



THE AMERICAN LEGION

# Children & Youth

## Department Chairman Program Guide



Americanism Commission's Committee on Children & Youth

**Disclaimer of liability**

The American Legion *Children & Youth Department Chairman Program Guide* ("guide") provides the reader with very general information about planning and conducting various programs. This guide is only intended to help assist volunteers and staff. With respect to information contained in this guide, neither The American Legion nor any of its officers, directors or employees make any warranty, express or implied, nor assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product or process implemented at the post or department level. This guide only constitutes general advice and recommendations for operations based on best practices. Information within the guide stating "shall or must" is based on federal law or federal/IRS regulations and mandates. All other items of information in this guide are general suggestions except for the National Constitution and By-Laws. This guide does not constitute any type of legal advice. If readers have any concerns about anything in this guide, they are strongly advised to contact their respective department and an attorney licensed in their state.

Please see 36 U.S.C. Section 21704: The Corporation (The American Legion) may provide guidance and leadership to organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts) ... but *may not control or otherwise influence the specific activities and conduct of such organizations (departments) and local chapters (posts)*. (emphasis added)

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# Introduction

On behalf of the National Americanism Commission's Committee on Children & Youth (C&Y), welcome to the Children & Youth team for this program year. Whether you are new to your position or a seasoned C&Y leader, your role is critical to our mission's success.

As the department C&Y chairman, you are the person American Legion posts and districts will look to for guidance in conducting C&Y programs. No matter your department's level of participation, there is always opportunity for growth.

National Headquarters' Americanism staff is here to help you take your programs to new heights. Use this manual as a reference guide, but watch for information throughout the year regarding ongoing programs, legislative efforts, meetings and the latest resources.

Have a question, suggestion or comment? Let us know how we can help. While we may not be able to meet every special request, we will do our best to assist you in your work.

The American Legion continues to do all it can to ensure **"a square deal for every child."** Thank you for continuing to serve our nation, and the interests of children and youth, in this challenging yet rewarding position.

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# The “Whole Child” Plan

In the years after the American Legion’s founding, members realized that neglect of family and child welfare problems affected disabled veterans’ rehabilitation. Following a year of careful study, the organization adopted the American Legion Child Welfare program in 1924.

Established a year later, in 1925, the American Legion National Child Welfare Division put forward the “Whole Child” plan, stating that the child of every veteran “should have a home ... health, education, character, and opportunity.” Its three principles are:

- **Strengthen the family unit against the forces of a more complex society.** The Legion recognizes that the most normal environment for children is at home with his or her own parents. Our efforts have always been directed toward keeping the family together.
- **Extend support to sound organizations and facilities that provide services for children and youth.** The Legion always acts in a supplementary capacity rather than duplicating the efforts of existing agencies.
- **Maintain a well-rounded program that meets the needs of today’s young people.** This third principle provides elasticity to address all matters of child health and child welfare, and affirms the Legion’s commitment to all children.

While these principles are the heart of the “Whole Child” plan, four methods are the muscle: **Education, Legislation, Material Aid and Prevention.** As you read this manual, you will become more familiar with each of these methods.

Over the decades, the development of new and improved public programs to provide economic security for children has made it possible for the Legion to focus on other problem areas. To date, no area of child welfare has gone untouched by the collective hand of The American Legion. The very program of Children & Youth itself is unique from any agency, governmental or private, in its ability to expand from every area of concern for child welfare and health.

While The American Legion’s list of accomplishments is long, it is by no means complete. The American Legion will always seek new, innovative and better approaches to child welfare programs. Without knowing what challenges will face our youth tomorrow, we at least know their survival may well depend on the quality of care, education and training we provide today.

The American Legion is proud of all our members do on behalf of our nation’s youth, along with our extended family: American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders. Together, our efforts in the area of child welfare are a testament to the Legion’s ability to adapt to changing needs while maintaining high principles and taking on increased responsibilities as necessary.

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# Children & Youth Components

## Coordinated Committees on Children & Youth

Coordinated committees are vital to the success and effectiveness of Children & Youth programs. Departments, districts and posts that run the most outstanding programs year after year have a concerted effort among all members of the American Legion Family. Since there is one Children & Youth Program for The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion, all may follow the program objectives as outlined by the Legion.

Coordinated committees are cooperative ventures organized at the post, district and department levels to coordinate C&Y activities of the Legion, Auxiliary and SAL. By working together, we reduce duplication of efforts and expense, and ultimately serve a greater number of children.

The American Legion Children & Youth chairman may serve as chairman of the Coordinated Committee, with the Auxiliary and SAL Children & Youth chairmen serving as members. Other members may include:

- The Legion adjutant
- The Auxiliary secretary
- The Legion commander (ex officio)
- The Auxiliary president (ex officio)
- SAL Children & Youth chairman
- American Legion Child Welfare Foundation chairman, if applicable
- Additional members, depending on the size and scope of your C&Y activities.

**The basic function of the Coordinated Committee is to put forth an organized effort to carry out the Children & Youth program in the most efficient and effective manner.**

## National Americanism Commission's Committee on Children & Youth

### Purpose

To formulate, recommend and implement plans, programs, and activities designed to:

- Assure care and protection for the children of veterans;
- Improve conditions for all children and youth with due concern for maintaining the integrity of the family home;
- Prevent social and physical ills of children and youth where possible, utilizing services of and cooperating with sound organizations and agencies for children and youth;
- Maintain a balanced program that provides for their physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs;
- Such other purposes as may be assigned to it by the National Executive Committee.

## National Headquarters Children & Youth Staff

The role of the National Headquarters staff is to serve the Legion's membership. We are here to assist and support you in carrying out your mission as it relates to children and youth. In addition to correspondence, email and phone conversations, staff members may be available for visiting and attending your official functions. If you would like a member of the national staff to attend your department convention, meetings or training sessions, make a request through your department.

The national staff keeps in touch with many of the major agencies and organizations interested in children and youth. Should you need additional information on a specific topic, we can put you in touch with others who can assist you.

Contact us at (317) 630-1323 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST Monday through Friday) or email [c&y@legion.org](mailto:c&y@legion.org).

## National Resolutions

Learn what American Legion resolutions are, why we have them, and how to write a resolution by downloading a guide at [legion.org/publications/161001/resolution-booklet](http://legion.org/publications/161001/resolution-booklet).

For samples of resolutions, go to [archive.legion.org](http://archive.legion.org).

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## Legislative efforts

Legislation is a critical part of accomplishing the Legion's C&Y goals. We have helped more children through sound legislation than any other means.

Legislation is more than new laws; it also includes administration of laws at every level, public awareness of existing laws and necessary amendments.

Every year, The American Legion is challenged to support various new or amended legislation and public appropriations at the local, state and federal levels of government. Nationally, our position on any legislation is based on the mandates of the national convention and the National Executive Committee.

Resolutions and testimony alone do not get the job accomplished. A concerted effort from the entire American Legion Family can reach people at the grassroots level. However, legislation is a last resort. When we can assist others without legislation, we should.

## Local efforts

In each community, local legislative action deserves continued attention:

- City ordinances affecting children & youth
- Appropriations for schools and school budgets
- Immunization
- Child abuse and neglect statutes
- Juvenile justice (courts, probation, correction)
- Local public welfare departments
- Traffic regulations
- Playgrounds
- All other matters relating to the health and welfare of children

If the post C&Y chairman or any other member believes there is some action The American Legion should take regarding local government, the proper procedure is to present the recommended action at a post meeting in the form of a resolution. If the resolution is adopted, the post commander or other post officers have the authority to inform the local government of the local American Legion's position on a particular matter.

There are times when the post C&Y chairman recognizes the need for changes at the state or federal levels in laws pertaining to children and youth. He or she should submit a resolution to the post, and if it is adopted, forward it through the proper channels as determined by the department constitution and by-laws.

## Department efforts

All legislative activity pertaining to children and youth should be carried out only with the full knowledge and support of the department headquarters and the department legislative committee. When your department C&Y committee has outlined a specific legislative agenda, it is imperative that department guidelines be observed. After program approval, the C&Y committee can assist the legislative committee through research and making contacts to support the proposed legislation. When legislative resolutions refer only to proposals in state legislatures, they are not forwarded to National Headquarters, since departments handle their own state legislative activities.



## National efforts

Once a resolution calling for legislative action becomes an official mandate of The American Legion, the onus is on the National Legislative Commission for appropriate congressional action. After the national convention or the National Executive Committee approves a legislative mandate, the Legislative Commission is responsible for petitioning Congress to support or oppose federal legislation connected to that mandate. The principal functions of the Legislative Commission are the planning, strategy and dissemination of information and coordination of American Legion mandates.

## Testimony

Americanism staff is often called upon to offer testimony regarding federal legislation related to our mandates. Testimony may be needed at local, department or national levels to help carry out the Legion's legislative mandates. The Legislative Commission will advise the Americanism Commission and its Committee on Children & Youth when written or oral testimony is required. The Committee on Children & Youth does the research and drafts testimony that is submitted to the National Legislative Commission via the Americanism Commission. A formal draft is then composed and submitted through proper congressional channels. Your department has guidelines outlining procedures regarding testimony given at the state and local levels.

## Report to Congress

The American Legion is required by our congressional charter (36 U.S.C. Section 21708) to report to Congress annually on what it accomplished the preceding year in its programs. **The department C&Y chairman is responsible for submitting all necessary reports in a timely manner so we comply with our congressional charter.** The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) provides us with the data necessary to accurately complete this report. Urge your posts to fulfill this important obligation.

## Reporting procedures

In most cases, your department headquarters receives a bulk shipment of CPR forms from National Headquarters in early February. In a few departments, the forms are sent directly to the posts. The CPR form has three parts; after completing it to the best of their knowledge, posts will send two copies to department headquarters and retain the third (pink) copy in their files. Of the two copies sent to department headquarters, the department adjutant will retain a copy and forward the second to National Headquarters. Download a CPR Form online at [legion.org/publications/161252/consolidated-post-report](http://legion.org/publications/161252/consolidated-post-report).

Posts can fill out and submit CPR forms online at [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org); the forms are located under "Post and Department" options. After completing the form online, click "submit" to send the report to National Headquarters. A copy will automatically be sent to department headquarters.

## Chairmen duties

Many department chairmen find difficulty in receiving a high level of response with the Consolidated Post Report form. Yet it is necessary for a complete picture of post activities. The CPR is a national form of reporting that is the envy of other organizations. We must make it clear to all posts that this is how we must report.

As chairman for the Children & Youth program of your department, you surely have a great deal of pride in what is accomplished for young people. This accomplishment may only be a few hours of volunteer time or a few dollars donated to a worthy cause. However insignificant it may seem, your activities deserve recognition and should be reported. The American Legion's federal charter requires us to submit an annual report of our activities and expenditures to Congress. Therefore, the number of posts reporting C&Y activities in your department is extremely important.

The CPR covers the period of June 1 to May 31 of the current program year. Part of your job is to encourage all post C&Y chairmen to fill out the section pertaining to C&Y activities.

Submitting the CPR to National Headquarters by July 1 of the current year is the department adjutant's responsibility. The Department Children & Youth Report is your responsibility and must be received at National Headquarters by July 1 of the current program year.

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# Children & Youth Program Reporting Awards

The Committee on Children & Youth and the National Executive Committee have authorized a number of program and reporting awards. **For your convenience, appropriate order forms for all awards are in the appendix.**

## Post awards

The Committee on Children & Youth offers three post-level Children & Youth program awards. After determining which posts deserve the following awards, forward the appropriate form as indicated on the specific award order form.

### Annual Children & Youth Citation

Upon certification by the department children & youth chairman, this award is available to any post that has reported an outstanding Children & Youth program for the year. The Americanism Division will send a supply of citations to the department adjutant or the C&Y chairman, who will assume responsibility for having individual citations completed and awarded.

### Special Children & Youth Citation

This award recognizes posts within a district that have conducted outstanding C&Y programs during the reporting year. One post is selected from each of the four membership categories:

Category 1	15 to 99 members
Category 2	100 to 299 members
Category 3	300 to 499 members
Category 4	500+ members

### Certificate of Meritorious Service

The Committee on Children & Youth issues this award for meritorious work performed by a post. It is available to only one post in each of the four membership categories within a department. These posts must have distinguished themselves as having the best Children & Youth program in their respective category. Once you have determined the top four standards for judging, posts' reports are left entirely to the discretion of the departments. Departments are the final and sole authority in the selection of posts to receive these awards. **Give citations only in cases where a post has actually reported creditable Children & Youth work. A report form with the notation "no report" is just that.**

The Committee on Children & Youth believes you are the best judge of who deserves these awards; therefore, supportive material is not required for justification.

## District award

The National Executive Committee has authorized one district reporting award. The National Achievement Award is given to districts achieving 100% Children & Youth reporting by posts in the district. Percentages of reporting are to be based solely on the CPR form.

## Department awards

The Committee on Children & Youth has authorized department C&Y reporting awards:

### 100% Consolidated Post Reporting Award

This award recognizes departments achieving 100% post reporting on the CPR form, as verified by National Headquarters. Qualifying departments receive their citations in the fall.

## **100% Children & Youth Post Narrative Reporting Award**

For a department to qualify for this award, the department chairman must have received a copy of a narrative report from each of his or her posts. These in turn are compiled by the chairman into a single department narrative report, which is mailed to the Americanism Division, separate from the CPR. When you have determined that your department has achieved 100% C&Y narrative reporting, fill out the appropriate form, attach a copy of each report and forward it to the Americanism Division. Only those departments having 100% Children & Youth post reporting should submit this report for verification.

## **Individual department narrative forms for reporting post Children & Youth activities**

By action of the Executive Section of the Commission on Children & Youth meeting on Oct. 15-16, 1979, it was recommended and agreed that each department C&Y chairman be responsible for disseminating the department's own narrative reporting form. The committee has agreed to respond to such involvement by offering 100% Department Narrative awards to those departments able to verify receipt of such reports from all their posts.

The department chairman is required to submit a Children & Youth narrative report to the Americanism Division containing the compiled information from posts. This approach accomplishes two major goals:

- Requires the department chairman to take full responsibility for narrative reporting.
- Offers reporting awards for 100 percent Children & Youth narrative participation at the department level, based on the department's own C&Y narrative reporting form.

To encourage department C&Y chairmen to assume the responsibility of distributing their own narrative forms to posts in their departments, the Committee on Children & Youth will recognize a department's own Children & Youth narrative reporting form for the purpose of a 100% Post Children & Youth Narrative Reporting Award.

Use of a narrative form developed and used by your committee serves three purposes:

- Provides you with information enabling you to better judge winners for various awards.
- Provide a better picture of overall Children & Youth efforts.
- Serve as the basis for a 100% narrative reporting award.

As with the Consolidated Post Report, it will be your job to encourage all posts to complete your department's Children & Youth narrative reporting form.

If your department does not have an established form for reporting posts' C&Y activities, it will be necessary to create one. It is recommended you use the suggested Children & Youth Post Narrative Report in the appendix.

Make special note of the deadlines for all submissions of reports and requisitions located on the specific form.

## **Children & Youth resolutions**

Download a summary of current Americanism resolutions at [legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/2017\\_Americanism\\_Summary\\_Resolutions.pdf](https://legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/2017_Americanism_Summary_Resolutions.pdf).

## Publications

Download and print all Children & Youth publications at [legion.org/publications](http://legion.org/publications).

Any successful C&Y program needs a plan as well as the materials necessary to accomplish the objectives. Our C&Y publications are available to help you develop and carry out your program.

## Special projects and needs

At times, you will require additional publications to promote projects or fulfill special needs – an American Legion booth at a county fair, for example, or a workshop on a particular program. Email your request to [c&y@legion.org](mailto:c&y@legion.org).

Children & Youth publications are not automatically sent to departments. For posts in your department to receive such materials, the department must make a request to National Headquarters or you may download and print the necessary publications.

## Budget

As department chairman, you may need to know the financial limits of your program. Specifically, know the answer to the following questions:

- How much is budgeted for the department's Children & Youth program?
- What is the accepted procedure for submitting a proposal to your department finance committee?
- How often does your finance committee meet?
- What percentage of your budget is earmarked for travel, printing, special meetings, special projects, or other areas not mentioned?

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## Annual Programs

### American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc.

Established in 1954, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc., is a repository of funds from individuals who wish to contribute to the betterment of the nation's children. Our foremost philanthropic priority is to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth by aiding progress in the field of child welfare through dissemination of knowledge about research, studies, surveys and projects, or by supporting programs and activities benefiting the welfare of children and youth.

Not all American children grow up inside the comfortable definition of normal childhood development. For thousands, each day is a challenge marked by pain, prayer and perseverance. Many of them require specialized care. To overcome their obstacles, they need help from you and the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

For more information on CWF, go to [cwf-inc.org/](http://cwf-inc.org/).

For grant information, contact (317) 630-1202 (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. EST Monday through Friday) or email [admin@cwf-inc.org](mailto:admin@cwf-inc.org).

### CWF awards

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation presents annual awards for outstanding support of C&Y programs. Awards are based on contribution year (June 1 of the current year through May 31 of the following year). Learn more about CWF awards online at [legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/publications/cwf\\_awards.pdf](http://legion.org/sites/legion.org/files/legion/publications/cwf_awards.pdf).

## Children's Action Teams

Department Children & Youth chairmen are responsible for promoting The American Legion's Child Welfare Foundation. CWF's mission depends heavily on your efforts. One of the best ways to promote CWF is through a Children's Action Team, or CAT.

As CATs, you and your colleagues are representatives of – and advocates for – CWF in your department.

The vast majority of donations come from the memberships of The American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion. Therefore, you need to encourage individuals, posts, units, salons, squadrons, districts and departments to contribute on a regular and annual basis.

Just imagine: if all of our local-level organizations committed to issuing a \$25 check annually to CWF, such contributions would ensure a steady growth in principal and greatly enhance CWF's grant-giving capabilities. In raising funds, the sky's the limit.

If your organization has a newsletter, place an article about what you are doing to support CWF. Make it a challenge. Do the same thing with your department and district publications.

Enlist the support of your commanders and adjutants for announcements. Set up a small display at post, district and department meetings. Organize a fundraising dinner, golf outing or sports tournament, with proceeds benefiting CWF. Find local merchants willing to donate merchandise and conduct a raffle or silent auction.

While attending various functions around your state, be on the lookout for children and youth organizations that may need CWF assistance. Tell them about us and give them our mailing and website addresses. If they want to write to us for an application, ask them to mention your name in the correspondence so we can track applications resulting from your efforts.

It is our sincere hope that through your work, the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation will enjoy greater annual support by members of your department.



I am interested in learning how to become an American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Children's Action Team (CAT) member for the

Department/Detachment of

Last Name		
First Name		Middle Initial
Address		
City	State	ZIP
Home Phone		
Cell Phone		
Email		

I certify that I am a member in good standing with The American Legion / the American Legion Auxiliary / Sons of The American Legion.

Membership No.

I understand that should I qualify, I must successfully complete a written exam and remit a \$25 donation to CWF to become a fully certified CAT member for my department.

Signature	Date
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For more information, contact CWF at (317) 630-1202 or go to [legion.org/cwf](http://legion.org/cwf).

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# April is Children & Youth Month

In 1938, a major program change designated April as Child Welfare Month, and The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary began a cooperative venture to celebrate the nation's children and youth.

Annually, The American Legion observes *April Is Children & Youth Month*. Departments, posts, units and squadrons are encouraged to conduct a Children & Youth activity or activities in April, informing members and the community of The American Legion's work on behalf of young people.

Download the *April Is Children & Youth Month* brochure from the Children & Youth section at [legion.org/publications](http://legion.org/publications). It includes activity suggestions, along with a sample proclamation and news release. This publication is available online only.

## Child safety

Child safety is everyone's business. In 1992, the Committee on Children & Youth unanimously voted to designate the Child Safety Program as one of our annual programs. Download the "Play It Safe" at [legion.org/publications](http://legion.org/publications), under Children & Youth.

## Make Halloween a Safe and Fun Night

Since the early 1970s, the Legion's National Committee on Children & Youth has encouraged members and posts to conduct safe Halloween for children in an effort to reduce accidents associated with the holiday. A brochure is available for download at [legion.org/publications](http://legion.org/publications), under Children & Youth.

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# Temporary Financial Assistance

Since 1925, the American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program has awarded cash grants to minor children of active-duty military personnel and American Legion members. These grants help families in need meet the cost of shelter, food, utilities and health expenses, thereby keeping the child or children in a more stable environment.

Download the TFA brochure at [legion.org/publications](http://legion.org/publications), under Children & Youth.



Post Name		No.	District No.
Department of		Present Membership	
City		State	
Address			
Date	Signature		

- (1) Did your post file a Consolidated Post Report form?  Yes  No
- (2) Did your post participate in any of the following National Children & Youth Program objectives?
- Family Emphasis (National Family Week)
  - Child Safety (Drug Abuse Prevention, Youth Suicide Prevention, etc.)
  - Children's Miracle Network
  - Halloween Safety
  - Missing Children
  - Missing Children
  - Temporary Financial Assistance
  - Temporary Financial Assistance

(3) Estimate the number of volunteer service hours provided by the membership of your post for the children and youth in your community:

(4) Please estimate the amount of money your post expended for administrative expenses for Children & Youth overhead (postage, printing, conferences, travel, salaries, etc.) \$

(5) Use the remaining space on this sheet to describe, in detail, specific C&Y activities promoted by your post. (Attach extra sheets as needed.) This section of the narrative is most important to your department Children & Youth committee in determining various awards.

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Instructions on other side



# INSTRUCTIONS

## For the post Children & Youth chairman:

1. Before completing this form, complete your section of the Consolidated Post Report.
2. Fill out this narrative report form.
3. Send this completed form, and any additional information, to your department C&Y chairman at department headquarters.
4. This narrative report form is NOT to be attached to the Consolidated Post Report form. It is intended for use by your department chairman in determining post C&Y awards and validating to National Headquarters your department's attainment of 100 percent C&Y post narrative reporting.
5. To make your total report more effective, we recommend you make three copies: one for your file, and one to be mailed to both your district and department C&Y chairman.

## For the department Children & Youth chairman:

1. This narrative report form should be helpful in determining winners of various C&Y reporting awards and citations.
2. This form is for use within your department. DO NOT FORWARD individual post forms to National Headquarters.
3. Review the Consolidated Post Report for each narrative received. Together, they should provide an accurate picture of each post's particular C&Y program.
4. Each question has been designated by a letter. The department chairman's reporting sheet references the same letters. It is your responsibility to transfer all information from the narrative form to the chairman's reporting sheet.
5. For the purpose of 100% narrative reporting awards, National Headquarters will recognize this form. The decision to recognize this form in no way removes the responsibility of the post for submitting the Consolidated Post Report form. As chairman of a major program within your department, you should strongly encourage posts to file the CPR.
6. To provide feedback to your districts, you may wish to compile separate reports concerning narratives at the district level and mail those figures to the appropriate C&Y officers.

### Disclaimer of liability

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