



The American Legion is the nation's largest Veterans wartime organization. Central to its mission is to mentor youth, sponsor wholesome programs, advocate patriotism, and promote national security. **The American Legion Oratorical Contest** is an academic speaking challenge.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. The program has featured numerous politicians and prominent contestants over the years

Scholarship prizes are awarded at the County, District, Zone, Department, and National levels. Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$203,500 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets a \$25,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$22,500, and third gets \$20,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$2,000 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship. The American Legion's National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

Additional Information:

- High school students who are US citizens or lawful permanent residents under age 20 are eligible.
- You must also be:
 - Presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or home school
 - Enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest.
 - Either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department that they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition through only one department.

- 
- Speaking subjects must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government.
 - Prepared oration speeches are eight to ten minutes long
 - Assigned topic speeches are three- to five-minutes speeches on an assigned topic also are part of the contest.
 - Both Oratorical speeches are all presented from memory only. No Prompting, No notes, No podium, and No microphone.

Why You Should Be Interested:

- ✓ Do you know someone at your high school who is an excellent speaker?
- ✓ Could this individual use a college scholarship?

Your local American Legion post has information on how to qualify for \$203,500 in scholarships.

Local Post Contact:

Many Americans are poorly informed about basic constitutional provisions, according to a new national survey by the Annenberg Public Policy Center. The annual Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey finds that: More than half of Americans (53 percent) incorrectly think it is accurate to say that immigrants who are here illegally do not have any rights under the U.S. Constitution; More than a third of those surveyed (37 percent) can't name any of the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment; Only a quarter of Americans (26 percent) can name all three branches of government. "Protecting the rights guaranteed by the Constitution presupposes that we know what they are. The fact that many don't is worrisome," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania. "These results emphasize the need for high-quality civics education in the schools and for press reporting that underscores the existence of constitutional protections."

Please come out and show your support for our student contestants. They are the very best of our young people!





Department of New York American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program



“A Constitutional Speech Contest”

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible participants in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest” shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

All contestants must be bonafide students herein described as any student under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Finals Contest and who is presently enrolled in high school or junior high school (public, military, private, or parochial, or who are home schooled) in which the curriculum is of high school grade level commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of the contest. High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the Department finals contest. Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competitions in only one department (state).

CERTIFICATION

The Contestant Application (Form # 1) must be filled out and signed by the contestant, the principal of the high school, and parent or guardian. Both the Prepared Oration and Contestant Application (Form # 1) must be submitted to the County Chairman no later than mid-November

DATES OF CONTESTS

County contests will be held between December 1st, to December 30th. Please contact your County Chairman to find out the date of your contest. District contests are held between January 3rd, to January 31st and Zone contests are held between February 7th to February 21st. The dates of each level of competition are determined by the respective Chairmen. They will contact you once they have received your Contestant Application (Form # 1) and your Prepared Oration. The Department (State) Finals will be held in March with a cancellation date normally the following week of March, at 9:30 AM, at the Crown Plaza-Desmond Hotel, Albany, New York. All Contestants and Chaperones must be in Albany.

The National Finals in May at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan. The National Organization will bear the expenses for the contestant and their chaperone. See www.legion.org for additional information.

CONTEST FORMAT

New York is broken down into four levels of competition, County, District, Zone, and Department (State) Final. Each school may enter three (3) contestants in the County Contest. Preliminary County Contest maybe run if too many contestants enter prior to the County Final. Each District will structure their contest to conform to the number of contestants that have applied to compete in the County contests, and how many will advance into the District contest or contests. No County or District will have more than six contestants in any preliminary or final contests without the consent of the Department of New York Chairman. The District Chairman will report the first and second place winners to the Zone Chairman. Two contestants from the District contest will continue to the Zone contest, and then one contestant will go on to the Department (State) Final. There will be five contestants in the Department (State) Final of which one will go on to the National Finals.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

District Scholarship Awards: 1st Place \$600.00; 2nd Place \$500.00; 3rd to 6th Place \$150.00 Zone Scholarship Awards: 1st Place \$1,000.00; 2nd Place \$800.00; 3rd & 4th Place \$500.00

Department Scholarship Awards: 1st Place \$6,000.00; 2nd Place \$4,000.00; 3rd Place \$2,500.00; 4th & 5th Place. \$2,000.00 National Scholarship Awards: 1st Round each contestant receives \$2,000.00 Scholarship.

2nd Round each contestant other than the 3 National Finalists receive another \$2,000.00 Scholarship National Finalists: 1st Place \$25,000.00 2nd Place \$22,500.00 3rd Place \$ 20,000.00

HOW TO ENTER

Click on the Application link on the Oratorical home page and complete the Contestant Application (Form # 1).

Make sure everything on the registration form is filled in. Then send the registration form, along with a copy of your oration to your local American Legion County Organization.

Suffolk County Oratorical Chair: Rich Knustson – (631)-626-2911 Email: reknutson106@yahoo.com

District 10: Lenore Braithewaite (631)-842-2376 Email: Lenore72LAB@aol.com

Zone 2: Michael Pankowski – (631) 800-4061 (mikebets@optonline.net)

Application Link: <https://nylegion.net/oratorical-contest/>