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At the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, we believe in the power of business to solve our toughest problems.

We recognize the importance of democracy to national prosperity and know business has a role to play in strengthening it. To address the declining rates of civic engagement in society, we launched the Civic Trust—a new initiative dedicated to improving civics education and literacy. With support from the Daniels Fund, we began engaging middle school students in 2022 through our first major program: the National Civics Bee.

We created the National Civics Bee to build enthusiasm for civics—and for America—because we believe all young people, no matter what job they dream of doing, should understand how democracy works and how to be active and engaged citizens.

This report celebrates the students who competed in the 2023 National Civics Bee and recognizes the partners who helped bring the vision of the competition to life.

We congratulate each of the finalists for demonstrating an exceptional understanding of civic knowledge and for their commitment to engaging constructively in the public life of their communities. Since the conclusion of the 2023 cycle, we’ve scaled to 28 states and aim to host competitions in all 50 states by 2026. We can’t wait to bring the Bee to many more communities next year.

Hilary Crow
Vice President, Civics
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
About the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The mission of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is to harness the power of business to create solutions for the good of America and the world. We anticipate, develop, and deploy solutions to challenges facing communities today and tomorrow.

About The Civic Trust®

The Civic Trust® is a nonpartisan educational initiative focused on elevating civics as a national priority with programs that advance and promote civic knowledge in schools, workplaces, and communities.
"A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?"

George Washington
We believe all young people and their families should understand how our democracy works and how to be active and engaged citizens. While civics education was once a banner of public education, it has been deprioritized for decades. Young Americans are left unequipped with the skills vital to thriving in our democracy and our workforce.

**The Need**

72% of Americans are dissatisfied with the way democracy is working in this country.

78% of 8th graders score below proficient in civics knowledge.

68% believe they will lose liberties, freedom, and rights over the next decade.

95% of adults cannot name all First Amendment rights.

**SOURCES**


U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2022 Civics Assessment.


One Solution

The National Civics Bee®

We created the National Civics Bee® to harness the potential of young Americans to turn this country around by engaging in civics and contributing to their communities.

The National Civics Bee® is a fun-filled annual competition that serves as an on-ramp for youth who may not otherwise access civics education. The competition reaches young Americans during a critical window of their development and removes barriers for participation by incentivizing learning as a fun game with a clear path to success: to win the championship and secure prizes along the way.

In 2023, we challenged 2,000 students from public, private, charter, and home schools across the country to learn about civics and engage as leaders.
2,000 students

9 states

1,055 schools

50 chambers
379 finalists

40% reside in rural areas

25% eligible for free or reduced school lunch
$40K+
cash awards

75K+
social media
followers

245
media stories
The Winners

The following students achieved the highest cumulative scores in their 2023 National Civics Bee® State Finals by demonstrating their exceptional level of civic knowledge and thoughtful approach to solving community problems through constructive civic engagement.

1st Place

Sriram Yalavarthy
Arvada, Colorado
Essay Topic: American civility

Matilda Peterson
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Essay Topic: Homelessness

Javan Dotson
Southeast Kentucky, Kentucky
Essay Topic: Economy

“It’s a great opportunity. It’s super fun, engaging, and you get to make an impact.”

Benjamin Wu
Greater Vancouver, Washington
Essay Topic: Computer education
“I think it’s important for young people to be educated about civics, so when you become older you know about your rights, and so you can defend them.”

Gianna San Juan
Crofton, Maryland
Essay Topic: Gardening regulations

“I feel more educated about what’s happening in my community. Now I can finally understand what they are saying on the news ... I feel like I can make a big impact, and I can be a better citizen after knowing all of this.”

Aarit Koul
Canton, Ohio
Essay Topic: Pollution
The Winners

“I definitely have a lot better understanding of what civics is and just how important it is.”

Nathan Lackey
Pearland, Texas
Essay Topic: Drunk driving

Auburn Eichers
Rio Rancho, New Mexico
Essay Topic: Sexual assault

Nathaniel Gushurst
Chester, Pennsylvania
Essay Topic: Environment
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. It gives chambers the opportunity to promote greater civic knowledge among young people and their families, while energizing their communities with a celebration of civic pride. Chambers interested in participating in the National Civics Bee® should email the U.S. Chamber Foundation at civictrust@uschamber.com to request more information.
Our Partners

Thank you to the chambers of commerce who joined us in 2023 to celebrate our democracy and strengthen civic engagement in their communities.

**Colorado**
- Colorado Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- Arvada Chamber of Commerce
- Buena Vista Chamber of Commerce
- Craig Chamber of Commerce
- Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce

**Iowa**
- Iowa Chamber Alliance (ICA)
- Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce
- Mason City Chamber of Commerce

**Kentucky**
- Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- Bardstown-Nelson County Chamber of Commerce
- Campbellsville-Taylor County Chamber of Commerce
- London-Laurel County Chamber of Commerce
- Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Southeast Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

**Ohio**
- Ohio Chamber of Commerce
- Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce
- Lancaster-Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce
- Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce

**Pennsylvania**
- Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce
- Chamber of Business & Industry of Centre County (CBICC)
- Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry
- Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership
- Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC

**Texas**
- Brownsville Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce
- Odessa Chamber of Commerce
- Pearland Chamber of Commerce

**Washington**
- Association of Washington Business
- Greater Vancouver Chamber
“This event definitely elevated our brand and helped strengthen some of our partnerships while also increasing access to civics education for youth in our community.”

Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce  |  Ohio
“Participation in the National Civics Bee® has been transformative for our chamber, fostering deeper connections with our community’s educational institutions.”

“It’s not just about knowledge; it’s about empowerment and engagement, forging stronger bonds between our chamber, city, region, schools, and families.”

“Through this platform, students find their voices, addressing pertinent issues and shaping our collective future.”
“The National Civics Bee has changed the way students in our area think about civics education. It is now a permanent part of their formal curriculum, and many of the finalists have taken action on projects stemming from their essay ideas. I can confidently say this event has made a lasting impact on the community.”
Bring the National Civics Bee® to your community!

CONTACT US TODAY:
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