

Tips for Your Program

So, you're looking for ideas for your Veterans Service program. You've come to the right place. And don't worry, you don't need thousands of dollars to make a difference.

Medical Center Needs

VA medical centers are constant need of supplies and equipment, and they'll welcome any help you can give. Try any of the following: General Supplies: Lap Robes, Slippers, Bibs, Handkerchiefs, Stationery, Envelopes, Pens, Pencils, First Class Mail Stamps, Deodorants, Shampoo, Razors, Shaving Cream, Nail Files, Sewing Kits.

Library Supplies: Paperbacks (Western, Detective, Historical, etc.); Pictorial Magazines (*People, Us, National Geographic, Popular Mechanics, Popular Science, Crossword Puzzle Magazine, Reader's Digest*, etc.) Magazines should not be more than three months old.

Greeting Cards: New only -- Christmas, Valentine, Birthday, Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day and "All Occasion" assortment.

Art Supplies: Water Paints, Poster Paints, Brushes, Crayons, Colored Pencils, Colored Markers, Art Paper.

Occupational Therapy and Manual Arts Supplies: Felt, Yarn, Masonite, Peg Board, Carpet Rags (rolled), Leather, Used Nylon Hose (for rugs and stuffing animals), Plastic Upholstery Materials, Foam Rubber (granulated or pieces), Ceramic Tiles, Plastic Models.

Fishing Supplies: Cane Poles, Rods and Reels, Hooks, Bobbers, Lead Shots, Leaders, Small Individual Tackle Boxes, Bait Boxes.

Greenhouse Supplies: Flower Vases, Heavy Vases (glass, ceramic or metal), Floral Table Centerpiece Dishes (low, flat pieces).

Golf Equipment: Balls, Clubs, Bags, Carts, Putter, Tees.

Musical Supplies: Good Condition -- Phonograph Records (33 and 45 RPM only), Audio Tapes, Compact Discs, Guitars, Beginning Method Books.

Small Appliances: Hot-Air Popcorn Poppers, AM-FM Radios, Tape Players, CD Players, Televisions and VCRs.

Games: Dominoes, Checkers, Playing Cards, Monopoly, etc.

General: Homemade Cookies and Pastries, Flower Arrangements, Canteen Books, Afghans, Wheelchair Cushion Covers (three to four inches thick), Ditty and Wheelchair Bags.

Welcome Kit for New Patients

Putting together welcome kits for new patients is another simple but effective project that doesn't require much more than some of your time. Here are some items to include:

- Safety Razor and pack of blades
- Shaving Cream
- Comb
- Mirror (4 x 6 or larger)
- Nail Clipper and File
- Toothbrush, Toothpaste, or Denture Cup with Cleaner
- Aftershave Lotion or Perfume
- Hair Shampoo, Hair Dressing, Hair Spray
- Deodorant
- Toilet Soap with container

Optional Items:

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| • Hair Brush | • Facial Tissues |
| • Pre-Electric Shave Lotion | • Gum or Lifesavers |
| • Body Talc | • Canteen Coupon Book |
| • Foot Powder | • Pair of Slippers |
| • Postage Stamps | • Ball Point Pens |
| • Stationery | |

On-Station Programs

Here are some fun activities that you can organize at VA medical centers:

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| • Coffee Social | • Hobby Shows |
| • Bowling | • Radio Clubs |
| • Pool Tournaments | • Physical Fitness Programs |
| • Swimming Events | • Monte Carlo Nights |
| • Choral Groups | • Bingo |
| • Gymnasium Programs | • Jazz Concerts |
| • Softball Games | • Magic Shows |
| • Chess Games | • Western Music & Square Dances |
| • Movies | • Arts & Crafts Contests |
| • Ward Socials | • Stage Plays |
| • Variety Shows | • Special Holiday Parties |
| • Dances | • Letter Writing |
| • Wheelchair Bowling | • Card Games. |

Off-Station Programs

And some activities for those veterans who are not confined to the facility:

- Dinner at the Lodge
- Picnic at the Lodge or suitable grounds
- Fishing Trips
- Golf Matches
- Concerts
- Sporting Events

- Sight-seeing Tours
- Stage Plays
- Movies
- Lodge Social.
- Catch The Spirit Project: One of the Lodges in the District has a warehouse of food, furniture, clothing and other provisions for veterans that might need help. If you know of any veterans that might need some assistance that your Lodge cannot provide, please contact Bob Burns, Jr., at 916-799-5968 or 916-354-2875.

Holidays and Special Events

Include our hospitalized veterans in your holiday plans: New Year's Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Valentines Day, Washington's Birthday, St. Patrick's Day, Good Friday, Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, Anniversary of VA (July 21), Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.

Video and History

Finally, the Elks National Veterans Service Commission has produced a seven-and-a-half-minute video that eloquently describes our work with our nation's veterans. It dramatically recounts our work from assisting the war effort in 1917 right through to our commitment to today's veterans.

We have also developed a [Concise History](#) of the Elks National Veterans Service Commission. This history is a perfect companion piece to our video. They both can be used for public display or when addressing civic groups. You may also use them as part of your program to recruit volunteers to work with our veterans. Feel free to print out the history and use it to promote our program.

The video and history will also serve as helpful tools for your Lodge's indoctrination program.