



# THE AMERICAN LEGION



Photo by Amy C. Elliott

# VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

A summary on The American Legion volunteer programs in the community

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to service of the community, state and nation. Founded in 1919, The American Legion has four pillars- National Security, Americanism, Children and Youth and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. Service does not end when our service members take off the uniform and return home to their communities. The American Legion invites our newest generations of veterans to continue their service as American Legion Volunteers.

The American Legion is a staunch supporter of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program, the largest volunteer program in the Federal government. The American Legion is also partnered with other organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together to ensure veterans are able to live in quality housing. The American Legion supports VA's Suicide Prevention Program to help connect a service member or veteran experiencing a mental health crisis with VA's National Suicide Prevention Hotline. The American Legion supports the Ride to Recovery program, a week-long cycling event in several locations across the United States to help injured veterans speed up their recovery and rehabilitation process.

Volunteering in service to America's veterans and their families is what The American Legion has done since our founding in 1919 and the proud tradition we carry on today. Come help us serve veterans by visiting any of our 14,000 posts or register online at: [www.legion.org/volunteers](http://www.legion.org/volunteers).

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

### ● The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program

The American Legion has actively supported the VAVS program since its inception in 1946. The American Legion volunteers help veterans everyday in their communities by serving in VA Medical Centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), Vet Centers, Nursing Homes, State Veterans Homes and in many more locations in support of hospitalized veterans. Volunteers serve in a variety of regularly scheduled assignments such as patient escorts, volunteer drivers, clerical positions, nursing, guest relations and caregiver positions.

### ● Ride to Recovery

Ride to Recovery conducts week-long cycling events in Virginia, California, Texas and Florida with hundreds

of injured troops, celebrities, athletes and elected officials. The American Legion volunteers have assisted in coordinating Legion riders, donations, volunteers to staff the day events, or sponsoring meals or use of post facilities. For more information on Ride to Recovery, go to: [www.road2recovery.us.com](http://www.road2recovery.us.com)

### ● Habitat for Humanity

The American Legion and Habitat for Humanity developed a joint volunteer toolkit to identify opportunities for American Legion Departments, Districts and Posts to assist Habitat for Humanity in building or supporting military or veterans' housing projects. The American Legion Department Service Officers distribute eligibility criteria in states where Habitat for Humanity is looking for applicable service members or veterans eligible for the housing program. In addition, American Legion volunteers serve on Habitat job sites to help build service members or veteran's homes in their communities. To view the Habitat for Humanity toolkit, go to: [www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/habitat.pdf](http://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/habitat.pdf). For more information on Habitat for Humanity, go to: [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org).

### ● Rebuilding Together

Rebuilding Together is the nation's leading non-profit organization dedicated to preserving affordable homeownership by providing free repair services for those with the greatest need. The American Legion assists Rebuilding Together by distributing veteran eligibility criterion for the housing program through The American Legion Department Service Officers, Districts and the 14,000 American Legion Posts. In addition, local American Legion districts and posts can sponsor a Rebuilding Together Veteran's Home Site such as the "Hootch Project," which will be the first official national event in conjunction with The American Legion's 2010 National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. For more information about Rebuilding Together's Veteran Housing Program, go to: [www.rebuildingtogether.org/section/initiatives/veteran\\_housing](http://www.rebuildingtogether.org/section/initiatives/veteran_housing)

### ● Suicide Prevention and Referral Coordinators

During The American Legion's 2009 National Convention, Dr. Janet Kemp, the National VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator, provided training to all the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission members. Each of the VA&R members present for the training were certified as Department Suicide Prevention and Referral Coordinators and received a certificate from the National Suicide Prevention Coordinator and a volunteer application to register at their local VA

Medical Center with the Local Suicide Prevention Coordinator. These volunteers will provide state training to posts on suicide prevention and connect any veterans with mental health emergencies with the National Suicide Prevention Hotline- 1-800-273-TALK (8255). To date, The American Legion has over 60 active American Legion Posts with active Suicide Prevention and Referral Programs. For more information about the VA National Suicide Prevention Program, go to: [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/index.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/index.asp)

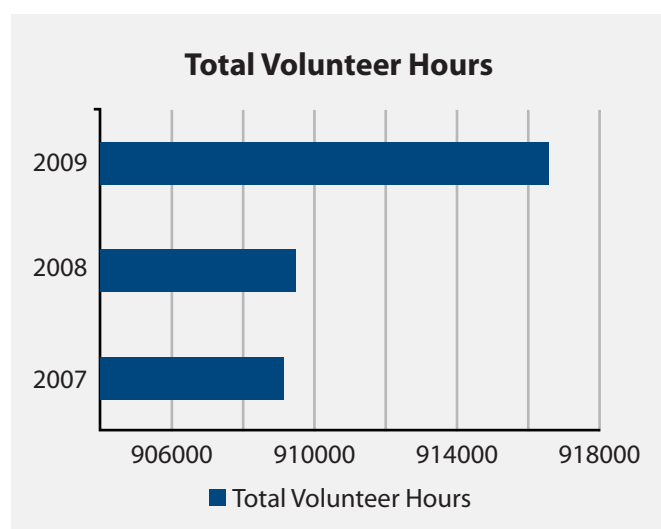
## KEY STATISTICS

### • Total Volunteer Hours And Service

In FY 2009, The American Legion had 6,307 members that volunteered over 916,598 hours of service to hospitalized veterans and those in their communities.

Based on an independent sector volunteer rate of \$20.25 per volunteer hour in 2010, this is a total cost savings of \$18.4 million to VA.

The American Legion had an additional 202 new volunteers added in 2009 and an increase of 7118 hours.



*“Someone once wrote that “volunteers don’t get paid—not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” Well, at VA, we’ve tried to put a price on our volunteer contributions, and we’ve calculated that it totals \$323 million—\$240 million in labor, plus \$83 million in donations. And that’s a conservative estimate. If we had to pay the going rate for everything volunteers do, we would simply not be able to afford your services.”*

*Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki quote from VA Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) Annual Meeting in Cincinnati, OH. April 7, 2010.*

STATES	VOLUNTEER HOURS	COST SAVINGS *
Alabama	2,342	\$47,425
Alaska	2,590	\$52,447
Arizona	37,137	\$752,024
Arkansas	7,273	\$147,278
California	47,742	\$966,775
Colorado	29,795	\$603,348
Connecticut	2,112	\$42,768
Delaware	10,449	\$21,159
District of Columbia	2,490	\$50,422
Florida	39,037	\$790,499
Georgia	9,207	\$186,441
Hawaii	713	\$14,438
Idaho	3,531	\$71,502
Illinois	27,953	\$566,048
Indiana	18,500	\$374,625
Iowa	26,778	\$542,254
Kansas	15,627	\$316,446
Kentucky	24,244	\$490,941
Louisiana	3,318	\$67,189
Maine	6,278	\$127,129
Maryland	3,373	\$68,303
Massachusetts	9,574	\$193,873
Michigan	22,328	\$452,142
Minnesota	49,597	\$1,004,339
Mississippi	4,545	\$92,036
Missouri	11,228	\$227,367
Montana	7,138	\$144,544
Nebraska	14,552	\$294,678
Nevada	7,138	\$144,544
New Hampshire	5,322	107,770
New Jersey	4,090	\$82,822
New Mexico	16,218	\$328,414
New York	48,040	\$972,810
North Carolina	26,656	\$539,784
North Dakota	1,752	\$35,478
Ohio	53,759	\$1,088,619
Oklahoma	6,909	\$139,907
Oregon	7,148	\$144,747
Pennsylvania	45,423	\$919,815
Puerto Rico	9,279	\$187,899
Rhode Island	2,613	\$52,913
South Carolina	6,842	\$138,550
South Dakota	18,450	\$373,612
Tennessee	25,631	\$519,027
Texas	20,603	\$458,946
Utah	4,085	\$82,721
Vermont	7,512	\$152,118
Virginia	23,196	\$469,719
Washington	18,249	\$369,542
West Virginia	28,262	\$572,305
Wisconsin	22,752	\$460,768
Wyoming	1,970	\$39,892
Regular Scheduled Hours	851,350	\$17,091,162
Occasional Hours (Not included in above chart)	65,248	\$1,321,272
<b>Final Total</b>		<b>\$18,412,434</b>

\* Based on a 2009 Independent Sector Volunteer Rate of \$20.25 per volunteer hour

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# BECAUSE WE KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO SERVE

*Volunteering is the cornerstone of our great organization as highlighted in the preamble to The American Legion constitution "...to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."*

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## BROCHURES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

*VAVS Handbook*

*VAVS Post Poster*

*VAVS Tri-Fold Brochure*

*The American Legion and Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Involvement Toolkit*

## VOLUNTEER PARTNERSHIP WEBSITE AND LINKS

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program- [www.volunteer.va.gov](http://www.volunteer.va.gov)

VA Suicide Prevention Program- [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide\\_prevention/index.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention/index.asp)

Habitat for Humanity- [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

Rebuilding Together- [www.rebuildingtogether.org/section/initiatives/veteran\\_housing](http://www.rebuildingtogether.org/section/initiatives/veteran_housing)

Ride to Recovery- [www.ride2recovery.com](http://www.ride2recovery.com)



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