

## Service Recovery Ideas

The goal of this concept is to turn around a negative experience a Veteran may encounter into a positive one, or to neutralize a potentially inflammatory situation. Volunteers always seek to demonstrate the compassion, care, and respect we have for Veterans. This is achieved in a variety of ways, such as using some of the following techniques.

### “On-the-spot” Amenities

As a means of recognizing an error, omission, or a long waiting time, the following amenities may be presented to the affected Veteran or family member:

- VCS Coupon Books
- Vouchers for a beverage, such as coffee or soda in the Canteen
- Telephone Calling Cards
- “Thank You Veterans” pins, or other types of pins
- Pens, crossword puzzles, playing cards
- Bus tokens or transportation vouchers
- Reading materials

### Post-Discharge Services

Volunteers make follow-up telephone calls to thank Veterans for the opportunity to serve them, and check to see how the Veteran is doing. Sometimes, volunteers send greeting cards to the Veterans, thanking them for the opportunity to serve them and wishing them a speedy recovery.

### Summary

VA volunteers have been providing outstanding service to Veterans since 1946. Veterans of today expect the same level of compassion and concern that has been the cornerstone of our volunteer program since the beginning. Contact the Voluntary Service Program Manager at your nearest VA Medical Center today for available volunteer opportunities!

# Exceeding Veterans’ Expectations

The Volunteer’s Guide  
to Customer Service  
and Service Recovery



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## Introduction



Customer Service and Service Recovery are interrelated concepts that can be translated into practical applications, which reinforce the confidence, trust, respect, and loyalty that our Veteran patients have for VA Health care. VA volunteers are an integral and significant force in ensuring that we meet and exceed the expectations our Nation's Veterans have for the services we provide. When we do not meet those expectations, we do our best to correct the situation and "make it right" for the Veteran and their family members.

## Veterans' Expectations

The men and women who have served America honorably in the armed forces have earned the right to expect the best possible service from our employees and volunteers in meeting their health care needs. As a volunteer, you are in a unique position to help ensure that our Veterans are treated with C.A.R.E. (Care, Affection, Respect, and Enthusiasm). Together, we must do all we can to make sure that our Veterans continue to come to use for their health care services.

## Customer Service

Customer Service is defined for the Voluntary Service Program as any activity or personal interaction that enhances veterans' experience during their time or interactions with us, which exceeds their expectations.

## Service Recovery

Service Recovery is defined as the practice of retaining the loyalty and respect of our customers when we have not performed as well as we could have, therefore not meeting their basic expectations.

## What Can You Do?

There are many ways that volunteers, working through the Voluntary Service Program at their local VA Medical Center or Community Based Outpatient Clinic, can get involved in customer service and service recovery projects, activities, or programs. The following are examples of some of the ways volunteers and community organizations are making sure that our Veterans receive the outstanding care and service they deserve. These examples demonstrate how we do everything we can to correct a negative situation and make our Veterans and their families experience satisfaction.

## Customer Service Ideas



## Guest Services Program

This program provides hotel type amenities or "concierge" types of service provided by caring and dedicated volunteers in a health care environment. Veteran patients can call a special telephone number to request a variety of amenities listed in their Guest Services catalog. Services and amenities such as newspaper delivery, bedside video movies, and personal care items can be provided to Veterans by specially trained volunteers. Fresh cut flowers in patient rooms and special gifts during the holidays are other components of this program.



## Nursing/Patient Representative or Patient Advocate Liaison

Specially trained volunteers working with Nursing Service, Social Work Service, Chaplain Service, and the Patient Representative Office are assigned to specific patient care units. Volunteers visit and talk with Veterans to determine if their needs are being met, and to see if there is anything more we can do to make them more comfortable.

## Greeter/Ambassador/VIP Programs

These programs may have different names, but the services provided are similar. VIP Programs provide information, directions, and escort to Veterans and family members when in the facility. Veterans are greeted warmly and are loaned a wheelchair for the day, if necessary. Volunteers answer telephone calls from Veterans who may need assistance with the location of their upcoming medical appointment or general information. The goal with each of these programs is to provide the best possible service to Veterans and their families.

## Reading/Coffee/Beverage Cart

Volunteers provide coffee, juice, reading materials, and various amenities to Veterans in outpatient clinic waiting areas. These types of services help to reassure Veterans that we are aware they are waiting, and shows them that their comfort while they wait is important to us.