termination of Membership.** Organizations will be removed from the VAVS Committee when none of the certified members is in attendance at three consecutive meetings. Membership can be renewed with a letter of certification to the facility Director indicating the attendance requirement will be met. Representatives-at-large and the nonaffiliated Representative will be removed from the membership listing when they miss three consecutive meetings.

***NOTE:** Notification to the respective National Certifying Official is required when an organization is removed from a local VAVS Committee. Notification is to be in writing and submitted in a timely manner, with a copy to the Director, Voluntary Service Office, and to the facility Director.*

(7) **Meetings**

(a) Quarterly meetings must be scheduled each fiscal year. It is recommended that one evening meeting be held each quarter to accommodate working VAVS members. Additional meetings may be scheduled by the chairperson. Meeting dates should avoid conflicting with religious holidays of the Committee members. ***NOTE:** A Volunteer Recognition Program is not considered as a quarterly meeting.*

(b) A printed agenda will be prepared for each meeting.

(8) **Meeting Minutes.** Minutes must be recorded for each meeting as a narrative summary.

(a) Minimum guidelines for minutes must include:

1. A header on the first page which includes: facility name and number, mailing address including zip code, telephone number, fax number, date of VAVS meeting, the name of facility Director and the name of the Voluntary Service Program Manager.

2. The name and title of the VA official chairing the meeting in the opening paragraph.

3. Names and titles of staff members present.

4. Succinct headings and sub-headings must be used throughout the minutes to facilitate future reference to subject matter discussed at the meeting.

5. Any recommendation passed which require approval of the medical center Director. The recommendation must be noted and follow-up accomplished by the Chairperson.

6. The Cumulative Attendance Listing (see App. A) as the first attachment to the minutes (see subpar. 6b(9)). Activity schedules, subcommittee reports, or other attachments may accompany the minutes.

7. Signatures of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the VAVS Committee at the end of the minutes.

8. A treasury report or a VAVS committee financial report, if it is presented during the VAVS committee meetings.

(b) One copy of the minutes will be mailed within 30 business days of the meeting date to the following:

1. Members of the VAVS Committee and appropriate staff.

2. Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

3. National Representatives of the organization represented on the local VAVS committee.

(9) **Attendance.** Attendance by any certified representative of the organization constitutes representation of the organization at the meeting.

(a) A Cumulative Attendance Listing is compiled on a cumulative basis for each fiscal year as a separate attachment to the minutes.

1. Organizations and their representatives are to be listed.

2. The dates of expiration for terms of office are to be shown for members after their names.

3. For uniformity of reporting, the format and symbols as shown in Cumulative Attendance Listing (see App. A) must be followed.

4. The percentage of attendance is computed on the representation of the organization based upon the number of meetings to date. *NOTE: The attendance of Honorary Representatives is to be recorded, but not used to determine representation of the member organization at meetings.*

5. The minutes and attendance listing must be reproduced head-to-head.

(b) Reporting of new member attendance must begin following acknowledgment of certification by the facility Director and notification of meetings has been given.

(c) Members must be excused when the VAVS Committee meeting conflicts with their presence at their affiliated organization's state or national conventions.

(d) References to organizations and nonaffiliated Representatives who have not met the attendance requirement, must be removed from the record.

c. **Facility VAVS Subcommittees and Task Groups.** Subcommittees and task groups must be appointed to undertake special projects, or study selected aspects of VAVS, and make reports or recommendations to the Committee for action. Membership on subcommittees and task groups is determined by the abilities, interests, and time availability of representatives. Membership on task groups is not restricted to members of the VAVS Committee.

d. **Facility VAVS Staff Advisory Committee.** Facilities with VAVS Committees must establish a VAVS Staff Advisory Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to actively assist the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the VAVS Committee, and to work to improve the quality of the VAVS Program. Members are appointed by the VAVS Committee Chairperson upon the recommendation of the Voluntary Service Program Manager. Only paid VA staff can be members of this committee. The Voluntary Service Program Manager serves as Chairperson and calls meetings as needed. Minutes of the meetings are recorded and distributed.

e. **VAVS Committee Funds.** VAVS Committees are authorized to establish operational funds to provide support for programs or activities that assist in carrying out the business of the VAVS Committee. If such a fund is established, the funds will be deposited in a VAVS Committee General Post Fund account (*see subpar. 10b(1)*).

7. RESPONSIBILITIES IN VAVS

a. **VHA Central Office Staff.** The Director, Voluntary Service Office, is responsible for the overall administration and operation of the VAVS Program.

b. **VAVS Member Organizations (National and Facility).** Organizations with representation on the NAC and/or facility VAVS Committee are responsible for:

(1) Identifying ways to improve the VAVS Program.

(2) Assisting in obtaining financial, material, and human resources in accordance with specific needs identified by VHA Central Office and VA facilities.

(3) Communicating policies and procedures established by the organization to VA.

(4) Appointing members to the NAC and facility VAVS Committees.

(a) Members on the VAVS NAC must be certified in writing to the Director, Voluntary Service Office, by the highest elected or appointed official of each member organization.

(b) Members on the facility VAVS Committee must be certified in writing by the National Certifying Official, or other designated person, as selected by the highest elected or appointed official of each member organization.

(c) The certification is to be addressed to:

VA Facility Director

ATTENTION: Voluntary Service Program Manager (135)

(d) The name, address, telephone number, term of office, and position must be clearly indicated for each appointment. The notification should name any individual who is removed or whose term has expired.

(e) Individuals may be certified to represent only one organization at each facility.

(5) Thoroughly reviewing the duties with potential committee members prior to certification to ensure appointees are willing and able to perform them.

(6) Training committee members with emphasis on duties, liaison role, and the quantity and quality of volunteer services to be given by the organization.

(7) Considering the replacement of any appointee to a committee who:

(a) Has poor attendance at meetings, and/or

(b) Demonstrates ineffective leadership as evidenced by the level of participation of the organization, and/or

(c) Fails to complete assigned duties in a timely and constructive manner.

c. **National Representative.** The VAVS National Representative is the official liaison between VHA Central Office and the organization in all aspects of the VAVS Program. The National Representative is responsible for:

(1) Advising and assisting with planning and improving the VAVS Program.

(2) Reviewing and responding to required administrative reports for the organization and VA.

- (3) Intervening regarding personality conflicts or inadequate performance by facility representatives when the matter of concern is not resolved locally.
- (4) Keeping national and local officials informed of VAVS opportunities, accomplishments, and needs.
- (5) Attending the NAC Annual Meeting.
- (6) Providing available resources to the facility representatives to carry out their responsibilities.
- (7) Promoting the recruitment of volunteers, including students, within the organization.
- (8) Developing and distributing materials for use in training facility representatives.
- (9) Serving as, or advising, the National Certifying Official on the appropriate selection of candidates for appointments.
- (10) Communicating with organization officials at local, state, and national levels, and VHA Central Office staff on matters of concern.
- (11) Encouraging state and local membership to support the VAVS Program.

d. **Deputy National Representative.** The Deputy National Representatives performs duties as assigned by the National Representative. Assignments may include:

- (1) Volunteer record keeping,
- (2) Correspondence,
- (3) Publicity,
- (4) Speaking engagements,
- (5) Training membership on policies and procedures of the organization and VA,
- (6) Participating in the NAC Annual Meeting, and
- (7) Serving as requested on committees and task groups.

e. **Facility Staff**

(1) **Senior Management.** The medical facility Director, or senior manager, will designate the Associate Director, or other senior management official, to serve as the Chairperson of the facility VAVS Committee.

(2) **Voluntary Service Program Manager.** The Voluntary Service Program Manager is responsible for the administration and operation of the facility VAVS Program. The Voluntary Service Program Manager, or designee, is responsible for:

(a) Serving as Deputy Chairperson of the facility VAVS Committee and Chairperson of the VAVS Staff Advisory Committee.

(b) Providing general user friendly orientation to volunteers about the role of the VAVS Program including policies and procedures, e.g., Privacy Act, infection control, fire and safety, etc. **NOTE:** *Every effort needs to be made to ensure volunteers have access to assignments and orientations that accommodate their schedules.*

(c) Directing recruitment, placement, orientation, training, evaluation, and recognition of volunteers.

(d) Managing the Voluntary Service System timekeeping package (VSS) for volunteer records.

(e) Creating a personnel file for all RS volunteers to include: volunteer application, volunteer assignment and name of supervisor, orientation and training records, position description, and other pertinent information relating to the volunteer's assignment.

(f) Informing VAVS Committee members of their responsibilities.

(g) Educating VA staff in the management of volunteers to include the:

1. Role of the VAVS Program,
2. Responsibilities of utilizing services, and
3. Duties of the supervisor.

NOTE: *Creative and effective use of volunteer resources should be emphasized.*

(h) Managing a Quality Improvement Program which meets the standards established by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and other mandatory reviews. **NOTE:** *Voluntary Service quality improvement plans need to include the impact of volunteer resources.*

(i) Terminating volunteers from service, in cooperation with the utilizing department and the Representative of the affiliated organization, as appropriate (see par. 4).

(j) Providing National Certifying Officials with a copy of the facility Director's acknowledgement of a Representative's and/or Deputy Representative's certification.

(3) **Utilizing Departments.** Department Heads, (Service Chief or equivalent) are responsible for coordinating all volunteer activities with Voluntary Service. Department Heads, or designees, are responsible for:

- (a) Determining the need for volunteer support and assistance.
- (b) Developing volunteer position descriptions in conjunction with the Voluntary Service Program Manager.

NOTE: The position descriptions will be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary.

- (c) Interviewing and approving potential volunteers prior to acceptance for an assignment.
- (d) Providing supervision, orientation, training, and recognition of volunteers.
- (e) Providing training, as required by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), in:
 - 1. Infection control (bloodborne pathogens, etc.);
 - 2. Emergency preparedness;
 - 3. General safety;
 - 4. Equipment management;
 - 5. Utility management; and
 - 6. Other service specific orientation.
- (f) Conducting periodic reviews to determine the effectiveness of volunteer resources.
- (g) Performing administrative duties including the completion of accident reports on injured volunteers.
- (h) Assisting Voluntary Service in informing the community about the importance of volunteer service in VA facilities.
- (i) Serving on the VAVS Staff Advisory Committee when requested and attend meetings.
- (j) Representing the service at meetings of the VAVS Committee to demonstrate support for the VAVS Program, expressing the needs of the service, and sharing pertinent information.
- (k) Conducting volunteer performance evaluations, as determined by local management, to meet JCAHO standards and competencies.

(l) Counseling volunteers when performance is marginal or unsatisfactory, and if necessary, initiate action for removal (see par. 4).

(m) Ensuring adequate space and materials are available for volunteer participation.

f. **Facility Representative.** The facility Representative is the official liaison between the facility and the organization in all aspects of the VAVS Program. On behalf of the organization, the Representative is responsible for:

(1) Assisting with improving the VAVS Program;

(2) Providing input to VA staff and the facility VAVS Committee;

(3) Promoting the recruitment of volunteers and the donation of financial and material resources in accordance with facility needs;

(4) Advising members of the policy and procedures of the organization and facility;

(5) Assisting VA staff when an affiliated volunteer must be removed for cause;

(6) Attending and participating in meetings of the VAVS Committee;

(7) Serving as a member of a subcommittee, or task group, as requested;

(8) Maintaining records and submitting reports as required by the organization and VA;

(9) Coordinating activities of the organization with the facility; and

(10) Delegating responsibility and voting privileges to Deputy Representatives or Associate Representatives, as needed.

g. **Facility Deputy Representative.** Facility Deputy Representatives perform duties as assigned by the facility Representative. Assignments could include recordkeeping, correspondence, and training their membership on the policies and procedures of the organization and VA. Deputies attend and participate in the VAVS Committee meetings. They may serve on subcommittees and task groups.

h. **Facility Associate Representative.** Organizations represented on the NAC may appoint one VAVS Associate Representative from adjacent states to the facility VAVS Committee when the organization has members in an adjacent state participating in the facility Volunteer Program. Duties (except for voting privileges, which may be delegated in the absence of the representative) are the same as a representative, but limited to the adjacent state. The Associate Representative must hold membership in the organization in the adjacent state.

i. **Facility Deputy Associate Representative.** Organizations represented on the NAC may appoint one VAVS Deputy Associate Representative to the facility VAVS Committee. Duties consist of those assigned by the Associate Representative. Deputy Associate Representatives may participate fully in discussions at facility VAVS Committee meetings and may be appointed to subcommittees and task groups. The Deputy Associate Representative must hold membership in the organization in the adjacent state.

NOTE: Appointments of Associate Representative or Deputy Associate Representative to the designation of Representative or Deputy Representative are authorized when the home state organization is not represented. These appointments must be made with the clear understanding that if the respective home state organization later certifies representation, the previous appointment will revert to associate status.

j. **Facility nonaffiliated Representative.** Upon the recommendation of the Voluntary Service Program Manager, the facility Director may appoint a nonaffiliated Representative to represent volunteers who are not affiliated with a member organization. The nonaffiliated Representative attends VAVS Committee meetings as a voting member and serves on subcommittees and task groups as requested. Terms of office are at the discretion of the facility Director.

k. **Facility Representatives-at-large.** Representatives-at-large may be recommended by the Voluntary Service Program Manager, and certified by the facility Director to serve as members of the VAVS Committee. They are individuals who have demonstrated skills and interest in the VAVS Program and are willing to assist with the mission of the committee. Terms of office are at the discretion of the facility Director.

l. **Facility Honorary Representative.** A Representative who serves at least 10 years on the VAVS Committee may be appointed by an organization to serve as an Honorary Representative; however, they may not hold office. Honorary Representatives serve as advisors to the Committee without vote and should receive all VAVS Committee correspondence as do the other VAVS committee members. Honorary Representatives may serve as members of task groups. *NOTE: This can apply to Deputy Representatives and Associate Representatives.*

8. RECOGNITION

It is VAVS policy to provide appropriate recognition for contributions of the VAVS volunteers and their organizations to the VAVS Program. Volunteers have a significant impact on VA and should be recognized for their contributions. Recognition is the responsibility of all staff and may consist of tangible awards, such as certificates, pins, plaques, etc. WOC employees under 38 U.S.C. 513 and U.S.C. 7405 may participate in the VA Employee Recognition and Awards Program. Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgment and the sense of belonging to the health care team (see Office of General Counsel (OGC) Opinion dated, April 5, 1999, and Office of Finance Bulletin 00GA2.05). Appropriate organized recognition activities should be considered for short-term and/or episodic volunteers beyond the annual awards ceremonies customary at many facilities.

VAVS recognition for State Veterans Home (SVH) volunteers has been established to offer the opportunity for volunteers who provide service to veterans in a SVH to receive recognition from VAVS. Recognition will consist of certificates or other appropriate form for those volunteering only in a SVH, and VAVS Awards for those giving time to both SVH and VA facilities (see VHA Handbook 1620.3).

a. **Award Eligibility**

(1) Credit for hours are given to volunteers when services are rendered within a VA facility, clinic, or other off-station site approved by VA as an appropriate location for an RS assignment under VA supervision. Credit is given for hours actually worked, rounded to the nearest hour.

(2) Hours are authorized:

(a) From the time a volunteer reports for duty until the assignment is completed.

(b) From portal-to-portal for volunteers in transportation programs whose assignment requires them to pick up patients prior to reporting to the VA facility.

(c) For volunteers serving in a community-based assignment or special projects in the community from the time they reach the assignment until the assignment is completed.

(d) For VAVS Committee members attending committee meetings, task groups, etc., at the facility or at alternate locations approved by the VA facility.

(e) For volunteers who are active at more than one VA facility and request to consolidate their hours for the purpose of receiving awards. Concerned Voluntary Service Program Managers must reach a consensus on how to implement the request.

(f) For occasional volunteers, service hours are credited to the affiliated organization and not used for the purpose of calculating hours toward individual VAVS awards.

(3) Hours are not authorized for:

(a) Services rendered other than those assigned by VA.

(b) Assignments performed without VA supervision.

(c) Volunteers serving in state veterans homes unless there is a Memorandum of Understanding, or the assignment(s) are performed under VA supervision.

(d) Employee childcare centers, exclusive of those managed by VA Canteen Service, even if located on the facility campus.

(e) Employees of veterans service organizations and others operating within the scope of their employment.

(f) Time spent completing projects at home, e.g., sewing lap robes, baking, etc. (unless the assignments are performed under VA supervision).

(g) Those assigned to VA Incentive Therapy or other VA compensated work programs.

b. **Facility Awards**

(1) **Individual.** VAVS awards are presented to volunteers who have met the eligibility standards. Awards are presented based on the date range selected by the Voluntary Service Program Manager. They include:

(a) VAVS Pins for Adult and Student Volunteers

1. 50 Hours (Student),

2. 100 Hours,

3. 150 Hours (Student),

4. 300 Hours,

5. 500 Hours,

6. 750 Hours,

7. 1,000 Hours,

8. 1,750 Hours,

9. 2,500 Hours,

10. 3,750 Hours,

11. 5,000 Hours,

12. 6,250 Hours,

13. 7,500 Hours,

14. 8,750 Hours,

15. 10,000 Hours,

16. 12,500 Hours,

17. 15,000 Hours,

18. 17,500 Hours,
19. 20,000 Hours,
20. 22,500 Hours,
21. 25,000 Hours,
22. 27,500 Hours (Local Award),
23. 30,000 Hours,
24. 32,000 Hours (Local Award),
25. 35,000 Hours,
26. 37,000 Hours (Local Award),
26. 40,000 Hours,
27. 42,500 Hours (Local Award),
28. 45,000 Hours,
29. 47,500 Hours (Local Award), and
30. 50,000 Hours.

(b) Certificates. VA Form 10-7031d, Voluntary Service Award for Hours and Years of Service, is presented to volunteers who have previously earned the 1000 hour pin and who have served at least 100 hours during the date range selected by the Voluntary Service Program Manager. This award is not to be given during the years in which the volunteer qualifies for another award.

(c) Other Awards

1. 7,500 Hour, Dedicated Service Award Plaque,
2. 8,750 Hour, Outstanding Merit Award Plaque,
3. 10,000 Hour, Honor Award Bowl,
4. 12,500 Hour, Outstanding Service Award Pyramid,
5. 15,000 Hour, Exceptional Honor Award Medallion,
6. 17,500 Hour, Superior Service Award Plate,

7. 20,000 Hour, James H. Parke Achievement Award Tray,
8. 22,500 Hour, Mantle Clock,
9. 25,000 Hour, angular, 6" x 8" Jade Crystal,
10. 27,000 Hour - Local Award,
11. 30,000 Hour, angular, 7" x 9" Jade Crystal,
12. 32,500 Hour - Local Award,
13. 35,000 Hour, angular, 8" x 10" Jade Crystal,
14. 37,500 Hour - Local Award,
15. 40,000 Hour, octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with wood base,
16. 42,500 Hour - Local Award,
17. 45,000 Hour, octagonal, 8" Jade Crystal with crystal base,
18. 47,500 Hour - Local Award, and
19. 50,000 Hour, 7" x 10" Jade Crystal Tower.

NOTE: VA pins denoting equivalent hours of service will be awarded in conjunction with the preceding items listed.

(2) **Group.** VA awards may be presented by the facility Director, or Voluntary Service Program Manager, to individuals and groups in recognition of exceptional service, special contributions, or continued outstanding service in VAVS. These awards need to be processed through the facility Voluntary Service office for coordination and verification.

(a) VA Form 4780C, Certificate of Appreciation, may be given in support of outstanding participation during the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

(b) VA Form 10-7042, Outstanding Service Award, may be presented on a selective basis.

NOTE: Locally developed awards may be presented to augment national awards.

(3) **One-time Only Awards.** Additional recognition may be given as follows:

(a) The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award. The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award is an annual award consisting of a certificate and scholarship given to a student volunteer.

The number of scholarships and amounts are established annually by the James H. Parke Memorial Fund Board. Details of the award and criteria are contained in VA publication IB 10-20, The James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award.

(b) The Voluntary Service Leadership Award. VA Form 10-1208, The Voluntary Service Leadership Award, and associated pin may be presented to any member of the local VAVS committee, who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and abilities, benefiting VA and/or its beneficiaries.

1. Nomination. The nomination, with a cover letter from the facility Director, addressing all elements must be sent to the National Certifying Official, or designee, for concurrence at least 2 months prior to anticipated presentation.

a. If the concurring official does not reply within 21 days from the date of notification, concurrence will be assumed.

b. In the event of nonconcurrence, the National Certifying Official, or designee, must notify the facility Director by letter, with a copy to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), VHA Central Office, of reasons for nonconcurrence. When concurrence is denied, presentation of the award will be withheld.

2. Eligibility Criteria

a. Nominees must meet all five of the following elements:

(1) Element 1: Hold current certification.

(2) Element 2: Attend 100 percent of VAVS meetings in the previous year.

(3) Element 3: Serve actively in an RS assignment other than the VAVS Committee.

(4) Element 4: Participate on a VAVS subcommittee or successfully complete a special project assigned by the VAVS Committee Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.

(5) Element 5: Complete the Annual Joint Review in a timely manner.

b. Nominees must meet three of the following five accomplishment elements:

(1) Element 1: Increased or maintained involvement of the organization in the VAVS Program as evidenced by:

(a) New programs,

(b) Number of volunteers,

(c) Number of hours,

(d) Number of visits, and

(e) Stability of existing programs.

(2) Element 2: Submitted recommendations which have been implemented and positively impacted VA.

(3) Element 3: Provided significant support through gifts and donations from their organization.

(4) Element 4: Involved new individuals or organizations in VAVS through volunteer resources and/or gifts and donations.

(5) Element 5: Demonstrated expertise and/or guidance to other VAVS members and ability to plan and organize committee work.

(c) Secretary's Volunteer Service Award. The Secretary's Volunteer Service Award is an 11" x 14" embossed certificate, signed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, presented with a blue and gold diamond enamel pin. This award may be issued only once and is not to be given indiscriminately, or during the year in which the volunteer qualifies for another award.

1. Nomination for the Secretary's Volunteer Service Award needs to be submitted at least 3 months in advance of the anticipated presentation.

2. The nomination may be initiated by any VA employee with concurrence of the utilizing service, Voluntary Service Program Manager, and the facility Director.

3. The nomination must include a cover letter of recommendation to the Secretary, signed by the facility Director, and forwarded through the appropriate channels to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), VHA Central Office.

4. The nominee needs to meet or exceed the following criteria:

a. **Service.** A minimum of 10 years of service and 11,000 hours.

b. **Performance.** Dependability, teamwork, and unique contributions.

c. **Impact.** Improvement, efficiency, or quality of service to VA and its beneficiaries.

d. **Attributes.** Generosity, sensitivity, diplomacy, and flexibility.

e. **Other Factors.** Non-VA awards, community involvement, length of service, special accomplishments, etc.

c. **Presentation of Awards**

(1) The presentation of awards is of equal, if not greater importance, than the award itself; management must give support and attention to the planning and presentation of VAVS awards.

(2) The senior management official needs to present these awards whenever possible, exclusive of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, which is presented at the VAVS NAC Annual Meeting.

(3) Procurement of awards presented at the local level, exclusive of the Secretary's Award, is the responsibility of the local facility.

(4) Facility unearmarked General Post Funds may be used to purchase awards for volunteer recognition.

d. **Voluntary Service Award For Excellence**. This award is to recognize a Voluntary Service Program Manager or other key staff with primary responsibilities for the management of Voluntary Service, who has demonstrated adherence to the highest standards demanded by the profession.

(1) **Criteria**

(a) Impact on patient care and/or employee morale.

(b) Innovations, new programs, management initiatives, and their tangible and/or intangible benefits.

(c) Contribution to Voluntary Service (efficiency, cost savings and/or avoidance).

(d) Professional involvement (American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services (ASDVS), Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA), local, state and/or regional participation).

(e) VA medical center and/or community involvement.

(2) **Nominating Procedures.** Nominees must be recommended by their immediate supervisor or higher level official at the facility.

(a) **Preparation of Nominations.** All nominations must be prepared in a narrative format, not to exceed two typewritten, single-spaced pages, specifically addressing the nominee's contributions for each separate criteria. The nomination should cover performance during the preceding 12 months.

(b) Submission of Nominations. All nominations must be forwarded through local channels and contain the endorsement of the facility Director. Endorsed nominations will be forwarded to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), VHA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, will be responsible for receiving all endorsed nominations and coordinating the selection process.

(c) Deadline for Receipt of Nominations. The deadline for receipt of nominations in VHA Central Office, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), is the close of business on the last workday in December.

(d) Selection Process. An ad hoc selection committee will be established by the Director, Voluntary Service Office.

(e) Award Presentation. A travel honorarium to the National Advisory Committee Meeting and a plaque or other appropriate award from the Director, Voluntary Service Office, will be presented. When travel funds are not available, the award will be presented at the field facility by the medical center Director.

(f) Notification. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, will notify the nominees, through their facility Directors, of the selectee.

e. NAC Volunteer of the Year Award. This award recognizes volunteers who have given extraordinary service to our nation's veterans. The Executive Committee of the NAC coordinates this program and works closely with the NAC and a selection committee established to review nominations. There will be two recipients (one male and one female) per year.

(1) **Criteria.** Nominees for this award must participate in established VAVS assignments, serve as an RS volunteer and meet one of the following criteria:

- (a) Volunteer with hospitalized veterans,
- (b) Volunteer with veterans at outpatient clinics,
- (c) Volunteer with veterans in nursing homes,
- (d) Volunteer with homeless veterans,
- (e) Volunteer with veterans and veterans groups in the community,
- (f) Host veterans' functions outside the Lodge, Post, Chapter, e.g., Memorial Day, July 4th,
- (g) Veterans Day observances, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment,
- (h) Host veterans' functions outside the Lodge, Post, Chapter, e.g., fishing trips, day at the races, sporting events, etc., that qualify as a VAVS assignment,
- (i) Visit veterans confined to their homes as a VAVS assignment, and

(j) Adopt-A-Veteran.

(2) **Nominating Procedures.** All nominations must be prepared in a narrative format, not to exceed 500 words, and must be submitted to the Voluntary Service Office by February 28th of each year. Letters of recommendation may be submitted with the narrative. VA staff making recommendations for this award must send the nomination to the National Representative of the organization to which the nominee is a member for preliminary judging.

(3) **Award Presentation.** The award will be presented at the NAC Annual Meeting by the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

f. **American Spirit Award.** This award recognizes successful volunteer recruitment initiatives within VA Voluntary Service (VAVS). There are four categories in this award: Student recruitment, recruitment from military groups, corporate recruitment, and senior recruitment. Eligible recipients for these categories are VAVS Programs, VA staff, volunteers, NAC Representatives and groups/teams. Nominations may be submitted by any facility for each Award Category.

(1) **Criteria.** Criteria for the four categories are as follows:

Student Recruitment

- a) Developed volunteer assignments in which the student volunteers can provide valuable and useful service to veterans and gain valuable career enhancing experiences
- b) Allowed the students to assist in the recruitment of other students or youth serving organizations
- c) Increased the public's understanding of student volunteer needs and the benefits associated with the student's volunteer experience
- d) Developed an innovative reward and recognition mechanism for student volunteers

Recruitment from Military Groups

- a) Partnerships in active duty, national guard or reserve military units that provide innovative/creative programs that support service to veterans
- b) Developed attractive assignments specifically for military groups and their families that support the mission of service to veterans
- c) Developed innovative outreach efforts toward military groups and their families
- d) Initiated innovative recognition for the military groups
- e) Developed innovative and creative recruitment efforts, i.e., use of media, community resources, partnerships, etc.

Corporate Recruitment

- a) Partnerships with local corporations or businesses to provide volunteer support to local VA facilities
- b) Developed attractive assignments specifically for corporate entities that support the mission of service to veterans
- c) Developed innovative outreach efforts toward corporations
- d) Initiated innovative recognition for the corporate groups

e) Developed innovative and creative recruitment efforts, i.e., use of media, community resources, partnerships, etc.

Senior Recruitment

- a) Partnerships with local senior organizations to provide volunteer support to local VA facilities
- b) Developed attractive assignments specifically for senior individuals or organizations that support the mission of service to veterans
- c) Developed innovative outreach efforts toward seniors
- d) Developed innovative and creative recruitment efforts, i.e., use of media, community resources, partnerships, etc.

Applications are to be mailed to Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20420 and must be postmarked by **November 22**. The applications should include the following:

- a) Nomination package must be addressed to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), through the facility director with a copy to the network director.
- b) The nomination must address each of the criteria in the categories for which the award is being submitted.
- c) A narrative of no more than 500 words addressing each criteria in one or more of the categories above, i.e., Student Recruitment, Recruitment of Military Groups, Corporate Recruitment or Senior Recruitment.
- d) Award winners will be announced during the month of January and a crystal award will be presented locally by the facility or network director.

9. OTHER SERVICES AND BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEERS

a. **Meals**. Meals may be furnished without charge to RS volunteers provided their scheduled assignment is at least 4 hours and/or the value of the service is commensurate with the value of the meal. Meals may be provided to others at the discretion of the facility Director, if the facility Director determines that the individuals render a service which will benefit VA in discharging its responsibilities to patients. Meals provided to volunteers are non-transferable. If the facility is providing meals, it is the responsibility of the Voluntary Service Program Manager to notify appropriate staff concerning any significant changes in the number of planned daily meals. When the facility is unable to furnish such meals, VA is authorized to provide meals without charge to qualifying volunteers, in accordance with existing policy (see M-1, Pt. I, Ch. 2; and MP-1, Pt. II, Ch. 3, par. 1e(1) and (2)).

b. **Quarters**. Temporary available quarters may be furnished to volunteers at no charge, in case of an emergency (see M-1, Pt. I, Ch. 2).

c. **Parking**. Facilities will make every effort to provide parking for RS volunteers without charge.

d. **Transportation for Volunteers.** The VA facility may furnish transportation to those volunteers whose presence at the VA facility is essential for complete medical and hospital service. Necessary transportation can be furnished by means of commercial or Government conveyance.

NOTE: Transportation may be obtained by either a direct contractual arrangement or an indirect arrangement, utilizing tickets, tokens, or cash provided by way of reimbursement (see OCG 4-65).

e. **Identification for Volunteers.**

(1) All VA facilities must issue the same type of identification to RS volunteers as they do paid staff. (IL 10-2002-013)

(2) Facilities are encouraged to provide smocks and/or jackets to aid in the identification of volunteers.

(3) Affiliated volunteers are authorized to wear insignia and uniforms identifying their affiliation, except where it is medically inadvisable. In these instances, VA will explain to the concerned volunteers and to their representatives the reasons for the exceptions.

f. **Medical Treatment.**

(1) Volunteers are considered WOC employees and are provided health services in accordance with established policy for employees as outlined in VA Handbook 5019. Specifically this means that:

(a) New volunteers, not normally required to have a physical examination, when deemed necessary for the protection of VA patients or volunteers, will be provided a physical examination without charge. All Volunteer Transportation Network volunteer drivers are required to have a physical examination. (VHA Directive 2004-040.)

A physical evaluation may be required based on the requirements of the volunteer position, (at no cost to the volunteer) or to determine fitness for duty.

Emergency outpatient treatment for injuries sustained while performing assigned volunteer service will be provided to volunteers.

(2) Voluntary Service, in cooperation with the facility's Infection Control Committee, will determine the need for tuberculin tests and examinations, including chest x-rays, for RS volunteers. These procedures are to be provided without cost to the volunteer.

(3) Volunteers will receive other employee benefits and/or services as determined locally, including cholesterol testing, blood pressure screening, and influenza vaccinations.

g. **Use of VA Facility Services.** As determined locally, volunteers may use facilities authorized for employee use.

h. **Compensation Benefits.** All VAVS volunteers, both RS and occasional, are considered employees for the purpose of compensation benefits as provided under the injury compensation laws (see 5 U.S.C. Ch. 81). All volunteers who are injured in the course of their assigned duties are authorized medical services by the Office of Workmen's Compensation (see MP-5, Pt. I, Ch. 810).

i. **Space, Equipment, Data and Reasonable Accommodations for Volunteers.**

(1) Facility Directors are authorized to allocate office space and furnish office equipment and telephones, when available, to VAVS representatives.

(2) Necessary space and equipment, i.e., protective glasses, safety equipment, etc., will be provided to individual volunteers to conduct or carry out their assignments.

(3) Utilizing services must ensure that reasonable accommodation is afforded volunteers to accomplish assigned duties.

(4) Volunteers, as WOC employees, are authorized access to necessary confidential and sensitive information (via files, computers, etc.) in order to complete their assignments, however, they must complete the Annual Information Security Training, Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) training, and other assignment specific trainings.

10. DONATIONS

a. **Delegation of Authority for Acceptance of Gifts and Donations**

(1) In accordance with VHA Directive 4721, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may accept, for use in carrying out all laws administered by VA, gifts, devises, and bequests which will enhance the Secretary's ability to provide services and benefits (38 U.S.C. 8301). The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has delegated the authority to accept and approve the use of gifts, devises and bequests to Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials effective July 12, 2000 (see Section 504, Public Law 102-86). Delegates must comply with existing laws and regulations governing the acceptance and use of such gifts, as well as a list of Governing Principles for Acceptance of Gifts which was issued along with the delegation. Delegates may redelegate this authority to VA officials in their agency or office.

(2) In VHA, the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, is delegated authority to accept gifts and donations for the benefit of patients and members of VA medical facilities, or for the benefit of one or more medical centers, domiciliaries, nursing homes, or clinics subject to the limitations in VHA Directive 4721.

(3) Facility Directors are authorized to accept gifts and donations for the benefit of patients or for the benefit of their medical center, domiciliary, nursing home, or clinic (see VHA Dir. 4721).

(4) The Voluntary Service Program Manager at each facility has the authority to accept gifts and donations for the benefit of that facility and its patients, except for gifts for research and education purposes (see VHA Dir. 4721). The Voluntary Service Program Manager is required to acknowledge all gifts and donations accepted in Voluntary Service, within 30 days of receipt.

(5) The Chief, Chaplain Service, at each facility is authorized to accept gifts for the benefit of the religious needs of patients and to support all Chaplain Service activities (see VHA Handbook 1111.2, and VHA Directive 4721).

b. **General Post Fund (GPF).** Policies and procedures governing GPF and accepting gifts and donations are included in VHA Directive 4721. This Directive includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

(1) Fiscal Service at each VA medical facility is to establish a VAVS Committee GPF account at the request of the Voluntary Service Program Manager. Treasurers of VAVS Committees may request the withdrawal of funds from their VAVS Committee GPF account with the concurrence of their Voluntary Service Program Manager. Fiscal Service at each VA medical facility shall use the simplest possible procedures to timely process such requests for withdrawals from this account. A Treasury Report and VAVS Committee Financial Report of those VHA GPF accounts controlled by VAVS Committee and/or Executive Committee is to be provided at the quarterly VAVS committee meetings.

NOTE: All accounts or investments external to VA, under the purview of a VAVS Committee, are prohibited.

(2) Funds deposited in the VAVS Committee GPF account may be used, as decided by the respective Committee, to provide support for programs or activities that assist in carrying out the business of the local VAVS Committee. Some examples are:

(a) Gifts for patients for distribution during National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week, Memorial Day, National Prisoners of War and/or Missing in Action Recognition Day, Veterans Day, Armed Forces Day, Christmas, and/or other special days,

(b) Canteen books and personal care items for patients,

(c) Refreshments for VAVS activities and other VA medical facility special events to which patients are invited,

(d) Support for volunteer recognition awards and volunteer recognition ceremonies,

(e) Support for student volunteer recognition, and

(f) Support for the Annual VAVS NAC Meeting which entails transferring funds to the GPF account of the host VAVS Committee.

(3) Gifts and donations will be processed and tracked utilizing the VSS Donations Tracking package.

Note: See VSS Donations Training Guide

(<http://vaww.vistau.med.va.gov/vistau/vss/default.htm>)

c. **Disposition of Donations**

(1) Disposal of applicable items will be in accordance with Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), Subchapter H.

(2) Medical Center Directors are encouraged to make necessary arrangements to return donated vehicles to the donor organizations when the GSA replacement standards are met, or the condition of the vehicle is determined to be unacceptable (see VHA Directive 2001-041).

11. RECORDS AND REPORTS

a. **Records Retention.** A system of records must be maintained in Voluntary Service to include master records of Regularly Scheduled (RS) Volunteers, documents of participation of Occasional Volunteers, signed "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration and Appointment Agreement," parental or guardian consent forms for student volunteers, etc. Voluntary Service administrative and general correspondence files are to be maintained in accordance with Records Control Schedule (RCS)

10-1.

(1) Information on VA Form 10-7055, Application for Service, is solicited under 38 U.S.C. 513 and is, therefore, subject to the requirements and restrictions of the Privacy Act. This includes and is not limited to:

(a) "Waiver of Claims to Remuneration and Appointment Agreement;" and

(b) Parental or guardian consent for student volunteers, if applicable.

(2) Information from VA Form 10-7055, may be released to an authorized official, e.g., VAVS Representative of the volunteer's organization only for the purpose of conducting VA assigned and approved duties.

(3) Information on VA Form 10-7055 is to be retained as part of the master record for RS volunteers.

(4) Parental or guardian authorization for diagnostic and/or emergency medical treatment of student volunteers must be obtained, and retained.

(5) Records documenting the participation of occasional volunteers will include the following (see OGC, February 1993):

(a) The identity of the person,

- (b) The identity of the VA establishment, the organizational segment where the service is to be performed, and the nature of the service,
- (c) The inclusive dates of the agreement, or in lieu of a terminal date, a statement such as “for an indefinite period,”
- (d) A waiver of all claims to monetary remuneration,
- (e) A provision to cancel the agreement by either party upon written notification,
- (f) Authority under which the agreement is made (38 U.S.C. Section 513), and
- (g) Signature of the person and the VA appointing official.

NOTE: The preceding listed provisions may be incorporated into the sign-in sheet for volunteers.

b. Facility Reports of Service

(1) Each VAVS Committee Representative will be provided a monthly computer printout listing volunteers and records of service.

(2) Each utilizing department will be provided a monthly computer printout listing information on volunteers assigned to the respective service.

c. **National Reports of Service.** VAVS National Representatives will be provided quarterly computer printouts summarizing the organization's number of RS volunteers, visits, and hours in each VA facility and local VAVS Committee representation.

d. Records Disposal

(1) Voluntary Service administrative and general correspondence files will be maintained in accordance with RCS 10-1.

(2) Computer-generated records should be retained in accordance with the requirements of the Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA).

e. Automated Information System Records

(1) Voluntary Service is required to record hours and visits of all volunteers each month. The processing of this data will be accomplished by utilizing the Voluntary Service System (VSS).

NOTE: See VSS Training Manual (<http://vaww.vistau.med.va.gov/VistaU/VSS/default.htm>) and the User's Manual (http://vista.med.va.gov/migration/vss/docs/VSS_USER_MANUAL_3-11-04.PDF).

(2) All volunteer information will be entered into the VSS system. This information, including any additions and/or changes, will be recorded and retained as part of the permanent record.

(3) Input to the system is written to servers in Silver Spring, Maryland. Monthly, semiannual, and annual reports are printed directly from VSS.

NOTE: There is no longer a requirement for a transmission to Austin.

(4) When a volunteer transfers to another VA facility, upon the volunteer's request, hours of service, awards, and other pertinent data should be transferred to the new VA facility. Transferred hours are creditable at the new location toward awards not previously received. This can be accomplished by the receiving facility editing the master record in VSS. The prior service hours can be manually adjusted to reflect the volunteer's total number of hours. For further assistance call the National Help Desk at 1-888-596-4357.

f. **Annual Narrative Report**

(1) The purpose of the Annual Narrative Report is to provide:

(a) An opportunity for Voluntary Service Program Managers to assess their VAVS Program during the previous fiscal year and to set goals for the next fiscal year.

(b) Programmatic information and analysis to the Chairperson, VAVS Committee, facility management, and the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

NOTE: Voluntary Service Program Managers having responsibilities at more than one facility (i.e., integrated facilities) should address secondary station VAVS Programs in this report.

(2) The Annual Narrative Report for the fiscal year period October 1 - September 30 is submitted annually through the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2). The report header must include the name and location of the VA facility, date of report, period covered, and Report Control Number (RCN) 10-0006. It will be submitted to reach VHA Central Office no later than November 15 (45 days following the last day of the report period).

(3) The Annual Narrative Report will be prepared by the Voluntary Service Program Managers. It will be submitted for concurrence through the Chairperson, VAVS Committee, and the VA facility Director. The following is an outline that should be followed in preparing the report:

(a) Program Workload, Developments, and Trends. This section should include:

1. Statistics concerning RS volunteers, RS hours, all volunteer hours, gifts and donations including monetary, non-monetary, and grand total for the immediate past fiscal year compared to the previous fiscal year,

Note: Voluntary Service offices should use the VSS Donations package to record all donations and obtain the necessary information.

2. A narrative assessment of the VAVS Program's impact on the local station's operations (i.e., how the VAVS Program benefited the facility),

3. A brief description of successful projects and activities implemented (i.e., fund-raising activities, corporate involvement, non-traditional community-sponsored events, etc.),

4. New and/or unique volunteer assignments initiated, and

5. Assessment of VAVS Committee(s).

(b) Program Management. Include management initiatives, consolidations, realignments, integrations, changes in function, and quality assurance issues having an effect on the VAVS Program.

(c) Community Relations and Activities. A brief summary of activities and contacts, including the number of contacts with community organizations, explanations of new or unique contacts and/or innovative approaches can be included in this section of the report. Please include partnerships with businesses, and corporations

(d) Report of Programmatic Goals. A report of programmatic goals, including:

1. Progress on goals set for this reporting period, and

2. Goals established for the next fiscal year.

(e) Other. Significant changes, accomplishments, problems and comments not fitting into any of the preceding categories are to be included in this section.

g. **Report of National Advisory Committee Annual Meeting**. A copy of the NAC Annual Meeting Report will be distributed to all members of the NAC, all Voluntary Service Program Managers, and others as required by FACA. A copy will also be posted on the national VAVS Voluntary Service website (www.va.gov/volunteer).

h. **Annual Joint Reviews**. The Annual Joint Review (AJR) is conducted to assess organizations' participation in the VAVS Program during the preceding year and to develop goals for the next year. The AJR provides an opportunity for the organization's representatives and Voluntary Service Program Manager to develop plans that will ensure active participation by the organization in programs for the welfare of veteran patients.

(1) The Voluntary Service Office (10C2) will periodically provide Voluntary Service Program Managers with updated listings of months that VAVS National Advisory Committee member organizations are due for AJRs.

(2) The AJR team consists of the organization's Representative, Deputy Representative(s), Associate Representatives, as applicable, and the Voluntary Service Program Manager.

(3) A mutually agreeable date and time will be set by the members of the review team during the month scheduled.

(4) VA Form 10-1240, VAVS Summary of Annual Joint Review, is used to summarize the work of the AJR team.

(5) All AJR summaries must be prepared, signed, and distributed within 15 working days following completion of the review.

(6) The original VA Form 10-1240 is retained by the Voluntary Service Program Manager. A copy is sent to:

(a) The VAVS National Representative with acknowledgment form, VA Form 10-1240a attached; and

(b) The local VAVS Representative.

NOTE: A copy is not required by the Voluntary Service Office (10C2).

(7) If the Voluntary Service Program Manager and the organization's representatives are unable to schedule and complete an AJR within the designated month, a report to that effect must be submitted by the Voluntary Service Program Manager on VA Form 10-1240 to all recipients as described in subparagraph 11h(6).

(8) This request for information is exempt from a Report Control Number (RCN) under MP-1, Part II, Chapter 26.

i. **Report on National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Activities.** The Voluntary Service Program Managers will submit a summary report of the National Salute activities. This report will be submitted to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), with the concurrence of the facility Director and an information copy to the VISN Director, by the 10th workday in March. The format of this report is contained in Appendix B.

j. **VAVS National Advisory Committee Recommendations.** VHA Central Office will annually share all NAC adopted recommendations with Voluntary Service Program Managers and solicit responses. The Director, Voluntary Service Office, proposes VA comments on each adopted recommendation, based upon responses received, and submits these via a numbered information letter over the signature of the Under Secretary for Health.

k. **Expendable and/or Non-Expendable Donation Report by Category**

(1) Voluntary Service must maintain a record of all donations received. This record includes the name of the donor, organizational affiliation (when appropriate), items donated, value of items donated (as specified by the donor), and disposition of donated items.

12. NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

a. **Background.** The National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans was established as an official VA Program in 1978, and is celebrated each year during the week of February 14. Voluntary Service is assigned overall program responsibility for the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans. The purpose of this program is threefold, to:

- (1) Pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans;
- (2) Increase community awareness of the role of the medical center; and
- (3) Encourage individuals to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

b. **Responsibilities**

(1) **VHA Central Office Voluntary Service Office.** The VHA Central Office Voluntary Service Office (10C2), will:

(a) Develop guidelines and criteria for the selection of a National Salute Chairperson and present a list of possible candidates to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for concurrence and/or selection of a National Chairperson;

(b) Arrange for appropriate publicity and recognition for the National Salute Chairperson (i.e., VHA announcements, White House photographic opportunity, participation in VAVS NAC annual meeting, etc.);

(c) Develop a proposed budget to support the National Salute Chairperson's expenses incurred while visiting VA medical facilities (the budget will be presented to the GPF Review Committee for approval);

(d) Coordinate the Chairperson's schedule of visits to VA medical facilities;

(e) Assist the Voluntary Service Program Manager at the local level with the National Chairperson's visit; and

(f) Coordinate the Annie's Column - "Valentines for Vets" Program.

(2) **Facility Medical Center Director.** The medical center Director will:

(a) Designate a Salute Coordinator, and

(b) Establish necessary committees.

(3) **Voluntary Service Program Managers.** The Voluntary Service Program Manager must submit a summary report of the National Salute activities. This report will be submitted to the Director, Voluntary Service Office (10C2), through the appropriate channels by the 10th workday in March (see suggested format in App. B).

13. REFERENCES

- a. Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 81, Compensation for Work Injuries.
- b. Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 5-Subchapter II, Section 552a, Records Maintained on Individuals.
- c. Title 28 U.S.C., Sections 1346(b) and 2671-2680, Federal Tort Claims Act.
- d. Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 5, Section 513, Contracts and Personal Services.
- e. Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 57, Section 5701, Confidential Nature of Claims.
- f. Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 73, Section 7332, Confidentiality of Certain Medical Records.
- g. Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 83, Section 8301, Authority to Accept Gifts, Devises and Bequests.
- h. Pub. L. 92-463, Federal Advisory Committee Act.
- i. Pub. L. 102-86, Section 504, Expansion of Authority to Accept Gifts, Bequests, and Devises.
- j. FPMR, Subchapter H, Property Utilization and Disposal.
- k. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 3, Subparagraph 1e(1) and (2), Meals for Volunteers.
- l. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 26, Reports Management.
- m. MP-3, Part III, Section 32.30, Motor Vehicle Safety Program.
- n. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 792, Health Services.
- o. VA Directive 5810, Managing Workers' Compensation Cases and Costs.
- p. M-1, Part I, Chapter 2, Quarters and Subsistence.
- q. M-1, Part 1, Chapter 25, Beneficiary Travel.
- r. M-2, Part II, Chapter 2, Chaplain Service Administrative Policies.
- s. VHA Directive 4721, General Post Fund.

- t. Voluntary Service System (VSS) Training Guide
- u. Opinion of General Counsel 4-65 (October 13, 1965), Transportation of Volunteers.
- v. RCS 10-1, VHA Records Control Schedule.
- w. VA Handbook 4010, Agent Cashier Procedures.
- x. OF Bulletin 00GA2.05-Award Payments for Residents, Without Compensation, Fee Basis and Purchase and Hire Employees.
- y. Opinion of General Counsel 6-99 (April 5, 1999), Applicability of the Employee Recognition and Awards Program to Residents and to Fee Basis, Without Compensation and Purchase and Hire Employees.
- z. VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Chapter 2
- aa. VHA Handbook 1620.3, VAVS Recognition for State Veterans Home Volunteers.
- bb. Title 5 CFR Part 732
- cc. VHA Handbook 1620.2, Volunteer Transportation Network.

**SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR THE
NATIONAL SALUTE TO HOSPITALIZED VETERANS
FACILITY EVALUATION REPORT**

1. Name of facility and station number.
2. Address.
3. Name and title of Salute Coordinator.
4. Telephone number (FTS).
5. A brief narrative of Salute activities including programs, photos and length and time of program.
6. Approximate number of patients visited.
7. Approximate number of visitors.
8. List any special visitors, i.e., sports celebrities, military personnel, etc.
9. Media coverage: newspapers, television, and radio.
10. Recommendations and/or concerns.
11. Number of valentines received from the Ann Landers' Program and other sources.
12. Innovative uses of valentines.
13. Number of volunteers recruited as a result of the program.