

FLORIDA

2026

WOMEN'S HISTORY

ESSAY CONTEST

250
YEARS

AMERICA

★ EST. 1776 ★



FLORIDA COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
DECEMBER 1, 2026

FOR FLORIDA STUDENTS IN GRADES 6 - 8

PURPOSE

To commemorate and honor women's history and members of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame



Sponsored by the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, the Florida Women's History essay contest is open to both boys and girls and serves to celebrate women's history and to increase awareness of the contributions made by Florida women, past and present. Celebrating women's history presents the opportunity to honor and recount stories of our ancestors' talents, sacrifices, and commitments and inspires today's generations. Learning about our past allows us to build our future.

THEME

2026

"Women, whether subtly or vociferously, have always been a tremendous power in the destiny of the world."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

In 2026, the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout our nation's history, countless women have helped shape our communities, state, and country through their courage, leadership, innovation, and service. Florida women have made lasting contributions in fields such as science, education, medicine, business, government, the military, sports, the arts, and community service. Their achievements have strengthened our state, inspired future generations, and helped shape the nation we know today.

Prompt: Choose a famous Florida woman – either someone born in Florida, someone who lived in Florida, or someone whose achievements made a lasting impact on the state. Research her life and accomplishments, then explain how her contributions reflect the ideals of perseverance, leadership, opportunity, or service that have helped shape America over the past 250 years.

In your essay, consider the following questions:

- Who is the Florida woman you selected, and why did you choose her?
- What challenges did she overcome?
- What are her most significant accomplishments?
- How has she made a difference in Florida or the United States?
- What lessons can young people learn from her example as America celebrates its 250th anniversary?

RULES



- Essays must be received by 5:00 pm on **December 1, 2026**. It is the desire of the Commission for all Florida Middle School students to have the opportunity to participate. Winners will be announced in March 2027.
- Each contestant must be a legal resident of Florida at the time of submission. All Florida students in grades 6 through 8 (public, private, and home-schooled) are eligible.
- Essays should have a title. The title should be at the top of the first page.
- Essays must be written in paragraph format, be between 250 and 500 words, typed using 12 point font, and double-spaced with margins set to at least one inch on all sides. Please select a legible font, such as Times New Roman.
- Essays must reflect the student's own original ideas and writing. The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) or other automated content generation tools to write, rewrite, or create any portion of an essay is prohibited. Submitting AI-generated content as original work will result in disqualification. Basic spelling and grammar check tools are permitted, provided they do not generate or substantially rewrite the content of the essay.
- **Do not** put your name on the essay. your name should appear on the entry form only.
- Submissions must include a completed official Entry Form and Release Statement.
- Essays may be submitted via e-mail to essay@fcsww.net (use subject line: FCSW Essay Contest.) Essays received via e-mail will be confirmed by e-mail within two business days. If a receipt is not received, please call 850-414-3531.
- All entries are the property of the Florida Commission on the Status of Women. The decision of the judges and the Commission is final.

Essays may be mailed to:

Florida Commission on the Status of Women Essay Contest
107 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

AWARDS & CRITERIA

Awards will be given to the first and second place winner in each of the 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade categories.

First Place: \$100; second place: \$75. Winning essays will be published on the FCSW website as well as otherwise published, displayed, reproduced, or replicated by the Commission.

Criteria for Judging Essays

- The theme must be clearly addressed.
- Responses should be creative.
- Content must include relevant, authentic information and ideas must be fully developed and must demonstrate critical and creative thinking.
- Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation must be consistent with accepted usage. **Please proofread your essay prior to submitting!** Engaging a teacher or other adult for review and feedback is encouraged.

ENTRY

Student Name:		
Title of Entry:		Grade:
Home Mailing Address:		Age:
City:	State: Florida	Zip Code:
Home Phone Number: <i>(including area code)</i>		
Parent/Legal Guardian Name:		
Parent/Legal Guardian Cell Phone Number: <i>(including area code)</i>	Parent/Legal Guardian E-Mail Address:	
School Name:		County:
School Mailing Address:		
City:	State: Florida	Zip Code:
School Phone Number: <i>(including area code)</i>		
Teacher Name:	Teacher E-Mail Address:	

Release Statement

As parent/legal guardian, I acknowledge that my child created the submitted essay and has followed all contest guidelines and rules. Should he or she win the essay contest, I agree to allow the submitted essay to be distributed publicly. I also understand that if it is discovered my child's essay is not original or fails to comply with all contest rules and submission guidelines, the essay will be subject to automatic disqualification.

I, _____ (print name), am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above and having read this release and approve of its terms, hereby certify the following:

1. I am the parent/legal guardian of _____
2. My child is a legal resident of Florida and is currently enrolled in grades 6 - 8.
3. I give permission for my child to enter his/her essay in the 2026 Women's History Essay Contest.
4. I have read the official rules of this contest, and I further certify my child has followed these rules and is eligible to participate in this contest.
5. I give the Florida Commission on the Status of Women permission to use, reproduce, reprint, transmit, post, distribute, adapt, alter, edit, and/or display the submitted essay.
6. I give the Florida Commission on the Status of Women permission to use my child's submission and/or my child's name, photograph, voice, video image, biographical information, and his/her essay for promotional purposes including but not limited to, print, radio, television, and Internet promotion, without compensation or prior notice.

I hereby release the Florida Commission on the Status of Women, as well as their employees, commissioners, officers, successors, assigns, licensees, and legal representatives, from any and all liability associated with my and my child's participation in this activity, and I agree not to assert any claim of any nature whatsoever against anyone relating to this activity.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date