



Kathy Speaker MacNett, Treasurer
3401 North Front Street
P.O. Box 5950
Harrisburg, PA 17110
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www.finneganfoundation.org

THE JAMES A. FINNEGAN FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION **SUMMER 2026 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 23, 2026 via email to FinneganEssayContest@gmail.com, OR mailed with a POSTMARK no later than January 23, 2026 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
2026 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
_____ 2026 _____ 2027 _____ 2028 _____ 2029
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,¹ for a minimum of 8 weeks and a maximum of 10 weeks beginning on or about the last week of May 2026 and concluding on or about the last week in August 2026. 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: _____

¹ Unless the agency allows remote work.



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THE JAMES A. FINNEGAN FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION
2026 ESSAY QUESTION

Pros and Cons of Data Centers and What Should the State's Role Be?

Data centers have been proliferating in Pennsylvania and in other states recently. What are the pros and cons of these structures/developments and what should the state's role be in providing financial assistance and in establishing regulations for these new large data centers?

The completed Application Form (Required Document 1) and 2026 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 23, 2026, via email to FinneganEssayContest@gmail.com, OR mailed with a POSTMARK no later than January 23, 2026 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.