

2026 LAW DAY CONTEST

FOR WEST VIRGINIA STUDENTS IN GRADES K-12



THE LAW DAY CONTEST IS A PROJECT OF THE WEST VIRGINIA
STATE BAR'S WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION COMMITTEE

WV STATE BAR WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION COMMITTEE LAW DAY 2026
WELCOME LETTER

Dear West Virginia Educators and Students:

Welcome to the annual contest for Law Day, which falls on May 1, 2026. The purpose of Law Day is to celebrate the role of law in our society and to cultivate a deeper understanding of the legal profession. You can find out more about Law Day, and its history, by visiting https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/law-day/

The West Virginia State Bar's Women in the Profession Committee was formed in 2020, and this student Law Day Contest is one of our favorite significant projects. The contest is open for students in grades K- 12 who are attending school (including any public, private, or homeschool program) in West Virginia. We are hopeful that educators will make this available to students in their classrooms, and we encourage educators to provide extra credit or to make participation in this Contest a graded assignment. However, it does not have to be. The students just need to have a parent or teacher sponsor their Contest submission.

The theme chosen by the American Bar Association this year is "The Rule of Law and the American Dream," which is described in this packet. Educators can select the medium created by the students, or those educators can give students the option of what medium they will create. The possibilities include essay-writing, poetry, songwriting and performance, poster creation, and digital art. The submission deadline is noon on April 3, 2026, and the submission requirements are contained in this Contest Packet. Each submission must contain a Submission Form and be signed by the student, teacher, and parent for each student participating. The only exception is in the case of a classroom-wide submission of a poster, which is an available option for educators teaching Grades K-5. In that event, we need a submission form and a list of the students in the classroom who participated.

Winners will be selected and announced at the awards ceremony hosted by the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia. Prizes will be given for winners in each of the three school-levels (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) for each medium (poster, essay, poem, song, digital art) and, in addition, overall prizes will be awarded for "Best in Show" for each of the three school levels.

Good luck to each of the students who participate! We are excited to see their creativity and understanding of the theme reflected in their submissions!

LAW DAY 2026 THEME

Each year, the American Bar Association selects a Law Day theme. This year the theme is “The Rule of Law and the American Dream.”

According to the American Bar Association, “The rule of law—the idea that no person is above the law—is what ensures the rights of the people to live their lives as freely as possible and to pursue their dreams. The ABA encourages all Americans to recognize Law Day on May 1, 2026, and to reflect on how the rule of law ensures all Americans have the ability to fulfill their dreams.”

The West Virginia WIP Law Day contest offers an opportunity for teachers and students to explore and learn about civics, civility, and collaboration through the creative process of developing an essay, song, poem, poster, or digital art about an aspect of the theme, what it means to you, your experiences, or how you have or will use these skills in a practical application.

For more information and a short video by ABA President Michelle Behnke, you can visit the following link: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/law-day/

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PROHIBITED

Each contest entry must be a student’s original work. Entries created by generative AI (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT) are not acceptable.

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Resources for families and educators who are interested in learning more about this year’s Law Day theme, including lesson plans, classroom activities, writing and discussion prompts, and other Law Day resources can be found at <https://abateacherportal.org/law-day/> .

We encourage you to interact online using #lawday and #wvlawday2026 in social media posts about what your students are learning during this Law Day season!

AWARDS CEREMONY INFORMATION AND JUDICIAL LEARNING CENTER VISIT

We are thrilled to announce that this year's award ceremony will be held **LIVE** at the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals at **1:00 p.m. on May 1, 2026**. All contest participants and their families are invited to attend the awards ceremony, which will be followed by a reception. Also on May 1, 2026, the contest participants and their families will also have the opportunity to visit the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Judicial Learning Center. The Judicial Learning Center is a modern exhibition space that provides information about the judicial branch of government and West Virginia's court system.

Please make plans to attend the awards ceremony. There is a chance that the Court will be holding oral arguments on May 1, prior to the awards ceremony. If that is the case, those arguments will be open to the public, which means that the contest participants and their families will be welcome to attend. Additional information concerning the Court's May 1 argument docket can be found at <https://www.courtswv.gov/appellate-courts/supreme-court-of-appeals/current-docket/may> as the date for those arguments approaches.



Former Justice Beth Walker and Chief Justice Haley Bunn explore the Judicial Learning Center at its December 2023 opening.

SONGWRITING CONTEST RULES

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation and a written evaluation of their submission.

Age Categories - Elementary, (K-5), Middle School (6-8) and High School (9-12)

Submission Guidelines, Rules and Regulations

- Students are encouraged to submit an original song from any popular music genre.
- Submissions must incorporate the theme "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."
- Complete submissions shall include an audio or video recording and a lyric sheet.
- Submit your Lyric Sheet as a PDF with your name, school, teacher, and county in the email.
- Video or audio file and lyric sheet should be emailed to WVLawDay@wvbar.org. Submissions must be accompanied by a completed submission form (form attached). Submissions can also be uploaded to a private YouTube post and the link provided via email with the form and lyric sheet if preferred.
- The song recording should be no longer than 3 minutes in duration.
- Recordings may be of a portion of the song.
- Recording must be made as an audio clip or video (MP3 or MP4 format) and may be made on a cell phone.
- Each entrant must be sponsored by an educator.
- Each applicant may submit a maximum of two songs.
- Plagiarism of copyrighted material is illegal.
- Songs may be submitted as an individual or as groups of no more than three students. A separate submission sheet must be submitted by each participating student.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Compositions

Entries will be judged based on their originality, aesthetic quality, how well the song addresses the chosen theme, and the power of the music and lyrics.

Ownership

Ownership of the songs submitted for the contest will remain with the songwriter. However, the WV State Bar reserves the right to reproduce and publish any and all artwork submitted for this contest, and publish the artist's name, age, and school for promotional and marketing use.

POSTER CONTEST RULES

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation and a written evaluation of their submission

Age Categories - Elementary, (K-5), Middle School (6-8) and High School (9-12)

Submission Guidelines, Rules and Regulations

- Students are encouraged to submit an original poster.
- Submissions must meet or address the theme "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."
- Poster size shall be 12" x 18" (vertical).
- Submit a photograph of your poster in either JPG (300 dpi) or PDF format with your name, school, teacher and county in the email.
- Email your submission to WVLawDay@wvbar.org. Submissions must be accompanied by a completed submission form (form attached).
- Each entrant must be sponsored by an educator.
- Each applicant may submit a maximum of one poster.
- Plagiarism of copyrighted material is illegal.
- For grade K-5, posters may be submitted as a class; otherwise, each poster may be submitted as an individual or as groups of no more than three students. A separate submission sheet must be submitted by each participating student.
- If your poster contains any photographs, please confirm that either you took the photograph or that you have obtained legal rights to use the photograph.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Posters

Entries will be judged based on their originality, aesthetic quality, and how well the poster addresses the chosen theme.

Ownership

Ownership of the poster submitted for the contest will remain with the creator. However, the WV State Bar reserves the right to reproduce and publish any and all artwork submitted for this contest, and publish the artist's name, age, and school for promotional and marketing use.

DIGITAL ART CONTEST RULES

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation and a written evaluation of their submission

Age Categories - Elementary, (K-5), Middle School (6-8) and High School (9-12)

Submission Guidelines, Rules and Regulations

- Students are encouraged to submit an original piece of digital art including graphic design and/or social media post that is designed to share awareness of the elected theme.
- Submissions must meet or address the theme "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."
- Do not use commercially available sources for post content or design - those aspects of the submission should be original. You may use commercially available sources for individual elements (i.e., backgrounds).
- Submissions can incorporate the hashtag "#WVLawDay2026."
- The submission should be static. In other words, art work with videos is not permitted.
- The best image size for Instagram posts are: 1080px by 1080px (Square) 1080px by 1350px (Portrait) and 1080px by 608px (Landscape). The best image size for Facebook posts is 1,200px by 630px. The best image size for images for Twitter posts is 1,200 px by 675px.
- The word limit for an Instagram post is 2,200 characters. The word limit for a Facebook post is 63,206 characters. The word limit for a Twitter post is 280 characters. Remember, just because the word limits exist does not mean that your post must take up all of the available characters.
- Submit your digital artwork or a photograph of your social media post in either JPG (300 dpi) or PDF format with your name, school, teacher, and county in the email. Please include the written (non-image) portion of a post in the text of the email as well. Please also designate the social media for which a post is designed (i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.)
- Email your submission to WVLawDay@wvbar.org. Submissions must be accompanied by a completed submission form (form attached).
- Each entrant must be sponsored by an educator.
- Each applicant may submit a maximum of one digital artwork.
- Plagiarism of copyrighted material is illegal.
- For grade K-5, digital artwork may be submitted as a class; otherwise, each digital

artwork submission should be created by an individual student. If your digital artwork contains any photographs, please confirm that either you took the photograph or that you have obtained legal rights to use the photograph or video.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Digital Artwork

Entries will be judged based on their originality, aesthetic quality, how well the digital artwork addresses the chosen theme, and the marketing quality of the artwork.

Ownership

Ownership of digital artwork submitted for the contest will remain with the student. However, the WV State Bar reserves the right to reproduce and publish any and all digital artwork submitted for this contest, and publish the artist's name, age, and school for promotional and marketing use.

ESSAY AND POEM CONTEST RULES

All entrants will receive a certificate of participation and a written evaluation of their submission

Age Categories - Elementary, (K-5), Middle School (6-8) and High School (9-12)

Submission Guidelines, Rules and Regulations

- Students are encouraged to submit an original essay or poem addressing one of the contest themes.
- Submissions must meet or address the theme: "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."
- All essays and/or poem submissions should be 500 words or less for K-8 submissions and 1,000 words or less for students in grades 9-12.
- All entries must be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman or Arial fonts and submitted in MS Word and PDF formats. Essay and poems will be judged on content and presentation. Any paraphrases and/or quotes must contain appropriately cited references.
- Each entry must include the following information in the front upper left hand corner on the first page of the submission: (1) Title of work (if applicable) (2) Student's name (3) Student's grade and age (4) School or group name (5) Teacher or group coordinator name (If registering as part of a school or group)
- Email your submission to WVLawDay@wvbar.org. Submissions must be accompanied by a completed submission form (form attached).
- Each entrant must be sponsored by an educator.
- Each applicant may submit a maximum of one essay and/or one poem. Each essay and/or poem should be written by an individual student.
- Plagiarism of copyrighted material is illegal.

Criteria for the Evaluation of Essays and Poems

Entries will be judged based on their readability, creativeness, content, grammar, and how well the writing addresses the chosen theme.

Ownership

Ownership of the essays and poems submitted for the contest will remain with the student. However, the WV State Bar reserves the right to reproduce and publish any and all essays or poems (or portions thereof) submitted for this contest, and publish the artist's name, age and school for promotional and marketing use.

**WV STATE BAR WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION COMMITTEE
LAW DAY 2026**

**GENERAL SUBMISSION RULES APPLICABLE TO ALL
SUBMISSIONS**

- A submission of a project should be made in a single email with the project work (i.e., the essay or poem in Word and PDF formats; the audio/video file and lyric sheet for the song; etc.) AND the completed submission form for each of the students who have worked on the project as attachments to the email.
- Please do not submit the project through Google classroom or other online services as the judges have had difficulty with access to those materials, especially if they are submitted using student email addresses issued through the school.
- The submission should be emailed to WVLawDay@wvbar.org with the following in the subject line: 2026 Law Day Submission by [STUDENT(S) NAME(S)].
- **Submissions must be received by noon on April 3, 2026.**

**West Virginia State Bar Women in the Profession Committee Law Day 2026
Scoring Rubric**

Category	4	3	2	1
Ideas and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is well suited for the audience, purpose, and mode • The main idea or thesis is clear • Ideas are fully developed and elaborated using details, examples, reasons, or evidence • The creator expresses an insightful perspective towards the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is adequate for the audience, purpose, and mode • The main idea is evident but may lack clarity • Ideas are developed using some details, examples, reasons, and/or evidence • The creator sustains his/her perspective toward the topic throughout most of the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is inconsistent with the audience, purpose, and mode • The main idea is not focused and leaves the reader with questions and making inferences to understand the main idea • Ideas are minimally developed with few details • May simply be a list of ideas • The creator has difficulty expressing his/her perspective toward the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is irrelevant to the audience, purpose, and mode • The composition lacks a central idea • Ideas lack development or may be repetitive • The creator has little or no perspective on the topic
Organization, Unity, and Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging to intended audience • Consistent focus on the theme/topic • Logical and appropriate sequencing and balanced with smooth, effective transitions where appropriate • Order and structure are strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evident introduction to the topic • Adequate focus • Adequate sequencing • Stays on topic with little digression • Uses limited but effective transitions where appropriate • Structure present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lack a clear organizational structure • Weak evidence of unity • Little or limited sequencing and/or transitions • Details may be randomly placed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks logical direction • No evidence of organizational structure
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate word choice which conveys the correct meaning and appeals to the audience in an interesting, precise, and natural way • Written content is engaging No vague, overused, repetitive language is used (ie., very, really) • Words that evoke strong images such as sensory language • Ordinary words used in an unusual way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words generally convey the intended message • The creator uses words that are appropriate but do not necessarily energize the work • Some use of lively verbs, vivid nouns, and imaginative adjectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few vague, overused or repetitive words used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word choice lacks precision and variety or may be inappropriate to the audience and purpose • May be simplistic and/or vague • Relies on overused or vague language (a lot, great, very, really) • Few attempts at figurative language and dialogue • Word choice is unimaginative and colorless with images that are unclear or absent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word choice indicates an extremely limited or inaccurate vocabulary • No attempts at figurative language • General, vague words that fail to communicate meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text too short to relay message in meaningful way

Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creator demonstrates appropriate use of correct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Spelling o Punctuation o Capitalization o Grammar o Usage • Errors are minor and do not affect readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creator shows adequate use of correct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Spelling o Punctuation o Capitalization o Grammar o Usage • Errors may be more noticeable but do not significantly affect readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creator shows minimal use of correct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Spelling o Punctuation o Capitalization o Grammar o Usage • Errors may be distracting and interfere with readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creator demonstrates very limited use of correct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Spelling o Punctuation o Capitalization o Grammar o Usage • Errors are numerous and severely impede readability
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptionally clever and unique demonstration of intended content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content impacts the reader/viewer/listener in a lasting or memorable way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughtfully and uniquely presented; clever at times in showing understanding of theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few original touches to enhance the project that demonstrates some understanding of the material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows little creativity, originality and/or effort in conveying the material in a meaningful and impactful way.
Adherence to Theme and Understanding of Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a sophisticated level of understanding of the content. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a high level of comprehension of the meaning of the theme. • Expresses, at high level, the theme in a manner that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the material. • Demonstrates significant research into the theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows an understanding of the theme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses the theme in a thoughtful manner. • Sets forth the theme in a manner that shows an average level of understanding of research material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a limited understanding of the chosen theme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contain misunderstandings or misinterpretations of research on theme or topic. • Expresses theme but only in a rudimentary level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not demonstrate an understanding of the chosen theme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misses key points or research areas.

<p>Submission-Type Related Criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Song: lyrics and music excellently written, catching and captivating, wonderful performance • Essay: Easy for reader to follow, well-organized, conveys the theme and key points in a captivating way. • Poster: Eye-catching, clever, conveys message well. • Digital Art: Unique and creative design, great understanding of marketing aspects of digital art; captivating and eye-catching; any written content is informative and persuasive. • Poem: creative, follows poetry conventions good use of language, captivating and compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Song: lyrics and music well written and performed; notes, tones and keys flow; consistent tempo • Essay: well-organized, conveys the theme and key points in a adequate way. • Poster: Good use of media, adequate text selection. • Digital Art: creative design; adequate understanding of marketing aspects of digital art; any written content is adequate and meets theme. • Poem: follows poetry conventions well, but does not reach level of captivating or compelling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Song: lyrics and music are adequate, but the lyrics and melody do not flow; choppy transitions • Essay: There is a theme and a main idea, but it is not well-organized for maximum impact on reader; writing is adequate but may be boring or too simplistic • Poster: Presentation is overly simple or does not adequately convey theme. • Digital Art: Adequate design; little understanding of marketing aspects of digital art; unpleasant graphics and/or inadequate text. • Poem: poetry conventions not consistently followed; confusing thematic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Song: Lyrics clash with music; purpose or focus unclear; unnatural tempo. • Essay: Writer's theme is not adequately presented in an organized manner; essay is difficult to follow • Poster: May be disorganized in content or messaging, little or no aesthetic value or thematic messaging. • Digital Art: Unoriginal design; fails to demonstrate any understanding of marketing aspects of digital art; does not adequately convey theme or message; may not have text or graphic. • Poem: fails to follow conventions for poetry; lack of thematic message.
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NOTE TO SCORERS / JUDGES: This contest is for grades K-12. The scoring rubric, therefore, may have categories or topics that are not applicable to lower grade levels as it is geared toward the 8-12 grade range. Please use your judgment and adjust scoring as necessary to fairly score submissions by students in grades K-7 so that their work is judged against that of their peers and in accordance with grade-level appropriate scoring criteria.

**WV STATE BAR WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION COMMITTEE
LAW DAY 2026 SCORING SHEET**

NAME _____ GRADE _____

SCHOOL _____

TEACHER _____

SUBMISSION TYPE (check one; complete a separate submission form for each submission):

Essay Poem Digital Art Song Poster

THEME: "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."

NOTE TO SCORERS / JUDGES: This contest is for grades K-12. The scoring rubric, therefore, may have categories or topics that are not applicable to lower grade levels as it is geared toward the 8-12 grade range. Please use your judgment and adjust scoring as necessary to fairly score submissions by students in grades K-7 so that their work is judged against that of their peers and in accordance with grade-level appropriate scoring criteria.

SCORE	CATEGORY
	Ideas and Development
	Organization, Unity and Coherence
	Word Choice
	Grammar, Usage and Mechanics
	Creativity
	Adherence to Theme and Understanding of Content
	Submission-Type Related Criteria

TOTAL SCORE: _____ / 28

COMMENTS:

**WV STATE BAR WOMEN IN THE PROFESSION COMMITTEE
LAW DAY 2026 SUBMISSION FORM**

**PLEASE SUBMIT A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH STUDENT WHO IS
SUBMITTING AN ENTRY, EVEN IF THERE ARE MULTIPLE STUDENTS
WHO ARE ON THE SAME SUBMISSION**

NAME _____ GRADE _____

ADDRESS (can be school address) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

SCHOOL _____

TEACHER _____ TEACHER EMAIL _____

SUBMISSION TYPE (check one; complete a separate submission form for each submission):

Essay Poem Digital Art Song Poster

THEME: "The Rule of Law and the American Dream."

By submitting this form, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the guidelines, rules and regulations for the category in which I am submitting my work. I acknowledge that my contest entry is my original work and that my entry was not created by generative AI (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT). (Each student must submit this form, even if there are multiple students who worked on the submission together)

Student Signature _____ Teacher Signature _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the student named above, I have completely read the Contest Packet for the West Virginia State Bar Women in the Profession Committee Law Day 2026 Contest ("Contest") and by consenting to the student's participation in the Contest, agree to abide by the rules stated in the packet. I hereby irrevocably grant to the West Virginia State Bar, perpetually, exclusively, and for all media (including print, electronic, video or any other formats), the rights to use, display, publish, reproduce, distribute and modify the work submitted for the Contest by the student and/or his/her school, to identify the student as the creator of the work in any promotional or marketing materials, all at the exclusive discretion of the West Virginia State Bar. I hereby release the West Virginia State Bar and its officials, employees and/or members from any and all claims, demands, causes of action, suits, costs, expenses, liabilities, and damages whatsoever that the child or I may hereafter have against the West Virginia State Bar, its officials, employees and/or members in connection with the work, the Contest, or the identification of the student as the creator of the work. I understand that nothing obligates the West Virginia State Bar to use the name of my child in connection with the work or any of the rights granted to it herein and that the West Virginia State Bar is not responsible for copyright violations by submitting students.

I give permission to the West Virginia State Bar to use the student's image in promotional or marketing materials (i.e., to publish photographs of the Contest winners). To opt out of this permission, initial here _____.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____