

Department of Texas
American Legion Auxiliary Program Action Plan
Americanism 2020-2021

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What is this program, and why do we have it?

The Americanism Program promotes patriotism and responsible citizenship.

What can you do?

- 1) Be knowledgeable on flag history, etiquette and proper disposal methods; and promote the observation of patriotic holidays so your community will look to the ALA for information.**

IDEAS:

Member

- ❖ Publish flag etiquette tips in your newspaper and on social media.
- ❖ Practice respect for our flag at public events, such as sporting events.
- ❖ Educate others on how to respect the flag.
- ❖ Volunteer for a local patriotic event.
- ❖ Sign up to receive notifications on when to display your flag at half-staff at www.legion.org
- ❖ If you have an idea about how to promote Americanism, let your unit know.
- ❖ Assemble pocket flags to be distributed by units.

Unit

- ❖ Conduct a flag disposal ceremony.
- ❖ Host flag awareness events and communicate information in schools, at your post home, and at public functions.
- ❖ Participate in local patriotic holiday events.
- ❖ Organize a patriotic holiday event.
- ❖ Encourage local businesses to fly a flag, especially on patriotic holidays.
- ❖ Order pocket flag kits and distribute to members for assembly.
- ❖ Identify and distribute assembled pocket flags to active-duty military overseas.

2) Encourage members to vote and to support the amendment to protect the United States Flag from desecration. The amendment currently reads, "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

Ideas:

Member

- ❖ Contact state and federal representatives, asking them to support the flag amendment.
- ❖ Vote.
- ❖ Encourage others to vote.
- ❖ Take your children/grandchildren with you when you vote; many places have kid-related voting.
- ❖ Recruit others to support the flag amendment by explaining what it is and why it is important.
- ❖ Attend the annual ALA Washington DC Conference(see www.ALAforVeterans.org for details).

Unit and Department

- ❖ Encourage members to contact state and federal representatives, asking them to support the flag amendment.
- ❖ Encourage members to participate in Get Out the Vote and Kids Voting USA campaigns.
- ❖ Guidelines: www.legion.org/vote and www.kidsvotingusa.org.
- ❖ Encourage member participation at the annual ALA Washington DC Conference.

3) Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest.

2020-2021 Theme

“How can we address the health and well- being of our veterans, military and their families”

Student Award: Americanism Essay Contest.

Type if Award: Citation, \$50 prize and an additional \$50 donation to the Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship Fund.

Presented to: 30 students total, six from each division, one student for every class in each division.

Materials and Guidelines:

- ❖ The contest shall include six classes.

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement
Class I	3 and 4	150-250
Class II	5 and 6	250-300
Class III	7 and 8	350-400
Class IV	9 and 10	450-500
Class V	11 and 12	450-500
Class VI	Students with Special Needs	Word count should correspond with grade level.

- ❖ **Students with special needs are defined as:**
 - Those in special education classes
 - A student recommended for special education classes, but who has not been admitted due to a waiting list or various other factors
 - A child identified as having a disability, but not in a special education class due to lack of facilities; identification contingent upon discretion of school officials
- ❖ Entries must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet found at the end of this program plan.
- ❖ Unit winners are sent to the Department Americanism Chairman, following department guidelines.
- ❖ Due to Division Committee Members by **MARCH 15, 2021**.
- ❖ All Department adjudicated entries must be sent by the Department Chairman to her National Division Chairman emailed or postmarked by April 15, 2021.
- ❖ National winners will be informed of their award via communication from National Headquarters directly following the National Convention.
- ❖ At this time, a copy of the letter sent to the student along with a citation will be sent to the Department to forward on to the unit. The Department and unit should arrange a public recognition of the student’s achievement.

Ideas:

Member

- ❖ Encourage your children/grandchildren to participate in the essay contests.
- ❖ Offer to contact schools or other organizations.
- ❖ Help judge the essays.

Unit

- ❖ Contact schools and other organizations such as the Young Marines, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, and 4-H about the essay contest.
- ❖ Offer incentives for essay winners.
- ❖ Encourage Junior members to participate in the essay contest.
- ❖ Create information packets explaining contest rules, deadline dates, theme and award opportunities.
- ❖ Contact the essay winner and their parents. Invite the parents to bring their child to your next meeting to read his/her winning essay. Provide refreshments
- ❖ Work with the school administration to identify guidance counselors, history teachers, etc., whose students would be interested in participating.
- ❖ Arrange for a day with the schools (preferably during a student assembly) to present the essay winners with their prizes. Provide cash award and /or savings bond.
- ❖ Invite media to attend the event.
- ❖ Be sure to include this information on your Unit report to your district, department and national chairman.

4) Participate in the promotion of American Legion Americanism programs.

Ideas:

Member

- ❖ Support American Legion Baseball.
 - Help with statistics.
 - Work the concession booth.
 - Donate to a team.
 - Contact local sports shops and ask if they would be willing to make donations toward a fundraiser or offer a discounted price to purchase needed items.
- ❖ Support the Oratorical Contest.
 - Help prepare post home to sponsor local or district contest.
 - Offer to be a judge or timekeeper.
 - Offer to help with refreshments.
 - Provide transportation for candidates.
 - Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
 - Contact history teachers or debate coaches.

- ❖ Support the Junior Shooting Sports, which promotes gun safety and marksmanship training for youth.
 - Volunteer to help with scoring, supervising or transportation.
 - Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
 - Contact JROTC at local schools.

Unit

- ❖ Work with the post and/or district Americanism chairman.
- ❖ Support American Legion Baseball.
 - Sponsor a team.
 - Help with statistics.
 - Man, the concession stand.
 - Hold a fundraiser.
 - Drive the team to games.
- ❖ Support the Oratorical Contest either at your post level or district level.
 - Offer to provide volunteers as timekeepers or judges.
 - Offer to help with refreshments.
 - Offer to host a contest.
 - Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
- ❖ Support Junior Shooting Sports, which promotes gun safety and marksmanship training for youth.
 - Offer to provide refreshments on event day.
 - Arrange transportation and/or supervision on event day.
 - Host an event at your post/unit home, if you have the space.

Americanism Reporting

Mid-Year Reports:

Mid-year reports reflect the program work of the units in the department. Mid-year reports must be submitted to Chairman Kim Seider by **December 15, 2020**. Please send a copy to your Division Committee member as well.

Annual Reports:

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department. It is requested that photos of select unit projects accompany your reports. Each Unit Americanism Chairman and/or President is required to submit a narrative report by **May 1, 2021**, to Chairman Kim Seider. Please send a copy to your Division Committee member as well.

Here are a few suggestions to help with your Narrative Report:

- How did you promote the Americanism Essay Contest?
- How did your unit promote the flag program?
- How did your unit promote patriotic holidays?
- How did your unit encourage support of the flag amendment?
- Did your unit support American Legion Americanism programs and how?
- How did your unit promote Americanism in your community?

Americanism Awards:

NOTE: Please be sure each award entry includes a cover sheet found at the end of this Program Plan and make arrangements for the return of materials in advance , if desired.

Unit Award: Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Americanism Program (more information on the National website). Type of Award: Citation Plaque, announced at National Convention. Presented to: One unit Americanism Chairman that reports the most outstanding Americanism program targeted to children and youth. Material and Guidelines: The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1000 words. The entry may contain no more than 5 pictures and 5 news articles. Attach an award cover sheet including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Americanism chairman. Deadline is **April 15, 2021**.

Each unit that submits a narrative report by May 1, 2021 will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Additional Resources can be found at www.legion.org , www.alaforveterans.org.

Americanism

Invite women veterans and their families to participate in Flag Etiquette Awareness Events at post/units, local schools, or at other public functions. Encourage military children to enter the Americanism Essay Contest by contacting Family Readiness Groups and creating information packets containing deadlines, cover sheets, criteria, etc., for distribution.



**AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST
2021 Cover Sheet**

Each year, the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) sponsors an Americanism Essay Contest for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs. Grade levels are divided into six classes. One award in each of the six classes will be presented in each division. Winners will receive \$50 and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Children of Warriors National Presidents' Scholarship fund. National winners will be posted at www.ALAforVeterans.org after convention.

Essay Title: *"How can we address the health and well-being of our veterans, military, and their families"*

Essay Classes:

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs	Word count should correspond with student's grade level.

Essay Checklist:

- Class competing in _____
- Sponsoring ALA unit _____
- Typed or neatly written essay conforming to the word requirement for class
- Completed essay coversheet as first page of essay
- Word count of essay _____
- Due date for student to return to ALA unit _____

To Be Completed by the Student/Parent:

Student Name: _____

Address (Street, City, State, Zip): _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone: _____

School Name: _____

School City/State: _____

Teacher Name and Signature: _____

Auxiliary Use Only (Must be completed for entry to be considered.):

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: _____

Signature of Unit Americanism Chairman: _____

Unit winner due to Department on: _____ Department: _____

Signature of Department Chairman: _____

Department winner due to National Americanism Division Chairman by April 15, 2021