



Department of Florida Americanism Program Engagement Plan for 2025-2026

Americanism in the American Legion Auxiliary is a program that every unit can participate and shine in. I hope our plan this year will inspire participation, as well as a **Passion** for all things American! This year we want to “Color Me America-Red, White and Blue” as we approach our nation’s 250th birthday.

National shares that the purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. Our youth is a great place to start. By instilling in them a sense of pride and passion for our country, an understanding of our flag and flag etiquette, constitution education, honoring our veterans and other ideas shared in this plan, we will be building a future generation of passionate, proud Americans.

As your unit plans out your year, find ways to include Americanism in it! Hand out flags at events, include your Juniors by having them lead the pledge, ask businesses in your community to fly flags and then recognize them with a certificate of appreciation, Americanism can be in almost everything we do.

In this Program Engagement Plan you will find examples, resources and links to help make your unit’s year successful. We all want to be “**passionate**” for Americanism, our veterans and our community, so let’s “Color Me America-Red, White and Blue”!

For God and Country,

Joni Taylor

Joni Taylor, Chairperson
Americanism
Americanism@alafl.org

**Department of Florida
Americanism
Program Engagement Plan for 2025-2026**

AMERICANISM GOALS

Purpose: The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. We do this by striving towards the following goals set forth by the National ALA Americanism program:

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.
2. Increase participation in the American Essay Contest. The theme for the current year is: "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday & the Veterans who fought for our freedom."
3. Participate in the promotion of the American Legion's Americanism programs.

Ways to be Passionate about Americanism: Below and on the following pages are some ideas that members or Units can do during the year that align with the National goals. Please read through these and let them help you "Be Passionate" and "Color Me America-Red White and Blue".

- Consistently track your activities on the ***Americanism Activity Tracker*** and submit to your Unit Chairman. Your Unit Chairman will use this information for the Americanism Unit Report.
- Use hashtags on social media postings: **#PassionForVets**
#AlaFImericanism and **#ColorMeAmerica**
- Work with your Unit Treasurer to develop a budget for the Americanism program to support awards for essay winners, flag purchases, purchase of informational and patriotic items for distribution in schools or other community venues and during presentations.
- Visit schools at the beginning of the school year to share the American Essay Contest, see if you can visit to share flag etiquette and other resources to educate our youth. See the attached "Flags for First Graders" program included in this plan, to help educate our youngest children!

- Volunteer for a local patriotic event, such as parades, Veteran Day or Memorial Day ceremonies.
- Vote! Take your children/grandchildren with you when you vote. Encourage others to vote. Volunteer as a poll worker.
- Sign up for the American Legion's Legislative action alerts and follow flag issues. <https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>
- Work with local schools to further education of the Constitution, either whole or in part, such as the Bill of Rights or the Preamble.
- Increase participation in the Americanism Essay Contest
 - Contact schools and other organizations such as Girl and Boy Scouts, 4-H, Young Marines, and JROTC about the essay contest.
 - Include the essay as part of your Girls State application
 - Encourage Junior members to participate in the essay contest.
 - Create information packets explaining the essay contest rules, deadlines, theme and award opportunities.
 - Contact the essay winner and their parents. Invite parents to bring their child to your next Auxiliary meeting to read their winning essay.
 - 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 bonds.
- Teach proper handling, displaying, and respect for the American flag, as well as our National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Organize a patriotic holiday event or participate in a local patriotic holiday such as parades, wave flags along the streets on 9-11, etc.
- Encourage local business to fly the American flag, purchase and gift them a flag and pole if need be.
- Provide American flags to your local schools for classrooms. See the link for the F.L.A.G. Program in under resources.
- Encourage Legion Family members to fly the American flag at their home.
- Work with Habitat for Humanity by donating and installing a Flag on a new homeowner's home.
- Support the Legion's Oratorical Contest
 - Help prepare post home to sponsor local or district contests.
 - 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

RESOURCES:

Flags for 1st Graders

The Forty & Eight's Flags for First Graders program is a flag education program for elementary schools. The program is responsible for educating thousands of American youth in the flag history, respect and protocol.

This script was developed and can be modified to fit your needs and style.

<https://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/741376/10879655/1298385270823/Flags+for+First+Graders+Program+Script.pdf>

(Searching “static flags for first graders” should bring up this program)

The F.L.A.G. Program

The F.L.A.G. Program instills pride and respect for the United States Flag through an extensive education program for students. Students will be held accountable for the proper Flying, Lowering, and Gathering of the United State Flag during the school year.

The F.L.A.G. Program provides all education and program materials to school districts across the nation at no cost. Students who participate in the F.L.A.G. program will be recognized with a Citizenship Award and lapel pin provided by program sponsors.

<https://www.theflagprogram.org/>

AWARDS

National Awards

Americanism Essay Contest

This year's Essay Contest will be **“Celebrating America's 250th Birthday and the Veterans Who Fought for Our Freedom.”** One award in each of the five classes will be presented in each Division, with Florida competing in the Southern Division. Department winners in each of the five classes will receive a certificate and medal at the Department Convention in June 2025. Winners at the National level will receive \$50 and a \$50 honorarium in the student's name to the National President's Scholarship at the National Convention in August 2026. It is up to the Unit as to what type of award or recognition they would like to bestow upon their local winners. The Americanism essay cover sheet is also available at alafl.org. AI generated essays will be disqualified from the contest. The Units are to select and submit one winner in each class level electronically to the Department Chairman by **April 1st, 2026**. Please attach the Unit Cover Sheet with the essays.

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.

Dorothy Pearl Plaque

A plaque will be presented to the Unit that reports the Most Outstanding Americanism Program. The entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words. Please send a digital report. A maximum of five pictures and news articles, provided as separate jpg files, may be included. All entries must be submitted to the Department Chairperson by **May 1st, 2026**. Check the National website for additional information.

Units can submit entry for this award directly to National. Refer to the National Website for more information.

It is encouraged to use the ***Committee-Specific Reporting Guidelines*** when writing your reports.

Department Awards

Doris E. Hahn Trophy “Best All-Around Award for Americanism Activities”

Entry to be typed on 8 ½” x 11” paper, double spaced, narrative form, not to exceed 1,000 words, and submitted electronically to americanism@alafl.org 30 days prior to Convention which will be May 11, 2026. Unit must have sponsored at least one girl to Girl’s State. Report to include only Americanism activities. Check the Unit guide for additional information.

It is encouraged to use the *Committee-Specific Reporting Guidelines*** when writing your reports.

Chairman’s Award: “Color Me America”

In honor of our approaching 250th birthday, this award will be presented to the Unit that submits the best picture of “Red, White and Blue” American Moments, (parades, veteran celebrations, flag waving, children with flags or at patriotic events, anything patriotic). Pictures may be submitted throughout the year with the Unit name, location of the picture, and one sentence caption. Pictures must be submitted digitally for eligibility. Please include pictures as separate jpg files. Pictures must be taken during this 2025-2026 year, and **final** deadline for pictures is **April 15th, 2026**.

Unit End of Year Reporting

1. Please use the Tracker sheets to prepare your Unit report.
2. Unit Reports are due to District Chairman no later than **April 1st, 2026** and should consist of the Unit Report form with a narrative. These responses should answer the following questions:
 - How did your unit promote Star Spangled Kids, educating children and youth about the U.S. Constitution from the aspect of patriotism and Americanism? Incorporate how your unit utilized the Star Spangled Kids kits provided by National, including the success stories highlights.
 - What training on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods did your unit provide in communities?
 - How did your unit identify as the resource for training and assistance in promoting patriotism and Americanism in communities?
 - What avenues were used to increase participation in the ALA Americanism Essay Contest?
 - How did your members and unit contribute to the advancement of The American Legion's Americanism programs?
 - Please include pictures! Share your hard work!

Forms and instructions can be found on the Department Website at ALAFL.org. All forms have been set up as fillable PDFs and members are encouraged to keep in the electronic format for ease of filling out and submitting.

Any report submitted in a hardcopy format MUST be converted to electronic prior to submission to Department to be considered for awards.

District End of Year Reporting

1. Please use the Tracker sheets to prepare your District report.
2. District Reports are due to the Department Chairman no later than **April 15th, 2026** and should consist of the District Report form with a narrative. These responses should answer the following questions:
 - How did the units promote Star Spangled Kids, educating children and youth about the U.S. Constitution from the aspect of patriotism and Americanism? Incorporate how units utilized the Star Spangled Kids kits provided by National, including the success stories highlights.
 - What training on flag history, etiquette, and proper disposal methods did units in your district provide in communities?
 - How did your units identify as the resource for training and assistance in promoting patriotism and Americanism in communities?
 - What avenues were used to increase participation in the ALA Americanism Essay Contest?
 - How did your units contribute to the advancement of The American Legion's Americanism programs?
 - Please include pictures submitted by units.

Forms and instructions can be found on the Department Website at ALAFL.org. All forms have been set up as fillable PDFs and members are encouraged to keep in the electronic format for ease of filling out and submitting.

Any report submitted to District in a hardcopy format MUST be converted to electronic prior to submission to Department to be considered for awards.