



# LIONS CLUBS OF TEXAS MD-2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH CONTESTS 2027 DRUG AWARENESS SPEECH



## Contest Rules

### “Social Media and Drug Exposure”

#### 1. Theme Description

“We Serve” is more than the Lions Clubs International motto—it is a commitment to building stronger, healthier, and safer communities. In today’s digital world, social media has become a powerful influence on how young people learn, communicate, and make decisions. While it offers many opportunities, it can also expose youth to harmful content, including the promotion and normalization of drug use.

Contestants are encouraged to examine both the positive and negative influence of social media and to share thoughtful ideas on how youth can educate, make informed choices, resist harmful influences, support their peers in making healthy choices, and use digital platforms to promote healthy, drug-free lifestyles.

#### 2. Contest Rules

- a. All MD-2 contests will be conducted in English via Zoom.
- b. 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.
- c. The essay should analyze the problem given in the subject and present a solution or solutions to the problem.
- d. The topic is broad and allows the contestants considerable leeway in the selection of their solution or solutions.
- e. Creative, innovative, practical, and reasonable ideas are welcome.
- f. Each contestant shall personally research, write, and present the contest essay.
- g. Sources of data and quotations should be identified by title, author, and publication date. List all sources in a bibliography formatted in APA style.
- h. The speech will be from five (5) to seven (7) minutes in length.
  - i. A monitor will signal contestants at five (5) minutes and at six and one-half (6.5) minutes.
  - ii. At seven (7) minutes, the monitor will signal, and five (5) points will be deducted from the contestant's score if the speech extends beyond seven (7) minutes.
  - iii. A speech of less than five (5) or more than seven and a half (7.5) minutes will be disqualified.
  - iv. Should a disturbance occur during a speech, the contest monitor will adjust the time accordingly.
- i. Contestants are **prohibited** from using notes, cue cards, and pre-recorded video during their speech contest presentation.

- j. The deadline to submit the ‘application packet’ (the contestants’ written speech, a copy or receipt of the contest application fee payment, and other required documents described in Sections 6 and 7) by email to the State Contest Coordinator is **Monday, April 19, 2027**.
- k. The State Contest Coordinator will send the Zoom link and the contestant order of appearance (on a first-come, first-served basis) to all contestants by **Saturday, May 1, 2027**.
- l. The following criteria shall be used for judging the speech:
  - i. Sixty percent (60%) of the contestant’s score shall be based on understanding of the topic; presentation of accurate, relevant facts, examples, or supporting evidence; delivery and public-speaking skills, including confidence, a clear voice, appropriate pace, eye contact, enthusiasm, poise, and effective gestures; and thoughtful analysis, critical thinking, personal insight, and an original perspective on the topic.
  - ii. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the contestant’s score shall be based on the realistic and practical ways youth can make healthy choices, resist harmful influences, help peers, and use social media positively. The speech should demonstrate compassion, leadership, service, responsibility, and ways youth can positively influence their school or community.
  - iii. Fifteen percent (15%) of the contestant’s score shall be based on speech organization and message: effective opening, logical progression, clear main points, and a strong conclusion. Overall impact: leaves the audience informed, inspired, and motivated toward positive choices or action.
- m. 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 a mental health expert or a medical professional.
  - ii. At least one judge shall be a professional educator with comprehensive knowledge of the English language and communication or a Toastmasters International member.
  - iii. At least one judge shall be selected from among Lions members, business leaders, or civic leaders.
  - iv. Since the speech’s theme revolves around internet usage, particularly social media, at least one judge shall be a person who is knowledgeable about digital technology or law enforcement.
  - v. *Optional*: one judge shall be selected from a recent graduate to bridge a generation gap.
- n. Judging procedures shall be as follows:
  - i. All MD-2 contests will be conducted in English and administered virtually via Zoom.
  - ii. Contestants’ written speeches will be sent to the judges by email, along with the judging criteria, by the State Contest Coordinator on Friday, April 23, 2027.
  - iii. The Official Judging Score Form and Zoom link will be sent to the judges by the State Contest Coordinator on Friday, April 30, 2027.
  - iv. The contest will be held on Saturday, May 8, 2027. The contest time will be determined by the State Contest Coordinator and communicated by email.

- o. 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 a 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 sent directly to the scholarship or 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. Basic Guidelines for Virtual Speech Contest

Contestants are **required** to participate in the orientation and the contest using **online** live audio and video communication tools. **Zoom** video conferencing will be utilized for the contest.

- a. Contestants must have a computer or access to one with a Wi-Fi connection, a webcam, and a microphone to ensure that their gestures and facial expressions are captured by the camera and their voice is clearly recorded by the microphone while they deliver their speech.
- b. Contestants will be sent an email invitation by the State IT Chair to participate in the contest and be ready at their designated time.
- c. Contestants must wear business attire for the online contest.
- d. Contestants' speaking areas must be free of distractions and noise. If necessary, the State Contest Chair will advise contestants about additional lighting needs.
- e. Each contestant's speaking area should provide an unobstructed view of the contestant without sacrificing audio quality while the contestant presents the speech.
- f. Once a contestant presents his or her essay or speech, he or she will be placed in a waiting room until the conclusion of the contest.
- g. If technology fails during the contest **and** the State Contest Chair determines that the contest can no longer continue, the State Contest Chair may pause the contest until the technology issue is resolved. A contestant may resume his or her speech or essay at the point at which the technology failed.

## 6. Responsibilities of Contestants

- a. Each contestant shall be required to submit by email the following items ('application packet') to their sponsoring Lions club and/or district:
  - i. Complete the "*State Contest Application*" form.
  - ii. Provide a color, high-quality, wallet- or passport-size photo (such as a current school picture/ID). Photos that do not meet this requirement may be omitted from the convention or contest souvenir booklet.
  - iii. The typed speech shall be submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and shall include a bibliography formatted in APA style. The speech may be used for judging, publications, and contest promotion.
- b. **No** revisions to typed speeches will be accepted after the State Contest Coordinator has received them.
- c. It is mandatory for all contestants to attend the **Orientation** session on **Saturday, May 1, 2027**.
- d. The Drug Awareness Speech contest judging session will be held on **Saturday, May 8, 2027**.
- e. When judging is complete and the results have been determined, the State Contest Coordinator will notify the OFY Contest Chairperson and all contestants of the first-, second-, and third-place winners by email.
- f. 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 6.f.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.
  - b. All contestants shall be recognized and receive a certificate of participation.
  - h. In addition to scholarship awards, contest winners shall receive an award and a winner's certificate.

## 7. 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 and include it with the final contestant's application packet.
- c. The sponsoring district must ensure that all documents listed in **6.a.i. to iii.** are completed and signed. **Email** the application packet along with proof of payment and the form identified in **7.b.** to the State Contest Coordinator. The **deadline** to send applications 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 **6.f.ii.1. and 2.** to the State Contest Coordinator as soon as the contest winners are announced before the State Convention.

## **8. 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, 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*.'

## **9. State Contest Coordinator Contact Information:**

PDG Janie Garza  
pdgjanie2a2@gmail.com  
(210) 643-3217  
P.O. Box 816  
Sutherland Springs, TX 78161

**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*