

FOUNDATION



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

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WHO WE ARE

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Foundation is the official 501(c)(3) charity of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. The VFW Foundation was established in 1996 to assist in securing financial resources for VFW programs and services. Through strategic relationships with corporations, private foundations, and individual supporters, the VFW Foundation helps fill in governmental assistance gaps for U.S. service personnel, veterans, and military families.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the VFW Foundation is to serve military veterans, service members and their families by securing resources for programs that facilitate enhanced life outcomes, now & for generations to come!

OUR VISION

The vision of the VFW Foundation is to create a positive impact on America's military veterans, service members and their families by addressing their unique needs.

WHO WE HELP

U.S. service personnel, veterans and military families have often personally sacrificed so much for us all. Thus, it is only right that we, in turn, provide for their urgent financial, physical, and emotional needs.

WHAT WE DO

The VFW Foundation secures donations from patriotic corporations, foundations and individuals to support urgently needed VFW programs and services such as National Veterans Service (NVS); Financial Assistance for Service members (FASM); Help-A-Hero Scholarship; Uniting For Veterans (UFV); Disaster Relief; Patriot's Pen & Voice of Democracy; etc.

Resources are secured through a variety of fundraising activities such as:

- Corporate relationships, employee matching gifts, and cause-marketing agreements
- Corporate sponsorships for the annual VFW National Convention and other VFW events
- Grants from corporations and charitable foundations
- Employee giving campaigns such as United Way, Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), etc.
- Individual gifts including major gifts, planned gifts, memorial gifts, vehicle donations, donor advised gifts, etc.
- In-kind product donations
- Fundraisers & Special Events

The VFW Foundation also assists VFW Departments, Posts and Auxiliaries in their local fundraising endeavors and provides grants to advance their community service efforts.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

visit www.vfwfoundation.org, email foundation@vfw.org or call (816) 968-1128.

VFW FOUNDATION

VFW FOUNDATION: GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

For over 125 years, VFW Posts have been pillars of support in their communities. From building local playgrounds and organizing clothing drives, to military support events and disaster relief efforts, we take great pride in our long history of service.

VFW community service projects continue to make a significant impact on local communities. To support VFW Posts and Auxiliaries in these endeavors, the VFW Foundation frequently offers grant opportunities each fall. Typically, these grants are awarded anywhere from \$1,000-\$1,500 in support of community-based projects. Information about current or upcoming VFW Foundation grant programs can always be found at www.vfw.org/grants.

Upon applying for any grant, a VFW or Auxiliary can expect to wait no longer than 30 days for a decision notification from the VFW Foundation. If the request is approved, it may take up to 6 weeks for the award funding to hit the Post's bank account. The timeline for review and payment is dependent on the workload of the Foundation staff, and applicants often receive funding in less than two weeks of applying.

While each of these grants has its own unique guidelines, there are some minimum requirements a Post or Auxiliary must meet to be eligible to apply:

- To be eligible to receive a grant your Post must:
- Have a completed election report on file at VFW National Headquarters
- Not owe any outstanding grant reports to the VFW Foundation
- Not be on suspension or in financial arrears
- Be in good standing for the IRS 501 status
- Have a qualifying project

Sometimes, grants require that you work with one of our eligible partners listed at: <https://www.vfw.org/grants-supporters>

For further information on these opportunities, please visit www.vfw.org/grants

FUNDRAISING IDEAS FOR VFW POSTS

Successful fundraising begins with a clear plan and a commitment to pursuing multiple funding opportunities. The following suggestions may help your Post increase financial support for projects, programs, and community initiatives.

Start with a Clear Goal

Before beginning any fundraising effort, determine exactly what you need funding for and how much money is required. Whether your goal is building improvements, accessibility upgrades, equipment purchases, community programs, or other projects, having a defined objective is essential.

If your project involves construction or renovations, obtain estimates from local contractors to establish a realistic budget. If the project changes the size or use of your building, check with local city or county officials to ensure compliance with zoning and permitting requirements.

Consider State Resources

While federal grants are generally not a practical option for VFW Posts due to limited eligibility and complex compliance requirements, some states offer assistance programs for veterans' organizations. Contact your state legislators or local government representatives to learn about available funding opportunities, including grants for building improvements, energy-efficiency upgrades, or community programs.

Learn from Other Posts

Pay attention to fundraising methods that have worked for other VFW Posts in your state. Successful ideas can often be adapted and implemented in your own community.

Building Your Donor Network

1. Identify Potential Donors

Consider your Post's location and surrounding community. If you are located in or near an urban area, contact your local Chamber of Commerce, community foundation, or public library to obtain information on major employers and businesses in your county. These organizations can help you develop a list of prospective donors.

2. Reach Out to Existing Business Partners

Start with businesses that already have a relationship with your Post, such as:

- Utility companies
- Banks
- Beverage distributors
- Insurance providers
- Vendors and suppliers

Ask these organizations to support your fundraising efforts. Donations may range from modest contributions to significant gifts that can greatly impact your project.

3. Connect with Trust Officers

Many banks employ Trust Officers who oversee charitable trusts and foundations established through wills and estates. These funds often support nonprofit organizations in local communities.

Trust Officers frequently have authority over annual charitable distributions and can be valuable contacts when seeking funding. They are most commonly found at larger bank headquarters rather than local branch locations.

4. Leverage Member Connections

Your members can be one of your greatest fundraising resources. Encourage them to identify:

- Business owners
- Community leaders
- Philanthropists
- Church members
- Friends and neighbors with charitable interests

Personal introductions often open doors that would otherwise remain closed. Additionally, encourage members to consider including the Post in their estate planning and charitable giving.

5. Contact Local Casinos

If your Post is located near commercial or tribal casinos, reach out to their Community Relations or Public Affairs departments. Many casinos support local nonprofit organizations through charitable giving programs and community grants.

Tell Your Story

Create a Community Impact Sheet

Develop a one-page summary or brochure highlighting the services and programs your Post provides. Most potential donors are unaware of the full scope of a VFW Post's community involvement.

Consider including:

- Support for deployed service members
- Assistance to homeless veterans
- Food pantry and community outreach programs
- Visits to VA facilities and veteran care centers
- Use of Post facilities by community organizations
- Participation in Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy programs
- Scholarships and educational support provided to local students
- Honor Guard and memorial activities
- Community service projects

Use specific numbers, examples and photos whenever possible to demonstrate impact.

Additional Fundraising Assistance/Resources Available Through the VFW Foundation

Please Note that all VFW Foundation services are free-of-charge to VFW Posts!

The VFW Foundation can provide:

A. Fundraising Templates

A variety of customizable fundraising letters are available in Microsoft Word format and can be tailored to your Post's specific needs.

B. Foundation Research

The Foundation has access to a nationwide database containing information on charitable foundations and grant-making organizations across the United States.

Research can identify potential funding sources within your county and provide:

- Foundation names
- Contact information
- Mailing addresses
- Telephone numbers
- Application requirements

Many Posts have successfully secured grants exceeding \$25,000 through foundation opportunities identified through this research.

To request foundation research, contact Jason Couch, VFW Grants Manager, at jcouch@vfw.org, 816.968.1174

C. Pass-Through Donations

Most VFW Posts operate as 501(c)(19) veterans' organizations rather than the more familiar 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. While donations to a 501(c)(19) generally receive similar tax treatment, some corporations, foundations and individuals prefer to contribute *only* to a 501(c)(3).

In these situations, the VFW Foundation may be able to assist by serving as a pass-through fiscal agent on behalf of your Post.

Donors can make contributions (checks) payable to the "VFW Foundation" instead of to your Post. The donor or the Post then would send the check to the VFW Foundation, 406 W 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111, with instructions that the gift is for Post (insert your Post #)..

Key points to share with potential donors:

1. The full amount, 100% of the donation with no administrative fees deducted is routed to the Post's bank account via ACH electronic transfer usually within two (2) weeks.
2. The donor receives a charitable tax receipt directly from the VFW Foundation, a recognized 501(c)(3) organization.

Posts should contact the VFW Foundation before arranging these donations to ensure proper processing and tracking.

Note:

- Government funds cannot be processed through the Foundation.
- A donation must exceed \$200 to qualify for this service as it would be overwhelming to our staff to process small gifts of say \$10 or \$25.

If you or your potential donors have any questions, contact Richard Freiburghouse, Senior Director of Operations, rfreiburghouse@vfw.org, or 816.968.1124

Final Thoughts

Fundraising success requires dedication, persistence, and a willingness to pursue multiple opportunities. Building relationships, telling your story effectively, and actively engaging your community can significantly increase your chances of securing support.

The VFW Foundation is available to assist Posts and Departments with fundraising questions, donor outreach strategies, and foundation research. Don't hesitate to take advantage of these resources as you work toward your fundraising goals. We are here to help!