



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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Illinois EPA Invites 5th & 6th Grade Student Writers and Artists to Compete in the 36th Annual Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest ***New Contest for High School Students Added***

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is inviting fifth and sixth grade writers and artists from around Illinois to participate in this year's Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest. The contest theme for the 2023 awards is "*Environmental Justice: A Healthy Environment for All!*" focusing on understanding environmental justice and how it relates to healthy communities.

In addition to the annual contest for fifth and sixth grade students, Illinois EPA has launched its first annual High School Poster, Poetry, and Essay Contest. The theme for the 2023 high school program is "*Environmental Justice: A Healthy Community for All – Uplifting Community Voices!*" focusing on understanding the need for environmental justice and why voices from overburdened communities are vital to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

"Illinois EPA has had tremendous response to this program for the past 35 years, and we are excited to add a new contest for high school students," **said Illinois EPA Director John Kim.** "Expanding the program seems like a natural fit as we see more and more high school students with a great interest in the environment and taking steps to protect it. We look forward to seeing the great works that will be developed from the very important topic of Environmental Justice."

Educators are encouraged to introduce Environmental Justice, what it is, how some communities are disproportionately impacted by pollution, and why it is important that their voices are heard. Informational resources have been shared by the Illinois EPA on the contest pages. Students are then asked to create posters or written works for the contests related to the theme's focus. Teachers may then display the submissions for voting and submit final entries to the Illinois EPA for further judging. Teachers may submit up to eight entries per school to the Illinois EPA by February 1, 2023. Awards for both programs will be announced in April 2023.

Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest/2

Additional information for elementary students can be found at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/education/contest/elementary/Pages/default.aspx>.

Information for the High School Contest can be found at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/education/contest/high-school/Pages/default.aspx>.

Other questions can be directed to Kristi Morris, Environmental Education Coordinator for the Illinois EPA, at 217-558-7198, or by email at Kristi.Morris@illinois.gov.

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