

Commissioner Nicole "Nikki" Fried  
presents the

# Florida Agricultural History & Creativity Award

4th-12th Graders, submit your essay by  
**January 25 - February 26, 2021**  
for a chance to win a

# \$1,000 Scholarship

For More Information Visit:  
[fdacs.gov/essay/diversity](http://fdacs.gov/essay/diversity)



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## OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES



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**Description:** Florida's 12th Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services is pleased to announce the second annual Agriculture History & Creativity Award Essay Contest. This contest is open to all contestants attending any Florida school in grades 4-12. The competition will consist of three topic categories, one for each grade level. Nine winners will be selected: three elementary school contestants (grades 4-5), three middle school contestants (grades 6-8), and three high school contestants (grades 9-12), will be selected from each topic category.

**Eligibility:** Contestants must be Florida residents and attend school in Florida in their respective grade level category. Each contestant shall enter only one essay, written in English, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, no longer than 500 words.

**Entry Dates:** Entries shall be submitted electronically All entries must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, February 26, 2021. Entries submitted electronically will receive email confirmation.

**Entry Form:** Contestants must provide all required information requested on the entry form and entry form must be legible. The contestant and parent/legal guardian are required to read and understand these rules to complete the entry form in its entirety. The entry form includes a release and certification that must be signed by a parent or guardian, before the contestant is eligible to participate.

**Labeling Requirements:** Essays should not include contestant's name, home address, telephone number, school the contestant attends, grade level, title of the essay, or any other identifying information. All identifying information should be included on the entry form only.

**Public Disclosure:** The Florida Public Records Act, Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, generally requires that all materials submitted to a government agency are open to the public. Therefore, anything you submit to the Department in connection to this contest, including your essay, will be subject to public disclosure, unless exempt by law.

**Awards:** Winners will receive a \$1,000 Florida Pre-Paid 529 Plan scholarship provided by Florida Prepaid College Foundation. Winners will receive awards and recognition at the February Florida Cabinet meeting to be held in Tallahassee, Florida at the Florida Capitol. Reasonable travel and lodging expenses will be paid for the winners and one immediate family member. Winners will be notified after March 31st, 2021.

**Letter of Recommendation:** In addition to the 500-word essay, each contestant must also submit a letter of recommendation attesting to the contestant's good moral character. The letter must be submitted by an educator (i.e. teacher, principal, coach, etc.), who has known and/or taught the contestant for at least one year. Letters of recommendation sent separately, via mail or electronically, will not be accepted.

**Categories and Topics:** Essays must address one of the topics below. Contestants must only select one essay category to compete in. Multiple entries will not be accepted. Contestants must write to the essay topic that corresponds to their grade level. Be sure to properly cite your sources on a separate page.

Elementary (Grades 4-5)- School gardens can provide many benefits in the areas of nutrition, health, and behavior and can make lasting differences in the lives of children. Explain why your school should establish a school garden program. Be sure to elaborate on how having this garden can increase students' social and community skills and can help improve nutrition for students.

Middle School (Grades 6-8)- Food insecurity is a complex social issue that often impacts many minority communities. Identify a minority leader in Florida who is championing food insecurity. Explain who this person is, the exact nature of his/her work, and how it is helping to decrease food insecurity in minority communities.

High School (Grades 9-12)- A recent study examined trends in food insecurity from 2001 to 2016 and found that food insecurity rates for both Black and Hispanic households were at least twice that of non-Hispanic White households. One reason is the lack of access to proper nutrition in these communities. Discuss the impact of inequitable access to nutritious foods in minority communities in Florida and propose at least one solution on how to eliminate such disparities.

**1. DESCRIPTION:** NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. The Agriculture History & Creativity Award Essay Contest (“Contest”) begins at 12:01 a.m. [ET] on Monday, January 25, 2021 and ends at 5:00 p.m. [ET] on Friday, February 26, 2021 (“Contest Period”). The Sponsors of this Contest are the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (“FDACS”) and the Florida Prepaid College Board (“FPCB”).

**2. ELIGIBILITY:** Contest is open to legal residents of the state of Florida who are enrolled in a Florida public, private or charter school, or homeschool, for the current school year of 2020-2021 and are currently enrolled in the 4th to 12th grade at time of entry between entry dates of 12:01 a.m. [ET] on Monday, January 25, 2021 and 5:00 p.m. [ET] on Friday, February 26, 2021. Any individuals (including but not limited to employees, consultants, independent contractors and interns) who are employed with, or have within the past six months held employment with or performed services for the Sponsors, Contest Judges, (collectively, “Contest Entities”) or any organization affiliated with the sponsorship, fulfillment, administration, prize support, advertisement or promotion of the Contest are not eligible to enter or win. “Immediate Family Members” shall mean parents, step-parents, legal guardians, children, step-children, siblings, step-siblings, or spouses. “Household Members” shall mean those people who share the same residence at least three months a year. “You” shall mean contestant and/or Parent/Legal Guardian of contestant, if contestant is a minor. Void where prohibited.

**3. HOW TO ENTER:** To enter, visit the Contest web site during the Contest Period by logging on to <http://www.FDACS.gov/essay/diversity>. Follow the on-screen instructions and complete the entry form by providing all of the information and required materials for entry into the Contest. Each contestant must submit a completed entry form, parent/legal guardian waiver form, a 500-word or less typed, double-spaced, essay, written in English in Times New Roman 12-point font, and a letter of recommendation from an educator. Once all information and/or materials are complete, contestants must submit the entry by clicking the “Submit” button. Clicking the “Submit” button will provide one (1) entry into the Contest. Limited to one entry per contestant. If more than one entry is received from a contestant, only the last entry will be eligible. Entries generated by a script, macro or other automated means will be disqualified. Contestants must provide all information requested to be eligible to win. Incomplete, unreadable, or unintelligible entries will be disqualified. All information provided by the contestants becomes the property of Sponsors. For more information, please see our website at [www.FDACS.gov/essay/diversity](http://www.FDACS.gov/essay/diversity).

All submitted material (“Material”) becomes the sole property of the Sponsors and may be copyrighted or otherwise restricted as provided by Florida or federal law. The Contestant shall not have any proprietary interest in the Material. Material includes to the extent applicable and allowable by law, (a) anything (e.g., photo) submitted by you in connection with the Contest; (b) your name, likeness, voice, and image; and (c) all photographs, recordings, audiovisual materials, writings, statements, and quotations of or by you and furnished to the Sponsors by you. Do not submit any Material of anyone other than yourself. By submitting Material, you represent and warrant to the Sponsors that (i) the Material is wholly original and does not infringe upon or otherwise violate any right of any third party, (ii) you have all rights necessary to submit the Material in the Contest in accordance with these Official Rules, and (iii) no party other than you has any right, title or interest in and to the Material or any part of the Material. All Material submitted will become the property of the Sponsors and will not be returned. By entering the Contest, you grant the Sponsors a perpetual, fully-paid, irrevocable, non-exclusive license to reproduce, prepare derivative works of, distribute, display, exhibit, transmit, broadcast, televise, digitize, otherwise use, and permit others to use and perform throughout the world the Material in any manner, form, or format now or hereinafter created, including on the internet, and for any purpose, including, but not limited to, advertising or promotion of the Sponsors and their services, all without further consent from or payment to you. You agree that the Sponsors have no obligation to post your Material on their websites. You understand that your name and other Materials may be posted on websites in connection with the Contest.

You further agree to fully indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Sponsor from any suits, actions, damages and costs of every name and description, including attorneys’ fees, arising from or relating to violation or infringement of a copyright or other intellectual property right of a third party, provided, however, the foregoing obligation shall not apply to the Sponsor’s misuse or modification of Contestant’s submission of Materials or Sponsor’s use of Contestant’s submission of Materials in a manner not contemplated by the Contest Rules.

**4. JUDGING CRITERIA:** All Material submissions will be judged by the following criteria, based on grade level. Elementary Contestant Criteria: Use of Facts, Supporting Examples and Evidence 20%, Spelling, Grammar and Mechanics 5%, Organization and Flow 5%, Relevance 65%, Research 5%. Middle and High School Contestant Criteria: Use of Facts, Supporting Examples and Evidence 20%, Spelling, Grammar and Mechanics 10%, Organization and Flow 10%, Relevance 50%, Research 10%. Sponsors will independently evaluate and judge all eligible entries received and select the winners on or about March 31st, 2021. All judging will be in the Sponsors’ sole and absolute discretion and the Sponsors’ decisions are final and binding on all matters relating to the Contest. The numbers will be added together for a final score. The contestants with the three highest scores will be named winners in each grade level category. In the event of a tie each contestant will be called and asked to briefly describe what inspired their essay and judges will determine, at their discretion, a winner based on those responses. In the event there are no entries for a category, the Sponsor reserves the right to select a winner in another category based on the judging criteria. All submissions will be judged by a panel of judges selected by the Sponsors. All decisions of the judging panel are final on all aspects of the Contest.

**5. PRIZES:** Each winner will receive a Florida 529 scholarship from Florida Prepaid [Prize Actual Retail Value (ARV): \$1,000]. Prize winners will be responsible for any and all federal, state and/or local taxes resulting from acceptance of the prize except as stated herein. Prize winners cannot assign or transfer the prize to another person. No cash or prize substitution is allowed except at the discretion of the Sponsors. Sponsors intend to award all prizes. If a prize cannot be awarded due to circumstances beyond the control of the Sponsors, a substitute prize of equal or greater retail value will be awarded. If prizes are awarded but are unclaimed or forfeited by prize winner(s), prize may not be re-awarded, in the Sponsors’ sole discretion. Other restrictions may apply. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received. Limit one prize per person, per household.

**6. WINNER SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION:** Three (3) contestants from each grade level category will be selected by the judges using the Judging Criteria in Paragraph 4. All selected contestants will be notified by e-mail at the e-mail address included on the contestant's entry form that was submitted on or about March 31st, 2021. Selected contestants will be required to respond (as directed) to the notification within 72 hours of attempted notification. The failure to respond timely to the notification may result in forfeiture of the prize described in paragraph 5. and, in such case, the Sponsors may select an alternate contestant to recognize based on the stated Judging Criteria. Selected contestants may be required to verify their address and also may be required to execute before a notary public and return within seven (7) days an affidavit of eligibility and liability/publicity release covering eligibility, liability, advertising, publicity and media appearance issues, unless prohibited by law. Selected contestants must provide upon request proof of grade and enrollment from local school administration for the current school year of 2020-2021. For contestants who are minors, all correspondences will be sent to the attention of the parent or legal guardian of such minor and the parent or legal guardian will be required to sign the affidavit of eligibility and liability/publicity release as stated above within the specified time period.

**7. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION/RELEASES:** Contest is void where prohibited or restricted by law. The state, local laws, rules and regulations of Florida apply. Sponsors reserve the right to change these Contest rules at any time. Notice shall be given to participants at the e-mail address shown on the entry form within 24 hours of the change. By participating, contestants agree to be bound by these official rules and the decisions of the Sponsors, which shall be final in all respects. By participating in this Contest and/or by accepting any prize that they may win, contestants agree to release the Sponsors; their units and divisions and advertising and promotional agencies and prize suppliers; each of their respective officers, directors, agents, representatives and employees; and each of their respective successors, representatives and assigns (collectively, the "Released Parties") from any and all actions, claims, injury, loss or damage arising in any manner, directly or indirectly, from participation in this Contest and/or acceptance or use of the prize. Entrants authorize the Sponsors to use their name, voice, likeness, biographical data, city and state of residence and entry materials in programming or promotional material, worldwide in perpetuity, or on a winner's list, if applicable, without further compensation unless prohibited by law. Sponsors are not obligated to use any of the above-mentioned information or materials but may do so and may edit such information or materials, at the Sponsors' sole discretion, without further obligation or compensation. The Released Parties shall not be liable for: (i) late, lost, delayed, stolen, misdirected, postage-due, incomplete, unreadable, inaccurate, garbled or unintelligible entries, communications or affidavits, regardless of the method of transmission; (ii) telephone system, telephone or computer hardware, software or other technical or computer malfunctions, lost connections, disconnections, delays or transmission errors; (iii) data corruption, theft, destruction, unauthorized access to or alteration of entry or other materials; (iv) any injuries, losses or damages of any kind caused by the prize or resulting from acceptance, possession or use of a prize, or from participation in the Contest; or (v) any printing, typographical, administrative or technological errors in any materials associated with the Contest. Sponsors disclaim any liability for damage to any computer system resulting from participating in or accessing or downloading information in connection with this Contest, and reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to cancel, modify or suspend the Contest should a virus, bug, computer problem, unauthorized intervention or other causes beyond the Sponsors' control, corrupt the administration, security or proper play of the Contest. Sponsors may prohibit you from participating in the Contest or winning a prize if, in their sole discretion, they determine you are attempting to undermine the legitimate operation of the Contest by cheating, hacking, deception, or any other unfair playing practices of intending to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any other players or the Sponsor's representatives. This Contest will be governed by the laws of the state of Florida. Any and all legal actions or claims arising in connection with this Contest must be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction in Leon County, Florida. CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE THE WEB SITE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE CONTEST MAY BE IN VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS AND WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTEST. SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, SPONSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEEK REMEDIES AND DAMAGES (INCLUDING ATTORNEY FEES) TO THE FULLEST EXTENT OF THE LAW, INCLUDING CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

**8. PRIVACY POLICY:** Any information supplied to Sponsor FDACS will be subject to the Florida Public Records Law, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes. By entering this contest, Contestant waives his or her rights under the family education rights and privacy act (FERPA) to maintain the confidentiality of school records limited to contestant's current grade level, school name, and enrollment status.

**9. SPONSORS:** Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 600 S Calhoun Street, H2, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and the Florida Prepaid College Board, 2011 Delta Blvd., Tallahassee 32303

**10. DISPUTES:** As a condition of participating in this Contest, contestants agree that any and all disputes which cannot be resolved between the parties, claims, and causes of action arising out of or connected with this Contest, or any prize awarded, or the determination of winners shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action exclusively by arbitration pursuant to the commercial arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association, then effective; further, in any such dispute, under no circumstances will entrant be permitted to obtain awards for, and hereby waives all rights to claim punitive, incidental or consequential damages, or any other damages, including attorney's fees, and contestants further waive all rights to have damages multiplied or increased; and the arbitration shall be conducted in Leon County, Florida.

**11. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION:** This promotion is governed by the laws of the State of Florida. All issues and questions concerning construction, validity, interpretation and enforceability of these Official Rules, or the rights and obligations of entrant and the Sponsor in connection with this Contest, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Florida, U.S.A., and any matters of proceedings which are not subject to arbitration, shall take place in Leon County, Florida.