

# VAVS VS. CDCE

VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service) and CDCE (Center for Development & Civic Engagement) are closely related — in fact, CDCE is the current national program office that manages VAVS activities.

## VAVS (Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service)

- **Definition:** VAVS is the long-standing Department of Veterans Affairs program that connects veterans, VA employees, and community partners to serve veterans in VA facilities.
- **History:** Established in 1946, VAVS has been administered by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and later by the CDCE
- **Scope:** Operates through VA medical centers, outpatient clinics, State Veterans Homes, and other VA facilities.
- **Structure:** Managed by VAVS Committees at the facility and national levels, with representatives from organizations like the VFW Auxiliary, Elks, Marine Corps League, and others
- **Activities:** Includes direct service to veterans (e.g., companionship, meals, transportation), organizing events, and fundraising.
- **Certification:** Volunteers must be certified by the national VAVS office and trained locally

## CDCE (Center for Development & Civic Engagement)

- **Definition:** CDCE is the current national program office that oversees all VAVS-related activities, replacing the old VAVS Committee structure
- **Role:** Sets national policies, standards, and procedures for CDCE programs across all VHA organizational elements, including VA medical facilities
- **Policy Updates:** CDCE directives consolidate and update VAVS policies, clarify volunteer eligibility (e.g., minimum age for youth volunteers), and define roles for VA employees and non-citizens
- **Integration:** The CDCE Portal replaces the old VAVS system, and CDCE now assigns responsibilities to senior VA officials, VISN Directors, Chiefs of Staff, and facility volunteer supervisors
- **Coordination:** Works with partner organizations (VFW Auxiliary, Elks, Marine Corps League, etc.) to expand volunteer capacity and improve veteran service

## Key Difference

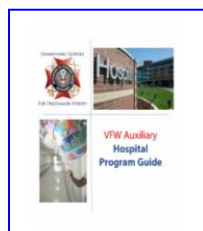
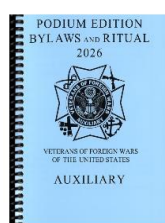
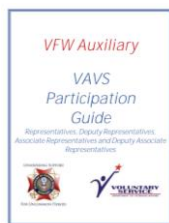
- VAVS is the *program name* and concept — the volunteer service initiative for veterans.
- CDCE is the *management body* — the current national office that runs and standardizes VAVS activities.

**VAVS is the volunteer service program; CDCE is the organization that manages it.**

A VAVS Representative holds a key position, not only to the VFW Auxiliary, but to the VA as well. The purpose of the VAVS National Advisory Committee as written on page 9 of the VHA Handbook, 1620.01 states: of Veterans Affairs, through the Under Secretary of 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 VAVS Programs; b. Communicating VA policies to their constituencies; and c. Making recommendations to improve volunteer services to veterans.

The VFW Auxiliary holds representation at nearly 100 percent of the VA facilities across the United States. All appointed VAVS Representatives to a particular VA medical facility have the same responsibilities outlined above as a member of the Committee. The VAVS Advisory Committee is the local equivalent to the VAVS National Advisory Committee. To emphasize the importance of the position, local VAVS Representatives are the source of feedback. The VFW Auxiliary National VAVS Representative looks for recommendations to review with the Secretary of the VA, the Under Secretary of Health and the Washington D.C. Office of VA Voluntary Service.



The Department President appoints all VAVS Representatives and up to three (3) Deputy Representatives and/or Associate Representatives and Associate Deputy Representatives per VA facility with a Voluntary Service Program; however, the Department Hospital Chairman is the immediate supervisor of all VAVS Representatives.

Founded in 1946 by the Federal Government, the VA Center for Development and Civic Engagement (CDCE) formerly called VAVS) program assists veteran patients through volunteer work in community-based volunteer programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, VA Medical Centers, and veteran outreach centers.

CDCE is the organizing force that brings compassionate Americans into veterans' health facilities to improve veterans' lives.

**T) Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service Program (VAVS)**

1. A National VAVS Advisory Committee has been established at the VA Central Office in Washington, D.C., to advise in the planning, integration, and coordination of VA Voluntary Service. Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Auxiliary is one of the member organizations of this committee and is represented by the National VAVS Representative and Deputy Representative(s) appointed by the National President.
2. The VAVS Advisory Committee for each local VA Hospital is composed of one (1) local representative and one (1) or more (not to exceed three (3)) deputy representatives from each of the member organizations. Our VAVS Representatives and Deputy Representatives are recommended by the Department President to the National VAVS Representative who certifies them to the VA Facility Director, Attn: Voluntary Service Program Manager.
  - a. A change may be made between certifications when it is in the best interest of the VAVS program.
  - b. When a change in representation is necessary for any reason, National Headquarters must be notified immediately.
  - c. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of the VAVS Representatives and Deputies.
  - d. The National Headquarters Office of the Auxiliary shall send official certification to: VA Facility Director, Attn: Voluntary Service Program Manager.
3. An Associate VAVS Representative may be appointed where Auxiliary members from a neighboring state participate in the VAVS Program. The Department President of the neighboring state appoints one (1) Associate Representative to assist by developing and coordinating the Auxiliary part of the program in their state. Associate Representatives are certified in the same manner as a Representative and serves on the VAVS Committee except for voting privileges, which may be delegated in absence of the Representative. The Associate Representative must work through the VAVS Representative at the VA Hospital in which they serve.
4. An Honorary VAVS Representative is an individual who a.
  - a. Has given ten (10) or more years of service as a VAVS Representative or ten (10) or more years of combined service as Deputy Representative and VAVS Representative.
  - z. This can apply to Deputy Representatives and Associate Representatives.
  - b. At the time of recommendation, the applicant must be the certified Representative, Deputy Representative, or Associate Representative.
  - z. They must be designated as Honorary Representative by the Department President and certified by the National Certifying Official.
  - zz. They maintain this status for life, but can't be a regular representative again.
5. Hospital Service Pins designating the number of hours a volunteer has devoted to hospital work will be awarded to members meeting eligibility requirements.
  - a. An Auxiliary member in good standing who has worked a minimum of 150 hours under Auxiliary sponsorship in any hospital is eligible to receive a pin as a gift of the National Organization.
  - b. Pins are available for volunteers who have served 150, 300, 500, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000 and 4,000 hours. The 5,000 hour pin is triangular. One (1) pearl is added for each additional 1,000 hours. A bar guard signifying 10,000 hours may be attached to this pin, and thereafter. Bar guards are available for each additional 1,000 hours.
  - c. Only Auxiliary members are entitled to receive and wear the Auxiliary Hospital Service Pins.
  - d. The sponsored hospital volunteer (including student volunteer), who works a minimum of 100 hours under Auxiliary sponsorship in any hospital, is eligible to receive a special pin from National Headquarters. Only one (1) pin may be ordered for each sponsored volunteer.
6. The National Organization has a "Hospital Program Guide" and a "VAVS Participation Guide," which is available in Member Resources. Please refer to these guides for full details and the most up-to-date information on our participation in VAVS.

VAVS/ CDCE was founded in 1946 to provide for our nation's Veterans while they are cared for by VA health care facilities and it is one of the largest centralized volunteer program in the Federal government. More than 7,400 national and community organizations support the program. Volunteers have provided over 760 million hours of service and nearly \$1.9 billion dollars in gifts and donations since 1946.

In Fiscal Year 2025, 27,825 volunteers served more than 3.6 million hours. Individuals and partnering organizations gave over \$95.5 Million in gifts and donations. Value added to VA – more than \$238.2 Million!

Volunteer Programs
Caregiver Support Program
Compassionate Contact Corps
Corporate Volunteerism
National Cemetery Administration
National Salute to Veteran Patients
▶ Student Volunteers
Volunteer Transportation Network