



Young Leaders Showcase Competitive Events Handbook 2025





WELCOME

Welcome to the Competitive Events Handbook for Tidewater LEAD. This handbook is designed to provide you with all the necessary information and guidelines to participate in our organization's competitions.

We are thrilled to have you join us in showcasing your skills, knowledge, and talent in various areas related to leadership, ethics, and service. Please read this handbook carefully to ensure a smooth and successful competition experience.



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GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Awards are provided to the top three finishers (1st, 2nd, 3rd) in each division. Honorable Mentions may be awarded *at the judges' discretion*. Certificates of Participation are provided to all contestants.
- Competitions are evaluated by volunteer judges using a rubric and any identifying information on behalf of the student will be hidden from the view of the judges whenever possible to ensure impartiality.
- Late submissions will not be accepted and evaluator/judge decisions are final.
- Competitors should dress in business professional or business casual attire for in-person events and any recorded virtual events (i.e. public speaking).
- All work should be completed solely by the entrant, who must be between the ages of 13 and 18.



This image indicates a virtual event.

In a virtual event, competitors upload their entries in advance of the competition date and are **not** required to be present at the competition.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are virtual entries submitted for competitions?

Virtual entry submissions, such as essays, presentations, or reports, are uploaded directly through an online platform. Please keep in mind the possibility of technical issues when planning your submissions, last-minute submissions may encounter connectivity, electricity outages, or technical issues that will impact your ability to upload on time. *Late submissions are not accepted* - please do not wait until the last minute!

Can I participate in multiple competitive events?

Yes, members may participate in multiple competitions! There is no event limit.

How can I stay updated on virtual competition announcements and results?

Competition announcements, results, and other related information will be communicated via email to registered participants. Additionally, information may also be posted on our website and social media accounts.

Is there an option for need-based entry fee waivers for in-person events?

Yes! Tidewater LEAD is committed to ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder members from participating in our events and programs. We offer need-based entry fee waivers to eligible individuals who may face financial hardship. To request a fee waiver, please contact our Leadership Team at director@tidewaterlead.org. We are here to support all our members in their pursuit of excellence. *Not all events require the payment of a fee.*

Who can I contact with additional questions or for further assistance?

If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact our Leadership Team at director@tidewaterlead.org.

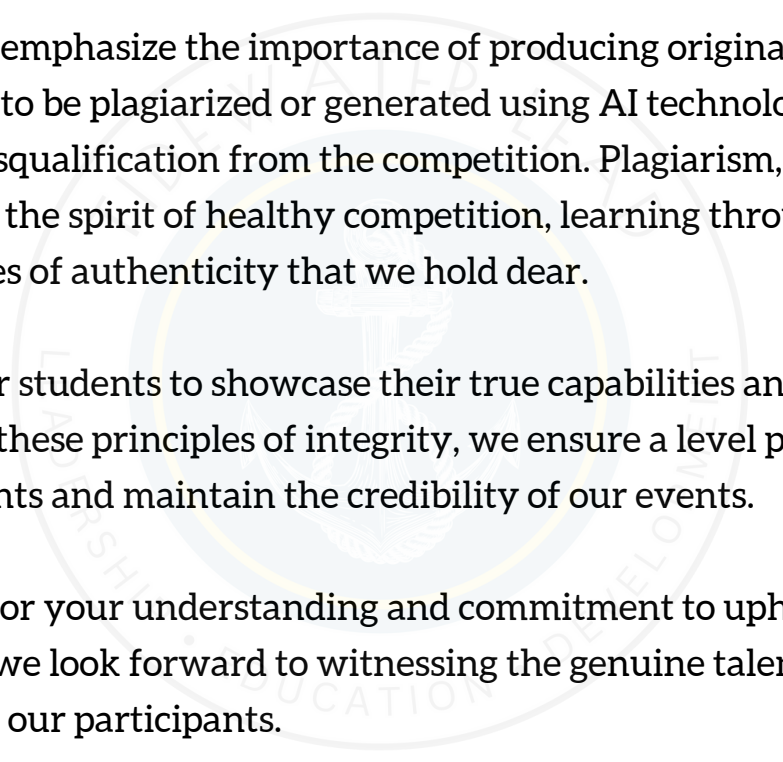
INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

At Tidewater LEAD, we uphold the values of integrity, authenticity, and the genuine expression of our students' abilities and creativity. We are committed to providing a fair and equitable platform for all participants in our events and competitions.

We want to emphasize the importance of producing original work. Any work found to be plagiarized or generated using AI technology will be subject to disqualification from the competition. Plagiarism, in any form, undermines the spirit of healthy competition, learning through doing, and the principles of authenticity that we hold dear.

We trust our students to showcase their true capabilities and talents. By adhering to these principles of integrity, we ensure a level playing field for all participants and maintain the credibility of our events.

Thank you for your understanding and commitment to upholding these values, and we look forward to witnessing the genuine talents and creativity of our participants.



Kristin Stephens

Kristin Stephens, President
Tidewater LEAD



ETHICS ESSAY

Description:

This event provides students an opportunity to explore and dissect a real-world ethical dilemma, employing critical thinking, personal values, and moral reasoning to craft a thought-provoking essay that explains the conflict of interest or ethical issue, evaluates the ethical dilemma from both sides, and provides a reasonable resolution to the problem.

Please Note: A new topic is provided for each competition.

Guidelines:

1. Submissions should be between 1-2 pages for the middle school division and 2-3 pages for the high school division.
2. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Every essay must reflect original work, and proper citations for any external sources are required.
3. Format essays in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and submit them in .PDF or .DOC format.
4. Prior to registration, a specific real-world ethical dilemma to analyze will be posted on the event website. The task is to present insights and resolutions in the essay specific to this topic.
5. The primary focus of the essay is content, not writing ability.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the submission:

1. Overall Content (40 points)
 - Understanding of the ethical dilemma
 - Well-structured argument
 - Unique perspectives
 - Effective use of examples or case studies
2. Writing Style and Clarity (30 points)
 - Clear and concise language
 - Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation
 - Coherent transitions
3. Resolution (20 points)
 - Reasonableness of the proposed resolution
4. Originality and Creativity (10 points)
 - Demonstration of creative thinking
 - Innovative approach to problem solving

JOB INTERVIEW

Description:

In this competition, students will participate in a mock in-person job interview with 1-3 interviewers. The goal is to demonstrate effective communication skills, professionalism, and an understanding of how to present oneself in a job interview.

Guidelines:

1. Participants must dress professionally in business attire.
2. Participants must arrive on time and be prepared for their scheduled interview time.
3. Participants may bring a copy of their resume and/or portfolio to give to the judges.
4. Participants will select a job that they are interviewing for from the list of options.
5. The interview(s) will last 10-15 minutes.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the interview:

1. Communication skills (25 points)
 - Clear and concise responses
 - Effective use of language
 - Confident delivery
 - Active listening
2. Professionalism (25 points)
 - Appropriate attire
 - Professional demeanor
 - Timeliness
 - Respectful attitude
3. Knowledge of the job (25 points)
 - Understanding of the job requirements
 - Familiarity with the company
 - Relevant experience and skills
4. Problem-solving skills (15 points)
 - Ability to provide logical solutions
 - Creative and innovative thinking
 - Adaptability to changing situations
5. Overall performance (10 points)
 - Demonstration of leadership potential
 - Quality of interview responses
 - Overall impression

Job Options:

- Sales Associate at a Retail Store
- Customer Service Representative at a Bank
- Marketing Intern at a STEM Startup
- Administrative Assistant at a Law Firm
- Event Coordinator at a Non-Profit



LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Description:

In this event, students are invited to share their unique leadership journey and community involvement. This is an opportunity to reflect upon and articulate the skills gained, lessons learned, connections made, and personal growth experienced through leadership roles in various contexts, such as sports, clubs, or any other community engagement. Through this report, participants can highlight the positive impact of their leadership experiences on both themselves and their communities.

Guidelines:

1. The use of relevant graphics, images, or charts to enhance the report's visual appeal and effectiveness is strongly encouraged but not required.
2. The report should be organized logically, including an introduction, main content, and conclusion.
3. Submit in .PDF format only.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the submission:

1. Content (40 points):
 - Clearly explains the leadership journey and community involvement.
 - Shows how new skills were developed and/or connections with others made.
 - Shares examples of how the student's leadership or project helped the community.
2. Graphic Integration (20 points):
 - Appropriately integrates graphics, images, or charts that enhance the report's content.
3. Writing Style and Clarity (20 points):
 - Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
 - Maintains a logical flow of events and ideas.
 - Ensures that the report is easy to understand and engaging to read.
4. Personal Reflection (20 points):
 - Offers insightful reflection on the leadership journey and/or project.
 - Expresses a unique perspective on the impact of these experiences.



LEADERSHIP ESSAY

Description:

In this event, students will discuss the concept of leadership and complete a reflective or research-based essay on one of the two available topics. The essay may explore the qualities, experiences, and philosophies that define effective leadership. Whether drawing from personal experiences, historical figures, or modern-day role models, the analysis should reveal what it takes to lead, inspire, and create positive change in the world. The essay should also examine how leaders emerge and what valuable lessons we can extract from their experiences.

Please Note: New topics are provided for each competition.

Guidelines:

- Submissions should be between 1-3 pages for the middle school division and 2-4 pages for the high school division.
- Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Every essay must reflect original work, and proper citations for any external sources are required.
- Format essays in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and submit them in .PDF or .DOC format.
- Prior to registration, two specific leadership-related topics will be posted on the event website. Students should select only **one** of the available topics for their essay.
- The primary focus of the essay is content, not writing ability.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the submission:

1. Content (40 points):
 - Demonstrates understanding of leadership concepts.
 - Provides clear and compelling examples.
 - Offers insightful analysis and perspective.
2. Writing Style and Clarity (30 points):
 - Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
 - Logical and engaging flow.
3. Personal Voice (20 points):
 - Expresses a unique and authentic perspective on leadership.
 - Captivates the reader's attention.
4. Conclusion (10 points):
 - Summarizes key points effectively.
 - Leaves the reader with a memorable takeaway.



MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION

Description:

In this event, students will create an engaging multimedia presentation that blends visuals, narration, and storytelling to convey insights about leadership. Participants may choose one of the two available topics to explore the qualities and impact of leadership in different contexts. Presentations should creatively combine information, images, and voiceovers (optional) or text to share an inspiring and informative message about leadership in action.

Guidelines:

- Presentations may be created using PowerPoint, Google Slides, Canva, or Prezi.
- Length should be 3–5 minutes for the middle school division and 4–6 minutes for the high school division.
- Narration (voiceover or embedded audio) is encouraged but not required.
- Visuals should support and enhance the message—not distract from it.
- All content, including images, music, and quotes, must be properly credited.
- Presentations should be submitted as a shareable link or uploaded file (.PPTX or .PDF)
- The primary focus of this event is creativity, clarity, and depth of leadership insight, not technical skill.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the submission:

1. Content and Leadership Insight (40 points):
 - Demonstrates understanding of leadership qualities and their impact.
 - Provides accurate and compelling examples.
 - Reflects thoughtful analysis and interpretation.
2. Creativity and Visual Design (30 points):
 - Uses visuals effectively to enhance understanding.
 - Demonstrates originality and creative storytelling.
 - Maintains visual balance and clarity throughout.
3. Presentation and Delivery (20 points):
 - Narration (if present), pacing, and transitions contribute to engagement.
 - Ideas are clearly communicated and logically organized.
4. Citations and Professionalism (10 points):
 - Properly credits all sources and media.
 - Submission is polished, edited,



PUBLIC SPEAKING (VIRTUAL)

Description:

In this event, students will prepare and give a speech on a chosen leadership topic. This competition will provide students with the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills and demonstrate their ability to inspire and lead others. Participants will be required to submit a video recording of themselves delivering a prepared speech on one of the leadership topics outlined in the competition information. The topics will change for each competition season.

Guidelines:

Competitors will submit a 1-3 minute video of their speech, which will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the rubric. Submissions may be made via a YouTube link, MP4 file, or a video embedded on a single PowerPoint slide.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the speech:

1. Content (40 points)

- Is the speech clear, organized, and relevant to the topic?
- Does the speech present a clear and concise argument?
- Are the main points well supported by evidence and examples?

2. Delivery (30 points)

- Does the speaker use effective body language and eye contact?
- Is the speaker's tone of voice engaging and appropriate for the topic?
- Is the speech delivered with clarity and confidence?

3. Style (20 points)

- Does the speech display originality and creativity?
- Is the speaker's use of language effective and appropriate for the audience?
- Is the speech engaging and memorable?

4. Overall Impression (10 points)

- Did the speaker meet the time limit and other requirements?
- Did the speech leave a lasting impression on the audience?
- Was the speech effective in delivering the intended message?

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Description:

In this event, students will prepare and give a speech on a chosen leadership topic. This competition will provide students with the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills and demonstrate their ability to inspire and lead others. Participants will be required to deliver a prepared speech on one of the leadership topics outlined in the competition information. The topics will change for each competition season.

Guidelines:

Competitors will deliver a 1-3 minute speech, which will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the rubric. Note cards are permitted, but no other props may be used.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the speech:

1. Content (40 points)

- Is the speech clear, organized, and relevant to the topic?
- Does the speech present a clear and concise argument?
- Are the main points well supported by evidence and examples?

2. Delivery (30 points)

- Does the speaker use effective body language and eye contact?
- Is the speaker's tone of voice engaging and appropriate for the topic?
- Is the speech delivered with clarity and confidence?

3. Style (20 points)

- Does the speech display originality and creativity?
- Is the speaker's use of language effective and appropriate for the audience?
- Is the speech engaging and memorable?

4. Overall Impression (10 points)

- Did the speaker meet the time limit and other requirements?
- Did the speech leave a lasting impression on the audience?
- Was the speech effective in delivering the intended message?



RESUME WRITING

Description:

This event is designed to evaluate the student's ability to create a professional and effective resume. The objective is to create a resume that highlights the student's skills, education, and work experience.

Guidelines:

1. The student must submit one (1) copy of their resume in PDF format.
2. The resume must be a maximum of two (2) pages in length and should be typed in font no smaller than 10-point and no larger than 12-point.
3. The resume must be original work and not copied from any source.
4. The resume should be created in chronological or functional format.
5. The resume should include the student's name, but should use a FAKE address, phone number, and email address to maintain privacy.
6. The resume should include the student's educational background, including the name of the school (when applicable), GPA or educational achievements, and anticipated graduation date.
7. The resume should include the student's work or volunteer experience, including job title, company name, dates of employment, and job responsibilities.
8. The resume should include the student's skills and achievements, including awards, honors, sports, and extracurricular activities.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the resume:

1. Appearance and Format (25 points)
 - Resume is visually appealing and easy to read
 - Appropriate use of font size, style, and spacing
 - Correct use of headings and bullet points
2. Content (50 points)
 - Personal details are complete and accurate
 - Educational background is included and well-presented
 - Work experience is included and well-presented
 - Skills and achievements are included and well-presented
 - Relevant information is highlighted
3. Clarity and Organization (25 points)
 - The resume is well-organized and easy to follow
 - Information is presented in a clear and concise manner
 - Grammar and spelling are correct



SERVICE ESSAY

Description:

In this event, students will explore the intersection of community service and leadership based on one of the two provided topics. The essay should delve into how active engagement in community service can drive positive change and influence the development of effective leadership skills.

Please Note: New topics are provided for each competition.

Guidelines:

1. Submissions should be between 1-3 pages for the middle school division and 2-4 pages for the high school division.
2. Plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Every essay must reflect original work, and proper citations for any external sources are required.
3. Format essays in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and submit them in .PDF or .DOC format.
4. Prior to registration, two specific service-related topics will be posted on the event website. Students should select only **one** of the available topics for their essay.
5. The primary focus of the essay is content, not writing ability.

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the submission:

1. Content (40 points):
 - Demonstrates an understanding of the topic.
 - Provides clear and compelling examples of how service can drive positive change.
 - Offers insightful perspective on how service influences leadership development.
2. Writing Style and Clarity (30 points):
 - Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
 - Maintains a logical and engaging flow of ideas.
3. Personal Voice (20 points):
 - Expresses a unique and authentic perspective on the topic.
 - Captivates the reader's attention.
4. Conclusion (10 points):
 - Summarizes key points effectively.
 - Leaves the reader with a memorable takeaway.



SERVICE PROJECT REPORT

Description:

This event is designed to encourage students to identify and address issues in their community through community service projects that include the use of volunteerism, leadership skills, and community engagement. Students will submit a comprehensive report on an individual service project, detailing its planning, execution, and impact, emphasizing a dedication to making a positive difference in the community. Participants are encouraged to include relevant graphics and photographs in the document.

Guidelines:

1. The project must address a specific community issue or problem, such as poverty, homelessness, environmental concerns, access to education, or any other relevant issue in the community, or demonstrate volunteerism in support of a non-profit organization.
2. The project must involve a minimum of 10 hours of community service. This may include planning, organizing, and implementing the project.
3. The project must benefit the community and its impact should be clearly stated.
4. Projects must be submitted in PDF format and are limited to 10 pages.
5. The project report should outline the following:
 - Project summary and description
 - Timeline and budget (if applicable)
 - Community needs addressed by the project
 - Project goals and objectives
 - Project outcomes and evaluation criteria

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the report:

1. Community Impact (30 points)
 - The project significantly benefits the community
 - The impact of the project is clearly stated in the project proposal
 - The project addresses a significant community need
2. Project Design and Execution (30 points)
 - The project is well-planned and executed
 - The project is feasible and safe
 - The project stays within the proposed budget (if applicable)
3. Collaboration and Leadership (20 points)
 - The competitor demonstrated effective leadership skills
 - The competitor worked well with team members and volunteers
 - The competitor demonstrated the ability to delegate tasks and responsibilities

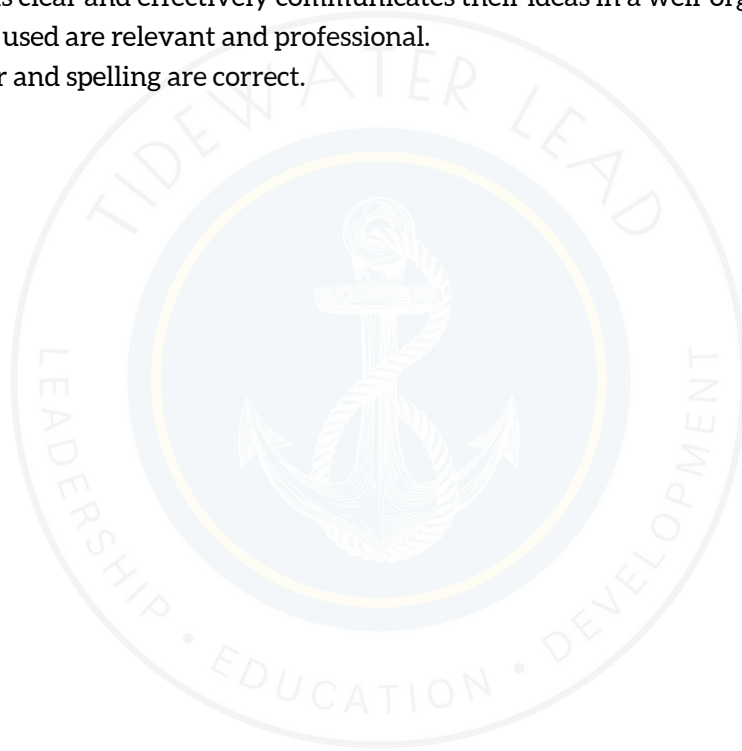
SERVICE PROJECT (CON'T)

4. Reflection and Learning (10 points)

- The competitor demonstrates an understanding of the community issue addressed by the project
- The competitor reflects on their experience working on the project
- The competitor identifies ways to improve the project in the future

5. Writing and Visual Appeal (10 points)

- Writing is clear and effectively communicates their ideas in a well-organized report.
- Graphics used are relevant and professional.
- Grammar and spelling are correct.





SOCIAL IMPACT PROPOSAL

Description:

This event is designed to encourage students to identify and address an issue in their community or world through a unique and innovative solution. The proposal may include the use of volunteerism, leadership skills, and community engagement. Students will submit a comprehensive report proposing their project, detailing its planning, execution, and impact, emphasizing a dedication to making a positive difference in the community. Please note this is a hypothetical proposal only, not an implemented project, and does not need to be implemented.

Guidelines:

1. The project must address a specific community issue or problem, such as poverty, homelessness, environmental concerns, access to education, or any other relevant issue in the community. It can be applied in a charitable way or applied to a for-profit business.
2. The proposal must benefit the community (small- or large-scale proposals are welcome) and its impact should be clearly stated in the project proposal.
3. Projects must be submitted in PDF format and are limited to 10 pages.
4. The proposal should outline the following:
 - Proposal summary and description, including identifying the problem
 - Timeline and estimated budget
 - Collaboration opportunities with other organizations, businesses, or individuals
 - Goals and objectives

Rubric:

The following rubric will be used to evaluate the report:

1. Community Impact (30 points)
 - The project significantly benefits the community
 - The impact of the project is clearly stated in the project proposal
 - The project addresses a significant community need
2. Innovation and Creativity (20 points)
 - The proposal demonstrates innovative and creative solutions to address the community issue, showcasing inventive thinking in problem-solving and community engagement.
 - Unique approaches or ideas are presented with the potential to make a strong impact.
3. Proposal Design (30 points)
 - The project is well-planned and researched.
 - All aspects included in the guidelines are present in the proposal.
4. Writing and Visual Appeal (10 points)
 - Writing is clear and effectively communicates ideas in a well-organized report.
 - Graphics used are relevant and professional.
 - Grammar and spelling are correct.