



Kathy Speaker MacNett, Treasurer  
3401 North Front Street  
P.O. Box 5950  
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Phone: 717-232-5000  
[www.finneganfoundation.org](http://www.finneganfoundation.org)

## **THE JAMES A. FINNEGAN FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION SUMMER 2025 ESSAY CONTEST - INSTRUCTIONS**

Please provide the following ***Required Documents***:

1. **APPLICATION FORM.** Completed Application Form (see page 2)
2. **ESSAY.** (Question on last page). The Essay should:
  - a. Be between 1,500 words (minimum) and 2,500 (maximum)
  - b. Be 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced
  - c. Be consecutively page numbered
  - d. Include a cover sheet with the name of the applicant and the name of his/her/their educational institution
  - e. NOT include the name of applicant or educational institution anywhere within the numbered pages of the essay
  - f. Answer to the question
  - g. Include a bibliography (This will not count toward the word limit.)
  - h. Be electronically transmitted no later than 11:59 PM on January 24, 2025 via email to [FinneganEssayContest@gmail.com](mailto:FinneganEssayContest@gmail.com), OR mailed with a POSTMARK no later than January 24, 2025 to Kathy Speaker MacNett, Treasurer, 3401 North Front Street, P.O. Box 5950, Harrisburg, PA 17110.
  - i. Note: Judging is considered as a “Blind Judging”. Judges will assess applicants on essay content as well as their ability to follow standard directions, grammar, and proof-reading. All personal identifiers are removed from materials prior to judging to ensure blind judging process.
3. **LETTER(S) OF RECOMMENDATION.** Up to three letters of recommendation may be submitted. The number of letters of recommendation is not as important as their content and a description of the opportunity which the faculty member, administrative official, or community leader has had to evaluate the applicant’s ability, performance, and leadership potential.
4. **TRANSCRIPT.** A grade transcript, containing background information explaining grade symbols and, if possible, indicating relative class standing of the applicant. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable.

***Optional Items*** to be consider after blind judging:

5. **RESUME or EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES STATEMENT.** A statement describing the applicant’s participation in extra-curricular activities or civic activities. It may be in narrative or outline form. Please limit to 500 words in length.
6. **REASON FOR APPLYING STATEMENT OR VIDEO.** A statement describing the applicant’s reason for applying for the essay contest. The written statement is limited to 500 words in length; or a 25MB file size for video statement.



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**THE JAMES A. FINNEGAN FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION**  
**2025 ESSAY CONTEST APPLICATION**

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Applicant:

Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

College or University Attending:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Major Study: \_\_\_\_\_ Minor Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Each Applicant certifies that they are:

1. A resident of Pennsylvania attending an accredited college or university at the time the essay is submitted, here or elsewhere;  
OR  
A non-resident student attending an accredited Pennsylvania college or university at the time the essay is submitted.
2. An undergraduate student working toward a baccalaureate degree to be obtained  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2025 \_\_\_\_\_ 2026 \_\_\_\_\_ 2027 \_\_\_\_\_ 2028
3. Not be a previous winner of a James A. Finnegan Fellowship internship.
4. Available to serve an in-person internship generally in an agency under the Governor's jurisdiction in Harrisburg, PA for a minimum of 8 weeks and a maximum of 10 weeks beginning on or about the last week of May 2025 and concluding on or about the last week in August 2025. In person internships should be planned. Unavailability to serve the internship will disqualify an applicant from the competition and related monetary awards, even if the applicant's essay is noteworthy.
5. Eligible to work in the United States.
6. Not utilizing Generative Artificial Intelligence in preparing any of the essays submitted for this competition. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence may disqualify applicant.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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**THE JAMES A. FINNEGAN FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION**  
**2025 ESSAY QUESTION**

*THE SCHOOL VOUCHER... HAS IT'S TIME COME?*

Pennsylvania currently has two indirect tax funding programs that aid students who wish to attend to private and religious schools: the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC). But in addition to tax credits, more states are turning to direct government funding for students in the form of school vouchers.

As part of the 2024-25 budget consideration, Pennsylvania has debated, but has not yet enacted, a voucher program. The latest proposal would have made \$100 million available to students from relatively low-income families who attend schools within the lowest 15% on annual assessment achievement tests (combined mathematics and reading).

Advocates for school vouchers believe that state-funded tuition programs give public school students more options to attend higher-achieving private schools. Opponents of school vouchers believe that such state-funded tuition programs take badly needed financial resources away from already struggling public schools.

Do you believe school vouchers should be part of Pennsylvania's next state budget, or not? Support your answer.

The completed Application Form (Required Document 1) and 2025 Essay (Required Document 2), together with Required Documents 3 and 4 and Optional Documents 5 and/or 6 (as listed on page 1) must be electronically transmitted, no later than 11:59 PM on January 24, 2025, via email to [FinneganEssayContest@gmail.com](mailto:FinneganEssayContest@gmail.com), OR mailed with a POSTMARK no later than January 24, 2025 to Kathy Speaker MacNett, Treasurer, 3401 North Front Street, P.O. Box 5950, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

All emailed documents must be in Word or .pdf format.