

Americanism
Program Action Plan - 2016-2017
Jennifer Pickering, Chairman

The Americanism Program is designed to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship to help us fulfill our brand promise by giving U.S. citizens a chance to participate in our mission by feeling patriotic and demonstrating their support in an active, visible way.

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.

- 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.
- Encourage members to fly a flag.
- Order pocket flag kits and have a party at your post for cutting and folding the pocket flags
- Identify and distribute the 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.”

- 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. This year’s theme is “How does learning about government and our America help you become a future guardian of the liberties of our country?”

Americanism Essay Contest Categories are:

Class I	Grades 3 and 4	150-250 words
Class II	Grades 5 and 6	250-300 words
Class III	Grades 7 and 8	350-400 words
Class IV	Grades 9 and 10	450-500 words
Class V	Grades 11 and 12	450-500 words
Class VI	Students with Special Needs*	word count should correspond with Student’s grade level

* Students with special needs are defined as:

- Students 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.

All entries must include the Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet found at the end of this Program Plan.

Suggestions for Promoting Americanism Essay Contest

- Contact schools and other organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Young Marines and 4-H about the essay contest. Encourage Junior Auxiliary and SAL members to participate in the essay contest.
- Create information packets explaining contest rules, deadline dates, theme and award opportunities.
- Contact the essay winner, their parents, teacher and principal to attend your next Auxiliary meeting to read his/her winning essay. Be sure to have a certificate to present.

Unit Winning Entries are to be sent to your District's Americanism Chairman by March 15, 2017. District's winning entries are to be sent to the Department Americanism Chairman by April 15, 2017.

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

- Support American Legion Baseball
 - Help keep stats, work concession booth, donate money to the team for travel and equipment expenses, etc.
- Support the Oratorical Contest
 - Offer to judge, be a timekeeper, help with Refreshments, provide transportation for candidates, help recruit candidates at local Schools or organizations.
- Support Junior Shooting Sports - which promote gun safety and marksmanship training for youth
 - Help with refreshments, supervising events or transportation

All Narrative Reports

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

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

Americanism Reporting

Mid-Year Reports

- Each Unit Americanism Chairman is required to submit a mid-year report by **December 1, 2016** to her District Americanism Chairman.
- Each District Americanism Chairman is required to submit a mid-year report by **December 15, 2016** to the Department Americanism Chairman.

Annual Reports

- Each Unit Americanism Chairman is required to submit an annual report by **April 15, 2017** to her District Americanism Chairman.
- Each District Americanism Chairman is required to submit an annual report by **May 1, 2017** to the Department Americanism Chairman.

National Awards:

The **Dorothy Pearl Most Outstanding Americanism Program** will be presented to one unit Americanism Chairman that reports the most outstanding Americanism program targeted to Children and Youth. The type of award is a Citation Plaque announced at National Convention. The entry must be typewritten in narrative format, not to exceed 1,000 words. The entry must include no more than 5 pictures and news articles and must attach the Award Cover Sheet (located at 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. Entries must be **sent to Department Americanism Chairman by April 15, 2017.**

Department Awards:

The Vickie Koutz Monetary Award to the unit reporting the most consistent Americanism program.

Department Chairman Personal Awards:

An award will be presented at Department Convention to the District Americanism Chairmen who submit a mid-year report to the Department Americanism Chairman by December 15, 2016.

An award for the Unit that demonstrates their support for the American Legion Baseball, Oratorical Contest or Junior Shooting Sports.

An award to the Unit that best demonstrates their support for the Americanism Essay Contest.

Additional Resources you can use:

- 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.
- The American Legion Flag Advocacy: www.legion.org/flag
- The American Legion's Action Programs of Americanism brochure: www.legion.org/publications
- 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.
- Promote the Pocket Flag Project. www.pocketflagproject.com

The ALA Americanism Program is a fun and rewarding program to participate in. If you have any questions about the program, please email me at timjenntacklebox@aol.com or call me at 260-750-5307.

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