

Getting started on Poppy Drives the Right Way
2025-2026 National "Buddy"® Poppy & VFW National Home Ambassador
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National Convention was a great success. I hope you enjoyed all the presentations. Now we are celebrating 2025-2026 National President Lois Callahan's theme: *From Sea To Shining Sea, Honoring Veterans Who Keep Us Free*. The 2025-2026 goal for "Buddy"® Poppy is to share creative ways of having the VFW and the Auxiliary work together during poppy drives and fundraisers with the distributions of the poppies. The 2025-2026 goal for National Home is to create new ideas for each Department on ways to share information to help us get needy veterans and their families to the National Home when assistance is needed.

Here are a few tips and important things to remember to get started on your "Buddy"® Poppy Drives:

- Choose your distribution date. Veterans Day and Memorial Day are particularly good but any day is a good day for a poppy drive.
- Decide where you are planning to hold your event. Choose high traffic areas (grocery stores, coffee shops, gas stations, street corners, post office, etc.). Be sure that you get permission from the business owner or manager and abide by any city ordinances.
- Add displays to your Membership recruiting table, set them out during an Auxiliary Bingo session and incorporate them into an auxiliary fundraiser.
- Wear something that tells people who you are. For example, a patriotic shirt, hat, or name tag always stands out. Remember to smile and have fun.
- REMEMBER we do not SELL "Buddy"® Poppies; we are simply distributing them with the hope of receiving a donation.
- Make sure you have plenty of poppies. Place orders via your local Post or Department

Remember while you are distributing poppies, you can also hand out VFW National Home brochures and explain that this is one of the Programs supported by donations from poppy drives. Each "Buddy"® Poppy purchased by a Department for distribution contributes to the following:

- One (1) cent goes to the VFW National Home
- One (1) cent goes to the VFW National Headquarters Veterans Service Fund
- One and a half (1.5) cent goes to your Department's Veterans Service Fund

How We Support Families at the National Home:

- ✓ **Guidance, Encouragement and Accountability** – Dedicated case managers work closely with each family to understand their unique challenges and create a personalized plan for success.

- ✓ **Safe & Stable Housing** – National Home provides families with a welcoming place to live and help them work toward long-term housing solutions.
- ✓ **Financial Guidance** – From budgeting assistance to job training and career counseling, help for families to gain financial independence is provided.
- ✓ **Veteran Transition Support** – Adjusting to civilian life after military service can be challenging. The transition support provides guidance and essential resources to help the veteran reintegrate into the community.
- ✓ **Education & Childcare** – National Home offers free on-site childcare for children up to kindergarten age. For school-age children, they provide educational programs during the summer, ensuring the children stay engaged and continue learning while parents focus on work, school and rebuilding their future.
- ✓ **Community Support** – Families don't just receive help — they become part of a caring, supportive community that lifts each other up.

Looking forward to a great year.