



# 2025-2026 Essay Scholarship Guidelines (7-12 grade)

**Statement of Purpose:** The Right to Life of Southwest Indiana Essay Scholarship strives to promote the ability of junior high and high school students to share their pro-life views with others. This essay scholarship seeks to help participants organize and express their views via an essay. Eligible students will write a 300-500 word essay around a pro-life theme. This year’s theme for the Essay Scholarship is **“The Pro-Life Generation.”**

***To ensure fairness and avoid conflicts of interest, any individual who is a current or former employee of Right to Life of Southwest Indiana is not eligible to have their children, siblings, or family members participate in the Art, Essay, and Oratory Contest.***

Your essay can include information and research about the importance of being the pro-life generation. The following issues can also be addressed in the essay:

- Abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, or stem cell research

When writing your essay, please be mindful of your word choice. We want to communicate the truth that abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, and embryonic stem cell research are unequivocally wrong and take innocent lives, but we want to do so in a manner that will build bridges of communication.

For example, using terms such as “baby killers” can often erect barriers rather than facilitate discussion and change. Please strive to communicate the truth but with grace and love.

## **Scholarships:**

### **(9th-12th grade)**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$600

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$300

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$200

### **(7th-8th grade)**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: \$300

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: \$150

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: \$75

## **2025-2026 Guidelines:**

*Students participating in the 2025-2026 Essay Scholarship must adhere to the guidelines established below.*

### **Eligibility**

- The Essay Scholarship Contest is open to all students enrolled in grades 7-12 as of February 2, 2026. In the case of advanced students, non-traditional students, or home-schooled students, eligibility is determined by the year the students will enter college.
- Students from Spencer, Posey, Gibson, Warrick, and Vanderburgh counties may enter.
- Applicants must complete an online registration form by February 26, 2026. The form can be found on our website.
- Your essay entries must be sent through Dropbox, [CLICK HERE](#) for dropbox link.

- Entries are due on Thursday, March 5, 2026, by 4:00 pm.
- Winners of previous contests may submit an entry in the contest of their choosing if they meet the grade requirement.

### ***Format of Essay***

Follow this protocol for your essay:

- Essay is double-spaced
- Pages are numbered (top, right corner)
- 300 - 500 words
- Font is Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Title is centered at the top of the first page
- Author's name is NOT shown on the essay
- When your essay is complete, save it as a .pdf using this format: 2026-essay title.pdf.
- For example, if your essay is titled "The Importance of Life," your submission would be saved as follows: 2026-TheImportanceofLife.pdf.
- All claims must be substantiated with current documentation that is referenced in the text.
- No copyrighted or AI-generated essays shall be used in the contest.

### **By submitting an entry, the contestant and parent agree:**

- To allow Right to Life of Southwest Indiana to reprint the essay.
- That the essay is original, and not copyrighted or produced with AI.
- That the essay has not been submitted to any other Right to Life of Southwest Indiana contest.
- Sources/references used for the essay are cited.

### ***Evaluation***

- The contest will have three judges, and these judges will review the essay submissions.
- Essays will be judged on originality, content, and accuracy. In the event of a mistake, every effort will be made to correct it.
- All judges are pro-life. Since the judges' backgrounds and qualifications differ, the essay should appeal to a broad audience.
- Contestants are given a score of 1-10 in each area (10 being the best). The scores are then added together for a perfect score of 30. The total scores from all three judges are added together to achieve a grand total. The grand total will determine which contestants will be named for first, second, and third places.
- The judges' decisions will be FINAL.
- The decision of the Contest Director concerning the application of these rules is FINAL.

- Students may only enter ONE submission in ONE contest of their choosing. Students may not enter multiple entries in multiple contests. Students will choose whether to enter one piece into the Art Scholarship Contest, Mary Ellen Van Dyke Voices for Life Scholarship Contest, or Essay Scholarship Contest.

*These rules apply only to the Right to Life of Southwest Indiana Essay Scholarship. No other rules from any national or state speech group apply.*

***The essay will be evaluated by a pro-life panel of judges. Winners of the Essay Scholarship will be announced and contacted by email/phone no later than April 2, 2026.***

For more information, reach out to [adardeen@rtlswin.org](mailto:adardeen@rtlswin.org) or call 812-474-3195. Thank you for supporting life. We look forward to receiving your “**The Pro-Life Generation**” themed essay.