



Housing& Children's Essay Contest

What Does Injustice Look Like to Me?

Housing& invites students residing in your communities to participate in our Children's Essay Contest! This year's theme, ***What Does Injustice Look Like to Me?***, encourages young people to reflect on fairness, community, and the experiences that shape their world.

This contest provides a meaningful opportunity for youth to share their unique perspectives and highlight what makes their communities strong and safe.

The contest is open to elementary school students (ages 6-12) who reside in properties owned or operated by Housing& members. **The community program staff are asked to host a property-level contest and mail the top entry from each property to:** Courtney Battle, Housing&, 1320 19th Street NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC, 20036.

All submissions must comply with the official Contest Guidelines to qualify for the Grand Prize and Runners-Up awards.

A \$500 cash prize will be awarded to the winner of the contest at the ***35th Annual Meeting & Housing Expo***, taking place on May 13, 2026 from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm at The Omni Shoreham Hotel (2500 Calvert St NW, Washington, DC 20008). The runners-up will each receive a \$30 gift card and a certificate of participation.

CONTEST GUIDELINES

For this year's essay contest, we invite children to reflect on the theme **What Does Injustice Look Like to Me?** Injustice can show up in many ways, including at school, in neighborhoods, online, or in the broader world. Sometimes it is loud and easy to see, and other times it is quiet and harder to notice. Through storytelling and reflection, we want to hear how young people understand injustice and imagine a more fair and caring community.

Our communities are shaped by fairness, opportunity, and how people are treated. Recently, many people in our region and across the country have faced challenges such as rising housing costs, concerns about safety, and changes that affect families and neighbors in different ways. These experiences can make people feel included or left out. **In 250 words or less, entries must include interpretations of the contest theme, What Does Injustice Look Like to Me?** responding to all or some of the following questions:

- What does injustice look like to you?
- Where do you see it happening, in your school, community, or the wider world?
- How does injustice make people feel or affect their opportunities?
- What is your role in responding to injustice in your community?
- What is the role of the rest of your community?
- What would fairness or justice look like instead?

Entries should be recorded on the pages at the end of this document, typewritten or handwritten in blue or black ink.

REGISTRATION & SUBMISSION

- The contest is open to children who attend elementary school (ages 6-12) and who reside in properties owned or operated by Housing& members.
- Community program staff should mail the **top entry** to: Courtney Battle, Housing&, 1320 19th Street NW, Suite 301, Washington, DC, 20036. **The Housing& team will only accept ONE entry from each Housing& member organization.**
- All submissions should include a completed entry form stapled to the back of the essay.
- All essays must be original work.

DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of entries is **March 20, 2026 at 5:00 PM** (must be postmarked by March 20). **Late entries will not be accepted.**

AWARDS

- Grand Prize: A \$500 cash prize will be awarded to the winner of the contest. **We request the winner attend the 35th Annual Meeting & Housing Expo taking place in May 2026 to read their essay live!**
- Runners-Up: Up to ten runners-up will each receive a \$30 gift card and a certificate of participation.

HOW ARE THE ESSAYS JUDGED?

Entries are judged on the author's ability to write an essay illustrating the **"What Does Injustice Look Like to Me?"** contest theme. Specifically, the panel of judges will consider:

- Theme interpretation: , **"What Does Injustice Look Like to Me?"**
- Originality:Written copy is the student's original creation.
- Overall writing ability: The essay shows a degree of creativity and skill for its age group.

If you have questions regarding the contest, please contact Trianna Overton at toverton@housingand.org

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IMPORTANT: PLEASE COMPLETE ALL FIELDS OF THIS FORM. INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. ATTACH COMPLETED FORM TO THE BACK OF EACH SUBMISSION.

Student Name: _____

Student Date of Birth: _____ Grade: _____

Student Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____ Parent/Guardian E-mail: _____

Name of Housing& Member Organization: _____

Name of Housing& Member Property: _____

Housing& Member Contact Person: _____

Housing& Member Phone: _____ Housing& Member E-mail: _____

Legal Notice:

As part of your submission of an essay associated with this contest, you acknowledge and declare that your essay submitted to Housing& is original, and that you as the writer hold exclusive copyright of your essay and hereby transfer exclusive copyright for this material to Housing& for the use of the organization.

The following rights are waived by the undersigned:

- The right to make a claim of ownership or suit against Housing&, all or in part for the reproduction, use, or intent to generate revenue with the aforementioned essay.

The following rights are retained by Housing&:

- Reproduction of said essay in future works of their own, such as marketing or public relations materials.
- Housing& also retains the rights to include the essay on their website or in future publications.
- Electronic or print copies may be made for commercial and non-commercial use.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this form, please contact Trianna Overton at toverton@housingand.org.

Please acknowledge that you have read and understood the above notice:

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

Instructions: Enter your submission here (typewritten or in blue or black ink).