sarah's inn
together strong

Youth Voice Award 2027

Submission Guidelines & Requirements

Thank you for your interest in the Youth Voice Award! Before submitting your project, please review the following guidelines to make sure your entry meets all requirements.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be enrolled in high school
- Be between the ages of 14–18
- Reside in the state of Illinois

Project Requirements

Projects must connect to one of the Youth Voice Award themes and include real examples or personal reflections.

Submissions are welcome in the following formats:

- Art
- Writing
- Video
- Music
- Dance
- Spoken Word

All entries must include a 2–3 sentence statement explaining the project and how it connects to the selected theme.

File Formats & Submission Requirements

All projects must be submitted digitally using one of the following file formats:

- Video: .mov
- Written work: .pdf, .doc, or .docx
- Visual art: .jpg, .png, or .pdf
- Audio: .mp3 or .wav

File requirements:

- Maximum file size: 100 MB per file

- Maximum video length: 5 minutes
- Videos must be submitted in .mov format, preferably at 720p or 1080p resolution.
- All files must be clear, high-quality, and easy to open, view, or play.
- Files that are corrupted, incomplete, exceed the size limit, or require special permissions will not be considered.

Please double-check your files before submitting!

Anonymity

To ensure a fair judging process, all projects must be submitted anonymously.

- Do not include your name, school, or other identifying information within your project file.
- Identifying information should only be provided through the submission form.

Originality & Use of AI

Your project should reflect your own voice, creativity, and ideas.

- All submissions must be original work created by the student(s).
- Limited use of AI tools for brainstorming, outlining, or proofreading is permitted.
- AI may not be used to create the main content of a submission, including writing, artwork, music, or other creative elements.
- Any outside words, music, or visuals used in a project must be properly credited.
- Plagiarism, including presenting AI-generated or copied work as your own, will result in disqualification.

Group Submissions

Group projects are welcome! Each group project will be considered one entry and, if selected, will receive one $2,000 award total, regardless of the number of participants.

Awards & Judging

Two projects will each receive a $2,000 award.

Entries will be evaluated by a panel of judges based on the following criteria:

- Follows the themes
- Demonstrates creativity and expressiveness
- Provocation of thought
- Inspires and compels the audience to take action
- Clearly communicates ideas

Winners will be notified in mid-April 2027.

How to Submit

Submissions will be accepted through the online submission form beginning in January 2027.

Submission Deadline: February 28, 2027

All entries must include:

- The completed online submission form
- The project file in an accepted format
- A 2–3 sentence statement explaining the project and its connection to the theme
- A signed copy of the Sarah's Inn Photo, Video, & Art Release

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Questions? Please contact development@sarahsinn.org for assistance.