

Official Rules of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation 2027 National Civics Bee® Contest – Essay Round (“Essay Round Rules”)



Version Date: September 3, 2026

CONTEST ADMINISTRATION

The National Civics Bee® contest is a civics-focused, non-partisan competition owned and organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 1615 H Street NW, Washington D.C., 20062 (“Foundation”), comprising multiple competition rounds (collectively, the “NCB Contest”). The 2027 NCB Contest begins with this Essay Round (the “Essay Round”) and will end with a National Competition. Foundation administers the Essay Round and will administer and host the National Competition. All other competition rounds of the NCB Contest (including Regional Competitions, Statewide Competitions, and State Competitions) are administered solely by third party organizations under agreement with Foundation to organize and host a Foundation-sanctioned round of the NCB Contest, as described in more detail below.

These Essay Round Rules govern the Essay Round only. Each round of the NCB Contest is governed by its own set of rules. Any provisions set out in these Essay Round Rules regarding other rounds are for informational purposes only and do not constitute rules with respect to any competition round other than the Essay Round.

NCB CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to participate in the Essay Round and all subsequent rounds of the NCB Contest, an applicant (“Entrant”) must satisfy all of the following criteria (the “Eligibility Criteria”):

1. Be a student in grades six through eight at the time of Entry (defined below in the section entitled “Entry Procedure”), residing in a participating U.S. state, district, or territory (each a “Participating Jurisdiction”)¹;
2. Be at least proficient at communicating in the English language;
3. Personally write and timely submit a new, unique essay (the “Entry”) written by the Entrant in the English language and which has not been submitted in any prior National Civics Bee competition or other contest;
4. Be the sole author of the Entry – no group entries, entries written by parents, or entries generated by artificial intelligence will be accepted;
5. Agree to all National Civics Bee Rules; and
6. Have not previously won first place at the National Civics Bee National

¹ A list of all Participating Jurisdictions for 2027 National Civics Bee competition may be found at www.nationalcivicsbee.com

Championship.

The following persons are not eligible to participate as Entrants in the Essay Round: (1) employees, officers, and directors of Foundation (“Foundation Persons”); (2) employees, officers, and directors of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America (“Chamber Persons”); (3) Immediate Family Members of, or individuals residing in a household (whether or not related) with, either Foundation Persons or Chamber Persons; (4) Immediate Family Members of a judge participating in the Essay Round (a “Judge”); and (5) individuals residing in the household of a Judge (whether or not related to the Judge). For purposes of these Essay Round Rules, “Immediate Family Member” means a parent, legal guardian, spouse, child, or sibling.

Foundation reserves the right to declare any Entrant ineligible or take other appropriate action, in Foundation’s sole discretion, at any stage or round of the NCB Contest because of any actual or potential conflict of interest, the appearance of a conflict of interest, failure to satisfy the Eligibility Criteria, or for any material non-compliance with these Essay Round Rules or other applicable NCB Contest rules.

TERM

The Essay Round will begin on September 7, 2026, at 6:01 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time (“HST”) and end on February 2, 2027, at 11:59 p.m. HST, after which all Entries will be judged as set forth in these Essay Round Rules. Finalists will be notified following completion of Essay Round judging and no later than May 1, 2027.

ENTRY PROCEDURES

To enter the Essay Round, an Entrant must write and submit an Entry in response to all four questions listed in the essay prompt accessible in the online Application Portal and [Essay Application Guide \(linked\)](#). Entries may be submitted online through the Application Portal at this link: [Application Portal \(linked\)](#), **no later than February 2, 2027, at 11:59 p.m. HST** (the “Portal Deadline”). All Entries submitted through the Application Portal (“Online Entries”) may be revised at any time prior to the Portal Deadline. Following the Portal Deadline, Online Entries determined not to satisfy the Eligibility Criteria or otherwise to violate these Essay Round Rules, in Foundation’s discretion, may be corrected and resubmitted at any time following notification by Foundation until February 14, 2027, at 11:59 p.m. HST. Thereafter, no further revisions to any Online Entry will be allowed unless authorized by Foundation in its discretion, consistent with these Essay Round Rules.

If online submission presents a hardship or is otherwise not practicable, Entrants may request materials and instructions for submitting Entries by U.S. Mail, by sending an email to nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com with the subject line “Mail-In Application Request.” Mail-in submission materials will be provided by Foundation only upon request. All Entries submitted by mail (“Mail-in Entries”) must comply with the instructions provided by Foundation with the requested materials, including but not

limited to all applicable postmark, receipt, and correction deadlines. Mail-in Entries may be revised or corrected only in accordance with the written instructions provided by Foundation. Thereafter, no further revisions to any Mail-in Entries will be allowed unless authorized by Foundation in its discretion, consistent with these Essay Round Rules.

After submitting an Entry, each Entrant will be assigned to an organization hosting a Regional or Statewide Competition within the Participating Jurisdiction in which the Entrant resides (for the purposes of these Essay Round Rules, the “Regional Host”), based on the Entrant’s location as provided by the Entrant. The Regional Host is responsible for selecting the highest scoring Entrants as regional finalists based on the essay judging criteria (listed below) and as provided in the Regional and Statewide Competition rules, as applicable.

By submitting an Entry, each Entrant agrees to these Essay Round Rules and warrants that his or her Entry complies with all requirements set out in these Essay Round Rules.

NO PURCHASE IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. IN NO EVENT WILL ANY PURCHASE INCREASE THE CHANCE OF WINNING. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. ALL APPLICABLE FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS APPLY.

FINALIST CERTIFICATES AND PRIZES

A certificate (which does not have any monetary/retail value) shall be provided to the highest scoring Essay Round Entrants selected as finalists for each Regional or Statewide Competition in accordance with applicable rules. Regional, State, and Statewide Competitions are subject to separate rules, terms, and conditions. Prizes may be won in the Regional, State, and Statewide Competitions, and may vary.

ODDS OF WINNING

This is a skills-based contest and chance plays no part in the determination of Essay Round winners. The odds of being named among the highest scoring Essay Round Entrants may vary greatly and depend on the number of Entries received and the quality of the Entries.

JUDGING CRITERIA AND PARTICIPATION OPTIONS

Each Entry will be evaluated by Judges selected by Foundation. Each Judge will use the 100-point judging rubric (the “Rubric”) accessible in the online Application Portal and in the **Essay Application Guide (linked)** to evaluate Entries. The Rubric, which is incorporated herein by reference, sets forth the scoring criteria, point values, and performance standards used to evaluate Entries. The Rubric may evaluate, among other things, the Entrant’s proposed idea, implementation plan, collaboration and community engagement, identification of supporting resources, and application of Founding Principles and Civic Virtues.

All Judges will be required to disclose any actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest before receiving access to Entries. Each Judge will evaluate Entries independently using the published Rubric, without receiving the names of, or other identifying information about, the Entrants who wrote the Entries they evaluate. In the event an Entry includes information indicating it was written by someone the Judge knows personally or with whom the Judge has another relationship that could reasonably call the Judge's impartiality into question, the Judge may not score that Entry. In furtherance of the foregoing and to protect the fairness, impartiality, and integrity of the Essay Round, Foundation may reassign Entries, disregard affected scores, or take other corrective action(s) necessary to protect the fairness of the Essay Round, in Foundation's sole discretion.

Each Entry will be assigned to a Regional Host organization that is responsible for hosting either a Regional or Statewide Competition. The highest scoring Entries assigned to each Regional Host will be identified as Essay Round finalists, notified via email and/or phone, and will be invited to participate in the Regional Host's Regional Competition or Statewide Competition if no Regional Competition exists. All Regional, Statewide, and State Competitions are subject to separate rules, terms, and conditions.

RESPECTFUL CONTENT REQUIREMENT

Central to the NCB Contest is the belief that civic engagement begins with thoughtful dialogue. This competition encourages students to express their views and analyze issues in ways that elevate the conversation and foster mutual understanding. To support this, we've provided the following content requirement to promote respectful debate and critical thinking.

When addressing community issues in an Entry and at any other stage of the NCB Contest, Contestants must focus on the nature and impact of, and possible solutions to, problems and challenges and must not blame, disparage, identify as the cause of a problem or as a contributor to a problem, or otherwise criticize any specific individual, company, organization, governmental body, government official or school by name or in any other identifiable manner ("Targeted Criticisms"). Foundation and Essay Round Judges shall have sole and absolute discretion for identifying and addressing all Targeted Criticisms occurring at or in connection with the Essay Round, including, without limitation, reviewing Entry materials for potential Targeted Criticisms, determining whether any statement therein constitutes a Targeted Criticism, assessing the severity of any violation of this Targeted Criticisms rule, identifying appropriate corrective actions or other consequences, if any, and communicating any imposed consequence to the Entrant and parent/legal guardian. In enforcing this Targeted Criticisms rule and addressing potential Targeted Criticisms, Foundation and Essay Round Judges shall have full discretion to consider the intent, tone, timing, context, and overall substance of an Entrant's statements,

as well as any other factor in addition to the statement itself, when deciding what, if any, corrective action or other consequence to impose. Entrant disqualification may be imposed in response to egregious, repeated, and/or intentional Targeted Criticisms.

Illustrative Examples:

Acceptable: “There are only a few activities for teens in our town, which can lead to boredom and risky behavior.”

May be disqualified: “The Parks Director refuses to build anything fun for teens.”

Acceptable: “There is limited access to internet in our town, which makes it difficult to do homework.”

May be disqualified: “Internet Provider X is horrible and should go out of business.”

GENERAL RULES

No Entry can be withdrawn after the applicable deadline for Entry described in the section above entitled “Entry Procedure.” Neither Foundation nor any affiliated entities or agents of Foundation are responsible for any illegible, lost, stolen, late, damaged, incomplete, mutilated or misdirected applications or other documents. Entrants are responsible for ensuring proper contact information has been submitted and is maintained throughout the National Civics Bee to allow communications about the National Civics Bee.

Materially erroneous or false information provided during the Essay Round may result in immediate disqualification of the Entrant, in Foundation’s sole and final discretion. Foundation retains the right to disqualify any Entrant for sufficient cause at any point in the NCB Contest, in Foundation’s sole and final discretion. Any submissions or communications indicating that Entrant or others could be in danger or containing other concerning content may be reported to appropriate authorities and/or the Entrant’s parents or legal guardians.

Entrant warrants that the Entry and all components reflect the Entrant’s own original ideas, analysis, organization, and written expression. Entrants may use ordinary spelling, grammar, and accessibility tools that do not create or materially rewrite substantive content. Entrants may not use generative artificial intelligence (including, but not limited to, large language models such as ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini) to draft, rewrite, paraphrase, translate, develop arguments, generate examples or otherwise create any substantive portion of the Entry (this “AI Prohibition”). Foundation may use third-party automated AI-detection tools (“AI Detection Tools”) to identify Entries likely generated or assisted, in whole or in part, by AI in violation of this AI Prohibition; however, Foundation will not rely solely on AI Detection Tools to determine whether an

Entry violates the AI Prohibition. Upon request by Foundation or any NCB Contest host, Entrant agrees to respond promptly and provide information and materials related to the Entrant's writing process, including drafts, notes, research materials, citations, or an explanation of any software tools used or outside assistance received. Entrant consents to Foundation's use of AI Detection Tools as described above and irrevocably grants to Foundation a non-exclusive right and license to reproduce, upload, and otherwise use Entrant's essay in connection with Foundation's use of AI Detection Tools for the purposes described above. A material violation of the AI Prohibition, or any failure to provide a reasonable explanation and supporting process materials promptly upon request, may result in disqualification or other appropriate action in Foundation's sole discretion.

If, for any reason, the National Civics Bee is not capable of running as planned, Foundation reserves the right in Foundation's sole discretion to cancel, terminate, modify, or suspend the National Civics Bee competition, including but not limited to the Essay Round, at any time. Foundation reserves the right to amend these Essay Round Rules, or any other rules governing the National Civics Bee competition, at any time. Any such rules amendment(s) shall be effective upon notice to Entrant in the form of Foundation (a) delivering written notice to Entrant (including by email) or (b) publishing of the amended rules on Foundation's website at www.nationalcivicsbee.com (the earliest of which being "Notice" hereunder), or such other effective date identified by Foundation; provided, however, if Entrant does not agree to be bound by such amended rules Entrant may notify Foundation in writing within ten (10) days following Notice of such rules amendment(s), indicating that Entrant has elected to withdraw from the NCB Contest. Entrant agrees to visit Foundation's website at www.nationalcivicsbee.com periodically during the Essay Round, and in any event prior to final submission of Entrant's Entry, to review any updated version of these Rules published by Foundation.

By creating an Entry, or by being an Entrant, each Entrant understands and acknowledges that there is no joint venture, partnership, employment, or agency relation between Entrant and Foundation arising from any Entry or Entrant's participation in the NCB Contest.

All decisions of the Judges and Foundation are final. Entrants specifically agree that the decision of the Judges and any decisions of Foundation are not subject to review or appeal in any forum whatsoever, including courts of law, to the maximum extent allowed by applicable law.

Any information provided as part of the Essay Round is provided according to the Privacy Policy available at this link: [Privacy Policy Link](#), as such policy may be amended from time to time, and as otherwise provided for in these Rules. Entrants agree that personal data, in particular name and address, may be processed, shared, and otherwise used for the purposes and within the context of the NCB Contest and

any other purposes outlined in these Essay Round Rules and according to the website's Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. The data may also be used by Foundation in order to verify the Entrant's First Name, Last Name, School Name, Address, Parent/Guardian's Phone Number/Email, or to otherwise verify the Entrant's eligibility to participate in the NCB Contest. Participants have the right to access, review, rectify, or request deletion of any personal data held by Foundation by writing to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 1615 H Street NW, Washington D.C. 20062, nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com.

PUBLICITY RELEASE

Each Entrant competing in the Essay Round and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) (collectively, "Licensors"), hereby jointly and severally grant to Foundation and all hosts of subsequent NCB Contest rounds, as well as any corporate or individual benefactors of NCB Contest rounds (collectively, "Licensees"), a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, worldwide, and transferable license to exhibit, display, broadcast, telecast, rerun, reproduce, edit, use, syndicate, license, print, distribute, and otherwise exploit any photos, images, videos, audio-visual recordings, and audio recordings taken or created in connection with the Essay Round, or any portion thereof, in any manner, and in any and all formats and media now known or hereafter devised, without payment to Licensors or any third party; *provided, however, the rights licensed to the Licensees above shall only be used by the Licensees in connection with and/or in furtherance of the NCB Contest, and not for any other purpose*. Licensors represent and warrant that (a) the person approving these Essay Round Rules as the parent or legal guardian of the minor Entrant participating in the Essay Round is the parent or lawful legal guardian of such minor; (b) Licensors hereby provide express consent for such minor and information about such minor to appear in any materials related to the NCB Contest or any NCB Contest-related event or ceremony; and (c) Licensors have the full legal right, power, and authority to grant this license. Information about the Entrant competing in the Essay Round that may be used by Licensee under this license may include, without limitation, their name, address (city and state only), image, likeness, photograph, voice, biographical information, and/or any statements made by them regarding the NCB Contest, Foundation, or any other person or entity related to the NCB Contest.

PROVIDED, HOWEVER, with respect to Entrant's Entry only, the foregoing license is limited to public display, use, reproduction, and other use of the Entry, in whole or in part, by Foundation only. For clarity, pursuant to such license only Foundation is authorized to make public Entrant's essay, or any portions or summaries thereof, and the Regional, State, and Statewide Competition Hosts are not herein permitted to make public an Entrant's Entry or any portions or summaries thereof.

The licenses described above do not authorize any Licensee to use the Entrant's name, image, or likeness in a manner that represents or suggests the Entrant endorses or sponsors any commercial product or commercial service (without prejudice to Licensees' rights to use Entrant's name, image, or likeness in connection with and/or in

furtherance of the NCB Contest, as expressly permitted above), absent separate written consent signed by the Licensors. Parents or guardians may contact the Licensees to request limited restrictions on future uses of their Entrant's image in educational or promotional materials, which requests Licensees may or may not accommodate, in whole or in part, in Licensees' discretion.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

By entering the NCB Contest, Entrant agrees that (1) any and all disputes, claims, and causes of action arising out of or in connection with the NCB Contest, or any prizes awarded, shall be resolved individually without resort to any form of class action; (2) any claims, judgment, and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including costs associated with entering the NCB Contest, but in no event attorney's fees; and (3) under no circumstances, will any Entrant be permitted to obtain any award for, and Entrant hereby waives all rights to claim, punitive, incidental, or consequential damages, and any and all rights to have damages multiplied or otherwise increased and any other damages, other than damages for actual out-of-pocket expenses. In no event shall the liability of Foundation exceed \$100.

WINNERS LIST

To request a list of the names of the three finalists of the National Civics Bee National Championship send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to National Civics Bee, 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, #27720, Washington, DC 20038.

Please direct any questions about these Essay Round Rules to Foundation, by email to nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com