



ILLINOIS SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

ILLINOIS SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

☐ **Poppy Program**

- *Poppy Order Form*
- *Poppy Display Entry Form*
- *Poppy Display Rules*

☐ **Blood Donor Program**

☐ **Program Donations**

- *Homeless Veterans*
- *National Home*
- *Military Assistance Program (MAP) Unmet Needs*
- *Service Office Support*
- *Commander's Special Project*

POPPY PROGRAM

Please read the program carefully. The Buddy Poppy Program and Buddy Poppy Display Contest are separated into sub-categories. Please contact me with any questions you may have.

A SYNOPSIS OF BUDDY POPPY

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was the first veteran organization to promote a nationally organized campaign for the annual distribution of Poppies assembled by disabled and needy veterans. The Poppy movement was inspired by the poem, "In Flanders Fields" written by Colonel John McCrae of the Canadian forces before the United States entered World War I. The VFW conducted a Poppy campaign prior to Memorial Day 1922, using only Poppies that were made in France.

It was during the 1923 campaign that the VFW evolved the idea which resulted in the VFW Buddy Poppy fashioned by disabled and needy veterans who were paid for their work as a practical means of providing assistance for these comrades. Immediately thereafter the VFW Buddy Poppy Factory was established in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where all VFW Buddy Poppies for the 1924 campaign were assembled by disabled veterans.

In February 1924, the VFW registered the name "Buddy Poppy" with the United States Patent Office, and a certificate was issued on May 20, 1924, granting the VFW all trademark rights in the name of "Buddy" under the classification of artificial flowers. The VFW has made that trademark a guarantee that all Poppies bearing that name and the VFW label are genuine products of the work of disabled and needy veterans. No other organization, firm or individual can make legal use of the name "Buddy Poppy". It has been noted that all Presidents since Warren G. Harding (1921-1923) have conveyed to the nation at large, endorsement and recognition of the VFW effort.

Today, VFW Buddy Poppies are no longer assembled by disabled, needy and aging veterans. The demand was greater than what could be assembled by disabled veterans. The majority of proceeds derived from each campaign conducted by VFW Posts and their Auxiliaries are retained locally to provide for veteran services and welfare. Buddy Poppy proceeds represent no profit to any VFW unit. All money contributed by the public for Buddy Poppies is used in the cause of veterans welfare, or for the well being of their needy dependents and the orphans of veterans.



Stephanie Kirksey
Chairman

7 Carol Dr.
Waterloo, IL 62298
Phone: (618) 973-0153

Email:
kirksey714@gmail.com

Post 6504-14

BUDDY POPPY PROGRAM

When VFW Posts acquire Poppies, they distribute these Poppies to the public for donations and those funds support the Relief Fund in the local VFW Posts. Recognition and Appreciation is noted for their displaying of the flower. All money received is used in the Post's Relief Work. All Posts should acquire extra Poppies that will not be distributed to the public so they can participate in our annual Buddy Poppy Display Contest.

The following rules apply toward our annual Buddy Poppy Distribution/eligibility for Contest:

- **When ordering** Buddy Poppies from the VFW State Headquarters, you have the option to pay when ordering or after your set date of distribution plus your Post will receive credit on the Programs Dashboard at the time the order is placed.
- **Be Advised** our Buddy Poppy Distribution Year runs from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 and is based on the number of Poppies purchased by the Post and/or Auxiliary with its purchases through the Post from the VFW State Quartermaster and covers any and all donations and other uses of the Buddy Poppy such as displays, floats, etc. by the Post and/or Auxiliary.
- **Remember** that when ordering your Poppies, our 2025-2026 Membership Program will require that Posts order a minimum of 3 poppies per member with a minimum order of 1,000 poppies to be considered for All-State. Also, Posts should order extra Buddy Poppies if needed for their Poppy Display requirements. It is also important to put your Poppy Sale Date on your Order Form to make sure you receive your Poppies when they are needed.
- **Be sure** to check your order upon delivery for a shortage in Poppies/multiple damaged Poppies because adjustments will be made only within 30 days of delivery.
- **Checks** will be presented to the Post and/or Auxiliary showing the greatest numerical increase in Poppy purchases. Cut-off for determining winners will be April 30, 2026. A Check will be presented to one Post in each Membership Category listed below. (Must have purchased poppies during the previous year to qualify for this award). In the event of a tie, the winner will be selected by the Director.

Membership Category 1 - Up to 150 Members

Membership Category 2 - 151 to 300 Members

Membership Category 3 - 301 Members and Up

- A **Special Award** will be presented during State Convention to any Post who orders a total of 25,000 poppies or more during this Fiscal Year.
- **Special Citations** will be presented to individuals recommended by Post or Auxiliary Poppy Chairman recognizing those individuals for their outstanding services to promote the Buddy Poppy Program. Individuals can include local bankers who may voluntarily set up a display in his/her bank a week or so prior to Buddy Poppy Day, urging the community's participation; another could be a theatre manager; an editor, a printer or sign maker; or anyone who promotes the program where it is not already advertised. Citation distribution to those concerned will be conducted by the Post Commander or the Post Poppy Chairman.
- **All New Post(s)** starting during the 2025-2026 Fiscal year will receive 500 free Poppies to begin their program.
- **ANNIVERSARY POPPIES** - Posts celebrating milestone anniversaries can order special poppies. Ordering requirements are the same - place your order through State Headquarters. Remember to allow 8-12 weeks for delivery.

Note: Should there be any need for clarification, contact the State Poppy Director.

ORGANIZING A POPPY DISTRIBUTION DAY

A successful V.F.W. or Auxiliary Poppy Chairman must be a special person. He or She must be a combination executive salesman, public relations expert, accountant and advertising specialist. They must be ever ready to cooperate with and assist their partner and counterpart in the Auxiliary (or Post) and have the leadership ability to make others want to work with them. They must be **ENTHUSIASTIC, AND ANXIOUS TO WORK** and have a thorough knowledge of the Program. To assist you in promoting your upcoming distribution, we offer these tips... Perhaps you are using them already, perhaps you use others more adaptable to your circumstances. In any case, follow these few guidelines in preparation:

A. **FIND POSSIBLE LOCATIONS:** for distribution and lock in your dates. If need be, contact the Bureau of permits at City Hall or the County Clerks Office. Insurance is also required for distribution in the streets at intersections.

B. **GET VOLUNTEER COMRADES** from your membership.

C. **START A SIGN IN SHEET** at your Post for comrades to be posted at specific locations so they know you know and that you will be looking for their presence at the time they specify.

1. **Obtain your workers.** If possible, invite the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts to help assist in your distribution of Poppies. Just remember that a VFW member must be at the same location with the scout(s).
2. **Make sure** you have only one (1) or two (2) at a location distributing poppies.
3. **Allow** two (2) to four (4) hour shifts for distributors before relief. Relief is necessary because we are not getting any younger. You may even want to have a chair at each location for a rest period.
4. **Instruct your workers.** They must know why they are distributing Poppies, what they are expected to do and how to approach the public without scaring them off or getting their dandruff up for an argument.

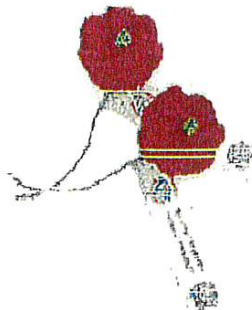
PROMOTE THE EVENT

Advise the public of your upcoming Poppy Day(s) through various sources. Example:

1. VFW Newsletters
2. Flyers
3. Newspapers
4. Radio & TV Announcements
5. Social Media
6. And of course... "Word of Mouth"

If you can think of any other way to attract attention of the public... do it!!

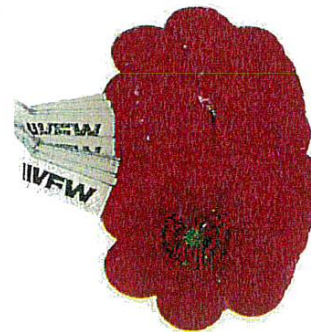
REMEMBER...When ordering Buddy Poppies, please allow twelve (12) weeks for delivery. If the State Headquarters has Poppies on hand, they will ship them to you immediately if needed right away. All Poppy accessories such as Poppy Cans, Easel Boards, Poppy Seller Caps, I.D. Cards, etc. are to be ordered directly from our National Emblem & Supply Catalog. Keep in mind that poppies can be paid for with a credit card by clicking on "Donations" on our Department Website and identifying your payment as Poppy Order.



Traditional Poppy

POPPY ORDER FORM

HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.
3300 CONSTITUTION DRIVE, SPRINGFIELD, IL 62711
FAX: 217-546-3415



Metal Poppy

ORDER DATE _____ DATE OF POPPY SALE _____

(Do not leave blank)

POST/AUX NAME _____ NUMBER _____ DISTRICT _____

PLEASE PLACE OUR ORDER FOR THE FOLLOWING:

_____ TRADITIONAL BUDDY POPPIES (\$280.00 PER THOUSAND)\$ _____

_____ METAL BUDDY POPPIES (\$140.00 PER THOUSAND)\$ _____
(ORDER IN INCREMENTS OF 500 ONLY)

(POPPY CANS, POSTERS, ETC. CAN BE ORDERED DIRECTLY
FROM THE VFW STORE AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS)

SHIP THE ABOVE TO: _____

(Name - PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

(Title)

(Poppies can only be ordered using a person's name, not the name of the Post or Office)

ADDRESS (UPS Address - **Please no P.O. Box No.**) (City) (Zip Code)

AMOUNT OF ORDER.....\$ _____

SHIPPING AND HANDLING.....\$ _____

AMOUNT INCLUDED WITH ORDER\$ _____

BALANCE DUE.....\$ _____

For Department use only:

Date Received	Date Recorded on X Sheet	Date Ordered	Date Shipped or Picked Up	Date Invoiced	Date Paid

PLEASE ALLOW 8 WEEKS WHEN ORDERING YOUR POPPIES!! YOUR POPPY ORDER WILL BE PROCESSED BY STATE HEADQUARTERS THROUGH THE PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT AT NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS. ONLY RUSH ORDERS WILL BE SHIPPED FROM STATE HEADQUARTERS IF AVAILABLE.

YOU MAY ALSO ORDER ONLINE AT www.vfwil.org

POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST GENERAL RULES

1. The rules governing the poppy displays for the 2025-2026 year will be in accordance with the national poppy display contest. All entrants will comply with these rules. Your entry will be judged by them. All Districts are requested to follow these rules as closely as possible when holding your display judging.

RULES

CATEGORY 1 - Public promotion of poppy sales: (Window, booth, parade, or poster displays, sales promotion, etc.)

A. Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message urging the buying and wearing of the VFW Buddy Poppy.

B. At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in their original form and color, with labels attached.

CATEGORY 2 - Memorial or inspirational displays: (wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes.)

A. Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy Program.

B. At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in their original form and color, with labels attached.

CATEGORY 3 - Artistic or decorative use of poppies: (Post home displays, table centerpieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

A. Display not meeting the qualifications for categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.

B. Complete freedom shall be permitted in the use of poppies, poppy parts or poppy labels, and in the use of dyes or paints in achieving the desired artistic effect.

C. At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in their original form and color, with labels attached.

2. The scoring of the displays will be in accordance with the national rules. Originality - 25 points; Composition - 25 points; Neatness - 25 points; Poppy Story - 25 points; for a total of 100 points maximum. The Originality, Composition, and Neatness are self-explanatory, with the Poppy Story as outlined in the Buddy Poppy Story.

3. Awards - First place Poppy Displays will be awarded a \$100 gift certificate to the VFW Store. Second place Poppy Displays will be awarded a \$75 gift certificate to the VFW Store. Category One (1) must have been on display at least three days.

4. A report of District judging must be sent to the Department Buddy Poppy Display Director prior to the Department Convention. Any display not accepted at District level, or not entered in District judging, will be ineligible for State judging.

5. All Displays entered and accepted at District level will be accepted for Department judging during the Department Convention.

6. Forms for judging and reporting results will be passed out to the District Commanders at the February Council of Administration Meeting, to be forwarded to each District Chairman.

7. Poppies to be used in display contests are to be ordered from VFW Department Headquarters, 3300 Constitution Dr., Springfield, Illinois 62711.

ALL DISTRICT CONTESTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY MEMORIAL DAY!!

The Districts will award prizes to their winners at their discretion. Each District entry will be allowed to enter in the Department Contest, in each of the three categories. However, they must remain in the category and division as entered in the District judging.

Who may enter the contest? Any person or group of persons (except professional display builders.) The display must be entered by Post or Auxiliary.

All previous District or Department entries are ineligible for this contest.

Categories 1-2-3

A. Originality - Your own thoughts, ideas, notion, lighting, or sound in setting up a display.

Categories 1-2-3

B. Neatness - Self-Explanatory

Categories 1-2-3

C. Composition - The manner in which display is composed, and use of Buddy Poppies for effect.

Categories 1-2

D. Poppy Story - Ability to display to sell and induce the public to buy and wear poppy; tells the story of the Buddy Poppy, its use of Poppy funds, by use of words, pictures or use of toys.

NOTE- No Poppy story included in category 3.

Judging-Point System - Categories 1 and 2 can earn up to 25 points in each of the above for a top score of 100 points. Category 3, which isn't judged with a poppy story can earn up to 25 points in the other categories for a top score of 75 points.

All ties will be broken by largest Buddy Poppy count.

POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST - STATE CONVENTION

All entries in the National Display Contest must be approved and sponsored by the Department Headquarters. No other entries will be accepted by officials of the National Contest. The number of entries allocated to Illinois by National Headquarters may be flexible, and in accordance with National's rules. Department display contest winners will be notified by Department Headquarters soon after the Department Convention. Special forms will be sent to those eligible for entry in national competition. Do Not, Do Not.... take any entry to National without the proper forms as it will not be accepted.

JUDGING:

There will be four (4) judges, one of whom must be a member of the V.F.W. The other three (3) judges should not be affiliated with the organization in any manner. Each judge will be assigned a specific area to judge. It is suggested the V.F.W. Judge be assigned to the Poppy Story. All judges should be residents of the convention city.

The decision of the judges and that of the Buddy Poppy Director, and her assistants, will be final. During the judging the entire area will be closed to all except the judges so as to insure impartial judging.

Let's show that No One Does More for Veterans, and have another great year in the Buddy Poppy Display Contest. Displays will be accepted at the Department Convention from noon to 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday of Convention Week. No entries accepted after 4 p.m. Friday. Awards to be presented during the Saturday business session.

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT
“BUDDY”[®] POPPY PROGRAM**

NATIONAL CONVENTION BUDDY POPPY DISPLAY CONTEST

These guidelines have been designed to place emphasis on the purpose and effectiveness of the displays. It is suggested and recommended that Department (State) contests rule be established in a like form.

RULES

- (1) Displays will be presented and judged in three categories:

CATEGORY 1. **Public Promotion of Poppy Campaign** (Window, booth, parade, poster displays, campaign promotions, etc.)

- (a) Displays must be designed for public exposure and must bear a message soliciting a donation for and wearing of the VFW “Buddy”[®] Poppy.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

CATEGORY 2. **Memorial or Inspirational Displays** (Wreaths, memorial tablets or plaques, patriotic or devotional themes)

- (a) Displays must be designed to honor the dead, to inspire devotion to God and Country, or to dramatize the activities supported by the Buddy Poppy.
- (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.

CATEGORY 3. **Artistic or Decorative Use of Poppies** (Post Home displays, table center-pieces, corsages, pictures, plaques, models, scenes, hats, novelty pieces, etc.)

- (a) Any display not meeting the qualifications for Categories 1 or 2 shall automatically be entered in Category 3.
 - (b) At least one (1) of the poppies used in the display must be in its original form and color, with label attached.
- (2) Departments purchasing over 250,000 poppies will be allowed two (2) displays in **each** of the three (3) categories for the National Display Contest all others will be allowed one (1) display in each of the three (3) categories, no deviations.
- (3) The National Programs Committee shall have no responsibility in setting up, taking down or returning displays.

- (4) Displays shall be set up in space provided in the convention facility. Prior to setting up the display, the responsible person must register with the Buddy Poppy desk and complete an entry form (unless one was forwarded earlier, approved by Department) which will show the category of competition, the number of poppies used, the purpose of the display, the Post and/or Auxiliary number and location, and the name of the person who will dismantle and remove the display at the close of the convention. **(Please be advised, all displays must be removed by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday or it will be disposed of by convention center personnel.)**
- (5) Displays may or may not be accompanied by a white card, not to exceed 4 inches by 6 inches in size, on which is lettered in black ink an explanation of the theme for the display or other information of interest to the viewers or the judges.
- (6) Post name, number, city or state (including the shape of your state) may **not** be visible on the displays. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.
- (7) (NEW) Any use of non VFW trademarks or copyrighted material on your display must have prior approval from the trademark or copyright holder. These include but are not limited to names, logos, audio/visual graphics, images and/or props. The VFW and Buddy Poppy logo and name is authorized but use of any outside organization trademark or copyrighted material and/or logos must have prior approval through their respective organization.

JUDGING

Judging of displays will be on the basis of effectiveness, purpose, clarity of theme, suitability, originality, beauty and number of poppies used. Where a sample of a large number of identical items (such as corsages or wreaths) is entered, full credit shall be given for the total number of poppies used. Judging will be completed by Monday evening and the winning displays will have the appropriate ribbons placed on the display on Tuesday morning.

PRIZES

Plaques will be awarded to the first, second, and third place winners in each of the three categories, and will be mailed to the winning Department's adjutant after convention.

NOTE

The Department adjutant will have to notify the Programs Director, in writing, by **June 30** of the Posts that will represent the Department in each category. This will allow us the time necessary to ensure each entry has sufficient space to set up at the National Convention.

Please be advised, the Programs Committee cannot guarantee against theft of personal items placed on the displays. The exhibit hall is secured at night and monitored by security guards; however, they monitor a large area and are not assigned to one specific area. We strongly discourage using items of sentimental value, items of value or items considered to be irreplaceable on the Buddy Poppy displays.

Thank you and good luck!

(Revised 1/8/2019)

OFFICIAL ENTRY BLANK FOR DISTRICT AND STATE DISPLAY CONTESTS
TO BE FILLED OUT BY ENTRANT:

POST #	AUXILIARY #
NAME OF BUILDER OR BUILDERS	
HOME ADDRESS	
NUMBER OF POPPIES USED IN DISPLAY	

THIS DISPLAY IS ENTERED IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORY:

Circle Category and Division:

STORE OR WINDOW DISPLAY

Category #1	Division A	Division B	Division C	Store or
Poppies used in Display	100 to 750	751 to 1500	1501 and up	Window

MEMORIAL or INSPIRATIONAL DISPLAY

Category #2	Division A	Division B	Division C	Memorial or
Poppies used in Display	100 to 750	751 to 1500	1501 and up	Inspirational

ARTISTIC OR DECORATIVE DISPLAY

Category #3	Division A	Division B	Artistic or
Poppies used in Display	10 to 1000	1001 and up	Decorative

CATEGORY #1, Please have this certification form completed before entering contest

I certify that this Poppy Display was on exhibit in my place of business for a period of not less than three (3) days.

Name of Store or Business: _____

City: _____

(To be filled in by Poppy Display Chairman:)

District# _____ Display # _____

Location of Display Contest: _____

Your Display was graded	<u>ORIGINALITY</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
	<u>NEATNESS</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
	<u>COMPOSITION</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
	<u>POPPY STORY</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
	<u>TOTAL SCORE</u>	

Your Display Finished
_____ **Place**

Attest: Buddy Poppy Display Chairman _____

DISTRICT BUDDY POPPY CHAIRMAN: You must submit one copy of this ENTRY BLANK for each display entered in your District to the State Poppy Display director by June 1

Send to: Stephanie Kirksey, 7 Carol Dr., Waterloo, IL 62298 • If you need more copies, please photocopy

BLOOD DONOR PROGRAM



Robert Bland
Chairman

2512 W Farmington Ct
Belvidere, IL 61008
Phone: 815-685-1611

Email:
robert.b.bland@outlook.com

Post 1461-6

During 2024-2025, the Department of Illinois saved as many as 8,364 lives!

2024-2025 Year Reporting by the Numbers:

3,388 hours donated, up 842 from 2023-2024
4,261 miles driven, up 822 from 2023-2024
1,577 members participated, down 1,457 from 2023-2024, more good with less members reported
\$29,972 spent or in-kind donations, up \$9,782 from 2023-2024
113 blood drives hosted or supported, down 25 from 2023-2024, more efficient drives
2,788 pints donated, up 916 from 2023-2024
Let's see how many lives we can save in 2025-2026!

Reporting Requirements:

The Blood Donor Program has two parts: Blood Donations and Blood Drive. Posts and Districts must report both in the Dashboard Report.

Dashboard Report Requirements:

Post Blood Donation. To receive credit on the Dashboard Report the Post must report blood donations. Each blood donation from a Post member, Auxiliary member, or someone donating on the Post's behalf at a blood drive hosted by the Post will count as one unit for the report. Posts will also receive credit for donations if a Post member donates with another organization, for example a Post member donates at a drive with the VA the Post will receive credit for the donation.

Posts will receive one donation for a whole blood donation, one donation for a platelet donation and receive two donations for a double red donation. Only donations count for credit.

Being paid for plasma at a plasma center is not a donation and does not count for blood donation. Receiving a small in-kind gift is acceptable, such as a T-shirt or gift card. Posts may report number of hours

for donations by individual and other incidentals such as mileage to get to the donation site.

Post Blood Drive: To receive credit a Post must host a blood drive. There are many ways that you can achieve this. A Post can have a Blood Center come out to the Post and hold a drive at the Post. A Post can work with another organization has have a blood drive at the other organizations location. A Post may also work with a Blood Center and adopt the site for a day and get Post and Auxiliary members to go there and donate. When reporting add the number of hours volunteers assisted and any in-kind donation, such as using your building.

District Blood Donation: A District will receive credit on the Dashboard Report for blood donation if a member of the District Leadership reports one donation, that donation will not be counted under the Post Donations, no double counting of donations.

District Blood Drive: A District will receive credit on the Dashboard Report for Blood Drive by coordinating more than one Post in the District to have a blood drive with in the same month. For example, for Veterans Day coordinate for two or more of your Posts will hold a blood drive that week or month.

Program begins on May 1, 2025 and will end on April 30, 2026.

At the District level, a Cash Award of \$50.00 will be presented if 100% of the Posts have reported blood donations and blood drives by January 15th 2024.

At the Post level, a \$50 Cash award will be awarded to the Posts who donates the most pints of blood in one of the following membership categories:

Category 1: Up to 150 Members
Category 2: 151 to 300 Members
Category 3: 301 Members and up

As your Blood Donor Chair I would like to thank all of those you have donated and held blood drives in the past and for your future support. December 2022 my Mother had a hole in her aorta, she needed 30 blood products to save her life and allow her to have another Christmas with family. When you donate you are not just saving that person's life, you are impacting the entire family, co-workers and maybe a fellow Veteran. I am passionate about helping Veterans and getting blood, please reach out to me if you have any questions. I also used to work for the Rock River Valley Blood Center and can talk to other Blood Centers to assist in setting up blood drives.

Blood is a product that cannot be manufactured, the only source if blood donations. We as Veterans that have stepped up to put our lives on the line have another opportunity to step up and save our fellow citizens. Blood products are needed every day, from helping a new born child fight for life, to helping accident victims, to help cancer patients fight another day. We have fought before, so now we will help others fight.

Illinois Blood Centers

Please work with your local blood centers and see if they have any programs that can assist us with community support. For example, many of the blood centers have a scholarship program for high school students. High school students run the blood drive and have a chance to earn money. This is an easy way for us to provide a place for the drive and the students run the blood drive.

The Blood Centers are listed below:

Versiti Blood Centers of Illinois

Versiti (formerly Heartland Blood Center) provide blood products to all three of our Chicagoland VA Hospitals: Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital, and Captain James A Lovell Federal Health Care Center. Across Chicagoland we serve over 80 hospitals and work with partners to collect 600 units of blood daily for local patients in need.

Point of Contact is:

Emily Alanis

Regional Manager, Donor Recruitment

Email: ealanis@versiti.org

Rock River Valley Blood Center (RRVBC)

RRVBC provides blood products to 13 local hospitals in the Rockford Area.

Point of Contact is:

Elizabeth Costa (Post 1461 Auxiliary Member)

Donor Recruiter

Email: ecosta@rrvbc.com

American Red Cross

Point of Contact is:

Anna Feltham

Account Manager II – American Red Cross Blood Services

Anna.feltham2@redcross.org

Vitalent

For information and to apply to host a blood drive go to their website at <https://vitalant.org>.

Impact Life

For information and to apply to host a blood drive go to their website at <https://www.bloodcenter.org>.

POC is Rob Bland at robert.b.bland@outlook.com or (815) 685-1611

PROGRAM DONATIONS

We ask every Post to support 5 programs that have been selected by the IL Veterans of Foreign Wars as vital programs that provide assistance to veterans, families, and communities. Below are the 5 programs that you are being asked to support and what your donations support.

The Program Year for these donations is July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026. Donations **MUST** be received during the dates of the Program Year to get credit on the dashboard. Donations are posted to the dashboard as the donations are received and processed by State HQ.

HOMELESS VETERANS

Minimum Donation \$50

This donation must be sent to State HQ and marked as Homeless Veterans to get credit on dashboard.

This money supports Homeless Veterans Programs throughout the State of Illinois. Types of programs supported include:

- o Homeless Veterans standdowns
- o Purchase equipment or supplies for Homeless Veterans shelters
- o Support building projects that benefit Homeless Veterans
- o Support programs that assist veterans transitioning from Homeless to Housing

NATIONAL HOME

Minimum Donation \$50

This donation can be sent to State Headquarters and marked as National Home to get credit on dashboard. If you send a donation direct to the National Home that is \$50 or greater, send proof of the donation to State Headquarters and you will get credit on dashboard.

This money supports the VFW National Home in Eaton Rapids, MI. The IL VFW has 2 homes that we sponsor at the National Home (Illinois 1 and 2). We have also worked with the National Home to sponsor or support fundraising to fund a specific item or special need. All donations will be forwarded to the National Home to provide funds according to the following priorities.

1st – Fund the operations, maintenance and upkeep of Illinois Home 1 and Illinois Home 2

If the reserves required for Illinois 1 and 2 are sufficient, then money will go to:

2nd – Fund any special item or need that the IL VFW has agreed to sponsor or support at the National Home. For example, during this last year, we agreed to support raising money for a new playground and golf carts.

Final priority at National Home

3rd – General Operating Fund

Military Assistance Program (MAP)/Unmet Needs

Minimum Donation \$50

This donation must be sent to State Headquarters and marked as Military Assistance Program (MAP)/Unmet Needs to get credit on dashboard.

This money supports veterans that needs financial assistance to meet their essential needs throughout the State of Illinois. Request for assistance can be emailed to vfwil@vfwil.org and must include a specific request outlining what type of assistance is needed, the circumstances that caused the need, and total amount requested. If the veteran is not a VFW member, they must provide proof of veteran status. They must also submit copies of invoices or bills that need paid. Assistance will be paid directly to the vendor and not to the veteran. All request are approved on a case by case basis following the same guidelines as National VFW Unmet Needs programs. Types of programs supported include:

- o Assist with rent or house payment
- o Assist with utilities (electric, gas, water, sewer, phone)
- o Assist with funeral expenses for a veteran
- o Provide gas for vehicle or food for veteran

Service Office Support (SOS)

Minimum Donation \$50

This donation must be sent to State Headquarters and marked as Service Office Support (SOS) to get credit on dashboard.

This money supports the Illinois VFW Veterans Service Offices. The Illinois VFW has 3 VSOs and 2 clerical personnel in Chicago, 1 VSO in Danville, 1 VSO in Marion, and 1 part time VSO in O'Fallon. The VSO supports veterans with VA claims, VA healthcare, funeral benefits, education benefits, employment counseling, military records and other federal and state veterans benefit programs. The VSO are a resource that Posts and Districts can use to support their activities and provide those VSO services on an outreach basis. These funds support the specialty requirements of the office and supports the outreach and marketing so that the VSOs can expand their reach and assist more veterans. The SOS donations and the Red, White, and Blue Program supports all of our VSO throughout Illinois.

Minimum donation for dashboard credit is \$50

SOS Support is \$50 to \$249

Blue Level Support \$250 to \$499

White Level Support \$500 to \$999

Red Level Support \$1,000 or more

Supporters at the Red, White, or Blue Level will receive a beautiful plaque denoting their level of support, and special recognition at State Convention. Supporters donating to all three levels will receive a special plaque noting their support at all levels.

2025-2026 Commander's Special Project

Minimum Donation \$50

The Commander's Special Projects for this year will be a little different from years past as it will involve two joint projects with the Auxiliary.

Both Projects will benefit the VFW National Home.

Project #1

Department of Illinois Commander Eugene Blackwell and Department President Diane Ahrens will have a joint project to raise funds for the purchase of a UTV.

The Facilities Department requests a 4-Wheel UTV with a dump box to enhance general maintenance across the campus. This vehicle would be utilized for transporting mulch, rock, and other landscaping materials, as well as providing essential support for snow plowing operations. Its addition would significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of campus upkeep.

Estimated cost: \$28,000

- 2025 Base Machine GATOR XUV825M S4	\$20,899.00
- Options:	\$ 4,347.00
Roof, full enclosure doors, winch, dump box, windshield with wiper	
- Attachments & Accessories	\$ 2,822.65
Winch and snowplow	
Total Cost	\$28,068.65

Project #2

The second part of the Commander's Special Project is a Joint Project with National Commander in Chief Carol Whitmore and National Auxiliary President Lois Callahan. "Let's Do More for the Store" (see flyer on the next page)

This project consists of purchasing equipment for the retail section of the National Home Store currently under construction for residents, including coolers and freezers for fresh and frozen food, and beverages, dry goods and other sundries that are deemed most useful to residents.

Both of these projects need the support of every Post and District. Post and Districts are encouraged to give generously to both of these worthy causes. The normal minimum donation of \$50.00 won't even begin to cover the costs. The minimum donation will not be increased but your support is appreciated as much as it is needed.

To obtain credit for donating to the Commander's Special Project, a Post or District must send a \$50 donation to Department HQ; once received and processed the staff will change the dashboard from red to green.

Whitmore's Warriors Class of 2025-2026 Project



LET'S DO MORE
STOCK THE STORE



V F W
N A T I O N A L H O M E



Whitmore / Callahan 2025 / 2026

Store Equipment (Refrigerators, freezers, etc and Food)
Consists of purchasing equipment for the retail section including coolers and freezers for fresh and frozen food, and beverages, dry goods and other sundries that are deemed most useful to residents. This fundraiser will also purchase an honor system point of sale program that allows residents to enter the store with a swipe card, pick out items and pay for them with a credit or debit card both during and after business hours.



SCAN ME



- THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK -