

OFFICIAL RULES FOR THE 2016-17 FINANCIAL SCHOLARS ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

The Office of the Kansas Securities Commissioner and the Office of the State Bank Commissioner are consumer protection agencies dedicated to keeping Kansans informed about issues concerning their finances, and promoting integrity and increasing transparency and fairness in the financial services industry. Our agencies are sponsoring an essay competition and will issue up to nine scholarships to Kansas high school seniors this school year.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

First Place: \$2,500

Second Place: \$2,000

Third Place: \$1,500

Fourth Place: \$1,000

Fifth Place: \$500

Up to four \$250 Honorable Mention scholarships may also be awarded.

STUDENT TOPIC ASSIGNMENT

Essay Part 1: Financial Challenge

In 1-2 pages (500 words or less):

Write an essay on one of the following financial challenges:

- A. Discuss a real-life event that you, a friend, or family member has experienced that made a significant impact on your views of handling money. How has that experience affected your approach to managing your own money?
- B. What, in your opinion, is a financial issue that public policy makers should be giving more attention to? Be sure to include solution(s) to the issue you address.
- C. Picture what your life could look like ten years from now. Write about some of the decisions you will need to make regarding your topic of choice (*choose from the selections below*), and how making wise financial decisions could benefit your future.

Topic Selections:

- Savings/Budgets
- Banking, Credit and Loans
- Investing/Saving for Retirement

Incorporate some of the following thoughts into your essay: Do you have a spouse or kids? Where are you living/working, and what is your income? Are you still paying off student loans?

Essay Part 2: Real-world Application

Accompanying Part 1, provide 3-6 pages of analysis (**800-1500 words**) showing how you will apply what you learned (or wrote about) to your life as you prepare for higher education. Please incorporate at least two of the following into your analysis:

- Comparison of the cost of various types of higher education (i.e. technical college, community college, 4-year college, private vs. public school, in-state vs. out-of-state schools, etc.)
- The positive and negative aspects of getting a loan for higher education versus paying your way through college
- The earning potential of your chosen degree/major or career, and the average debt load and pay-off time the average graduate in that field will face upon completing higher education. Consider also: job availability and demand, and jobs graduates are actually getting with your chosen degree.

WHO

The competition is open to any public, private or homeschool Kansas high school Senior who meets the following two qualifications:

- 1) **The Senior must be planning to attend a Kansas technical school, college or university.**
Not attending a Kansas school of higher learning will constitute forfeiture of the award.
- 2) **The Senior must have enrolled in and *completed at least one KSC or OSBC sponsored program** (*EverFi, Life\$smarts, The Stock Market Game or the Personal Finance Challenge contest*) during their high school career. A parent or teacher will be asked to verify student participation in one of the sponsored programs to confirm eligibility. *Successful completion of a sponsored course by **April 20th** is required.

Teacher Prizes:

The teacher of the first place student winner will receive a \$150 gift card to the teacher supply store of his or her choice.

The teacher who is credited with the most ****valid** entries submitted will receive a \$100 gift card.

***If you are not enrolled in a sponsored program but would like to enroll for free today and be eligible for this year's Essay Scholarship Contest, call Shannon Stone at 913.652.9164 (Securities Commissioner Office), or Dana Branam at 785.296.1783 (Bank Commissioner's Office).**

**"Valid" means that the essay meets the appropriate length and submission requirements. Incomplete entries will not count.

HOW

- Style: [Op-ed \(MLA or APA accepted\)](#)
- Format: Word document
- Entries must be in English and typed in 12-point font and double-spaced.
- The financial challenge portion should not exceed 500 words.
- The real-world application portion should be between 800 and 1500 words.
- [Citation](#) from credible sources is encouraged and expected.
- A completed Entry Form must accompany each essay submission. Words on Entry Form will not count toward the total word count. The Entry Form may be typed or neatly handwritten.

WHEN

Essay submissions will be accepted from December 5, 2016, until **11:59 p.m. CST , Monday, April 3, 2017.** Judge's clock is the official time keeper.

Entry forms and essays should be merged into one single Word document attachment if possible and emailed by the deadline to shannon.stone@ks.gov. Please save the document as <School_StudentLastName>.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS & AWARDS CEREMONY

The winning essays will be announced on or before Thursday, April 20, 2017 via KSC (@Kansas.Securities) and OSBC (@ksosbc) Facebook Pages.

Scholarships will be awarded at the 2017 Financial Scholars Awards Ceremony in Topeka, Kansas on **Friday, April 28, 2017.** Students will be expected to attend the ceremony unless they have a sufficient reason they cannot attend. Honorable Mention awardees are welcome to attend the Ceremony, but may choose to have their award mailed to their home address.

JUDGING & LEGAL TERMS

Essays will be judged based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of and Adherence to Essay Requirements **(30 points)**
 - Student demonstrates knowledge and the importance of financial literacy, student accurately makes connections between Essay Part 1 (topic assignment) to Essay Part 2 (analysis bullet points)
- Personal Expression, Fluency and Supporting Evidence **(40 points)**
 - Student uses personality in their writing; essay is organized with clear introduction, sentences/paragraphs flow smoothly; credible sources are used to support information given; essay highlights a positive theme(s)
- Word choice, Punctuation and Spelling **(30 points)**
 - Student displays wide vocabulary range and good word choice; proper grammar is displayed with little to no grammatical errors

By submitting an entry to the competition, entrants acknowledge that all submissions may be posted on the Offices of the State Banking Commissioner (OSBC), the Securities Commissioner's (KSC) website or their social media outlets, as well as the KansasMoney.gov website for viewing by the general public. Entrants also grant in perpetuity, a nonexclusive license to edit, publish, display, duplicate or otherwise use the submission, and photographs and video of the participants in connection with this contest, for the Sponsors (OSBC and KSC) and their Designees in their sole discretion whatsoever and without further notice or compensation.