

AMERICANISM

2022-2023

In February of 1927, a group of Veteran's organizations held a conference in Washington D.C. This definition of Americanism was established at that meeting:

"Americanism is an unfailing love of country; loyalty to its institutions and ideals; eagerness to defend it against all enemies; undivided allegiance to the Flag; and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity."

The VFW Auxiliary believes and promotes this definition of Americanism. As members of The VFW Auxiliary, it is our duty to promote and instruct citizens of our communities in Flag etiquette and patriotism. We must also promote the reasons for celebrating patriotic holidays and paying respect to those who have sacrificed to keep America a free country. Engaging all ages in these ceremonies and celebrations ensures patriotism is passed down through generations.

The following things should be part of your Auxiliary Americanism program.

- **Flag Education.**
- **Promotion and celebration of Patriotic Holidays.**
- **Education on the POW/MIA flag and table.**
- **Instruction on VFW Auxiliary ritual and the Federal Flag Code.**
- **Digital connections.**

Here are some suggestions on how to complete your goals:



Share information on Flag etiquette and the proper way to display the American Flag. You can go to [vfw.org/community/flag](https://www.vfw.org/community/flag) to obtain information about displaying and



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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & DEADLINES

- ✓ Flag Education
- ✓ Promote #AuxiliaryPatriotism
- ✓ POW-MIA Recognition
- ✓ Star Family Recognition
- ✓ Community Patriotic Events
- ✓ Americanism Coloring, Poster, and Essay Contests*

*** Deadlines**

Entries received by:

District – March 30

Department – April 15

handling the Flag, Flag history, when to fly at half-staff, how to correctly fold a Flag, and other useful information concerning care and use of the American Flag. Take this to the schools, to other organizations, and share on social media. Recognize a community member, a business, or an organization who properly displays the Flag and present them with a **certificate of appreciation** from your Auxiliary. Hold a Flag raising ceremony. This could be done to show off a new flag pole, to commemorate a patriotic holiday, or just as an educational tool for community members.

Promote Patriotism by celebrating and dispersing information on these and other patriotic holidays.

- March 29..... National Vietnam War Veterans Day**
- May 1..... Loyalty Day**
- 3rd Saturday in May..... Armed Forces Day**
- May 30 (traditional)..... Memorial Day**
- June 14..... Flag Day**
- July 4..... Independence Day**
- September 11..... Patriot Day**
- 3rd Friday in September..... POW/MIA Recognition Day**
- Last Sunday of September..... Gold Star Mother and Family Day**
- November 11..... Veterans Day**
- December 7..... Pearl Harbor Day**

Share information on the meaning of the POW/MIA Flag and the missing man table. Present the information at a school program, a meeting, or a community event. Go to vfwauxiliary.org/resources to find help with ceremony wording and the table setup.



Patriotic Instructors can use the VFW Auxiliary Bylaws and Ritual book to study information on Auxiliary traditions, rituals, patriotic ceremonies and the Federal Flag code. The *Understanding Auxiliary Traditions* help sheet and video on the vfwauxiliary.org/resources website are also good sources for information. It is very important for you to pass this knowledge on to your brothers and sisters of the Auxiliary.



Using Digital connections is a necessity in today’s world. Last year was the first year the Americanism program used a hashtag campaign to promote patriotic activity and events.

#AuxiliaryPatriotism was used more than 2,500 times in its first six months. It can be used to tag events where you are teaching

Flag education, holding a Veterans Day ceremony, or marching in a patriotic parade. Record these moments and post them on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Partner with parents, teachers, Auxiliary members, and other community organizations to educate others about patriotism and loyalty. Receiving coverage for your events on a local television station or in the newspaper is still a great way to connect with a lot of people. If possible, use technology and social media to share events with Veterans in hospitals, nursing homes, and Veterans homes, if they cannot attend. Do what you can to let the people around you know that you love your country, respect the Flag, and are loyal to our Veterans!

Present an American or a POW/MIA Flag to a school, business, organization, or deserving individual to recognize their contributions to the community, their patriotic spirit, or their overall example of what it means to be a good citizen. Give out small American Flags to attendees at a parade or other patriotic event. (The Flags should be at least 2"x3").



Hold a Patriotic Community Event. For more information about celebrating patriotic holidays and the Americanism program, go to vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/americanism. Participate in events happening in your communities. If your town has an Independence Day Parade, be a part of that parade. Help with Memorial Day and Veterans Day Ceremonies. Organize a program for

Loyalty Day or Flag Day. Hold a **Family Freedom Festival** at your Post or in the town park. Use your resources and knowledge to make a lasting, positive impact on people's lives .

Additionally, the Department of Illinois has three contests for children from the age of 3 through 5th grade.



1. **Coloring Contest** is for preschool and kindergarten students ages 3, 4, and 5. A copy of the coloring page is included in the program book. Be sure to have the child's name, age, Auxiliary number, District number and school or daycare's name on the back of the picture. Auxiliaries should choose one winner for every 15 entries received in each age group and submit winner(s) to the District Americanism Chairman no later than March 30th. The District Chairman must forward the District winner(s) to the Department Chairman by April 15, 2023.
2. **Poster Contest** is for students in grades 1 - 3. The rules state the poster should be no larger than 14"x22" and should be white in color. Crayons, pencils, markers, or any other coloring medium can be used. The theme for the poster contest is "**My Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Veteran.**" Be sure to write the student's name, age, grade, school's name

and your Auxiliary and District number on the back of the poster. Auxiliaries should submit winner(s) to the District Chairman no later than March 30th with the District winner(s) sent to the Department Chairman by April 15, 2023.

3. **Essay Contest** is for students in the 4th and 5th grades. The essay should be typed or legibly written in black ink. The entry requires a cover sheet listing the student's name, school, and grade; also, include the Auxiliary and District number on the back of the cover sheet. The theme for the essay contest is "**My Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Veteran.**" Auxiliaries should submit winner(s) to the District Chairman no later than March 30th with the District winner(s) sent to the Department Chairman by April 15, 2023.

NOTE: For each of these contests, your Auxiliary and District are allowed to choose one winner for every 15 entries received in each age group with all winning entries forwarded for judging at the next level.

It is important to report the projects completed for the Americanism program on a regular basis. The easiest way is to use the report form provided on the Department website under "Reporting". If you opt to report by using a hard copy form, please make sure your information is legible. When reporting, please give the Department Chairman as much information as possible. The details are important. I want to know about the great job the Auxiliaries are doing!

"How little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy!"

Thomas Jefferson

Every Auxiliary should use all available resources to help others recognize these blessings, preserve them for our future and for all generations to come. Honor our forefathers by educating our next leaders and by promoting patriotism to all ages.

RESOURCES:

vfwauxiliary.org/resources

vfw.org/community/flag

vfw.org/what-we-do/americanismauxiliary

AMERICANISM

Program Awards

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Auxiliary Awards

1. A citation to each Auxiliary that is reported in the Americanism Program by December 31, 2022.
2. An award to the Auxiliary that hosts the most outstanding patriotic community event. A required entry form and criteria can be found at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. The entry form is due to the Department Chairman by March 31, 2023.
3. An award to one Auxiliary Chairman with the best promotion of all parts of the Americanism Program. To qualify, the Auxiliary chairman must submit a report to the Department Chairman by April 15, 2023. Monthly reports are encouraged.

District Awards

1. A citation to each District Chairman who has 100% of his/her Auxiliaries in the District reported in Americanism by December 31, 2022.
2. An award to the District Chairman with the best promotion of all parts of the Americanism Program. To qualify, the District Chairman must submit a report to the Department Chairman by April 15, 2023. Reports should be submitted within 30 days of the meeting.

Individual Awards

1. An award to the 1st place winner in each age division of the Coloring Contest.
2. An award to the 1st place winner in each age division of the Poster Contest.
3. An award to the 1st place winner in each age division of the Essay Contest.

National Awards

Auxiliary Awards

1. A citation will be awarded to every Auxiliary that hosts a patriotic community event. A required entry form and criteria can be found at vfwauxiliary.org/resources. The entry form is due to the Department Chairman by March 31, 2023.
2. A citation and \$25 will be awarded to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that hosts the most outstanding patriotic community event. The winners will be announced at the 2023 National Convention.