

SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM

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Welcome to the 2026-2027 Scholarships Program year.

Our theme from our Department Auxiliary President Ceil Cook is **“Simply the Best for Our Veterans”** and our National Auxiliary Presidents theme is **“Serving America’s Heroes.”**

As we start off our program year, the first scholarships program in the timeline will be the Voice of Democracy and the Patriot Pen essay contests. This year the themes are the same for both programs once again. That theme is **“What a Veteran Taught Me About America.”** Our challenge this year is connecting applicants with veterans so students can submit their best essays, especially if they do not know a veteran personally. Please think creatively about ways to help students connect with local veterans.

Many of our scholarships programs give students opportunities to show their creativity. Our job is to spread the word and encourage them to take that first step. If students have participated before, we should encourage them to continue for the experience and chance to broaden their knowledge. Reach out to local schools and administrators to identify the right contacts. Be sure to include homeschooled students as well, since their numbers have grown in recent years and they are a valuable resource. By educating ourselves and our youth, we can help create a brighter future and give students the tools to reach their potential.

VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIPS (VOD)

This year’s VOD theme is **“What a Veteran Taught Me About America.”** The Voice of Democracy Audio/Essay Contest is open to students in grades 9–12 by October 31, 2026, including those in public, private, parochial, approved home study programs in the U.S., its territories or possessions, and dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel attending overseas schools. U.S. citizenship is not required, but students must be lawful permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence and intend to become U.S. citizens when eligible. Foreign exchange students, students aged 20 or older, previous First Place Department winners, GED students, and adult education students are not eligible. Students must write an original essay on the theme and record it in their own voice, in English, on a flash drive or as a voice file; CDs are no longer accepted. No music, singing, poetry, sound effects, or background noise is allowed, and the recording must not identify the student by name, school, city, state, race, or national origin. Label the essay with the student’s name to show ownership.

The recording is limited to 3 to 5 minutes in length. Please adhere to this rule. The entry application, recorded speech, and a printed copy of this essay is submitted to your local VFW for judging. Judging is done on the recording. District level winners are required to submit a head and shoulder photograph with your submission of your entries. Please read the rules, one little mistake could disqualify your entry.

Complete rules and entry forms can be found at
vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships

SCHOLARSHIPS

Each Post may sponsor 1 winner for each 15 entries or fraction thereof. (If a Post receives 170 entries, they may sponsor 12 entries!) If you have remaining entries submitted to your Post, please check with other Posts in your District to see if they would like to sponsor one of your students. Please, IF possible, give ALL our entries a winning chance. Offer them to other Posts to involve more students. One winner from each District will then advance to the Department level for judging.

PLEASE, DO NOT MAIL DISTRICT LEVEL WINNERS TO STATE HEADQUARTERS.

DISTRICT WINNERS ARE TO BE MAILED TO: Mr. Vince Gavin

BY DECEMBER 9, 2026

State of PA, VFW VOD Chairman

658 Miller Street

Eynon, PA. 18403

DEADLINES: Entries to VFW Post: Midnight October 31, 2026

Completion of Post Judging: November 15, 2026

Completion of District Judging: December 1, 2026

District Winner Entry Form, recorded speech of essay, typed copy of Essay, and a head and shoulder photo must be included in the mailing. Please be sure to allow for the US Postal Service delivery turn around time.

DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY VOD AWARDS

First Place - \$500.00 Second Place - \$350.00 Third Place - \$250.00

PATRIOT'S PEN ESSAY CONTEST

This year's theme is: ***"What a Veteran Taught Me About America."*** This program is provided to ALL students in 6th through 8th Grades by October 31, 2026, enrolled in a public, private, parochial school, or an approved home study program in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Although U.S. citizenship is NOT required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residency (the application for which has not been denied) and intend to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students aged 20 or older, students who have previously placed in the National competition, GED and Adult Education students are not eligible. Please download the complete rules and official entry form at: vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships. All essays must be the original entries work and a product of the contestants' own thinking. The essay's theme should be positive and focused. Poetry is NOT accepted. Quotations may be used sparingly and identified when used. Parents, Counselors, or Teachers may check this essay for punctuation, grammar, and spelling, but the essay must remain the students' work.

Essays must be 300-400 words (+or-5 words) and typed in English. Every word counts in the length of the words, excluding title and footnotes. The essay must NOT identify the student in any way, (including but not limited to name, school, city, state, race, or national origin). Graphics and colors are NOT permitted on the essays. Only White 8"x 11.5" paper for printing. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME, GRADE, or DATE** on the essay. The completed entry form is your cover page. District level winners will be required to submit a head and shoulder photo along with their entries. The essay and application forms are submitted by the schools to the VFW Post for judging. One winner for each 15 entries or a part thereof, will advance to the District level for judging. One winner from each District advances to the Department for judging, and one Department winner advances to National finals.

SCHOLARSHIPS

PLEASE, DO NOT MAIL DISTRICT LEVEL WINNERS TO STATE HEADQUARTERS.

DISTRICT WINNERS ARE TO BE MAILED TO: Mr. Bill Lamond

BY DECEMBER 11, 2026

State of PA, VFW PP Chairman
3360 Nashotks Road
Madison Township, PA 18444
Email: ta30chev@gmail.com

DEADLINES: Entries to the sponsoring VFW Post- Midnight, October 31, 2026

Post Judging complete- November 15, 2026

District Judging complete- December 1, 2026

District Winner Entry Form, typed copy of Essay, and a head and shoulder photo must be included in the mailing. Please be sure to allow for the US Postal Service delivery turnaround time.

DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY PATRIOT'S PEN AWARD

First Place - \$400.00 and a Plaque

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Continuing Education Scholarships are offered to assist members and their immediate family members who wish to further their education by pursuing a college degree or career direction at a vocational/technical school. Must be 21 years old, and an Auxiliary member for a minimum of one year (in good standing) to qualify. The Continuing Education Scholarship is in the amount of \$1,250.

Applications are due to National Headquarters by February 15, 2027.

Application can be found at vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/continuing-education.

Mail applications to:

- Program Awards Administrator
VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111

Or email submissions to info@vfwauxiliary.org

- **Auxiliaries may make donations** to this program through MALTA. Select the "Make a Gift" tab in the system and select "Continuing Education" or mail to this address:

- VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
ATTN: Continuing Education Fund
406 W. 34th Street, 10th Floor
Kansas City, MO 64111



VFW "SPORT CLIPS HELP A HERO SCHOLARSHIP"

Introduced in 2013, this VFW program awards scholarships to qualifying service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to complete their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. ****While this scholarship is promoted through this program, it has not been adopted by the Auxiliary, donations to this program are reportable under the Veterans & Family Support Program****

YOUNG AMERICAN CREATIVE PATRIOTIC ART CONTESTS

- Student does NOT have to be related to a VFW of VFW Auxiliary member to enter.
- Open to students in grades 9-12 by March 31 Deadline who are enrolled in a public, private, parochial or home school program in the United States, it's territories and possessions, or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools.
- Although U.S. citizenship is NOT required, students must be lawful permanent residents or have applied for permanent resident (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen.
- Foreign exchange students age 20 or older, GED and adult education students are NOT eligible.
- Previous winners of VFW Auxiliary National 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contests are NOT eligible.
- Scholarships are paid directly to the American college, university vocational, technical or trade school of the winner's choice. Funds may be held for a maximum of (5) five years from the date of high school graduation.
- Students may enter BOTH contests in same Program Year but must complete and entry form for each.
- Entries must be submitted to a participating sponsoring VFW Auxiliary for the first level of judging. Entries mailed directly to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters will be disqualified.

Please download the fillable entry forms on MALTA. Complete rules are available at
<https://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships/young-american-creative-patriotic-art-contest/>

2-DIMENSIONAL PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST

Artwork may be done with oils, watercolors, pencils, pastels, charcoal, tempera, crayon, acrylics, markers, pen-and-ink, or any other media. Artwork must be on stretcher frames, canvas, or paper, and **may NOT** be smaller than 8" x 10", nor larger than 18" x 24" excluding mat. **DO NOT FRAME ENTRIES!** Entries NOT on stretcher frame or canvas board may be matted with only white matboard and must be reinforced with heavy paper or cardboard on the back so it does not bend. Mounted/floating matting is permissible but must be white. If the American flag is shown in the art, it must conform to the Federal Flag Code. Entries are judged on the Patriotic theme and technique. Students must submit their artwork with an entry form and a brief description of the patriotism being expressed in the artwork. (150 words or less, typed and in English. Both must be securely attached to the back of the art.

3-DIMENSIONAL PATRIOTIC ART CONTEST

Entry may be paper, papier mâché, pottery, sculpture, fabric, wood, metalwork, etc.

Artwork must be an original 3-dimensional piece of artwork. Entry may not be larger than 18" in any direction and may not weigh more than 5 pounds. Complete contest entry form and submit with entry. Complete typed explanation of the steps taken to create the 3-Dimensional art entry and an artist statement (250 words or less) and submit with entry. Parent or guardian signature required on contest entry form. If the American Flag is used, it must conform to the Federal Flag Code in relation to colors, number of stars and stripes and other pertinent rules of the code.

- **Digital art, photography, weapons, art generated by a 3-D printer and jewelry are NOT accepted.**

Mail entries to: Karen Mooney

81 Greenwood Drive

New Cumberland PA 17070

Deadlines for Patriotic Art and 3-Dimensional Art entries:

Participating VFW Auxiliary – Due by March 31, 2027

(District Judging is OPTIONAL)

VFW Auxiliary Department – Due by April 15, 2027

VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters – Due by May 5, 2027

DEPARTMENT AUXILIARY ART AWARDS

2- Dimensional

First Place - \$500.00

Second Place - \$350.00

Third Place - \$250.00

3-Dimensional

First Place - \$500.00 S

Second Place - \$350.00

Third Place - \$250.00

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM AWARDS

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that host the most outstanding “Red Carpet” event/celebration honoring VFW and VFW Auxiliary Scholarships participants.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Scholarships Chairman by March 31, 2027, for judging.

Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

DEPARTMENT SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM AWARDS

1. Citation to VFW Auxiliary sponsoring the Department first, second and third place winners of the **Voice of Democracy** Audio Essay Competition.
2. Citation to the VFW Auxiliary sponsoring the Department first, second and third place winners of the **Patriot’s Pen** Essay Competition.
3. Citation to the VFW Auxiliary sponsoring the Department first, second and third place winners of the **2-Dimensional Young American Creative Patriotic Art** Contest.
4. Citation to the VFW Auxiliary sponsoring the Department first, second and third place winners of the **3-Dimensional Patriotic Art** Contest.
5. Citation to VFW Auxiliary that has a winning entry in the **Continuing Education Scholarship**.

“BISCUIT IN THE BASKET” Recognition SCORES!

It is of utmost importance to recognize your winners at every level, who doesn’t love a “Stanley?”

Host a “Red Carpet” night and present certificates, gifts...social media highlights!

Be creative and celebrate their efforts and don’t forget to **THANK parents and teachers!**