

# Virginia Association of Fairs (VAF) Youth Leadership Scholarship Contest 2024



**Date & Time:** January 4, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.

**Contest Location:** Virginia Association of Fairs Conference  
Williamsburg Lodge, 101 Visitor Center Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23185

**Eligibility:** For youth ages 14-19 as of January 1, 2025, who are active participants in a VAF-member fair or festival. Youth can participate more than once if they do not win first place. *(See general rules.)*

**Application Deadline:** 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of December (December 6, 2024)

**Mail to:** VCE-Highland Attn: Kari Sponaugle, P.O. Box 528, Monterey, VA 24465 *(FedEx: 83 Highland Center Drive, Monterey, VA 24465)* **Late, faxed or incomplete entries will not be accepted.**

**Contest Chair:** Kari Sponaugle, Virginia Cooperative Extension - [karis@vt.edu](mailto:karis@vt.edu) - 540-468-2225

**Contest Co-Chair:** Sarah “Essie” Berry, VAF Secretary

**Scholarship Awards:**

1st Place	\$ 2500.00
2nd place	\$ 2000.00
3rd place	\$ 1500.00
4th Place	\$ 1250.00
5th place	\$ 1000.00
6th place	\$ 750.00
7 <sup>th</sup> place	\$ 500.00
8 <sup>th</sup> place	\$ 250.00

**Contest Components:**

Due in December:

1. Application, Résumé, Essay, & Letter of Reference

Bring On Contest Day:

2. Digital Presentation (PowerPoint)
3. Individual Interview
4. Prepared Speech
5. Extemporaneous Speech

### **About Scholarship Awards:**

Awards are given in the form of scholarships and dispersed upon receipt of a bill showing the winner's name and made payable to an accredited post-secondary institution of higher learning. Awards can only be used toward the intended purpose of further education. No other uses of funds are allowed under these contest rules. The recipient has until their 23rd birthday to use the funds awarded in this contest. Funds not used by the deadline revert to the overall scholarship fund. Scholarship proceeds are non-transferable. Bills from a qualified institution must be submitted in a timely fashion to the VAF Treasurer. Please allow 60 days or more for processing.

### **Contest Goals:**

The goals of the VAF Youth Leadership Scholarship Contest are to

- recognize superior leadership characteristics among junior members of VAF member fairs and festivals and the overall fair industry.
- encourage and develop leadership and workplace readiness skills among youth members so they will be able to better serve their communities and fair/festival organizations.
- share, as well as receive, ideas and concepts that have proved successful, or unsuccessful, at local fairs and festivals in Virginia.

### **General Rules:**

1. Contestants must be age 14 to 19 as of January 1 of the contest year.
2. To compete, contestants must actively participate in their local VAF-member fair (youth board member, livestock exhibitor, contest/fair entry participant, fair volunteer, etc.). Application must be signed by a sponsoring fair official (board member, committee chair, etc.).
3. A letter of reference from a fair board or committee member must be submitted with the application. The letter should highlight the applicant's contributions to the local VAF-member fair.
4. Contestants must be present to participate; contest is held during the VAF Conference. Contestants should wear professional attire and conduct themselves accordingly during the entire contest period.
5. Results will be announced **shortly after tabulation is complete** so youth and families can travel home. Finalist information will also be shared during the VAF Conference Gala Saturday night. Finalists receive an award letter to keep until they request the scholarship to be paid to their college/institution.
6. Contest participant(s) may also be asked or wish to present a portion of their contest entries (PowerPoint, Prepared Speech, Extemp Speech) to the VAF board, their own fair or festival board, or another fair-supporting organization during the 2025 fair season for program promotion.

## **Due December 6, 2024:**

### **Letter of Reference, Résumé and Essay:**

Application form with the appropriate signatures, essay, letter of reference and résumé must be received **IN HAND, not postmarked** by the deadline on the front page of the packet.

### **Résumé requirements:**

- a. Two-page maximum
- b. Include contact information
- c. Experience related to fair participation and service. (ex. youth board member, 2022-23; livestock exhibitor, 2020-2024; canned goods committee chair, 2024; social media assistant, 2023; fair intern, 2023-24)
- d. Community Organization Memberships
- e. Work Experience, paid or volunteer
- f. Honors and/or Awards received
- g. Education and/or Career goals

### **Letter of Reference:**

Receive this letter from a member/volunteer/director of your fair or festival (non-relative) emphasizing your fair participation, service, and leadership.

### **Essay:**

1. Each contestant must submit a typed essay addressing the topic below.
2. **Participant Name, Age, and Fair/Festival** must be in the **top right corner** for identification purposes.
3. Essays will be judged on grammar and spelling, organization, relevance, creativity, and quality.

#### **The 2025 Essay Prompt is:**

Inclement weather is always a possibility when planning an outdoor event. Fair planning teams work for months to secure entertainment, food, and fun activities for attendees, but rain or wind could wreak havoc on best-laid plans. What does your fair or festival do in case of inclement weather, or how do they rally from a weather event that could cancel part of or the entire program? What are some 'rainy day' plans that have worked well for your event in the past or you have ready in your back pocket, just in case?

## **On Contest Day:**

### **Tentative Schedule**

- 8:45 am – check in contest rooms
- 9:00 am – 10:30 am – Digital Presentations, open to public/parents
- 11:00 am – 1:30 pm – Contest Rotations – Prepared Speech, Extemp Speech, Interview
  - Winner Announcement in the contest area, shortly after tabulation
- Winners announced after contest completion in contest rooms
- 7:00 – Winners also announced during the VAF Conference Gala Dinner

### **Interview:**

1. Each contestant will participate in an interview with at least one judge to answer questions about their résumé, application, and involvement in their local fairs, community, and other organizations.
2. Youth can bring their resume to reference during the interview.
3. Youth are judged on delivery, content, resume, and preparedness.

### **Digital Presentation:**

1. Digital Presentations (PowerPoint) are the FIRST part of the contest. Parents and Conference attendees can observe this portion.
2. Create a presentation on the topic below. A laptop and projector are provided. Any other equipment must be brought by the presenter (clicker, mouse, etc.). A provided laptop will have PowerPoint software.
3. Bring your presentation saved on a USB drive on contest day. Do not rely on a cloud-based system as the internet may not be reliable in the contest area.
4. Speech order on Contest Day is at random.
5. Presenters should refrain from using sound or movie clips to minimize technological glitches.
6. Two-thirds of the score from Digital Symposium is decided by two (2) judges. The remaining one-third is the average of youth presenters' score sheets.
7. Presentations will be judged on composition (40%), Delivery (45%), and Response to Judge Questions (15%).
8. Delivery time is four to six (4-6) minutes. Points are deducted if the presentation time falls outside of this time frame. Suggested presentation size is 20 slides or less.
9. Be creative; use appropriate photos, charts, borders, backgrounds, and word art.

#### **The 2025 Digital Presentation Topic is:**

There is a lot of buzz about the county fair the few weeks before and after the event. But how does your fair keep that fair feeling alive the rest of the year? What other events are held at your fairgrounds or by other community organizations to maintain that enthusiasm for fair participation throughout the year?

**Prepared Speech:**

1. Speech Topic: The **importance of participation in fairs and festivals (self, community, etc.)**.
2. Each contestant must bring two printed copies of the speech to contest check-in with YOUTH NAME, AGE, and FAIR/FESTIVAL NAME in the top right corner.
  - a. Speeches must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and stapled.
3. Delivery time is four to six (4-6) minutes.
4. Speeches are scored on composition, delivery, and response to judge questions.
5. Speech order on Contest Day is at random.
6. Contestants are allowed notecards, but points are deducted for excessive use. No other materials or devices are allowed.
7. A podium may or may not be available.
8. Points are deducted if contestants are over/under the time limit.

**Extemporaneous Speech:**

1. Contestants have 30 minutes to prepare a two to four (2-4) minute speech on a topic chosen by contest officials on contest day.
9. Extemporaneous speech is scored on composition, delivery, and response to judge questions.
2. Speech order on Contest Day is at random.
3. Topic is opinion-based and related to the fair industry and/or youth's personal experiences at fairs and festivals.
4. Contestants are allowed notes, but points are deducted for excessive use during delivery.
5. Points are deducted if contestants are over/under the time limit.

# Virginia Association of Fairs (VAF) Youth Leadership Scholarship Application 2025

Participant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

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

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifying Fair/Festival: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(\*Note: Fair must be a member of Virginia Association of Fairs.)*

Your Local Newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*A press release may be shared with contestants' local papers to explain the contest and share contest results.*

**Submit Essay, Letter of Reference & Résumé with this page.**

**Signatures:**

I certify that the applicant is an active member of our fair or festival and is eligible for this contest.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fair/Festival Representative's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

I certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my ability and is my work. I have read and understand the rules for the contest.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

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**Applications due (NOT post marked) by 5:00 p.m. December 6, 2024, to the address above.**