

2026 Scholarship Essay Contest

The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Scholarship Essay Contest is a chance for students to learn more about the importance of Organized Labor in America.

Over the years, we have awarded tens of thousands of dollars to students furthering their education.

Scholarships are available exclusively to Pennsylvania AFL-CIO affiliated union members and their immediate family members.

Scholarships are offered to students in two categories: graduating high school seniors (Class of 2026), and all post-secondary students.

Essay Contest Categories

Category 1: Graduating High School Seniors

Recent issues like inflation, AI, and changing labor laws affect the lives of working families. Choose one of these issues and explain its impact on workers in your community. How can labor unions help them respond to these challenges?

Category 2: Post-Secondary Students

Recent trends such as AI in the workplace, major labor strikes, the rise of gig work, and shifting labor laws are reshaping work in the United States. Analyze one key trend and assess its short- and long-term impacts on the working class. How should labor unions adapt to protect workers' rights and economic security in this evolving landscape?



Scholarship Awards

First Place	\$2,000
Second Place	\$1,500
Third Place	\$1,000

How to Apply

- Essays must be a minimum of 1,500 words on the topic in your respective category. Essays less than 1,500 words will not qualify.
- Titles must include the Category for which you are applying.
- Your application form (located on the back of this flyer) must be included with your essay in a PDF file, or as a separate PDF attachment.
- Entries sent in the incorrect format will not be considered.
- Entries must be sent to monica@paaficio.org by May 29, 2026.

The PDF version of this flyer is on www.paaficio.org

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS MAY 29, 2026

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 DONORS!

**Neshaminy Federation of Teachers
Greater Westmoreland CLC
United Steelworkers Local 15253
IUOE Local 66**

If you have questions:

**Please contact Monica Virgilio
at 717-231-2853, or email
monica@paafICIO.org**

PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION BELOW IN FULL AND
INCLUDE IT WITH YOUR ESSAY SUBMISSION IN A PDF FILE.

INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

*IF YOU ARE CHOSEN AS A WINNER, PLEASE BE PREPARED TO SUBMIT A
HEADSHOT VIA EMAIL TO BE FEATURED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS*

NAME

ADDRESS

HOME PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

UNION AFFILIATION & LOCAL

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL (if known)

PLEASE STATE THE NAME & ADDRESS OF THE SCHOOL AND/OR PROGRAM YOU CURRENTLY ATTEND

I agree to provide proof of school acceptance or
enrollment, should I become a scholarship recipient.

SIGNATURE OF CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL OR LOCAL UNION



PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO

President Angela Ferritto

Secretary-Treasurer Maurice Cobb

April 8, 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO is pleased to announce its **2026 Scholarship Essay Contest**. We thank affiliate unions that have contributed to the award money for the Scholarship Essay Contests, in the past. **Now we are writing to request your financial support and your help in promoting the 2026 Essay Contest.**

The Essay Contest provides an opportunity for high school and post-secondary students to learn about the Labor Movement's important contributions to the social, economic, and political development of our country. It also reminds students – the next generation of workers – about the importance of protecting the Labor Movement's gains, for their own wellbeing in current and future workplaces.

Awards are offered to students in two categories: Graduating High School Seniors (class of 2026) and All Post-Secondary Students. The award amounts are: First Place - \$2,000, Second Place - \$1,500, Third Place - \$1,000.

The essay topics for each category are as follows:

Category I – Graduating High School Seniors:

Recent issues like inflation, AI, and changing labor laws affect the lives of working families. Choose one of these issues and explain its impact on workers in your community. How can labor unions help them respond to these challenges?

Category II – Students Attending an Accredited, Post-Secondary Institution:

Recent trends such as AI in the workplace, major labor strikes, the rise of gig work, and shifting labor laws are reshaping work in the United States. Analyze one key trend and assess its short- and long-term impacts on the working class. How should labor unions adapt to protect workers' rights and economic security in this evolving landscape?

If you post this information on your website, please note that the scholarships are only awarded to Pennsylvania AFL-CIO affiliated union members and their immediate family members.

All submissions must be received by email to monica@paafcio.org by May 29, 2026. Essays will be judged in June 2026, and awards will be made in July 2026.

Enclosed you will find a Scholarship Application form for distribution to your members. You may make copies of this form.

If your union affiliate can contribute to the award money, please make your check payable to the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO and mail it to: PA AFL-CIO, Attention: Maurice Cobb, Secretary-Treasurer, 600 North Second St., Harrisburg, PA 17101.

Thank you for your support of the Scholarship Essay Contest, whether it be monetary, helping to publicize it, or both.

In Solidarity,



Angela Ferritto, President



Maurice Cobb, Secretary-Treasurer