



Background Information for the VSA Program

Introduction

Over one hundred Leagues have signed up to participate in the Volunteer Service Awards (VSA) program, which made its official debut at the 2005 AJLI Annual Conference in New Orleans. This document provides background information on the program — what it is, how it works — and details the specific responsibilities for the people who have been designated by the participating Leagues as their VSA Administrators.

**THE ASSOCIATION OF
JUNIOR LEAGUES INTERNATIONAL INC.**
Women building better communities®

Volunteer Service Awards Program LOGIN

Welcome to the Volunteer Service Awards Program

To participate in the program, you must first fill out a quick, online registration form. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#). If you are already registered, just log in below.

LOGIN

Username

Password

Remember my name?

YOU **MUST** HAVE YOUR BROWSER'S COOKIES ENABLED TO LOGIN
[\(find out more\)](#)

Junior League members in the U.S. who volunteer 100 or more hours in a 12-month period on League-sponsored activities are eligible to receive the U.S. President's Volunteer Service Award.

Junior League members outside the U.S. who fulfill the same criteria are eligible for the AJLI President's Volunteer Service Award.

Program Description/How It Works

The Volunteer Service Awards (VSA) program is a great opportunity for League members across the Association who dedicate at least 100 hours of service on League projects in a 12-month consecutive period to receive national recognition. All League members — Provisionals, Actives and Sustainers — in good standing are eligible to participate in the program, assuming their League has opted to participate.

The VSA program has four different award levels. League members who contribute 100-249 volunteer hours on League projects in a 12-month period are eligible for a Bronze Award. There is also a Silver Award, for 250-499 hours worked in a 12-month period, and a Gold Award for those extraordinary individuals who contribute 500 volunteer hours or more in a 12-month period. Each Awards package consists of a special President's Volunteer Service Award lapel pin, a personalized certificate suitable for framing, and congratulatory notes from the President and the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

League members who have volunteered more than 4,000 hours of volunteer service on League activities during their

tenure with the Junior League are eligible to receive the President's "Call to Service Award" — a special "lifetime achievement" awards package.

League members can track their volunteer hours in a special, easy-to-use, online service log contained in the VSA Program website that has been created for this initiative (the website is accessible directly by going to <http://vsa.ajli.org>, or through the Volunteer Service Awards page in the Members Area of the AJLI website). Detailed screen-by-screen explanations of the VSA website can be found in a separate training document (one version to train members, and another to train the VSA Administrators). Each League's designated VSA Administrator will periodically review and "certify" those hours, then place her League's award order at the end of the award year. AJLI arranges (and pays) for the Points of Light Foundation (POLF) in Washington, D.C. to ship awards to the respective Leagues for final distribution. Many of the participating Leagues distribute the Volunteer Service Awards in conjunction with special League-year-end celebrations or functions.

Background on the VSA Program

In his 2002 State of the Union address, the President of the United States, George W. Bush, encouraged Americans to make time to help their neighbors, communities, and the nation through volunteer service. The President's Council on Service and Civic Participation was created to recognize this volunteer service. The Council came up with the idea of a "President's Volunteer Service Award" that would recognize people across the nation who contributed a minimum of 100 volunteer service hours to their communities each year.

The VSA program is administered by the Points of Light Foundation (POLF) in Washington, D.C.

A special task force of Junior League leaders and AJLI staff worked with the POLF to customize the President's Volunteer Service Award program to reflect the unique volunteer contributions of Junior League members. As a result, League members can receive credit for almost all of the hours they invest in on League projects with only a few exceptions (see WHICH LEAGUE ACTIVITIES COUNT section).

A parallel awards program, called the AJLI President's Volunteer Service Awards, was set up for the Leagues outside the United States.

Primary Responsibilities of the VSA Administrator

- Communicate the details of the VSA program to your membership base, encouraging them to enroll in the program and start tracking their hours
- Periodically review the volunteer hours of your members and certify them before placing orders for the awards
- Answer any questions members may have about the program (most answers exist on the VSA website)
- Order the awards from AJLI beginning the first week of April
- Distribute the awards to League members as appropriate for your League
- Designate and train your League's incoming VSA Administrator (including the transferring of all relevant files and knowledge of deadlines specific to your League)

Which League Activities Count

- ✓ All League committee placements (but only for time spent working, not socializing)
- ✓ Attendance at Provisional Training sessions (plus any hours Provisionals put in on a special Provisional community project)
- ✓ Attendance at General Membership meetings
- ✓ Attendance at Transfer Orientation sessions
- ✓ Attendance at League placement fairs
- ✓ Attendance at AJLI trainings (but only for the time spent in plenaries and workshops)

League members who volunteer for other organizations besides the Junior League can track those hours separately and apply for their own awards on the regular Points of Light website (at www.presidentialserviceawards.gov).

Which League Activities Don't Count

- ✓ Attendance at League fundraisers (unless you are actually working the event)
- ✓ Attendance at League social events
- ✓ Travel time to/from League activities
- ✓ Any time spent "socializing" before, after or during League activities
- ✓ Time spent reading League publications
- ✓ Volunteer work on non-League projects, even if that project was formerly a Junior League project

Best Ways to Communicate VSA Program to League Members

Post a blurb in your League's quarterly newsletter and/or on your League's website. Provisional and Active committee chairs can introduce the VSA program at their first meetings using the PowerPoint template provided by AJLI

(available for download as an AJLI tool on the VSA website). For Sustainers, you may want to mail out a postcard or letter describing the program.

Defining the 12-Month Period of Volunteer Service

League leaders on the VSA task force, defined the 12-month period as beginning April 1 and ending March 31 (timed to when most League activities happen). Awards are processed and shipped to participating Leagues by the Points of Light Foundation (POLF) 5 to 6 weeks after the order is placed. Award orders must be submitted by June

30 to be fulfilled for the current award year. These deadlines are mandated by the POLF.

There is no rollover of volunteer hours from one 12-month period to the next. Hours can only be accumulated for the 4,000-hour "Call to Service" lifetime achievement award.

Only One Award per Person in a 12-Month Period

No matter how many volunteer hours are entered during the 12 months, a League Member will only be eligible to receive **one** award per 12-month period for the highest level earned. For example, if Susan Jones puts in 360 volunteer hours in the 12-month period (theoretically enti-

ting her to receive a Bronze Award for the first 100 hours and a Silver award for the next 260 hours), she only receives **one** award — the Silver Award — for the combined total of 360 hours.

Handling Awards for League Member Transfers

League members who transfer from one League to another may transfer their volunteer hours with them. It will then become the responsibility of the League to which they transfer to order the Award for them. However, the

member will still have to meet the program requirements (i.e., a minimum of 100 hours in a 12-month period from April 1 to March 31) in order to be considered eligible for an award.

Tracking Lifetime Achievement Awards

Hours for the Lifetime Achievement Award can be counted beginning with the date a League member joined the League. Validation for the hours is determined by the VSA Administrator in each League. To document League hours, we suggest existing records, such as the member's League placement card. Volunteer hours performed outside the League should be reported according to each

organization involved. A member should submit a total for each organization, along with a letter from an executive in that organization specifying the role and period in which the member was involved. The VSA program is based on the honor system, so letters do not need to list the individual days/times of the service.