



Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Western Division

January 2024

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 1st—New Years Day January 6th—Feast of the Epiphany
January 7th Orthodox Christmas
January 8th—Elvis Presley’s Birthday
January 9th Law Enforcement Day
January 14th Orthodox New Year

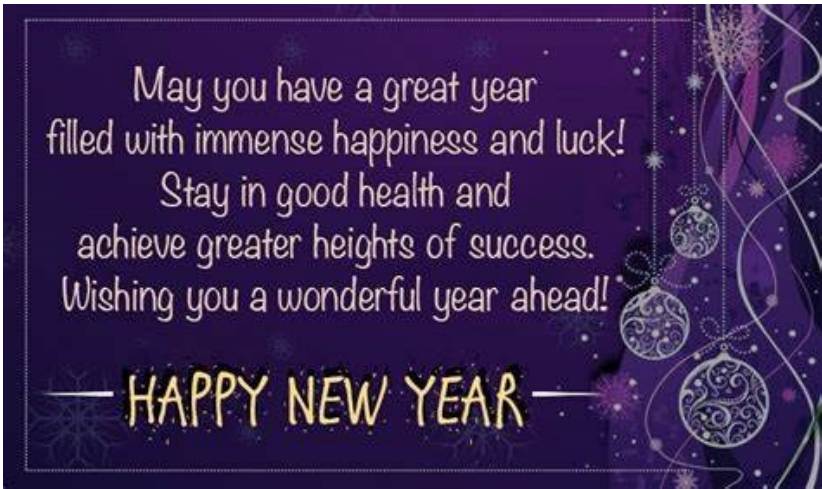
Who’s ready for 2024?

As we bid farewell to the rollercoaster that 2023 was, a year filled with its fair share of highs and lows, it’s time to start looking towards the future with hope and determination. The new year is a time of reflection, renewal, and hope. It’s a moment when we bid farewell to the old and usher in the new — often accompanied by resolutions, goals, and aspirations.

This transition is not just a change in the calendar, but an opportunity to start afresh, to reevaluate our paths, and to rejuvenate our hopes for the journey ahead. Making 2024 your best year yet is being positive. Because when positive, your thoughts about the new year can help you stay optimistic about what’s to come—no matter what obstacles arise. Every year you make a resolution to change yourself. This year, make a resolution to be yourself.

As many departments get ready for Mid-Year Conferences it gives us chairman the opportunity to visit with our Auxiliary sisters, to listen to what their department have accomplished. We all know how hectic the last four months of the year are for all of us. Keeping up with family and friends for many is challenging. Spending time with friends and family makes a big difference when it comes to happiness. Studies have proven that the amount of time spent with friends and family goes a long way towards boosting happiness - even more so than an increased income! So where do we find the time to volunteer? The commitment our members have in serving our veterans is priceless and the rewards are bountiful. After all this is **Who We Are, What We Do, and Why We Matter.**

2024





Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)



The VA recognizes the significant role of family caregivers in supporting the health and wellness of Veterans. Auxiliary members may be eligible to apply for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). As of October 1, 2022, this program (PCAFC) is now open to family caregivers of eligible Veterans of all eras. This includes eligible Veterans who served after May 7, 1975, and before September 11, 2001.

Are Auxiliary members eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers?

Auxiliary members may be eligible if you and the Veteran you are caring for meet all of these requirements. You must be at least 18 years old. And at least one of these must be true for you:

- * You are a spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member of the Veteran, or
- * You live full time with the Veteran, or you are willing to live full time with the Veteran if we designate you as a family caregiver.

Eligibility requirements for the Veteran

All of these must be true for the Veteran you are caring for:

- * The Veteran has a VA disability rating (individual or combined) of 70% or higher, and
- * The Veteran was discharged from the U.S. military or has a date of medical discharge, and
- * The Veteran needs at least 6 months of continuous, in-person personal care services.

What are personal care services? These are services the eligible Veteran needs from another person. They include care or assistance to support the Veteran's:

- * Health and well-being
- * Everyday personal needs (like feeding, bathing, and dressing)
- * Safety, protection, or instruction in their daily living environment

Eligible Primary Family Caregivers may also receive:

- * A monthly stipend (payment)
- * Access to health care benefits through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)—if you don't already qualify for care or services under another health care plan [Learn more about CHAMPVA](#)
- * At least 30 days per year of respite care for the Veteran.

How do Auxiliary members apply for this program? You (Auxiliary member) and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in an application process to determine if you are eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. You both will need to sign and date the application and answer all questions for your role.

Apply on line or by mail at; [The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#)

<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers/>

Apply In person Bring the completed VA Form 10-10CG to your local VA medical center's Caregiver Support Coordinator. To find the name of your local coordinator, you can: [Go to the VA Caregiver Support Coordinator directory](#), or Contact the Caregiver Support Line at [855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

What is the role of a veterans service officer?

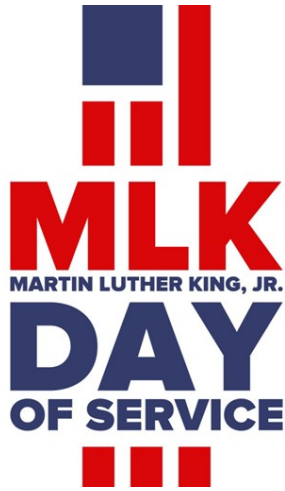
Accredited American Legion service officers are specially trained to provide expert assistance, free of charge, to veterans and their families. While the majority of a service officer's work involves application for VA disability benefits, these compassionate professionals also provide information, referrals and resources on education, employment and business, death benefits and other important topics.

A veterans service officer (VSO) is an individual who advocates for veterans benefits. They should never take an action which they believe to have a negative impact on the veteran or family of the veteran. The VSO is also responsible for being proficient in the areas of customer service, technical knowledge of regulation and law as it pertains to VA matters, and proper disposition of claims and appeals. They too should be empathetic, understanding and helpful.

When seeking a professional VSO several factors must be taken into consideration. First, verify that the service officer is accredited by a veterans service organization, such as The American Legion. Second, if a VSO attempts to charge money for services rendered, either covertly or overtly, they should be reported to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Third, it is suggested that the applicant make an appointment with the prospective representative to explain their case. The VSO is the applicants lifeline to VA benefits.



As VA&R chairman one of our responsibilities is to share information with Auxiliary members. Knowledge is Power. With knowledge, you can achieve more in life. It gives you the ability to make informed decisions and to act on them. And it gives people voices. The power to speak up and act.



'Love in Action' is theme of 2024

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Jan. 15

Volunteering in your community

If you're looking for an easy way to contribute to your community, consider volunteering. For example, if you have time and want to get involved, volunteer as a mentor at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). The BGCA provides a safe space for children and young adults that's free from violence and helps them build skills for success.

A Day of Giving

One way you can help those that continue Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work is by volunteering your time or donating goods or services for your community or someone else's community in need. Help out at a local soup kitchen or food pantry. Give back by making donations through your workplace

Service Ideas for Seniors

As we all know, the population of people living in America is getting older. The elderly population is increasing at a rapid rate, and seniors are looking for more opportunities to be active. With this in mind, service ideas for seniors can help you find opportunities to connect with your community. Some options include helping out at your senior center or volunteering at a local shelter so that you can help those who need support. It's also important to remember that while some seniors have health issues, there are many who still want to live independently. Remembering this will help you tailor your service project accordingly.

Servicing in your community

To continue his work, you can volunteer at your local animal shelter or give a donation to an organization that fights for these causes. You could also volunteer with your local NAACP chapter or participate in a service project on this day to keep Dr. King's legacy alive.

Serving food to the community

One way you can do this is by volunteering or serving food to people in need on this day. One of the most effective ways to serve the community is by donating items like food, milk, and toiletry items. This will help your local homeless shelters that are struggling with limited resources. You could put together a care package for someone who's struggling or donate clothes and other household goods to a women's shelter.

The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation program through the American Legion Auxiliary offer a wide range of assistance by helping veterans of every generation. On this day of Service members can volunteer by assisting veterans in need, reach out to homeless veterans, visit veterans at assisted living facilities and hospitals, etc. The possibilities are endless. Just note that it is a day of service.



Department
of OREGON

In the Spotlight

★ **Kidney and Liver Transplant Unit** - Year round we support the Kidney and Liver Transplant Unit by supplying some of the food for the unit. The transplant unit has room for 30 Veterans either waiting for a transplant or recovering from one. Each Veteran must have their own aid that stays with them the whole time. So, if the unit is full, we are shopping for up to 60 people.

★ **The Fisher House** - We have just got acquainted with the Fisher House. When the National President visited last year, we arranged to have her visit the Fisher House. She was given a Fisher House challenge coin that none of us in Oregon had seen. I went back to the House and asked if they had coins to distribute. They gave us 25 coins. We soon had \$500 to give back to the Fisher House. We will continue to do this throughout the year.

★ **Veteran's Housing** - We have many new Veteran's Villages throughout Oregon. Our Units are out there supporting these alternative housing groups in every way we can. One of our Units cooks a meal for one group once a month so that they have a sit-down hot meal that they can all enjoy. Most of the housing units have limited cooking so most of their meals are crock pot or cold meals. Other units are supported in different ways, clothing, food, or outreach services.

★ **VAVS Craft Sales** - Every other month the VAVS group at the Portland VA has a hand made craft sale. All of the Veteran organizations at the Portland VA support this by donating items to be sold. The last sale, they made over \$900 in one day. All of the money raised goes to the hospital for special requests that are not in their budget.

★ **Rock House** - We have a small Unit, about 29 members, in Oregon that has built a Rock House. They have started an outreach program for their community painting rocks. They have a "house" outside their Post where people can take a rock. They ask the community to come in once a month and paint rocks. Their specialty is Poppy rocks. They were able to go to the Portland VA hospital and hand out 310 painted poppy rocks to the Veterans that were there for appointments.

★ **Christmas** - Units were able to get all of the Christmas Gift Shops back in person this year. We had one at the Portland VA where we served 329 Veterans with gifts for themselves and their family members. This gift shop is open to inpatients and outpatients both. Our last Christmas Gift Shop will be held on December 18 at the Roseburg VA. They are doing what they call "Letters to Santa". We were also able to do Christmas Cheer at the Portland VA in person this year. We filled 99 Christmas stockings with small items and got to personally hand them out to the Veterans on the different floors. What a rewarding experience!

★ Linda Liebenow
★ VA&R Chairman
★ Department of Oregon

Next quarterly meeting will be in January 22, 2024 @08:00 PM Eastern registration link below.
Please have all department chairman register.

https://legion-aux.formstack.com/forms/va_r_program_national_meeting

