

Honoring Those Who Teach

The VFW launched the Smart/Maher National Citizenship Education Teacher Award in 1999 to recognize certified teachers for promoting citizenship education. One K-12 teacher is selected as a department winner. The department winner and their school will receive a National Citation. Visit this link for more information and for an entry form: vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/teacher-of-the-year.

Eligibility

Teachers who promote civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism are prime candidates for this award. For example, do you know a teacher who plans field trips to city hall or organizes community volunteer projects? Maybe you know an instructor who invites veterans into the classroom to discuss their military experiences. Perhaps you are familiar with a teacher who fosters the development of democratic values and beliefs through special projects. If you know of such a teacher, honor him or her today.

All current certified/licensed teachers in grades K-12 are eligible. Previous national winners are ineligible. Nominations can be submitted by themselves, fellow teachers, supervisors, family members or other interested individuals.

Deadlines

Post judging should be completed and their winning entry sent to the District, if applicable, or Department by January 1. Department judging should be completed and their winner's entry be submitted to VFW National Headquarters by February 1 by completing a VFW Department Teacher Award Citation Request Form located on the VFW website. Post chairmen must be sure to send the original entry form of the winner along with a one-page resume as a minimum, or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, such as references, news articles, etc. Also good quality head and shoulders photograph from the winning teachers, if available.

Judging

Select competent and unbiased judges. A panel of at least three to five judges is recommended. The VFW chairman should be present at the judging to provide assistance but should not be one of the judges. Prior to the judging, the chairman should review all entry forms to ensure they adhere to the rules.

Judges should grant points based on four criteria with the potential of 100 points as follows:

1-25 points - Does the teacher teach and/or model good citizenship and community involvement?

1-25 points - An innovative approach to teaching citizenship.

1-25 points - Development of resources to teach citizenship education.

1-25 points - Passion for teaching citizenship education.

NOTE: Judging sheets are available on later pages.

Running the Program

Here are some important points to remember when conducting the Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award Program.

- Know the program procedures and judging guidelines thoroughly.
- Develop a good working relationship with your Post's Auxiliary chairman.
- Contact schools early and make a point of explaining the importance of the program to the principal.
- Send a news release to your local media with the names of your winning teachers (see website for sample).
- Recognize your participants (both winners and judges) with official VFW awards - see the official VFW Store catalog (or visit vfwstore.org for ideas.)
- Forward your winning Post's entries to the Department as soon as the competition is finished.

Winning Entry Checklist

Here's what your Post needs to have to your District, if applicable, or Department:

- Winning teacher's entry form
- Teacher's one-page resume as a minimum or up to five pages as a maximum of documentation of their teaching experience, such as references, news articles, etc.
- Good quality head and shoulders photograph of the teacher, if available.

If you have any questions, please contact your Department Headquarters or Tammy Beauchamp in VFW Programs: phone: 816.756.3390, ext 6287 email: tbeauchamp@vfw.org.