



16th Judicial Circuit | County of Kane
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE ROBERT K. VILLA
Kane County Judicial Center

2026 Law Day Essay Contest Rules and Submission Details

Eligibility

Spring 2026 **Sophomores** and **Juniors** enrolled in Kane County high schools.

What is Law Day?

Law Day, sponsored by the American Bar Association, is an annual event held on May 1 celebrating the rule of law and how the legal process protects liberty, promotes justice, and supports the freedoms Americans share. Read more about Law Day at LawDay.org.

Essay Prompt

Write an essay (500 words or less) on the 2026 Law Day theme “**The Rule of Law and the American Dream.**” The rule of law, the idea that no person is above the law, is what ensures the rights of the people to live their lives as freely as possible and to pursue their dreams. Reflect in your essay how the rule of law ensures all Americans have the ability to fulfill their dreams.

Essays must be professional in tone and avoid political commentary. The use of AI or any form of plagiarism is strictly prohibited. Winners will be selected based on writing quality and originality by the Chief Judge’s Office.

Rules and Submission Details

- Length: **500 words** or less.
- Deadline: **4:30 pm, Friday, April 10, 2026.**
- Submit essay by email to Ellen Schmid: SchmidEllen@16thCircuit.IllinoisCourts.gov
 - Use subject line: Law Day Essay Contest LastName_FirstName_Grade_School
 - Attach your essay as a single **PDF** (500 words max).
 - In the email body include your full name, grade, school, essay title, and word count.
- Winners notified by email: **Week of April 20, 2026.**
- Awards presented on Law Day: **Friday, May 1, 2026** (presentations made at high schools with permission).

Prizes

- Per category (Sophomore and Junior): 1st place **\$500**; 2nd place **\$250**; 3rd place **\$250**.
- All winners (1st, 2nd, and 3rd in both grade categories) will receive their cash award, a certificate, and a Law Day swag bag.
- Winners’ names will be added to the Law Day Essay Contest plaque in the Kane County Judicial Center.
- Cash awards are generously donated by the **Kane County Bar Foundation**.

Questions?

Contact Ellen Schmid: SchmidEllen@16thCircuit.IllinoisCourts.gov