

Community Services Department
Written and Video Competition
Topic: Poverty

Introduction

200,000 people, over 60,000 children, live in abject poverty in our community (United Way PBC Hunger Relief Plan). These are our neighbors, friends, and family. Poverty affects every aspect of a family's life. Families that experience poverty struggle to make ends meet; they oftentimes have to decide whether to pay rent or a utility bill; they must decide whether to purchase food or medication.

Adults experiencing poverty must choose whether they will get a job and pay for childcare or be a stay at home parent and not be able to afford basic expenses such as food. Adults that decide to work risk losing crucial benefits such as childcare or SNAP (food stamps). Acquiring a job and maintaining that job is expensive. It costs money to buy clothes needed for the interview, take time off of work for the interview, transportation to and from the interview – the costs just add up. Once a job has been secured, adults must maintain appropriate clothes, transportation, childcare, health insurance, and more.

Securing and maintaining housing is a critical challenge for families experiencing poverty. Oftentimes the decision must be made whether to pay utilities or rent. When rent is not paid, landlords evict families experiencing poverty. Many families in this situation must quickly find new housing, which is even more challenging with an eviction history. These families oftentimes end up staying in a temporary shelter or even sleeping in their vehicle.

Youth that live in poverty experience less success in school. 30% of children living in poverty do not graduate high school and young adults that do not earn a high school diploma are more than 7 times more likely to experience chronic poverty (Childfund.Org). These students are hungry and are worried about where they will sleep at night. These students struggle with concentration and cannot focus on classwork or homework. They have fewer resources to purchase needed school supplies.

Students experiencing poverty have far fewer resources to achieve the dream of post-secondary education. With their lower scholastic scores compared to their peers, they are less likely to get accepted to college. Post-secondary education such as college or trade school is often too expensive to attend. Students in these scenarios are unlikely to break the cycle of poverty for their families.

There are multiple organizations in Palm Beach County working towards eliminating poverty. Poverty is a complex issue that requires a creative and collaborative solution.

Purpose

The Securing Our Future Initiative invites local middle and high school students to submit original essays or videos with a solution to eradicating poverty in Palm Beach County.

Eligibility

- Students must be between 6th and 12th grade during the 2020-2021 school year.
- Students must reside in Palm Beach County.

Guidelines

Written Material

- Should describe a solution to poverty eradication in Palm Beach County

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- You may submit essays, stories, poems, graphic novels, or any other form of written material.

Videos

- Should describe a solution to poverty eradication in Palm Beach County
- Should be between 1-3 minutes
- Be creative (you can dance, sing, present, anything you like)

** You may submit one (1) video **AND** one (1) written material, if you desire. **

** You may work as a team to complete your project. If you decide to work as a team, you will only receive one gift card if your project is selected. **

Awards

Selected winners in each category (essay and video) will receive:

- \$50 visa gift card
- Collaborate with leaders in our community to implement proposed solution
- Interview with the media
- Press releases and social media posts

** If you worked with a team to complete your project, only one gift card will be awarded per team. **

Submission

- Complete the submission form here: <https://bit.ly/3kDTDRY>
- Upload written material and videos to the Securing Our Future Initiative Google Drive, located here: <https://bit.ly/3kDTDRY>
- Written material must be in PDF form.
- Name essays using this format:
 - o First Name Last Name_Poverty Competition 2021_Title_Written Material
- Name videos using this format:
 - o First Name Last Name_Poverty Competition 2021_Title_Video
- **DEADLINE: May 2nd at Midnight**

Selection Process

A committee of individuals from the Palm Beach County Community Services Department, Palm Beach County Youth Services Department, and the Birth to 22 Alliance will score the essays and videos based on the criteria below:

Criteria Name	Description	Total Points Available
Creativity	Projects that develop a unique solution to problem solving	20
Implementation	Projects that have measurable outcomes	15
Cost	Projects that have minimal cost	10



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Guidelines	Projects that stay within the written guidelines	5
Total Points		50

Selections will be made the week of June 28th.

Announcement of winners will occur via phone and email no later than July 9th.