



Commonwealth of Virginia

Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

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Office of the Governor

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Governor and First Lady Northam Announce Virginia Council on Women's 11th Annual High School Essay Contest

~ Contest is a scholarship opportunity for high school females pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics and healthcare ~

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam, First Lady Pamela Northam, and the Virginia Council on Women today invited high school students who identify as female to enter the 11th Annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics, and Healthcare essay contest.

“Every year this contest inspires young women to become the next generation of doctors, nurses, engineers, and more,” **said Governor Northam**. “This is a great opportunity for students to explore their passions and open new doors in high-demand fields.”

The Virginia Council on Women launched the STEM Essay Contest in 2012 with 170 participants from across the Commonwealth submitting essays

focused on their vision for pursuing a STEM career. In the first year of the contest, the Council raised \$10,000 and awarded three scholarships. Now, in its eleventh year, the Council has awarded approximately \$200,000 in scholarships. In 2020, as the Council prepared to launch the 10th Annual STEM Essay Contest, it broadened the definition of STEM to STEAM-H to be more inclusive of the intersection between STEM and the Arts. Last year, the Council received more than 200 essay submissions, and thanks to the generosity of sponsors, awarded \$14,250 in scholarships to ten Virginia students.

“Getting students interested in STEAM-H is just a small piece of the puzzle,” **said Da’Shaun Joseph, Virginia Council on Women STEAM-H Essay Contest Chair**. “We have to keep them engaged and valued throughout their entire academic journey, including pre and post education.”

The Council will award scholarships to qualifying high school seniors who plan to pursue a STEAM-H career at a community college, four-year college or university, trade or technical school, online, and/or through certificated STEAM-H oriented courses. The 11th annual contest will award one merit-based and one need-based scholarship in each of five geographic regions across the Commonwealth. Merit-based scholarships will be awarded based on the quality of the essay submitted. Need-based scholarships will be awarded based on the quality of the essay submitted and the individual’s self-identified financial need. Award amounts may vary and are determined by the Council annually.

To be eligible, you must identify as female, be a Virginia high school senior, and must hold at least a 3.0 GPA for the merit-based awards and a 2.5 GPA for the need-based scholarships. Applications and guidelines are available **online [here](#)**. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, January 3, 2022. Essays will be judged by a panel of Council members and individuals who represent STEAM-H fields. Winners will be notified in March 2022. **The scholarship awards will be presented in the spring of 2022.**

The purpose of the Virginia Council on Women is to identify ways in which women can reach their full potential and make their full contribution to society and the Commonwealth. The Council has initiated several projects to meet this goal, including the annual STEAM-H Essay Contest for high school seniors. Find additional information about the Council and available sponsorship opportunities [here](#).

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