



THE AMERICAN LEGION

# ACTION PROGRAMS OF AMERICANISM



AMERICANISM COMMISSION



## **ACTION PROGRAMS OF AMERICANISM**

Americanism is an unfailing love of country, loyalty to its institutions and ideals, eagerness to defend it against all enemies, individual allegiance to the U.S. flag and a desire to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Our forefathers laid the foundation for a civilization that is the envy of the world. It has brought us greater spiritual and material wealth than any people has ever known.

This is our heritage.

The activities of The American Legion's Americanism Commission acknowledge and preserve that heritage, recognizing inalienable rights of all.

This brochure briefly describes The American Legion's Americanism programs.



## AMERICAN LEGION OPERATION COMFORT WARRIORS

The American Legion Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program has been aiding in the recovery of wounded, injured or ill military personnel since 2008, by providing them with comfort items not usually supplied by the government. Items include toiletries, clothing, electronics, rehabilitation equipment, adaptive sporting equipment and other necessities. OCW also hosts events for service-members who are recovering from their wounds, such as dinners and picnics.

One hundred percent of donations to OCW goes toward funding items and events for wounded servicemembers and veterans.

Donations and requests for assistance may be directed to The American Legion, Operation Comfort Warriors, P.O. Box 361626, Indianapolis, IN 46236 or online at [legion.org/ocw](http://legion.org/ocw).

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/ocw](http://legion.org/ocw) or email [ocw@legion.org](mailto:ocw@legion.org).



## AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

American Legion Baseball began in 1925 and held its first national tournament the following year. Today, there are more than 3,400 teams and nearly 55,000 youth who participate in the program yearly from all 50 states and Canada. American Legion Baseball teaches youth good sportsmanship, loyalty, respect for rules and decisions rendered, physical fitness, fair play, courage and citizenship.

The program is divided into two divisions — seniors (18- and 19-year-olds) and juniors (17-year-olds and younger). Tournaments are conducted in the senior division and the top eight teams who win their respective division's regional tournament advance to the American Legion World Series (ALWS).

Since 2011, Shelby, N.C., has become the permanent home of the ALWS where more than 130,000 paid attendees watch the 15-game tournament every year. Game coverage of the ALWS is available on ESPN3.com and on ESPN. Viewership of the ALWS has expanded to include game coverage of the majority of pool play, semifinals and the championship game.

The national championship team is honored with a trip to the Major League Baseball (MLB) World Series and recognized on field, a tradition upheld since 1926 when American Legion Baseball and MLB formed a relationship.

Many current MLB stars such as Madison Bumgarner and Albert Pujols, and former MLB players such as Hall of Famers Bob Feller, Yogi Berra and Reggie Jackson, developed their skills on American Legion diamonds.

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### For additional information

visit [legion.org/baseball](http://legion.org/baseball) or email [baseball@legion.org](mailto:baseball@legion.org)



## AMERICAN LEGION AND SCOUTING

The American Legion officially recognized Scouting as a positive youth program at its first national convention in 1919. Support has remained constant since then, with local posts chartering over 2,300 Scout troops and providing other forms of support.

Annually, an Eagle Scout is recognized as The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year and is awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship. Scholarships of \$2,500 each are awarded to three runners-up.

American Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members who are actively involved in Scouting and who have furthered the Scouting program in The American Legion are recognized with the Legion and Scouting Square Knot Award.

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/scouting](http://legion.org/scouting) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



## YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Many American Legion departments conduct a weeklong Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program in conjunction with their state police or highway patrol academy. Program titles may vary, such as “Student Trooper Program” or “State Police Youth Week,” but they all share the same mission of educating high school students about law enforcement, providing a day-in-the-life of a trooper in training, and instilling respect for law enforcement.

Most departments host their programs at law enforcement training centers with law enforcement officers conducting the physical fitness training and practical and classroom education. Cadets learn officer survival techniques, defensive tactics, firearms safety, precision driving, accident and criminal investigation, law enforcement technology and more.

The application process to attend the program varies by department, but typically American Legion posts nominate a cadet(s).

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/youthlaw](https://legion.org/youthlaw) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



## AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports program is recognized as one of the premier amateur shooting programs in the country, teaching students under 18 years old (or high school seniors no older than 20) gun safety and marksmanship while fostering healthy competition.

Over 1,300 individual shooters enter The American Legion's air rifle tournament each year. Shooters are trained to use a .177 air rifle and skill levels vary from beginners learning safety basics to regional champs competing shoulder-to-shoulder in The American Legion's 3-Position Air Rifle National Championship, held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Any recognized youth group (school or club) with responsible adult leadership can become involved with this program. The group/club must be sponsored by an American Legion post and affiliated with the national organization.

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/shooting](http://legion.org/shooting) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



## **AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE AND NATION**

### **AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE**

Since 1935, American Legion Boys State has been one of the country's most revered and selective government instruction programs, teaching high school students about the operation of local, county and state governments. Fifty American Legion departments conduct this program, serving more than 17,000 young men each year. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors a similar program for young women called Girls State.

At American Legion Boys State, young men learn about the rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of a franchised citizen. Elected and appointed local officials offer participants objective, practical training in city, county and state governance, and activities are conducted such as legislative sessions, court proceedings, law enforcement presentations, assemblies, band, chorus and recreational programs.

American Legion posts select participants to attend their respective Boys State program after receiving recommendations from school officials. Usually posts, local businesses or community organizations pay the cost of attendance.

American Legion Boys State participants go on to achieve success in a variety of fields. Notable alumni include astronaut Neil Armstrong, basketball legend Michael Jordan and national television news journalist Tom Brokaw.



## AMERICAN LEGION BOYS NATION

Two outstanding participants from each of the 50 American Legion Boys State programs are selected to attend American Legion Boys Nation in Washington, D.C. The program provides an appreciation for and understanding of the U.S. system of government with emphasis on citizenship education and a two-party system of government.

Each American Legion Boys Nation delegate is assigned to one of two mythical political parties. The young men caucus, conduct party conventions, nominate and elect a president and vice president, introduce and vote on bills into the Boys Nation Senate, and meet with elected officials from their respective state.

The weeklong session also includes special visits to federal agencies, national shrines, memorials and historical sites.

Since its beginning in 1946, Boys Nation has seen many of its graduates elected to public office, such as former President Bill Clinton.

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/boysnation](http://legion.org/boysnation) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



## **THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: “A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST”**

The American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Program helps high school students develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the U.S. Constitution, teaches the importance of leadership, and provides participants with an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Each contest has two phases: an eight to 10-minute prepared oration and a three to five-minute assigned topic presentation.

Department-level contests are usually held January through March. The national competition is conducted in Indianapolis in April.

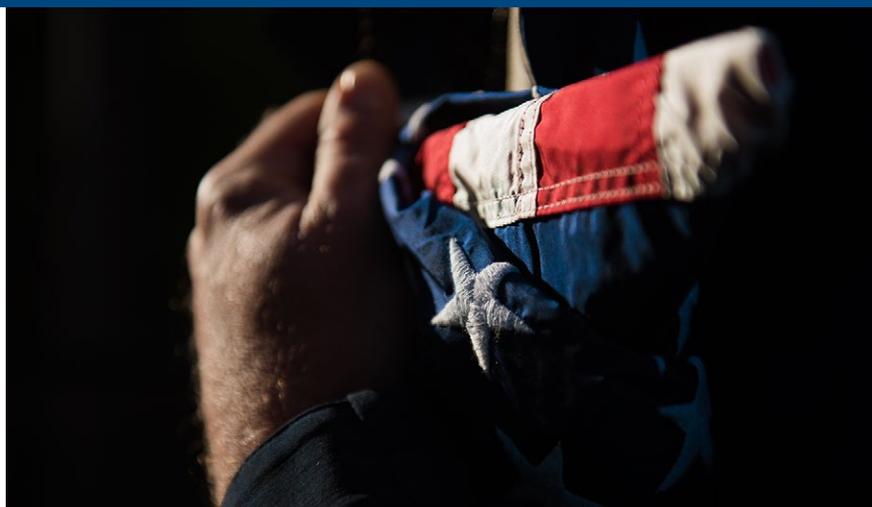
Scholarships are awarded at most levels of the competition, with the largest scholarships offered at the national level. In addition, each department winner who competes in the first round of the national contest receives a scholarship.

Since 2010, The American Legion has established a collaborative relationship with the National Speech and Debate Association, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit honorary society recognized as a premier high school speech and debate organization in the United States.

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### **For additional information**

Visit [legion.org/oratorical](http://legion.org/oratorical) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



## FLAG EDUCATION PROGRAM

The American Legion's Flag Education Program increases awareness of proper flag display, dignified disposal and instills patriotism and honor in all Americans. Flag education has been a major activity of The American Legion since its inception, with thousands of flag education programs presented each year in classrooms across the country.

The American Legion encourages and supports efforts to display the American flag and daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in our nation's classrooms.

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/flag](http://legion.org/flag). The American Legion publishes flag literature and makes it available through American Legion Emblem Sales. Visit [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org).

### Flag education items include:

**"Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette"** booklet contains flag code and American Legion interpretations of proper flag etiquette in situations not specifically covered by the law.

**Flag Code:** The brochure illustrates and describes the correct way to display the American flag, as well as the history of the flag.

**"For Which It Stands"** is a 20-minute interactive DVD that provides flag etiquette training for classrooms.



## **SCHOOL AND STUDENT PROGRAMS**

American Legion posts are encouraged to promote the importance of education and play an active role in activities at schools in their communities.

### **AMERICAN LEGION LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP**

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship is available for children whose parents lost their lives while honorably serving on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, as well as for children of post-9/11 veterans having been assigned a combined disability rating of 50 percent or greater by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Legacy Scholarship is needs-based. The grant amount each eligible scholarship recipient receives is based upon the financial gap remaining after all federal and state educational benefits have been applied. The renewable Legacy Scholarship awards up to \$20,000 for the expense of undergraduate or post-graduate tuition, books, room and board, meal plans, and other supplies needed to achieve a higher education.

### **SAMSUNG AMERICAN LEGION SCHOLARSHIP**

In 1995, worldwide electronics leader Samsung endowed a scholarship fund of \$5 million to be administered by The American Legion. Meant to show appreciation for U.S. veterans who came to Korea's aid during its struggle against communist forces during the Korean War, the Samsung American Legion Scholarship program established a series of scholarships derived from the interest and other income from the principal amount.

Scholarship applications are only available to high school juniors who attend the current session of either an American Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State program, and who are a direct descendant, i.e., child, grandchild, great grandchild, etc., or a legally adopted child, of a wartime U.S. military veteran who served on active duty during at least one of the periods of war officially designated as eligibility dates for American Legion membership.



Since the awarding of the first scholarships in 1996, the Samsung American Legion Scholarship has awarded more than \$6.5 million in college scholarships to over 2,300 applicants.

### **AMERICAN LEGION SCHOOL MEDAL AWARD**

Students who display courage, honor, leadership, patriotism, scholarship and service are recognized by local American Legion posts in the graduating classes of elementary, junior/middle and senior high schools, as well as at the college level.

Awards may be purchased from Emblem Sales at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org).

### **AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK**

In 1921, The American Legion and the National Education Association organized American Education Week to address illiteracy and to recognize teachers and students who performed above the norm. Each year The American Legion distributes literature to departments for dissemination to posts on ways to celebrate the week.

### **VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Connecting veterans with schools and classrooms gives students an opportunity to learn about life in the military, the rigors of war, and how the service of America's veterans affected their lives and the lives of others. Students also gain a greater respect for and understanding of the veterans' sacrifices and commitment to service. The American Legion's Veterans in the Classroom program crystallizes the true meaning of patriotism through study of real American issues and values.

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**For additional information**

Email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



## **CITIZENSHIP**

As Americans, understanding and upholding the rights, privileges, duties and obligations of citizenship better our communities, states and nation. American Legion posts are especially well-positioned and well-suited for assuming a strong, local leadership role in citizenship and development.

### **GET OUT THE VOTE**

The American Legion's Get Out the Vote program encourages American Legion members to renew their commitment for continued service to this country by being civically active as individuals and by encouraging all Americans to register and vote in all elections.

### **CITIZENSHIP OUTREACH**

Legionnaires play a significant part in growing America's diverse population. Since its founding in 1919, The American Legion has provided assistance and instruction to those following the lawful path to citizenship and assimilating into American society.

The Americanism Commission encourages posts to uphold a commitment to mentor candidates for U.S. citizenship and to support their assimilation into local communities.

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#### **For additional information**

Visit [legion.org/citizenship](https://legion.org/citizenship) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).

## OTHER PROGRAMS

Posts and departments may conduct other Americanism programs, including sporting activities, participatory government education programs, mentoring activities, fund drives for community betterment, safety programs and school-related activities. For more information about local post and department programs, please contact those posts and departments directly.

## AMERICANISM PUBLICATIONS

Americanism publications are available at cost from American Legion Emblem Sales. To purchase publications, call (888) 453-4466, visit [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or email [emblem@legion.org](mailto:emblem@legion.org).

The Americanism Division also has numerous free publications available for download at [legion.org/publications](http://legion.org/publications).

## COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

The American Legion remains focused on the welfare of our country's children and the issues facing our young people as it has ever been. The Americanism Commission's Committee on Children & Youth remains committed to serving the nation's youth.

The purpose of the Committee on Children & Youth is to formulate, recommend and implement plans, programs and activities designed to address three main areas: child safety, child well-being and family emphasis.

The "Children & Youth Programs" publication provides an overview of the major programs of the Committee on Children & Youth. The publication, along with other American Legion children and youth program publications, are available for download at [legion.org/youth](http://legion.org/youth).

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### For additional information

Visit [legion.org/youth](http://legion.org/youth) or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



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 [legion.org](https://www.legion.org)

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To contribute to one of The American Legion's programs that helps veterans,  
youths and others, please visit [legion.org/donate](https://www.legion.org/donate).