



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest Finalists Announced

SAN FRANCISCO – Federal judicial districts throughout the Ninth Circuit have selected their local civics contest winners who will advance as finalists in the preliminary round of the 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest. Forty-two essays and 31 videos are up for consideration to be the next top winners at the circuit level contest. The circuit received 737 essays and 88 video entries.

“70 Years Later—The Legacy of *Brown v. Board of Education*” was the theme of the civics contest. In addressing the theme, students were asked to discuss the impact they think Brown has had and why. The contest was open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status, in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington state, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Judging panel members are now reviewing and scoring the essays and videos that advanced to the preliminary round of the Ninth Circuit civics contest. The Ninth Circuit Public Information and Community Outreach (PICO) Committee, composed of judges, court executives and attorneys, will determine the final winners of the contest. PICO is responsible for determining the theme and organizing the contest with support from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and the 15 federal judicial districts that comprise the Ninth Circuit.

First-place winners at the circuit level will be invited to attend the 2024 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, and a total of \$11,400 in cash prizes will be awarded to the top three essay and video winners. First place cash prize in each category is \$3,000, second place is \$1,700 and third place is \$1,000. If the winners of the video portion of the contest are part of a team, then they will split the total cash prize.

Circuit winners will be announced on the contest website <https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest/> in June. District winners are listed in the following pages.

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Civics Contest District Winners

Below are the names of students from each district who are advancing to the next round of the competition at the circuit level.

District of Alaska

Essay Winner: First place (\$1,000) – Manning Zhang, West Anchorage High School, Anchorage.

District of Arizona

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,500) – Akshita Khanna, BASIS Phoenix, Phoenix; Second place (\$750) – Prisha Yelamanchili, BASIS Chandler, Chandler; and Third place (\$500) – Chloe Moore, Desert Vista High School, Phoenix.

Video Winners: First place (Total of \$1,500) – the team of Aayush Shah, Mihir Sahani and Vivian Patel, BASIS Chandler; Second place (\$750) – Anthony Baltazar, Desert Ridge High School, Mesa; and Third place (\$500) – Christine Vuong, Mesa High School, Mesa.

Central District of California

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Justina Liu, Arcadia High School, Arcadia; Second place (\$750) – Michael Isayan, North Hollywood High School, North Hollywood; and Third place (\$500) – Aston Kwon, Northwood High School, Irvine.

Video Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Katelyn Cheng, Westlake Village; Second place (Total of \$750) – the team of Chidike Nwankwo, Jayden Mendoza and Chidinma Ojinmah, Norte Vista High School, Riverside; and (Total of \$500) – the team of Gael Garivay, Roberto Vega- Alarcon and Antoine Cueller-Morgan, Azusa High School, Azusa.

The Central District is also inviting their first-place winners and their parent/guardian to attend the 2024 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference.

Eastern District of California

Essay Winners: First place – Joshua Yang, El Camino Fundamental High School, Sacramento; Second place – Michael Reynoso, El Camino Fundamental High School; and Third place – Brysan Polhemus, El Camino Fundamental High School.

Video Winner: First place – Lauren Richey, Cosumnes Oak High School, Elk Grove.

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Northern District of California

Essay Winners: First place (\$2,000) – Jia Aggarwal, Dublin High School, Dublin; Second place (\$1,500) – Shaan Singh, San Leandro High School, San Leandro; and Third place (\$1,000) – Karthik Subramanian, American High School, Fremont.

Video Winners: First place (\$2,000) – Julia Karsner, Castilleja School, Palo Alto; and Second place (Total of \$1,500) – the team of Isabel Sonneborn, Marguerite Walden-Kaufman and Hadassah Krieger, San Rafael High School, San Rafael.

Southern District of California

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Raine Wen, Mt. Carmel High School, San Diego; Second place (\$500) – Natalie Amir-Lobel, La Jolla Country Day School, San Diego; and Third place (\$250) – Daniel Palacios, Mt. Carmel High School.

Video Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Eva Tieu, Hoover High School, San Diego; Second place (Total of \$500) – the team of Tyler Maula and Diego Contreras, Bonita Vista High School, Chula Vista; and Third place (\$250) – Marcos Hernandez, Hoover High School, San Diego.

District of Guam

Essay Winners: First place (\$300) – Vance Meno, Father Duenas Memorial School, Chalan-Pago-Ordot; Second place (\$200) – Mariana Castro, St. John's School, Upper Tumon; and Third place (\$100) – Angel Samaniego, Simon Sanchez High School, Tamuning.

Video Winners: First place (Total of \$300) – the team of Samantha Pascua and Arianna Cadiz, Simon Sanchez High School, Yigo.

District of Hawaii

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,500) – Peter Vahsen, Kaiser High School, Honolulu; Second place (\$750) – Tiffany Ishida, 'Iolani School, Honolulu; and Third place (\$500) – Colbie Bell, 'Iolani School.

Video Winners: First place (\$1,500) – Teah Simon, 'Iolani School, Honolulu; and Second place (Total of \$750) – the team of Zuri Pagel, Tezeru Kapfer and Soraya Nasseghandi, Kaiser High School.

District of Idaho

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Max Pieper, Second place (\$500) – Addie Branen and Third place (\$250) – Dylan Taylor. All students are from Moscow High School in Moscow.

Video Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Jacob Nunez, Post Falls High School, Post Falls; Second place (\$500) – Kate Raley, Boise High School, Boise; and Third place (\$250) – Kira Sherman, Post Falls High School.

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District of Montana

Essay Winners: First place (\$2,000) – Skylar Pinsondumm, Sentinel High School, Missoula; Second place (\$1,000) – Emma Cashell, Corvallis High School, Corvallis; and Third place (\$500) – Tayler Wolf, Dawson County High School, Glendive.

Video Winners: First place (\$2,250) – Trinity Nicholson, Foothills Community Christian School, Great Falls; and Second place (\$1,250) – Kimber Koteskey, Foothills Community Christian School. The \$500 prize for a third-place winner was equally distributed to the first- and second-place winners since the district did not have a third-place winner.

District of Nevada

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,500) – Auri Fernandez, Incline High School, Incline Village; Second place (\$850) – Jamie Arevalo, West Career and Technical Academy, Las Vegas; and Third place (\$500) – Aeron Pearson, Southwest Career and Technical Academy, Las Vegas.

Video Winners: First place (Total of \$1,500) – the team of Vanessa Lei, Hannah Vuong and Joan Li, West Career and Technical Academy; Second place (\$850) – Grace Li, West Career and Technical Academy; and Third place (\$500) – Evelyn Wu, Southwest Career and Technical Academy.

District of Northern Mariana Islands

Essay Winners: First place (\$200) – Irene Park, Saipan International School, Chalan Kanoa; Second place (\$150) – Gwanpil Son, Marianas High School, Susupe; and Third place (\$100) – Trixia Jhoanne Singca, Marianas High School.

Video Winners: First place (Total of \$200) – the team of Misha Kim and Ayung Lee; Second place (Total of \$150) – the team of Jeongbin Park, Keylie Claveria and Zi Hao Zhou; and Third place (Total of \$100) – Eva Lizunova, Linda Li and Nikki Qiu. All students are from Saipan International School.

District of Oregon

Local winners in the District of Oregon will receive cash prizes to be determined by the district.

Essay Winners: First place – Colin Williams, Charles A. Sprague High School, Salem; Second place – Dorothy Cui, Lincoln High School, Portland; and Third place – Matthew Meyers, Charles A. Sprague High School.

Video Winners: First place – the team of Colin Williams and Matthew Meyers, Charles A. Sprague High School; Second place – Ruby Kara, Milwaukie Academy of the Arts, Milwaukie; and Third place – Asher Lee, Sabin-Schellenberg Professional Technical Center, Milwaukie.

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Eastern District of Washington

The Eastern District of Washington selected a total of three winners, in essay and video categories combined.

Winners: First place (Total of \$1,000) – the team of Luke Blue and Eleanor Weitz for their video entry, Mt. Spokane High School, Mead; Second place (\$500) – Autumn Kern, essay entry, Mt. Spokane High School; and Third place (\$250) – Klara Hulick, essay entry, Hanford High School, Richland.

Western District of Washington

Essay Winners: First place (\$1,000) – Addison Wooster, Kingston High School, Kingston; Second place (\$750) – Havah Alcorn, Gibson EK High School, Issaquah; and Third place (\$500) – Isaiah Sinclair, Homeschool, Everett.

Video Winner: First place (\$1,000) – Shreya Damodaran, Lake Washington High School, Kirkland.

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