

Department of Texas
American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan
Americanism 2017-2018

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
 - 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.
- Encourage members to fly a flag.
- 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

- 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.

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.

2017 – 2018 Theme:

“What can I personally do to promote Americanism in my school or community?”

Student Award: Americanism Essay Contest

Type of award: Citation, \$50 prize and additional \$50 donation added 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

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.

- 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, 2018**
- All department adjudicated entries must be sent by the department chairman to her national division chairman emailed or postmarked by April 15, 2018• National winners will be informed of their award via communication from National

Headquarters directly following 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 Auxiliary meeting to read his/her winning essay. Provide refreshments
- Work with 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 out 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 out 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 booth.
 - 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 out 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 units in the department. Each department Americanism chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **January 5, 2018**, to the division Americanism chairman at the address found on the front page of this program Plan, plus copy the national Americanism chairman.

Annual Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department. It is requested that photos of select unit projects accompany these reports. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

Each department Americanism chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **May 15, 2018**, to the division Americanism chairman at the address found on the front page of this program Plan, plus copy the national Americanism chairman.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did you promote the Americanism essays contest?
- How did units promote the flag program?
- How did you promote patriotic holidays?
- How did units encourage support of the flag amendment?
- Did units support American Legion Americanism programs? How?
- How did units promote Americanism in their 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

Type of award: Citation Plaque, announced at the National Convention

Presented to: One unit Americanism chairman that reports the most outstanding Americanism program targeted to children and youth.

Materials and Guidelines:

- The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
- The entry may include no more than five pictures and five news articles.

- Attach an award cover sheet (located at the end of this program Plan) including the name of the award, as well as the name and contact information for the department and unit Americanism chairman.
- Deadline: May 15, 2018
- Send to National Americanism Chairman, Martha Corriher, at the address found on the front page of this program Plan.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. Emblem Sales: www.emblem.legion.org - flag education DVD: explains the history, significance, meaning, proper display and treatment of the U.S. flag.
Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette - a "question and answer" booklet on proper flag etiquette.
2. The American Legion Flag Advocacy: www.legion.org/flag
3. The American Legion's *Action Programs of Americanism* brochure: www.legion.org/publications
4. Capitol Building flags: To order flags flown over the Capitol, contact your congressional representative or senator or visit his/her website. Flags are available for a nominal fee; four to six weeks should be allowed for delivery.
5. Promote the Pocket Flag Project. www.pocketflagproject.com *At time of publication of the Programs Action Plan the pocket flags are \$90.00 per 300 flags.*

Department of Texas Americanism Committee 2017-2018:

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AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST
2018 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: *"What can I personally do to promote Americanism in my school or community?"*

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, 2018

Americanism