



2021 FOURTH CIRCUIT ESSAY CONTEST

In his inaugural address 60 years ago, President John F. Kennedy uttered a profound and enduring challenge regarding citizenship: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” As Kennedy recognized, citizenship carries with it both rights and responsibilities.

What are the responsibilities of citizenship, and how do those responsibilities support and reinforce the rule of law?

Who May Enter

The essay contest is open to all students currently in grades 9 through 12 from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Note: Prior award winners as well as children, grandchildren, stepchildren, and members of the household of a federal judge or federal judiciary employee are excluded from the competition.

Length & Format

Essays are limited to **1,000 words** (strictly enforced). Citations should be placed in footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies and excluded from the word count. Submit your essay as a Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF document. Do not include your name on your essay.

Submission Deadline

Your essay and contest entry form must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, May 28, 2021**. Go to www.ca4.uscourts.gov/essay-contest to complete the contest entry form and for instructions on submitting your essay.

Judging

- Understanding of constitutional principles (40 points)
- Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme (35 points)
- Grammar, spelling, and composition (25 points)

Exceeding the word limit, missing the submission deadline, plagiarizing content, providing false entry information, and not adhering to the rules are grounds for disqualification.

Awards

Winners will be announced in the summer, and travel will be provided to the court’s Essay Awards Program in September 2021.

FIRST PLACE

\$2,000

SECOND PLACE

\$1,500

THIRD PLACE

\$1,000

Questions

Contact the Fourth Circuit Clerk’s Office at (804) 916-2706 or essaycontest@ca4.uscourts.gov.



<https://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/essay-contest>