



Americans Against Gun Violence
921 11th Street, Suite 700
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 668-4160
www.aagunv.org / info@aagunv.org

Announcement of our 2021 National High School Essay Contest

Open to All U.S. High School Students

With Total Awards in the Amount of \$15,000

Note: Deadline for entry is 11:59 PM PST on Saturday, April 17, 2021

- ***Essay Topic***

- To enter the 2021 Americans Against Gun Violence National High School Essay Contest, students must submit an original essay of 500 words or fewer in response to the following prompt:

“Describe the effect on American youth of the confluence of our country’s longstanding gun violence epidemic with the current Covid-19 pandemic and the threat of violent insurrection; and describe what role you believe the adoption of stringent gun control laws should play at this critical time in our nation’s history.”

- ***Contest Eligibility and Rules***

- Contestants must be high school students in good standing attending school in the United States or its territories.
 - Students who entered high school on track to graduate in 2021 but who graduated early are also eligible.
 - First and second degree relatives of Americans Against Gun Violence Board members, employees, and paid consultants are not eligible.
- Contestants are encouraged to use information posted on the Americans Against Gun Violence website among other resource materials, and to discuss the essay topic with teachers, parents, friends, and other mentors; but each contestant must write the essay himself or herself, in his or her own words.
- Contestants who are under the age of 18 must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to enter the contest.
- To enter the contest, students must submit their essays and demographic information via the online entry system link posted on the

[High School Essay Contest page](#) of the [Americans Against Gun Violence website](#).

- Essays may include a title and footnotes, but these elements are not required. Titles and footnotes do not count toward the 500 word limit.
- Only one essay will be considered per student. If a student submits more than one essay, the most recent submission will be the one that is considered.
- The deadline to enter the contest is 11:59 PM Pacific Standard Time on Saturday, April 17, 2021. Late entries will not be accepted unless the delay was caused by a malfunction of the Americans Against Gun Violence online entry system.

- ***Selection of Scholarship Winners***
 - Twelve contest winners will be selected from the essays submitted.
 - The Americans Against Gun Violence Board of Directors will establish a panel of members to judge essays based on accuracy, originality, clarity, cohesiveness, and overall impact.
 - Essay readers will be blinded to all student identifying information.
 - Contest winners will be notified by email by Monday, May 17, 2021.
 - At the time that students are notified that they've been chosen as contest winners, they'll also be sent a signature form that includes the following elements:
 - A statement that the essay submitted by the student is his or her original work
 - A statement signed by a parent or legal guardian, if the student is under age 18, confirming that the parent or guardian approves of the student's participation in the essay contest
 - A statement by a school official confirming that the contestant is a high school student in good standing or that the student entered high school on track to graduate in 2021 but graduated early
 - Note: If the student's school is not physically in session, documentation other than a school official's signature (e.g., a student body card or transcript, will be accepted in lieu of the signature of a school official.)
 - In order to receive a monetary award, students must return the signed signature forms within 30 days of being notified that they are contest winners.
 - Students don't need to submit the signature form at the time that they enter the contest..

- ***Contest Awards (Total \$15,000)***
 - Upon submission of their completed signature forms, the first place winner will be sent a check for a \$3,000 award; second place a \$2,500 award; and third place a \$2,000 scholarship.
 - The fourth through tenth ranked winners will each receive \$1,000 awards, and the 11th and 12th ranked winners will receive \$250 apiece.

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- If one or more of the twelve winners does not submit a completed signature form within 30 days of being notified that he or she is a contest winner, the lower ranked finalists and alternate finalists who have submitted their signature forms will be moved up in ranking, and the total \$15,000 in awards will be distributed accordingly.
- Awards will be sent by check to the home address listed on the students' entry forms.
- Americans Against Gun Violence reserves the option of also offering additional monetary awards to students not ranked in the top 12 if the essay contest panel feels that their essays are of exceptional quality.
- ***Publication of Essays and Release of Contact and Identifying Information***
 - By entering the contest, students agree to allow Americans Against Gun Violence to publish their essays in part or in whole in any way that the Board of Directors deems to be appropriate, but without any student contact or identifying information linked to the essays.
 - Americans Against Gun Violence will not publish or release any student contact or identifying information without the written consent of the student and, if the student is under age 18, the written consent of a parent or guardian.
 - When the 12 contest winners are notified that they have been chosen as winners, they will be provided with release forms to indicate to what degree, if any, they wish to have their contact and identifying information released in association with their essays.
 - The responses to the release forms will not in any way influence the ranking of the contest winners.
- ***Summary of Essay Contest Timeline***
 - The deadline for entering the contest is 11:59 PM PST on Saturday, April 17, 2021.
 - The students selected as the 12 winners will be notified by Monday, May 17, 2021.
 - Students chosen as contest winners must return completed signature forms within 30 days of being notified that they have been chosen as winners in order to receive monetary awards.
 - Award checks will be mailed to the winners upon receipt of their completed signature forms.

For additional information or questions, please email essaycontest@aagunv.org or call (916) 668-4160.