

# **Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Program - serving those who served**

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SPRINGFIELD – Volunteers across Illinois are gearing up to participate in the Serving Those Who Served Program (STWS), with a week’s worth of events from November 5 – 11. Their goal is to make an impact in the lives of veterans and show gratitude for their service to this country.



“We want our Illinois heroes to know that their service means more to us than a one-day program or parade,” said IDVA Director Erica Jeffries. “We are counting on our fellow

Illinoisans to come out, volunteer, and give back to those who have protected our freedoms here at home.”

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs spearheads the STWS program. The Department is partnering with seven other organizations to help increase the success of the program - Chicago Cares, The Mission Continues, Serve Illinois, Corporation for National & Community Service, Illinois Joining Forces, Student Veterans of America and the City of Chicago. Each of these partners assisted with recruiting volunteers, funding, or hosting community service projects. The website, <http://bit.ly/2ilAVyK>, which was created through Chicago Cares, allows Illinoisans to look for a project in their area and sign up to volunteer.

This is the second year for this STWS program. About 570 volunteers came out to support the program last year, providing approximately 2,280 hours of much needed and welcomed community service for Illinois Heroes. According to the Points of Light, the total number of volunteer hours had an economic impact of \$53,716.80 in 2016.

Traditionally, volunteer time has been estimated using a single dollar value for all types of volunteering. The Value of Volunteer Time, which is updated annually, is made available by Independent Sector. The current Independent Sector rate is \$24.14 per hour (2016).