



The American Legion College began at the 1944 National Convention with Resolution No. 138 to help educate and integrate veterans joining the Legion after World War II. The first two Legion College sessions convened at National Headquarters in Indianapolis in July (see image) and December 1946, and covered a variety of topics, including Legion Service Work, Youth Programs, Child Welfare, Legion Legislation, Veterans Preference, Community Service Programs, and Legion Public Relations and Speeches.

Additional sessions from 1947 to 1949 trained hundreds of future Legion leaders. A session in December 1950 was canceled because enrollment requirements weren't met, but with the influx of Korean War veterans, two more sessions were conducted in 1954. By 1955, a number of departments were already offering their own Legion Colleges. This became the preferred method for training future leaders due to budgetary considerations and the ability to offer Legion education to more Legionnaires through their departments.

The national-level Legion College was reinstituted based on recommendations from the 1997 21st-Century Ad Hoc Committee report. The first Legion College since 1954 convened in November 1999, with 34 Legionnaires participating. Legion College continues to be an annual event that educates students in leadership, management and communication.

The National American Legion College embraces a servant leadership model, that equips Legionnaires with the skills to lead through service, inspire others, and strengthen The American Legion's mission.

This six-day immersive experience goes beyond traditional leadership education as it fosters a deep understanding of The American Legion's core values, and the power of collaborative, service-driven leadership. Students will develop practical strategies to lead with empathy, accountability, and vision, ensuring they are prepared to build strong teams, enhance community impact, and guide The American Legion into the future. Through critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and hands-on learning, participants will gain the confidence and knowledge to lead at every level within their posts, districts, departments, and beyond.



2000 - James Lee - Post 72, Ada
2001 - Ronald Mullen - Post 308, Tulsa
2005 - Michael Taylor - Post 12, Warr Acres
2006 - Joseph Steil - Post 88, Norman
2008 - Paul Bettis - Post 88, Norman
2008 - Roy Clingenpeel - Post 183, Ryan
2009 - Gerald Pope - Post 190, Covington
2010 - John Benge - Post 135, Wagoner
2010 - Lisa Milner - Post 1, Tulsa
2013 - Robert Willis - Post 111, Edmond
2014 - Coral Porch - Post 445, Krebs
2015 - Ernest Martin - Post 88, Norman
2016 - Ron Gott - Post 123, Okemah
2017 - Paul Rizo - Post 15, Muskogee
2018 - Timothy Smith - Post 20, Fort Gibson
2019 - Sammy Padgett - Post 445, Krebs
2021 - Brett Martin - Post 12, Warr Acres
2021 - Samuel McPherson - Post 5, Kingfisher
2022 - Elmo May - Post 146, Sayre
2022 - Lee Cathey - Post 178, Grove



2023 - Hayden Woods - Post 164, Tishomingo

2023 - Patricia Mathes-Kerr - Post 64, Chandler

2025 - Shirley May - Post 146, Sayer

2026 - Michael Kerr - Post 64, Chandler