

## **American Legion Auxiliary**

### **Department Of Michigan**

#### **Americanism Guide**

**2025-2026**

#### **“Mission Possible”**

The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and citizenship in our units and communities. There are many programs involved in Americanism.

#### **The Americanism Essay Contest**

The essay contest is an excellent opportunity for our youth in the democratic process. The topic for the 2025-2026 year is **“Celebrating America’s Birthday and the Veterans Who Fought for Our Freedoms.”**

The cover sheet must accompany each essay. Cover sheet is below. The essay must be submitted to the Americanism Department Chairman by March 30, 2026. Please note that the essays do go to the districts. Don't hesitate to reach out to your local schools and youth organizations to promote the program.

Department Awards are given in each class. 1<sup>st</sup> place-\$75, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place-\$50, 3rdPlace-\$25.

#### **Get Out the Vote!**

If you hold a Candidate Night, be sure to invite all political parties. The American Legion Auxiliary is non-partisan. Think of ways you can help people get to the polls. Voting is a critical part of our Democracy.

#### **Flag Education**

Flag etiquette and respect for the flag are integral to Americanism. Teaching our youth (and adults) to respect the flag and what it stands for is a priority. Contact your local schools and ask them to do a flag education program. Join with the American Legion to get veterans into the schools. Talk about how and why we salute the flag and what the colors, stars, and stripes stand for. Include the Pledge of Allegiance and The Star-Spangled Banner. Hand out flags and flag coloring books. What a great way to promote patriotism.

The list of ways to promote Americanism in our communities is vast. Here are a few but use your imagination to come up with new ideas.

- Fly your flag
- Wear patriotic clothing
- Observe Patriotic Holidays

- Check out Star Spangled Kids [www.alaforveterans.org/StarSpangledKids](http://www.alaforveterans.org/StarSpangledKids)
- Have a flag retirement Ceremony on Flag Day, June 14
- Making Pocket Flags

## Year-End Reporting

Keep records of all your activities in Americanism throughout the year so that you have all the information for your annual report. A short narrative describing your activities is very helpful.

Remember, reports are due to your District Americanism Chairman by March 30, 2026, and the district chairman needs to submit them to the Department Chairman by April 15.

Please consider writing a narrative and applying for Department Awards. Please share the outstanding programs that you have had this past year.

Awards are:

**The EVA Spalding Citation Award** is presented to the most outstanding Americanism targeted to children and youth. This entry must be typewritten in a narrative form and not to exceed 1000 words. Describe what/how your unit involves children and youth regarding Americanism and entry to the Department Chairman by April 15.

**The Mary Ripley Citation Award** is presented to the unit with the greatest percentage of Americanism. This entry should describe your unit's Americanism and Patriotism efforts and events. Please include what you did and how you did it. How many members and how many cumulative hours? Unit entries must be judged at the district. The district should send their 1<sup>st</sup> place entries to the Department Chairman by April 15.

**The Donna Baley Citation Award is presented to the District Chairman for promoting the most outstanding Americanism Program. The entry must be typed and written in a narrative form and not to exceed 1000 words. It may include no more than five pictures and five news articles. The district chairman must send the winning entry to the Department chairman for judging by April 15.**

**The Dorothy Pearl Award**-The award will be presented to the unit that reports the most outstanding Americanism Program. This entry must be typed and written in a narrative form and not to exceed 1000 words. This entry may include no more than five pictures or five news articles. The winner will be sent on to National for the DOROTHY PEARL CITATION.

As we begin the 2025-2026 American Legion Auxiliary year, be sure to keep accurate records of your events and activities, including the number of hours worked, the number of people attending, and the amount of money spent. This will make your reporting very easy.

## 2025-2026 National Americanism Program Awards Deadlines and Submission Requirements

All award submissions must include a narrative (either a PDF or Microsoft Word document) explaining why the department or unit you're nominating should receive the award. The narrative can also be the department chair's report. You may also upload other supporting documentation that will give the committee a full picture of the important mission work your department or unit has accomplished this year. These files can be photos (JPG, JPEG or TIFs -- no larger than 14MB) or PDF documents. If you have more than three supporting files, please email the committee at the email address listed in the form.

**National Awards Form Link:** <https://www.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form>

### **Americanism Committee 2025-2026**

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### **National Americanism Chair 2025-2026**

Diana Sirovina

Website: <https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/americanism>

Email Address: [Americanism@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:Americanism@ALAforVeterans.org)

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/818779828161560>



## AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST

### Contest Rules

The American Legion Auxiliary's Americanism Essay Contest is for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs, divided into six classes. One award in each class will be presented in each division. Winners will receive a \$50 check, and a \$50 donation in the student's name will be made to the Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund.

#### Essay Title:

***"Celebrating America's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday and the Veterans Who Fought for Our Freedom"***

#### 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

1. The Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet must be filled out **legibly** and **completely**. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
2. Departments (states) will determine the deadline for the local unit contests.
3. Essays will be due from the state department chairs to the Americanism Division chairs by April 15.
4. Essays received after the contest deadline will not be accepted.
5. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of an essay, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and writing published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
6. The essay shall be the work of only one individual.
7. Use of AI in writing essays is not allowed. Essays will be checked for use of AI. Any essay determined to be 30% or more AI written will be disqualified.
8. Essays will be scored using the following rubric:
  - Word Count: 5pts.
  - Cover Sheet: 5pts.
  - Topic/Theme — Does the Essay Answer the Topic Question?: 25pts.
  - Content — Original Thought: 25pts.
  - Grammar: 10pts.
  - Clarity/Coherence: 10pts.
  - Organization — Introduction, Body, and Conclusion: 10pts.
  - Correct Word Usage: 10pts.

**THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.**



## AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST 2026 Cover Sheet

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#### Essay Checklist:

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

#### To be completed by the student and parent/guardian:

**\* Please write legibly in ink.**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): \_\_\_\_\_

Student or Parent/Guardian Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Unit Americanism Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Winner Due to Department on: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

***Department Winner Due to National Americanism Division Chair by April 15, 2026***