



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Call for Entries: LAFCU's 2026 Write to Educate Essay Contest

\$20K in college scholarships available for Michigan high school seniors

LANSING, Mich. — LAFCU is once again turning student voices into opportunity, inviting Michigan high school seniors to share their perspectives through its 2026 Write to Educate Essay Contest, awarding \$20,000 in college scholarships and supporting local nonprofits across the state. Applications will be accepted through March 31.



\$5,000 will be awarded to four Michigan high school seniors, with an additional \$500 donated to a charity of their choice, for a total of \$22,000 in donations from LAFCU.

This year's essay topic asks students to think critically about their surroundings: *"Describe a problem facing your community and explain how you would help address or solve it. Discuss the impact your solution could have on others."* By sharing their unique perspectives, participants highlight the diverse experiences that shape and strengthen Michigan communities.

“The Write to Educate Essay Contest gives students a meaningful platform to share their stories, perspectives and creativity,” said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU’s chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer. “Education plays a vital role in helping individuals discover their potential and shape their futures. By eliminating barriers such as GPA requirements or financial need, LAFCU is proud to offer an opportunity that welcomes students from all backgrounds and encourages them to confidently express their ideas and aspirations.”

The contest is open to all Michigan high school seniors, with no restrictions based on GPA, financial need or LAFCU membership. Participants are encouraged to submit a one-page, 500-word essay addressing this year’s topic. Essays must be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, single-spaced, with one-inch margins. Essays shorter than 500 words or longer than one page will not be scored.

To ensure impartial judging, students are asked not to include their name or the school name anywhere in the essay. Submissions will be evaluated on a 1–10 point scale based on adherence to contest rules, quality and clarity of content, and proper spelling and grammar. Winners will be selected by April 24.

Now in its 18th year, the contest reflects LAFCU’s long-standing commitment to supporting Michigan youth in their pursuit of higher education. To date, LAFCU has donated more than \$140,000 to help students attend college and support causes that matter to them through the Write to Educate program.

“Write to Educate goes beyond a traditional scholarship program,” said Alyssa Troub, LAFCU’s digital marketing and community engagement specialist. “It invites students to reflect on their experiences, share innovative ideas and make a positive impact in their communities. Each year, we’re inspired by the thoughtfulness of the essays and the meaningful causes the students choose to support.”

The 2025 winners include Aubree Moore (Woodhaven High School); Kennedy Mullens (Alma High School); Kelcie Pung (Fowler High School); and Nolan Sanders (St. Johns High School). Their selection was based on a one-page essay responding to a prompt that asked students to creatively propose a new high school course and explain its benefits, drawing on personal experiences and visions for the future of education.

Winning essays will be featured in the Lansing State Journal, the contest’s community sponsor. For full contest details and to submit an entry, visit lafcu.com/writetoeducate.



LAFCU 2025 Write to Educate winners (L to R) Aubree Moore (Woodhaven High School), Kennedy Mullens (Alma High School), Kelcie Pung (Fowler High School), and Nolan Sanders (St. Johns High School).

About LAFCU

Founded in 1936, LAFCU (pronounced laugh-cue) is a not-for-profit, member-owned credit union open to all who live, work, worship or attend school in Michigan, and to Michigan businesses. LAFCU serves more than 74,000 members and holds over \$1 billion in assets. With a particular focus on serving people of modest means, LAFCU is committed to enhancing its members' financial well-being and creating long-lasting positive change across generations. Awarded the prestigious Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Community Service Award, LAFCU is known for its people-helping-people mission, which has led to award-winning financial literacy programs for all ages. A three-time honoree as a national 'Best Credit Union to Work For,' named a Best Place to Work for Women, and recognized globally for its diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, LAFCU stands out for its commitment to creating an inclusive workplace. Learn more at www.lafcu.com.

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