



VFW Auxiliary Family Freedom Festival



What is it?

The Family Freedom Festival is a family-friendly, all-ages opportunity for your Auxiliary to:

- Show your community what the Post/Auxiliary offers; how you positively impact your community.
- Promote patriotism in your community.
- Connect families of veterans and active-duty military with Auxiliaries.
- Create awareness of and support for legislative initiatives.
- Increase membership for the Post/Auxiliary.
- Provide youth with scholarship and volunteer opportunities.
 - Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest, Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, etc.
- Boost the number of volunteers at the Post, medical facilities, for special events/projects and for veterans and active-duty military families (yard/house work, etc.)
- Include an aspect of every National Program in one event.

What are we supposed to do?

The goal of the Family Freedom Festival is to increase Auxiliary program participation and community awareness of, and involvement with, our National Programs. It is an event Auxiliaries of all sizes can implement in their communities.

- Auxiliaries are encouraged to host a Family Freedom Festival sometime during the 2017-2018 Program Year (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018).
 - Participating Auxiliaries will select their event's time, day and place.
- Involve every National Program for easy reporting and participation fulfillment.
- If you don't have a Post Home, consider hosting your Auxiliary's Family Freedom Festival at a local park, community center or other gathering place.
- Review the Steps to Participate and Event Information prior to your event.
- Use publicity materials within the Family Freedom Festival Toolkit to promote your event.
- Questions? Contact Megan Zinn-Sanchez at VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters at mzinn-sanchez@vfwauxiliary.org.

Family Freedom Festival Toolkit

The Family Freedom Festival Toolkit includes what you need to know and do to host a successful event.

- Steps to Participate
- Event Ideas (Combine two or more ideas/events to increase attendance).
- What to Do at the Event
- Event Suggestions (Add a few of these to your event; no need to have them all!)
- Logo for Event Promotion
- Sample Social Media Posts
- Sample Press Release

We look forward to hearing how your Auxiliary implements a Family Freedom Festival in your community!

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS AUXILIARY

POST #

For more information, contact:

Name:

Email:

Phone:

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VFW AUXILIARY TO HOST [FREE] FAMILY FREEDOM FESTIVAL

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary [enter Auxiliary number] will host its first ever Family Freedom Festival on [enter day and date] from [enter start and end time] at [enter location name and address of the event]. This [free] family-friendly event will feature food, music, games and more! It's a festival to celebrate the freedoms we enjoy and will include activities and entertainment for all ages. Attend this event and learn about what the VFW Auxiliary does and what we can offer you: [the bullet points below are examples – fill in your own]

- Discover educational scholarships we offer and support and learn how to apply.
- Meet members of our youth group and speak with them about some of the volunteer work they've done in our community; learn how your child can join this patriotic group!
- See U.S. Flags from different eras and find out what the each of the 13 folds of the Flag mean.
- Talk with hospital volunteers and hear why they love to volunteer and bring smiles to the faces of hospitalized veterans in our community and how you can join them.
- Visit with city council members [the mayor, state representative _____, etc.] and register to vote.
- Learn how you can take steps to change mental health in America. Learn the Five Signs of emotional suffering, obtain information about the Veterans Crisis Line and the VFW National Home for Children's Military & Veteran Family Helpline.
- Sign up to become a member; join the VFW or VFW Auxiliary.

Find us on Facebook here: [link to Auxiliary/Post Facebook page – make sure there is a post about the Family Freedom Festival on the Facebook page!]

About the VFW Auxiliary: *The VFW Auxiliary is one of the nation's oldest veterans' service organizations and our members are the relatives of those who have served in overseas combat. We have nearly 500,000 members representing all 50 states who volunteer millions of hours and give millions of dollars to support veterans, military service personnel and their families.*

We are a voice for veterans on Capitol Hill and are instrumental in assisting the VFW pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families. We are one of the top 10 providers of volunteer hours in the VA medical system. Every year, members fundraise millions of dollars for charitable projects that benefit veterans and their families. We also provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships for our nation's youth. With nearly 4,000 Auxiliaries, there is likely one in your area working to improve the lives of America's uncommon heroes. Learn more at www.vfwauxiliary.org.

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Steps to Participate and Event Information



Steps to Participate:

Step 1: Auxiliaries hosting a Family Freedom Festival will set a date and identify a primary point of contact and email this to Megan Zinn-Sanchez at mzinn-sanchez@vfwauxiliary.org no later than one month prior to their event.

Step 2: Plan your Auxiliary's Family Freedom Festival. Sample event ideas are listed below. Your Auxiliary is encouraged to combine two or more event ideas to increase attendance at your event.

Step 3: Prepare for and market the event by downloading and using the sample publicity tools provided behind Member Login at www.vfwauxiliary.org.

- VFW Auxiliary Family Freedom Festival Logo
- Sample Social Media Posts
- Sample Family Freedom Festival Press Release
- Fill out the Brochure Order Form and receive Membership Brochures, Facts Leaflets and Young American Creative Patriotic Art Brochures at no charge from VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters.
 - Patriot's Pen, Voice of Democracy and other VFW brochures are available for download at www.vfw.org, or may be purchased from the VFW Store at www.vfwstore.org or by calling 1.800.821.2606.

Step 4: Host your Auxiliary's Family Freedom Festival and share photos from your event on Facebook using the hashtags #AuxiliariesinAction and #FamilyFreedomFestival.

Step 5: After the event, email Megan Zinn-Sanchez photos and information about the event, including the number of adult and youth attendees, and volunteers.

Event Ideas:

- Host a safety fair and invite fire, police, EMT to come; offer fingerprinting for children.
- Host a 5K run and a 1 mile family-friendly walk.
- Host a talent show featuring adults and children playing or dancing to patriotic music.
- Host a children's bike parade – have the children decorate their bikes and dress in red, white and blue.
- Host a car/bike show.
- Host an art show or art auction; the art can be created by veterans, children or even animals!
- Host "Shows under the Stars" – outdoor patriotic movie events for the whole family.
- Host a contest – it could be a Battle of the Bands, Cook/Bake-off or even a photo contest.
- Host a tournament – it could be a video game, board game or trivia tournament.
- Host touch-a-truck, musical instrument petting zoo or other hands-on event for youth.

What to Do at the Event:

- Highlight Auxiliary programs by having a booth for each of the following. Consider having a display board with information pertaining to that program and an activity at each:
 - Americanism
 - Hospital
 - Legislative
 - Membership
 - Scholarships
 - Veterans & Family Support
 - Youth Activities
- Have a place where attendees (non-members) can register to win something. It could be a gift certificate to a grocery store, restaurant, Walmart, Target, etc., or it could be an item such as a purse, rifle, iPad, AmazonEcho, TV, etc. They must fill out a form with their contact information and if they are a veteran, relative to a veteran, etc. Winner is drawn at the end of the event in public. Follow up with those who may be eligible.
- Share Five Facts with attendees – i.e.:
 - Did you know the Auxiliary helped ____ families in this community last year?
 - Did you know the Auxiliary volunteers each month at _____?
 - Did you know the Auxiliary adopted ____ park and helps pick up trash and maintain flower beds?
 - Did you know the Auxiliary delivers clothes and goodies to _____ every quarter?
 - Did you know the Auxiliary, with help from _____, placed ____ Flags at graves of veterans last year.

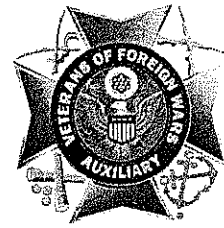
Those listed above are samples. You are encouraged to list Five Facts that pertain to your Auxiliary.

Event Suggestions - Add a few of these to your event; no need to have them all!

- Collect items for veterans, deployed troops and/or their families such as canned goods, clothing, school supplies, etc. Add a charitable element to the event.
- A “selfie station” with fun props (boas, big glasses, etc.) for people to take photos of their families.
- Food Trucks/Food vendors to park at your event.
- A popcorn stand, cotton candy and/or snow cone machine (you can rent these).
- Relay games such as hula hoop marathon, potato sack races, bean bag toss, egg toss, egg on spoon balance, ring toss, balloon squeeze, balloon tennis, noodle ball, twister, oversized memory game, tire rolling race, limbo, etc.
- Games with a patriotic twist such as Patriotic Bingo.
- Craft stations with crafts such as finger painting, sidewalk chalk, painting with bubbles, decorating patriotic visors, bottlecap poppy painting, build a birdhouse, etc.
- Sports clinic or organized pick-up game of the sport of your choice.
- Kid-friendly Zumba or Yoga.
- A free face-painting station.
- A balloon artist.
- A 50/50 raffle.

Family Freedom Festival

Sample Social Media Posts



Please note: The posts below are samples. The information will need to be changed to reflect each Auxiliary's event.

Sample Post 1:

Join VFW Auxiliary 12345 on Saturday, September 16 from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. for our first ever Family Freedom Festival! This *FREE* family-friendly event includes a children's bike parade, free face painting, and three arts and crafts stations. Food will be available for purchase from Three Little Pigs. The Auxiliary will be collecting bar soap, men's and women's socks, shampoo, conditioner and baby wipes for the community homeless shelter. The event will take place at VFW Post 12345 at 123 Main St. in Springfield. See you there! #AuxiliariesinAction #FamilyFreedomFestival

Sample Post 2:

Does your family like to have FUN? Especially FREE FUN? Join VFW Auxiliary 12345 on Saturday, April 14 at our first-ever Family Freedom Festival. The event will feature a relay games, arts and crafts stations, cotton candy and popcorn, and music and will take place at Smith Park in Springfield. The Auxiliary will be collecting canned goods for the local food pantry. The fun begins at 4:00 p.m. and ends at 7:00 p.m. See you there! #AuxiliariesinAction #FamilyFreedomFestival

Sample Post 3:

VFW Auxiliary 12345's first-ever Family Freedom Festival is one week from today! We hope your family will join us for a fun-filled day of food, games and music at Smith Park in Springfield. The fun begins at 10:00 a.m. and lasts until 4:00 p.m. Remember to bring a non-perishable food item for the food pantry! The Auxiliary looks forward to seeing you at this free event! #AuxiliariesinAction #FamilyFreedomFestival