



Department of  
Veteran Affairs

Rockford Outpatient  
Clinic

816 Featherstone Rd.  
Rockford, IL 61107

# *Adopt-a-VA*

A Community Initiative to  
Serve Our Nation's Veterans

# *Adopt-a-VA*

## *Community support for Veterans in need*

**Adopt-a-VA** is a program between a VA facility and houses of worship, businesses and organizations in their local area. Houses of worship and organizations, who are the *adopters*, interact with their local VA contacts to meet the needs of area Veterans.

Houses of worship, businesses and organizations, when feasible, commit to support their local VA Medical Center (VAMC) or Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) by providing assistance to Veterans in need as requested by their local VA facility.

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### **What is required and who are served?**

The program centers on Veterans and their families who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or exiting homelessness. Additionally there are other areas within a VA facility such as Mental Health or Blind Rehab that will also benefit from **Adopt-a-VA**.

When a Veteran exits homelessness they need basic essentials such as a bed, furniture, towels, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene items, small appliances and more to set up their new home.

Through the **Adopt-a-VA** program houses of worship, businesses and organizations will be made aware of these and other needs. They will be asked to provide assistance *only as they are able*.

#### What will the VA do?

- A VA facility will assign at least two people as primary contacts for their local adopter
- VA contacts will reach out to adopters as Veteran needs arise
- VA contacts will help adopters answer questions about the VA and provided resources as feasible

#### What will an adopter do?

- Houses of worship, businesses and organizations will assign at least two people as primary contacts
- Adopters will respond to their adopted VA requests for assistance as they are able
- Adopters will learn about VA resources and how to use them in their organization

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### **How to participate in the *Adopt-a-VA Program*?**

To learn more about the **Adopt-a-VA Program** and how to participate visit:

[www.militaryoutreachusa.org](http://www.militaryoutreachusa.org)

# *Who can Adopt-a-VA?*

Any house of worship, business or organization that wants to help our nation's Veterans can participate in the ***Adopt-a-VA Program***.

Examples of those who can adopt include:

- Rotary or Lions Clubs
- VFW or American Legion Posts
- Houses of worship of any denomination
- Boy or Girl Scout troops or councils
- Colleges and Universities
- Elementary or high schools
- Businesses and Individuals
- Civics groups
- Chambers of Commerce

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## *How many adopters can there be in a community?*

The goal of ***Adopt-a-VA*** is to have as many adopters in a given community as possible. This will relieve the stress on any one organization to have to provide continuous assistance to a VA facility.

For example, if a community has 25 houses of worship and/or organizations that adopted a VA facility they may only be contacted a couple of times out of the year to help fill a need. When a larger need arises, such in the case of a city wide collection drive for Move-In-Essentials or clothing, these adopters can work together in reaching the goal of the project.

By having as many adopters as possible in any community the goal of serving all Veterans in need can be reached.

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## *The Adopter Network*

Adopters will be provided with news and updates concerning programs from the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as activities being planned for their communities. They will be made aware of other adopters in their community so that local partnerships can be developed. In working together adopters will be best able to meet the needs of their VA facility.

# *Benefits of Adopt-a-VA*

The most significant benefit to an adopter is the knowledge that they are helping to support Veterans and their families in need of help.

Every community has Veterans. As an adopter, your house of worship or organization can bring to those Veterans and their families in your community information and resources available from the VA.

Most VA facilities will provide speakers to discuss topics such as:

- Suicide prevention
- VA benefits
- Burial benefits
- Senior benefits
- Education benefits
- Caregiver support

Many of these topics, such as Suicide Prevention, are of value beyond the Veteran population in the community. They are suitable for schools, government agencies, businesses as well as individuals.



Many VA facilities also have mobile clinics that will go to community events to not only provide such services as giving free flu shots to Veterans but helping to enroll Veterans into the VA Health Care system.

Firearms are still the most lethal means used to die by suicide. One of the programs available from your local VA facility suicide prevention team is providing FREE gun locks to Veterans. As an adopter you can utilize this service at a Suicide Prevention presentation or community event.



Become an adopter of your local VA facility.

The benefits to area Veterans, their families and the community will be immeasurable.

# *What an adopter might be asked?*

A key point of ***Adopt-a-VA*** is that it ***does not require*** an adopter to satisfy every request from their VA facility. An adopter can choose, based on their capabilities, to assist in meeting a request or not. Following are some typical requests that an adopter might be asked to provide or take part in:

- Donate pots and pans (new or used)
- Assist in a clothing drive
- Help purchase a bed
- Provide needed Move-In-Essentials items
- Provide transit passes
- Donate new or used furniture and provide assistance in delivery
- Purchase a microwave or coffee pot

An adopter may go a month or two before a request is made for their help. Some houses of worship, businesses or organizations will take the initiative by contacting their VA facility to identify needs and then to launch a project to satisfy those needs.

Military Outreach USA will also conduct national collection drives for Move-In-Essentials where adopters will be asked to participate.

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## Real Life Examples



This Veteran had been sleeping on the floor of his apartment in San Francisco for more than 5 years. A case worker from the VA contacted Military Outreach USA to help purchase a bed for this Veteran. This is the type of need that an adopter can easily satisfy.

Help was needed to deliver beds to a Veteran transitional housing project in Battle Creek, MI. Volunteers gave their time to assist these Veterans who are exiting homelessness.



A school in Bolingbrook, IL collected Move-In-Essentials during Veterans Day week. Not only did the students learn about service they also learned about Veterans. A win-win all around.



## *Join Adopt-a-VA Today*

Learn more about Adopt-a-VA and the opportunities to serve those who have served us.

Visit [www.militaryoutreachusa.org](http://www.militaryoutreachusa.org) and complete the online form to join ***Adopt-a-VA***