

About the 2026 National Civics Bee®



Background for Educators & Parents

The National Civics Bee® is a national nonpartisan competition that encourages young Americans to engage in civics and contribute to their communities. Participating 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students flex their civics knowledge for a chance to win recognition and cash prizes, and there is no cost to participate.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation created the National Civics Bee® because we believe informed and active citizens make for a strong country, a strong economy, and a strong workforce, and that our continued prosperity depends on the strength of all three.

For the 2026 National Civics Bee®, middle school students will submit answers in response to the following prompts:

- Identify a specific problem, challenge, or opportunity in your community. What can you do to contribute to its improvement? (200 words minimum - 250 words maximum)
- What individuals or organizations would you work with to accomplish your solution? Examples include elected officials, business leaders, and nonprofits. (200 words minimum - 250 words maximum)
- How does your solution include [Founding Principles and Civic Virtues](#)? (200 words minimum - 250 words maximum)

Visit our website at www.nationalcivicsbee.org to learn more! Email us at civictrust@uschamber.com to get involved.



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What is the Structure of the Competition?

The National Civics Bee® is hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in partnership with state and local chambers of commerce from across the country.

The contest contains four phases:

- **Phase 1 - Essay Round:** Students submit essays in response to the 2026 National Civics Bee® Essay Prompt.
- **Phase 2 - Local Competitions:** Essay winners compete in a 90-minute, in-person event featuring two rounds of civics questions followed by a Q&A round. The top three winners receive cash prizes and advance to the State Finals.
- **Phase 3 - State Finals:** Local winners compete in their State Finals, another 90-minute live event featuring three rounds. The top three finalists receive cash prizes, and the winner advances to the national competition.
- **Final Round - National Competition:** State champions receive a trip to Washington, DC to compete in the national-level competition hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

The National Civics Bee® is open to middle school students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. To be eligible to participate in the National Civics Bee®, an applicant (“Entrant”) must:

- Be a student in grades six through eight at the time of entry;
- Enter only one local chamber competition, which must be in their state of residence;
- Be the sole author of their entry – no group entries or entries written by parents will be accepted;
- Submit their entry in the English language;
- Submit a new, unique entry, if they’ve participated in any past National Civics Bee® contests;
- Agree to all National Civics Bee® Rules, including potentially attending the local, state, and national competitions.

*Immediate family members of Co-Sponsors and individuals residing in their households are not eligible entrants. **There is no cost to enter the competition.***

How to Apply?

Students submit their essays online. Students may use the [2026 Essay Guide](#) to help prepare their essays. The online essay portal opens in September 8, 2025 and closes in February 3, 2026. Visit www.nationalcivicsbee.org for the latest news on the application process, deadlines, and resources.

