



**LATINO AMERICAN COMMISSION**

(402) 471-2791 toll-free (877) 220-1250

## 2016 Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest

The Nebraska Latino American Commission invites the youth of Nebraska to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration Essay Contest

**Hispanic Heritage Month:** National Hispanic Heritage Month was enacted into law on August 17, 1988 observing September 15 to October 15 as a period to celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of those who can trace their ancestry to Mexico, Spain, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

For the essay, the Hispanic Heritage Month Committee is asking students to write about civic engagement:

What is the importance of civic engagement among the Latino/a community? Why is it important for Latinos/as to engage in voting, encouraging others to vote, volunteering, taking part in student organizations, knowing and contacting your local elected official, and running for public office?

**Guidelines:** When writing your essay, consider the following: What does civic engagement mean to you? How do you participate in civic engagement? Why is it important to contact your local elected official and inform them of your support or opposition to certain issues? How is civic engagement relevant and important to Hispanic Heritage Month? What are the barriers that prevent Latinos/as from becoming engaged in civic purposes, and how can Latinos/as become fully engaged? Your essay will be judged by grammar, content, creativity, and understanding of the theme.

**Eligibility:** Students of all ethnicities currently enrolled in a Nebraska public, private, special purpose, home school or magnet school (grades 6-12). Entries welcome in English or Spanish, and include a signed entry form.

**Rules:** Essays must be original, typed or legibly handwritten, and double-spaced. The word length is 250 – 400 words for middle school students, and 500 – 700 words for high school students. We reserve the right to disqualify essays that contain offensive language, political messages, or derogatory statements.

**Awards:** Scholarships, certificates, Kindles, and McDonald's gift cards will be given to six winners. Winning students will be recognized at the Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration scheduled for October 7, 2016 at the Nebraska Capitol Building in Lincoln. First place winners will be asked to read their essay at the Commemoration and McDonald's will publish first place winning essays on their tray liners. The Commission reserves the right to edit essays for fitting purposes. The scholarship awards are: \$200 for first place winners, \$125 for second place winners and \$100 for third place winners for both high school and middle school.

**Submission:** All essays due by **Tuesday, September 20, 2016** at 5 P.M. Essays and entry forms may be submitted by email to [Jasel.Cantu@nebraska.gov](mailto:Jasel.Cantu@nebraska.gov), via fax at 402-471-4381, or mailed to:

Nebraska Latino American Commission  
ATT: Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest  
P.O. Box 94965  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4965