



Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Scholarships Bulletin October-2026-2027

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HAVE YOU BEEN BACK TO THE SCHOOL?

It is hard to believe that we have **less than 31 days** to finalize everything for the **Voice of Democracy** and **Patriot's Pen** contests!

By now, your Auxiliary should have made contact with your local schools to verify that they are participating in these programs. If you haven't followed up recently, **now is the time!**

Remind teachers, counselors, and administrators that there is still time for students to complete their essays and submit them to your Auxiliary by **October 31, 2026**.

A simple follow-up visit, phone call, or email could be the reminder that encourages a teacher or student to participate.

HAVE YOU DECIDED ON YOUR PRIZES?

Has your Auxiliary decided what prizes you will award to students at the Auxiliary level?

If the prize amounts are not already established in your Standing Rules, make sure your Auxiliary votes on and approves them.

Once your prizes are determined, **let the students know what they are working toward!** Students may be even more motivated to participate when they know there is an award waiting for them.

Ideas for Student Awards & Recognition

Host a Pizza Party!-Consider providing a pizza party for **all students who participate** in the program. Incentives can make participation more exciting, and what student doesn't enjoy getting pizza instead of the regular school lunch?

Award Cash Prizes!-Some Auxiliaries provide cash awards to their top students. For example, prizes could range from **\$100 for first place to \$25 for additional winners**, depending on what your Auxiliary can afford.

Whatever you decide, the important thing is to recognize the students for the time and effort they put into their essays.

REMEMBER THE 1-FOR-EVERY-15 RULE

An Auxiliary may advance **one winning entry for every 15 entries received, or fraction thereof**, provided the requirements of the contest are met.

For example, if your Auxiliary receives **100 eligible entries**, you may advance **7 winning entries** to the District level.

When advancing multiple entries, remember that they must all be considered **first-place winners** at the Auxiliary level and should receive the **same first-place prize amount**.

Be sure to carefully follow all current program rules when selecting and advancing your winners.

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DUE DATES:

The Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Essays had to be turned into the Auxiliary by now and by November 16th they must be turned into District Chairman for the District Judging.

ROLL OUT THE RED CARPET!

Have you decided how you will recognize your students?

You might hold an awards ceremony immediately following the essay contests, or you could wait until all of your Auxiliary's scholarship programs have been completed and recognize everyone together.

Remember, this year's theme is **RED CARPET!**

We hope you will have some fun with it and **GO ALL OUT!** Roll out a red carpet, decorate with stars, create a photo area, invite families, and make your students feel like the stars they are.

These students worked hard on their essays. Let's make sure they know how proud we are of their accomplishments!

KEEP PROMOTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't forget the importance of continuing to promote our scholarship programs through social media.

The **Department Scholarships Program** page provides flyers, promotional graphics, and other valuable resources that are ready to download and share.

Post scholarship information on your Auxiliary's:

- Facebook page
- District social media pages
- *Instagram
- *Personal social media pages
- *YouTube

Encourage your fellow Auxiliary members to **LIKE, SHARE, and POST** the information as well. Every share gives us another opportunity to reach a student or parent who may not otherwise know these scholarships are available.

EVERY STUDENT DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY

Remember, these scholarship opportunities are not limited to students attending public schools.

Be sure to reach out to students attending:

Public Schools • Private Schools • Parochial Schools • Homeschool Programs

Every eligible student deserves the opportunity to participate, share their voice, and compete for these scholarships.

DON'T WAIT — FOLLOW UP TODAY!

A phone call, school visit, email, Facebook post, or conversation with a parent could result in another student participating.

Let's make the 2026–2027 scholarship year a successful one!

Nicole Koutz-Department Scholarships Chairman

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