

VFW Auxiliary Community Outreach Guide

What Does and Does Not Qualify



What is Auxiliary Community Outreach?

Auxiliary Community Outreach is volunteer work performed by an Auxiliary under the direction of another organization, for the benefit of their community or its institutions. It is a donation of time, not in-kind or monetary donations. It's about partnering with other organizations in our communities to help improve where we live. Auxiliary Community Outreach can:

- Be performed by people of any age, skill set or ability level.
- Benefit any group of people such as youth, senior citizens and those with disabilities.
- Benefit animals, the environment and public spaces.
- Be done in communities of all types and sizes – rural, suburban and urban, small and large.

What's Considered Auxiliary Community Outreach

Examples include:

- Working walks or runs that benefit other organizations as an event spotter, water station volunteer, timekeeper, etc. (Walking or running in the race is not part of Auxiliary Community Outreach; that's participation, not partnering.)
- Working with local police on child ID kits or with EMTs to host CPR Training.
- Working with firefighters on fire safety and prevention.
- Working with parks and recreation departments to plant trees, develop non-veteran related community art installations and on adopt-a-park initiatives.
- Helping with a spay and neuter animal clinic.
- Handing out food at soup kitchens.

What's Not Considered Auxiliary Community Outreach

Auxiliary Community Outreach is for projects NOT AFFILIATED with VFW or VFW Auxiliary Programs. Volunteer work that is performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary is NOT considered Community Outreach. Examples of projects that do not qualify include:

- Repairs to, maintenance or beautification of the Post home.
- Cooking or serving a meal for a Post or Auxiliary fundraiser.
- "Buddy"® Poppy distribution.
- VFW or Auxiliary meetings, conventions, conferences or schools of instruction.
- Providing an honor guard at a member's funeral.
- Flying the American Flag.
- Conducting Flag retirement programs.
- Church activities for one specific congregation and not the entire community (e.g., usher, elder, deacon, minister, etc.)

Examples

1. John, an Auxiliary member, mowed his neighbor's lawn out of the goodness of his heart. This is not Auxiliary Community Outreach. John found out his local senior center helps mow lawns for individuals in the community. He brought that up at a meeting. The Auxiliary voted to partner with the senior center. This is Auxiliary Community Outreach.
2. Jane, an Auxiliary member, went to donate blood. She noticed how busy the Red Cross volunteers were. She offered to stay to help them, and they accepted. This is not Auxiliary Community Outreach. However, while she was there, she asked if they could use help in the future. So, when Jane went to her monthly meeting, she told her fellow Auxiliary members about the need for volunteers at the blood drive. Her Auxiliary voted to help at these drives. Now when there is a blood drive Jane and some other members of her Auxiliary are there, wearing Auxiliary attire and helping. This is Auxiliary Community Outreach.

VFW Community Service and VFW Auxiliary Community Outreach

VFW Auxiliary Community Outreach is similar to the VFW Community Service Program. Below is an excerpt from what the VFW communicates to their Posts. We hope this will help you to know what can and cannot be reported under this Program for both the VFW and the Auxiliary.

VFW Community Service

Community Service as defined by the National Community Service Trust Act “encompasses any human act serving the common good; in the interest of the community.” Elsewhere, community service is further defined as “a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions.”

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. subscribes to the above but adds that, for the purposes of volunteer recognition, VFW community service must be performed by and as a representative of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and must be performed for an organization outside the VFW and its Auxiliaries and must be verified by an authorized representative of that organization.

In addition, efforts performed for the benefit of the Post or Auxiliary’s benefit should not be considered as community service.

A particularly controversial area in VFW community service is service to one’s church. Generally, these efforts are not considered community service for two reasons: 1) they are not performed for the community at large; 2) they are part of an individual’s service to their faith and not to the VFW. The exception to this would be performing the same service for all the churches, etc. in a given community.

Important Auxiliary Additions to VFW Community Service:

1. Wear something that signifies you are a member of the VFW Auxiliary.
2. The project must be voted on during an Auxiliary meeting. *(The VFW also requires this in another section of their instructions.)*
3. If what you are doing can be reported under another Auxiliary Program, report it under that Program, not under Auxiliary Community Outreach.
4. Auxiliary work* (e.g., Community Outreach, Americanism, Veterans & Family Support, etc.) is to be reported to your local VFW Post Adjutant so it can be added to their report. This will help your Post with eligibility for the National Outstanding Community Service Post Award.
5. Auxiliary Community Outreach volunteer work does not have to be verified by the organization you are partnering with. *(This is a VFW requirement only.)*

Auxiliaries are responsible for so many good deeds that help our communities. Collectively, all our projects need to be counted to effectively show the importance of the local VFW and VFW Auxiliary to the community.

We hope this provides clarification on this Program. If you are unsure of whether your project will count toward the Auxiliary Community Outreach Program, contact your Department Chairman with your questions.

**VFW Community Service encompasses many Auxiliary Programs, not just Auxiliary Community Outreach. Therefore, all that your Auxiliary does is to be reported to the Post Adjutant.*

VFW Auxiliary Community Outreach

Frequently Asked Questions



- Q.:** Every year my Auxiliary participates in a walk in our area that raises awareness about suicide prevention. Members walk in the event and donate \$100 to the organization. Can the number of hours and members who walked in the event count toward Auxiliary Community Outreach?

A.: This is a great team-building activity for your Auxiliary, however, walking or running in an event/race may not be reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach. This particular example may be reported under Veterans & Family Support as that's where Veteran & Military Suicide Awareness and Prevention falls.
- Q.:** Members of a local Auxiliary were asked to sit on their county board to help raise money and volunteer to work at a dedication of a memorial that honors veterans. Since it was not a VFW- or VFW Auxiliary-sponsored event, can this be reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach?

A.: No, it cannot be reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach. It's for veterans and the betterment of the community, therefore, it should be reported under Americanism.
- Q.:** A VFW Post hosts several events throughout the year at which VFW and Auxiliary members hand out the Thin Blue Line flags in honor of police officers. Can this be reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach?

A.: No, it cannot be reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach as it is not in partnership with another organization. If the Auxiliary partnered with the police department or police foundation to hand out Thin Blue Line flags it would count under Auxiliary Community Outreach.
- Q.:** A few of the ways listed to participate in Auxiliary Community Outreach involve youth. Wouldn't this be reported under the Auxiliary's Youth Activities Program?

A.: It depends on the project. For example, if you are putting on a patriotic program at a school with your Auxiliary, that is reported under Americanism and/or Youth Activities. If your Auxiliary partners with the Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts to teach them the Folds of the Flag, that is reported under Americanism and/or Youth Activities. If your Auxiliary volunteers at the Boys & Girls Club to tutor a group of kids, that is reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach.
- Q.:** Our Auxiliary purchases and delivers turkeys for a food pantry every Thanksgiving. Does this get reported under Auxiliary Community Outreach?

A.: No, it does not. Dropping off turkeys for a Thanksgiving meal is not the same as volunteering time in the food pantry organizing food, serving meals, bussing tables, etc.
- Q.:** Our Auxiliary partners with another organization to host a sock collection at our local Walmart. Does this qualify as Auxiliary Community Outreach?

A.: It depends. If you stay and man the collection, then yes. If you drop off a collection bin and leave, then no.

If you are unsure of whether your project will count toward the Auxiliary Community Outreach Program, contact your Department Chairman with your questions.