

VVEC's Youth Tour Leadership Essay Contest offers any current **11th grade** student at your school the opportunity to be awarded a scholarship or the Grand Prize of an all-expense-paid trip to Washington DC in the summer of 2026! The DC trip is FREE to you and is sponsored by Oklahoma's Electric Cooperatives. Top finalists who go on the DC trip will explore iconic landmarks, engage with members of congress, experience government in action, learn about civic responsibility and make lasting connections with other high school juniors from across the US. This will be one of the fastest paced yet most enjoyable weeks of your life! Make Your Mark!!!

TEACHER INCENTIVE: We are encouraging area schools to get involved. If a teacher administers this essay contest as part of a whole classroom assignment and produces a highest scoring finalist, he or she could be rewarded with \$100.00 toward the purchase of classroom materials or equipment and be featured in VVEC's Newsletter and/or Facebook page. We'd love your participation!!!

Contest Requirements:

- 1) You must currently be a high school Junior (11th grade) at the time of essay contest and attend a high school in Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative's service territory. It's not necessary that the student's parents be members of VVEC.
- 2) Essay is to be type-written, double spaced, and **500-600** words in length.
- 3) Be original and be factual. (without the use of A.I.)
- 4) Your name should not appear on the essay itself. Instead, attach a cover sheet that has your name, teacher's name, teacher's contact information and school name on it. Also, complete and submit the Youth Tour entry form/application along with your cover sheet and essay.
- 5) Essay Topic: **"Explain what Oklahoma Electric Cooperatives are, how they originated and the many ways our communities benefit from them".**
- 6) Deadline to submit cover sheet, essay and Youth Tour entry form/application is Monday, January 12th, 2026, no later than 4:00 pm.
- 7) Essay can be submitted one of **3** ways; hand delivery in person to VVEC's headquarters in Collinsville, by email or by U.S. Postal Mail. (**Important!!** If mailing, you must send to PO BOX, not physical address.)
- 8) Be prepared to commit to attending an all-expense-paid Youth Tour DC trip & Youth Prep Day if you are selected as a trip finalist in this contest. The date of the Youth Prep Day is **April 17th, 2026**, and Youth Tour Trip to DC is **JUNE 13-19, 2026**.

The top finalists will go to Washington D.C. based on the highest scoring essays. There will also be two (2) runners-up who will win a \$1000.00 and a \$750.00 college scholarship.

ESSAY DEADLINE: 4 p.m. Monday, January 12th, 2026.

For more contest details visit our website at www.vvec.com – go to Community Programs, then view Washington Youth Tour.

For more information, contact:

Misti Frazier, Youth Programs Coordinator, Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative

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