

**Americanism
Plan of Action 2015-2016
Department of NC**

Chairman: Mary Towery

Committee Members: Sue Gooch
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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.

Ideas/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 ALAWashington DC Conference (see www.ALAforVeterans.org for details).

Ideas/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.

3. Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest. In Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address, he promised, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan,” by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s veterans. This year’s theme is "How do we keep Lincoln's promise to our veterans and their families?"

Student Award: Americanism Essay Contest

Type of award: Citation, \$50 prize and additional \$50 honorarium added to the Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship Fund.

Presented to: 30 students total, 6 from each division, 1 student for every age group 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
- Must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet.
- Unit winners should be sent to the department Americanism chairman.
- 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.

Ideas/Unit

- Contact schools and other organizations such as the Young Marines, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts 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, themes and award opportunities.
- Contact the essay winner’s parents and ask if they would 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 a cash award and/or savings bond.
- Be sure to include this information on your unit report to your district, department and national chairman.

4. Promote pride in belonging to the world's largest women's patriotic organization, the American Legion Auxiliary.

Ideas/Member

- Wear and display your name, unit or department identification badge at all functions.
- Wear your Auxiliary clothing and jewelry to functions.
- Wear and display your "Honoring Their Service" button depicting the veteran who made you eligible for Auxiliary membership.
- Write and be prepared to use an elevator speech that quickly explains the American Legion Auxiliary and its programs to potential members.
- Carry membership applications for the Legion Family.

Ideas/Unit

- Encourage members to wear and display their name, unit and/or department identification badge.
- Encourage members to wear Auxiliary apparel and/or jewelry to functions and when volunteering.
- Encourage members to wear and display the "Honoring Their Service" button depicting the veteran who made them eligible for Auxiliary membership.
- Encourage members to carry membership applications for the Legion Family.
- Plan an annual program to recognize and honor your unit's Junior members who will become eligible for senior membership. Make it a special occasion, and honor the contributions they have made to your unit as Junior members.

5. 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.
- Support the Junior Shooting Sports.
 - Volunteer to help out with scoring, supervising or transportation.

Ideas/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.

- o Offer to provide volunteers as timekeepers or judges.
- o Offer to help out with refreshments.
- o Offer to host a contest.
- o Help recruit candidates at local schools and other organizations.
- Support Junior Shooting Sports, which promote gun safety and marksmanship training for youth.
 - o Offer to provide refreshments on event day.
 - o Arrange transportation and/or supervision on event day.
 - o Host an event at your post home, if you have the space.

Americanism Reporting

Mid-Year Reports: Each Unit Americanism chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **December 15, 2015**.

Annual Reports: Each Unit Americanism chairman is required to submit a narrative report by **April 30, 2016**.

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

- How many Americanism essays did you receive?
- How many children did you sponsor in the Oratorical Contest?
- How many flag programs did you provide, including flag disposal ceremonies?
- How did you promote patriotic holidays?
- How did you encourage support of the flag amendment?
- How many units promoted Junior Shooting Sports? How?
- Did you support American Legion Baseball? How?
- How did you promote the American Legion Auxiliary in your community?
- How many pocket flags were folded for active-duty military serving overseas?

Department Awards:

- a. Best overall Americanism Program. A narrative report not to exceed 1000 words. Feel free to include pictures, newspaper clippings etc. Certificate and Gift
- b. Most outstanding Junior Americanism Program. A narrative not to exceed 1000 words. Feel free to include pictures, newspaper clippings etc. Certificate and Gift (Winner to be submitted to National)
- c. Most outstanding Americanism program targeting children and youth. Narrative report not to exceed 1000 words with pictures, newspaper clippings etc. Certificate and Gift (Winner will be submitted to National)
- d. All Units who have Americanism Essays submitted on time will receive Certificates as well as each participant. Winners in each age group will be submitted to National.

National Americanism Awards

*Please be sure each award entry includes a cover sheet found at the end of this Plan.

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 news articles and **MUST** include the award cover sheet located in this Plan.

- All entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2016, and sent to Carole S. Baldwin, 269 Del Sol Ave., Davenport, FL 33837 or carolebaldwin1226@yahoo.com by 5:00 p.m. EDT. Also please send a copy to Department Americanism Chairman, Mary Towery.

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Junior Americanism Program Committee Member

Type of award: Citation plaque

Presented to: One unit Americanism chairman

Materials and Guidelines:

- The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
- A maximum of five pictures and news articles may be included.
- All entries must be postmarked June 1, 2016, and sent to Debra Noble at 600 Avenue E, Bayonne, NJ 07002 or debbien916@gmail.com by 5:00 p.m. EDT. Also please send a copy to Department Americanism Chairman, Mary Towery.

Unit Award: Million Member Award

Type of Award: Citation Plaque

Presented to: One unit per division

Materials and Guidelines:

- The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words.
- A maximum of five pictures and news articles may be included.
- Must demonstrate how working the mission of the Americanism Committee engaged, retained and attracted members to grow membership in the unit.
- Due to National Chairman Brenda Collins at 5 Clingstone Drive, Taylors, SC 29687 or brendawcollins@charter.net by June 1, 2016. Also please send a copy to Department Americanism Chairman, Mary Towery.

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 Program 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. Your national committee members (see cover page of this Plan)
6. Promote the Pocket Flag Project. www.pocketflagproject.com

