



LIONS CLUBS OF TEXAS MD-2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH CONTESTS 2027 DIABETES AWARENESS ESSAY



Contest Rules

“How Youth Can Advance Diabetes Awareness”

1. Theme Description

Diabetes—one of the fastest-growing health challenges in the world—is one of Lions Clubs International’s eight Global Causes. Raising awareness is essential to preventing the disease, supporting those living with diabetes, and promoting healthy lifestyles. Through service, education, and compassion, youth have a unique opportunity and the power to make a positive difference in our communities by improving lives and creating a healthier future.

Contestants are encouraged to explore how today’s youth can become leaders in educating others, encouraging healthy habits, reducing stigma, supporting individuals and families affected by diabetes, utilizing social media platforms for health campaigns, advocating for school wellness policies, and inspiring community action through volunteer service and partnerships with Lions clubs and/or other organizations.

2. Contest Rules

- a. The title of the contestant's essay is not required to be the same as the topic for the essay. Contestants should be creative in the selection of an essay title and set the tone for their presentation with the title they choose.
- b. The essay should analyze the problem given in the subject and present a solution or solutions to the problem.
- c. The topic is broad and allows the contestants considerable leeway in the selection of their solution or solutions.
- d. Creative, innovative, practical, and reasonable ideas are welcome.
- e. Each contestant shall personally research, write, and present the contest essay. Pre-recorded presentations are not permitted for online contests.
- f. Research may include interviews with physicians, nurses, medical professionals, family members, and community organizations, as well as information gathered from internet and library resources. The essay shall be a written article read aloud by the contestant and judged by a panel in competition with other contestants.
- g. The essay shall not exceed 1,500 words:
 - i. All words in the essay are counted, including articles, conjunctives, and pronouns. Examples: "I," "a," "the," "and," and "an." Provide the word count on the last page of the essay.
 - ii. The essay must include a bibliography of alphabetized sources used in its composition in APA style. Note: the bibliography is not included in the 1,500-word count.
 - iii. The essay should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font.

- iv. The deadline to submit the essay and other required documents to the State Contest Coordinator is Monday, April 19, 2027.
- h. Essays will be sent to judges on **Tuesday, April 20, 2027**, along with the judging criteria and scoring forms by the State Contest Coordinator.
- i. Judging shall be based on the five C's of academic and essay writing: **clarity, cogency, conventionality, completeness, and concision**. Scores will be calculated on a 100-point scale using the following criteria:
 - i. Sixty percent (60%) of the contestant's score shall be based on content and response to the prompt (understanding of the theme; a clear, focused, and insightful thesis statement), original and critical thinking (offers a unique perspective or creative voice; arguments are supported by strong logic or unique insights rather than clichés), a clear explanation of why awareness matters, and continuous focus on the theme.
 - ii. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the contestant's score shall be based on organization and structure (a clear introduction, body, and conclusion; smooth and logical transitions between paragraphs), evidence and research (facts are accurate, well-integrated, and properly cited; concrete examples support the claims), the ability to translate awareness into action, realistic and achievable recommendations, and measurable impact in schools and communities.
 - iii. Fifteen percent (15%) of the score shall be based on mechanics and style (clear, engaging, grammatically sound, and free of punctuation errors; uses varied sentence structures and strong vocabulary).
- j. The State Contest Coordinator will select the judging panel. It is recommended that an **odd number** of judges be chosen, and the following individuals should be included:
 - i. At least one judge shall be selected from among Lions members, business leaders, or civic leaders.
 - ii. At least one judge shall possess knowledge of the medical aspects of diabetes.
 - iii. At least one judge shall be a professional educator with comprehensive knowledge of the English language, specifically regarding grammar, syntax, pronunciation, and linguistic accuracy.
 - iv. *Optional*: one judge shall be selected from among recent graduates to bridge a generation gap.
- k. Judging procedures shall be as follows:
 - i. All MD-2 contests will be conducted in English and administered virtually via Zoom.
 - ii. Judges will review the essays and select the three best submissions. They will notify the State Contest Coordinator and the Opportunity for Youth Chairperson of their selections by **Monday, April 26, 2027**.
 - iii. The State Contest Coordinator will send invitations to the top-selected essay contestants to attend the judging session on **Saturday, May 1, 2027**.
 - iv. The judges, the State Contest Coordinator, and the Opportunity for Youth Chairperson will attend the judging sessions on **Saturday, May 1, 2027**. They will determine the first-, second-, and third-place winners from the top three essays. The winners will be announced.

- v. Contest winners will be invited to the essay presentation on **Saturday, May 8, 2027, to read aloud their essays**. Please note that the presentation is not a part of the judging criteria and will not influence the winner's placement.
- l. Contest winners will be announced to all participants at the conclusion of the judging process.

3. Awards

- a. The first-place winner will receive a \$3,000.00 scholarship.
- b. The second-place winner will receive a \$2,000.00 scholarship.
- c. The third-place winner will receive a \$1,000.00 scholarship.
- d. To collect the scholarship award, all contest winners:
 - i. Winners must complete the "Scholarship Request Form" along with proof of registration information from a university, college, junior college, or vocational school.
 - ii. Winners must send the payment request form to the State Office along with any supplemental information needed by the institution (i.e., scholarship forms, etc.) to:

Lions of Texas
3301 Legion Dr.
Kerrville, TX 78028
(830) 257-6557
lionsstateoffice@texaslions.org

- e. The scholarship award disbursement will be made directly to the scholarship/financial aid office of the designated school.
- f. The scholarship awards must be collected no later than two years following the recipient's graduation from high school.

4. Rules of Eligibility for Contestants

- a. A district may sponsor only one contestant per contest. To enter, the district must submit the completed application, all required signatures and documents, and the entry fee to the MD-2 Contest Coordinator by the stated deadline.
- b. Any false statement on the entry application or related documents, or any violation of contest rules, will result in the contestant's **disqualification** and forfeiture of the entry fee.
- c. There shall be no refund of any entry fee.
- d. Each contestant shall be the first-place winner in the district contest during the current Lions' year.
 - i. If a district's first-place winner cannot compete in the MD-2 contest, the first alternate may take their place. Once approved by the MD-2 State Contest Chair, the alternate can enter using the original contestant's paid application fee.
 - ii. If a district has only one contestant, the district may sponsor the contestant in the MD-2 Opportunities for Youth Contest.
- e. Each contestant must be, or must have been, regularly enrolled in a Texas public high school or a comparable educational program.
- f. Each contestant must be a junior or senior at the time of the MD-2 contest.

5. Responsibilities of Contestants

- a. Each contestant shall be required to submit the following documents ('application packet') to their sponsoring Lions club and/or district:
 - i. A completed and signed "*State Contest Application*" form.
 - ii. A color, high-quality, wallet- or passport-size photo, such as a current school photo or ID photo, is required. Photos that do not meet this requirement may be omitted from the convention or contest souvenir booklet.
 - iii. The essay shall be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, with the word count at the end and a bibliography formatted in APA style. The essay may be used for judging, publications, and contest promotion.
- b. **No revisions to the essay** will be accepted after the State Contest Coordinator has received them.
- c. The Diabetes Awareness Essay contest judging session will be held on **Saturday, May 1, 2027**. After the session, the State Contest Coordinator will notify the first-, second-, and third-place winners by email.
- d. Note for the first-place winner:
 - i. All first-place winners must attend the Opportunities for Youth Luncheon at **Lions Clubs of Texas MD-2 State Convention on May 22, 2027, in Beaumont, Texas, and must present their winning entry, except** as provided in Item 5.d.iii. Additionally, upon request, the first-place winner must participate in Lions MD-2 events and activities during the period from immediately after the contest until the end of the following year's contest.
 - ii. Send the following forms by **mail** to the State Contest Coordinator, **as soon as the contest winner is announced and at least one week before attending the convention:**
 1. Completed and signed "*Contestant Code of Conduct*" and "*Chaperone Guidelines*" forms.
 2. A completed and signed "*Medical Power of Attorney*" designating the contestant's chaperone as the Primary Responsible Party and the State Contest Chair as the Secondary Responsible Party.
 - iii. A first-place winner who is unable to attend due to a medical or family emergency, graduation, school-related conflict, or other circumstance approved by the State Contest Coordinator may request an alternative presentation method. The request must be submitted in writing to the State Contest Coordinator at least 10 days before the luncheon and must receive written approval before the luncheon. Failure to attend or obtain approval for an alternative presentation shall result in **forfeiture** of the scholarship award.
- e. All contestants shall be recognized and receive a certificate of participation.
- f. In addition to scholarship awards, contest winners shall receive an award and a winner's certificate.

6. Responsibilities of the Sponsoring District

- a. The \$250 contest application fee per contestant shall be paid by check (payable to ‘**Texas State Convention Fund**’) or electronically via **PayPal** before submitting the application packet.
 - i. If the application fee is paid electronically, a copy of the payment receipt shall be included in the application packet.
 - ii. If paying by check, make the check payable to the “**Texas State Convention Fund**.” Include a copy of the check in the application packet, and mail the original check to the State Contest Coordinator.
- b. The sponsoring district must complete the *District Responsibilities Checklist* form. This form shall be included in the application packet.
- c. The sponsoring district must ensure that all documents listed in 5.a.i. to iii. are completed and signed. **Email** the application packet including the proof of payment and the form identified in **6.b.** to the State Contest Coordinator. The **deadline** to send these documents is **Monday, April 19, 2027**.
- d. The sponsoring district **must promptly** send by **mail** the winning contestant’s completed and signed “*Contestant Code of Conduct*,” “*Chaperone Guidelines*,” and “*Medical Power of Attorney*” forms identified in **5.d.ii.1. and 2.** to the State Contest Coordinator **as soon as** the contest winners are announced before the State Convention.

7. Chaperone/Sponsoring Club and District Responsibilities

- a. All first-place winners **must** attend the **Opportunities for Youth Luncheon** at the **Lions Clubs of Texas MD-2 Convention on Saturday, May 22, 2027, in Beaumont, Texas, and must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or designated chaperone from their sponsoring club or district to the convention.**
- b. The sponsoring club or district shall be responsible for all contestant expenses.
- c. Parents, guardians, or designated chaperones must adhere to the requirements outlined in the Texas Lions Clubs MD-2 Opportunities for Youth contests’ ‘*Contestant Code of Conduct*’ and ‘*Chaperone Guidelines*.’

8. State Contest Coordinator Contact Information:

PDG Cesar Montelongo
montelongcesar@sbcglobal.net
(956) 460-7801
PO Box 562
Donna, TX 78537

MAKE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR PAYMENT RECEIPT/COPY WITH YOUR PACKET

Tap each line to get the document:

Contest Application and District Responsibilities Checklist

Contestant Code of Conduct

Chaperone Guidelines

Medical Power of Attorney