



2026 Essay Scholarship Contest Rules

Graduate Students Only

At Least Nine Awards from \$2,000 to \$5,000!

NPG, a national membership organization devoted to population issues, invites graduate students to compete in our annual Scholarship Contest.

On July 4, 2026, America will turn 250 years old. Happy Birthday, America!

Our country's population is now more than 87 times larger than it was at the first official census in 1790, growing from 3.9 million at that time to over 342 million today – and every day we add more people.

Negative Population Growth, Inc., the nation's premier organization exclusively devoted to the study of U.S. population size and growth, has identified several reasons why population growth negatively impacts the United States.

We want to know what you think!

In 500 - 750 words, identify three aspects of American life that are negatively affected by population growth. Explain why these factors would be easier to manage with fewer people.

In your opinion, what is an ideal population size for the United States and why?

Use hard data to support your positions. Essay must include at least three citations from credible sources (books, magazines, academic journals, organizational websites, or news outlets). Blogs and social media posts are not permitted. Citations are not included in word count.

The NPG Scholarship Committee will select at least nine winning entries. Essays will be judged based on the quality of writing, originality, relevance to the topic, and evidence of critical thinking. All decisions are at the discretion of NPG Scholarship Judges, and all decisions are final. All scholarships will be paid directly to the accredited graduate school or university of the winning students. Official contest information is available on our website (www.NPG.org).

Official Contest Rules and Eligibility Requirements:

1. **Entries must be received by 11:59 PM EST on April 13, 2026 through NPG's official submission webpage [click here to access page](#). Submissions received after the deadline will NOT be accepted. Winners will be announced online at www.NPG.org by July 13, 2026.**
2. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) writing tools is not permitted and can lead to disqualification.
3. Essay must be the original work of the applicant. Artwork or photos are not required and if included with the entry, they will not be included in judging.
4. Essay must include at least three citations from credible sources (books, magazines, academic journals, organizational websites, or news outlets). Blogs and social media posts are not permitted. Citations are not included in word count.
5. Document must be in **MS Word (doc or docx) file**. Google Docs, Pages, PDF and other file formats will not be accepted. **File name MUST include applicant's name** and document MUST include the applicant's name, address, email, and telephone number at the top of the essay. Essay should be between 500 and 750 words, in 12-14 pt. font. Citations are not included in word count.
6. Applicant must be a U.S. Citizen or legal permanent resident.
7. Applicant must be 14 years old or older.

(Rules continued next page.)



2026 Essay Scholarship Contest Rules Graduate Students Only (Continued)

8. Applicant must be enrolled in an accredited graduate program of study, located within the U.S. or operated overseas by the U.S. government, for the Fall 2026 semester.
9. No purchase or contribution is required for entry. Neither membership in nor contributions to NPG will enhance the chances of winning.
10. Applicant must sign the Application Form. A parent or guardian signature is also required for all applicants under 18.
11. All entries are subject to the [NPG Privacy Policy](#).
12. Relatives of NPG employees or directors are not eligible.
13. Not valid where prohibited.
14. The winning entries will be posted on NPG's website.
15. Failure to comply with all of the rules will result in an applicant's entry to be disqualified.
16. Entries may be used by NPG for advertising purposes.

(Continue to next pages for Release Agreement and Privacy Policy.)



Essay Scholarship Contest Project Release

NOTE: This document gives NPG complete ownership of all materials submitted by you to the Essay Scholarship Contest, and allows NPG to use those materials, any photo or identification of you, and your essay for any purpose related to the Essay Scholarship Contest or NPG's other program activities.

This is a complete release and authorization for use of my product(s) submitted to the Essay Scholarship Contest including my essay and any related materials, name and identification, appearance, and any related services. For good and valuable consideration, including publicity and eligibility for a contest prize, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, I hereby irrevocably grant to Negative Population Growth, Inc. ("NPG") all services and appearances rendered by me, and all ideas and materials provided by me, in connection with the development, production and/or exploitation of print, graphic, audio and/or visual or other content, projects, productions, campaigns and/or programs relating to the project known as NPG Essay Scholarship Contest ("Project"). My product and services are a "work-for-hire."

I hereby irrevocably give and grant to NPG all rights and proceeds of every kind and character whatsoever in all media and languages throughout the world, in perpetuity, in and to all work done, and all appearances of my name, likeness, image, and to all the results and proceeds of my product, for all commercial and non-commercial purposes (including, but not limited to, merchandising, advertising, and promotion purposes) related to the Project. I further irrevocably give and grant to NPG the right to adapt, change, edit, modify, add to, delete, combine with other materials, record, reproduce, distribute and otherwise exploit the same by any means now known or hereafter devised. NPG may freely assign or transfer its rights hereunder, in whole or in part.

I hereby irrevocably agree that I will not assert nor maintain against NPG, its licensees, successors or assigns, or any persons related to them, any claim, action, suit or demand of any kind or nature, such as invasion of privacy or of publicity or any other rights (including, without limitation, intellectual property rights), defamation, libel or slander in connection with the exercise of the rights granted herein. I realize that NPG is relying upon this Release in the making of the Project and, accordingly, I hereby irrevocably waive any and all rights to seek or obtain any injunctive or other equitable relief related to the Project.

No compensation for such use will be paid hereunder beyond any contest prize or similar award already designated.



Official NPG Contests

Privacy Policy

Entry into any NPG Contest requires disclosure of certain personal information. We do not sell or trade this information to third parties, except as stated in the policy or as necessary for NPG's programs and activities. Participation in any NPG contest is completely voluntary. By entering any NPG contest, participants consent to disclose all required information and release NPG from any and all liability from its disclosure.

The information requested may include but is not limited to: contact information (such as name and mailing address) and demographic information (such as zip code, educational institution, and age). Contact information will be used to notify winners, award prizes, and for other NPG program purposes. Certain information (such as name and school) may be used in publicity about the Contest and NPG.

In addition, NPG may use your information to contact you in the future concerning events or efforts related to our organization. You may opt out of further contact from NPG by submitting a written request, by mail to the address below or by email to npg@npg.org. We may also use your information internally for evaluation and research and may report aggregate results (without personally identifiable information) to others. NPG may also use your information related to future program purposes with other organizations.

This Privacy Policy may be changed at any time and will be available on the NPG website. For more information on our Privacy Policy or about NPG, please visit our website at www.NPG.org.