

Hello to all my fellow VFW Auxiliary members!

I just want to say how much of an honor it is to be the Department of South Dakota Scholarships Committee chairman again for the 2024-2025 year. Let's make this an amazing year for Department President Colleen Foland! Now, let's get down to business.

There are a total of 5 scholarships available through the VFW and VFW Auxiliary: Voice of Democracy (VFW), Patriot's Pen (VFW), Continuing Education (Auxiliary), and Young American Creative Patriotic Art (Auxiliary) (two categories: 2-Dimensional and 3-Dimensional). The information you will need for your year-end reports for each scholarship is already on our new website as "2024-2025 Year End Report".

All scholarships have their own deadlines and requirements, which are available at: <https://vfwauxiliary.org/scholarships>, in MALTA Membership Resources <https://malta.vfwauxiliary.org>, or our very own website <https://vfwauxsd.org> under "Programs", then "Scholarships".

One question that has come up a few times with regards to the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy entries in ScholarsApp was there were times when a notice will appear that states "Parts of their essay may include parts written by AI." I reached out to my Scholarship Ambassador and this was her response: "As an English teacher, I completely disqualify any essay using AI or ChatGpt. If you or your committee find the essay not to be the student's original work, disqualification should be next. It is really hard and I would make every attempt to verify the validity of the essay before disqualification." She also informed me that she will work to find resources for us to use before she puts out her next blog. When I receive those resources, I will be sure to add them to the report.

- **Voice of Democracy Scholarship (essay and oral presentation)**
  - Theme: "Is America Today, Our Forefather's Vision?"
    - **Post/Auxiliary Deadline: October 31, 2024**
    - **District Deadline: November 15, 2024**
    - **Department Deadline: January 10, 2025**
    - **National Deadline: January 15, 2025**
- **Patriot's Pen Essay Scholarship**
  - Theme: "My Voice in America's Democracy?"
    - **Post/Auxiliary Deadline: October 31, 2024**
    - **District Deadline: November 15, 2024**
    - **Department Deadline: January 10, 2025**
    - **National Deadline: January 15, 2025**
- **Continuing Education Scholarship**
  - **Department Deadline: February 15, 2025**
  - **National Deadline: February 15, 2025**
- **Young American Creative Patriotic Art Scholarship**
  - 2-Dimensional
    - **Post/Auxiliary Deadline: March 31, 2025**
    - **District Deadline: Optional**
    - **Department Deadline: April 15, 2025**
    - **National Deadline: May 5, 2025**
  - 3-Dimensional
    - **Post/Auxiliary Deadline: March 31, 2025**
    - **District Deadline: Optional**
    - **Department Deadline: April 15, 2025**
    - **National Deadline: May 5, 2025**