

January 24, 2024

Dear School Administrator, Teacher, or Parent,

We are so excited our Chamber has been chosen to engage St. Mary's County students in a national non-partisan Civics Bee (think “spelling bee” but for civics). The 2024 National Civics Bee is an initiative aimed at encouraging more young Americans to engage in civics and appreciate the role it plays in our everyday lives. Organized in partnership with The Civic Trust of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the competition in St. Mary's County will inspire middle schoolers to become better informed about American democracy, to engage respectfully and constructively in the community, and to build greater trust in others and institutions.

Middle school students across our state are invited to take part in the first round by writing a 500-word essay (see below). The deadline for essay submissions is February 19, 2024. The top 20 selected students will move on to the final round of competition: a live event to test their civics knowledge. The top winners will receive cash prizes, including \$500 cash for the first-place student. The top three winners will then have a chance to compete at the State level, and potentially even the National level.

Essay Topic: National Civics Bee® 2024 – 500 Words (approximately 2-3 paragraphs)

Identify a problem facing your community. How might you or a citizen solve the problem?

- What is the problem, and how do different members in your community or neighborhood view it?
- What civic principles or systems could help to address the problem?
- What is your idea or recommendation for solving the problem?
- What primary sources, such as the Declaration of Independence or the United States Constitution, provide supporting evidence or examples for your idea or recommendation?
- How might members of your community or neighborhood bring your idea or recommendation to life?

For more information on the essay topic, competition rules, a teacher's guide, and a link for students to submit essays, visit: [Civics Bee - St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce \(smcchamber.com\)](https://www.smcchamber.com/civics-bee).

Please circulate this to any families, scout troops, etc. that you know. Students from anywhere in Maryland may apply to our St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce Bee. We would welcome an opportunity to meet with your middle school teachers and/or students if that would be helpful! All of this information is available through the link above, but please reach out to us if you need additional packet copies.

Sincerely,



Christine L. Bergmark, PhD
CEO/President

UPDATED National Civics Bee® Timeline:

- **February 19: Essay Submission Deadline (NEW)**
- **February 20: Begin Essay Judging (NEW)**
- **February 26: Essay Judging Deadline (NEW)**
- **February 27: Notify Local Finalists (NEW)**
- **March 7: Parent Confirmation Deadline (NEW)**
- **April 13: Live Bee – Cole Cinema, St. Mary's College of Maryland, 10 am (NEW)**

Recent Press:

- Colorado State Finals: <https://coloradosun.com/2023/05/22/colorado-inaugural-civics-bee/>
- Washington State Finals: <https://www.kuow.org/stories/wa-has-its-first-civics-bee-champion>
- 2023 National Civics Bee Highlights Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQdMbyBUttc>
- Video of a Local Bee: https://youtu.be/6FCOIy_9Bi4