

Scholarships Program

PROGRAM GOALS:

Student Participation * Recipient Recognition *Promoting Scholarship Opportunities * Increasing the Funds

DEPARTMENT PRESIDENT’S THEME

“Growing Stronger for Our Veterans”

NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S THEME

“Serving America’s Heroes”

It is truly an honor to serve as your 2026–2027 Department of Florida Scholarships Chairman. This year, I invite every Auxiliary in Florida to help us ***Plant the Seeds. Inspire the Voice. Create the Future.***

Scholarships are more than contests and awards — they are opportunities to encourage patriotism, creativity, leadership, education, and service in our communities. Through essays, speeches, artistic expression, and continuing education, we help young people and adult learners discover their voices while strengthening appreciation for America’s veterans and their sacrifices.

Every scholarship promoted, every student encouraged, every donation collected, and every entry submitted helps us strengthen our communities while investing in the future generation of patriotic Americans.

In addition to increasing participation and awareness, I hope we can work together this year to grow and increase scholarship funding opportunities through donations and creative fundraising efforts supporting the National Continuing Education Scholarship Fund and National Patriotic Art Scholarship Fund. By planting seeds today, we help create educational opportunities that will inspire future leaders, artists, and patriots for years to come.

Continuing Education Scholarship

The VFW Auxiliary Continuing Education Scholarship helps VFW Auxiliary members and their immediate family members continue their education through college, vocational school, technical school, or career training. This is a wonderful way to “Plant the Seeds” for personal growth and future success while supporting Auxiliary families.

Who Can Apply: VFW Auxiliary members, spouses, sons, and daughters. The qualifying Auxiliary member must have been a member for at least one full year by the application deadline. Applicants must be 21 years of age or older.

Deadlines:

- **July 1:** Application process begins
- **February 15:** Applications due to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters
- **May 1:** Scholarship recipients notified

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest

Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest gives high school students the opportunity to express patriotism through original artwork created during the current school year. Entries may be 2-dimensional artwork on canvas or paper, sized between 8”x10” and 18”x24”, or 3-dimensional artwork no larger than 18 inches in any direction and weighing no more than 5 pounds. Students must also prepare a typed explanation of 250 words

or less describing the patriotism expressed in their artwork. Auxiliaries are encouraged to promote this contest with schools, art teachers, homeschool groups, libraries, and community youth programs to help inspire young artists to share their patriotic vision.

Who Can Enter: Students in grades 9–12. (Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or older, GED and adult education students are ineligible.) Entry forms are available on the Department and National websites under resources

Deadlines:

- **March 31:** Student entries due to participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary
 - **April 15:** Department-level winning entry due to the Department
- **May 5:** Department winner due to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters

Please note: Digital art, photography, weapons and jewelry are **NOT ACCEPTED**.

3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest

The 3-Dimensional Patriotic Art Contest allows high school students to express patriotism through original three-dimensional artwork created during the current school year. Entries may be created using paper, papier-mâché, pottery, clay, metal work, fabric, or other appropriate materials.

Pieces must be no larger than 18 inches in any direction and may not weigh more than 5 pounds. Students must complete the official entry form and submit it with their entry.

Each student must also submit a typed explanation or artist's statement of 250 words or less describing the steps taken to create the artwork and the patriotism expressed in the piece. This contest encourages creativity, craftsmanship, and patriotic expression in a unique and meaningful way.

Who Can Enter: Students in grades 9–12. (Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or older, GED and adult education students are ineligible.)

Important Reminder: When a 3-D entry is mailed forward, a photo of the 3-D artwork must be included so the entry can be properly evaluated and documented.

Deadlines:

- **March 31:** Student entries due to participating/sponsoring VFW Auxiliary
 - **April 15:** Department-level winning entry due to the Department
- **May 5:** Department winner due to VFW Auxiliary National Headquarters

Please note: Weapons and jewelry are **NOT ACCEPTED**.

VFW Voice of Democracy

2026–2027 Theme: "What a Veteran Taught Me About America"

Voice of Democracy is the VFW's premier audio-essay scholarship contest for high school students. Students submit a 3–5-minute recorded essay, along with a written copy of the essay, based on the annual theme. This program gives students the opportunity to speak about patriotism, democracy, and what America means through their own voice. Recordings may be submitted on a flash drive, through the Scholars App platform when used by the local Post, or emailed directly to the Post with the Post's permission.

Who Can Enter: Students in grades 9–12. Entry forms are available on the Department and National websites under resources

Deadline:

- **October 31, 2026:** Student entries due via the Scholars App or at a participating local VFW Post.

VFW Patriot's Pen

2026–2027 Theme: “What a Veteran Taught Me About America”

Patriot's Pen is a patriotic essay contest for middle school students. It encourages students to reflect on America, citizenship, patriotism, and the lessons learned from veterans through a 300-400 word written essay.

Who Can Enter: Students in grades 6–8.

Entry forms are available on the Department and National websites under resources

Deadline:

- **October 31, 2026:** Student entries due to a participating local VFW Post.

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

A Citation and monetary award to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the membership classes that hosts the most outstanding “Red Carpet” event/celebration honoring VFW and VFW Auxiliary Scholarship participants.

Entry form is required and available on the Department website under programs – Scholarship and also in MALTA under Member Resources.

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

NATIONAL AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES:

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

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Scholarships Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

The Department Scholarships Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Scholarships Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging

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

Stoney Lawrentz-Edwards
Scholarship Chair
StoneyLawrentz@gmail.com

