NORC Writing Contest — Official Rules

NO PURCHASE, FEE, OR PAYMENT OF ANY KIND IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR TO WIN. THIS IS A SKILL-BASED CONTEST. WINNERS ARE SELECTED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF JUDGING CRITERIA. NO ELEMENT OF CHANCE IS USED AT ANY STAGE. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED BY LAW.

1. Sponsor

The National Opinion Research Center, doing business as NORC ("NORC," "we," "us"), 300 East Randolph Street, Ste. 4600 Chicago, Illinois, United States. These Official Rules (the "Rules") govern the [NORC Fact Forward Awards] (the "Contest").

2. Agreement to the Rules

By submitting an entry, you accept these Rules in full and agree that NORC's decisions on all matters relating to the Contest are final and binding. If you do not agree, do not enter.

3. Entry period

The Contest opens at 12:00 a.m. Central Time on [November 18, 2026] and closes at 11:59 p.m. Central Time on [January 22, 2027] (the "Entry Period"). Entries received after the close of the Entry Period will not be considered. NORC's system clock is the official timekeeper.

4. Eligibility

To enter you must be an individual, at least eighteen (18) years old at the time of entry and the age of majority in your place of residence. Entries from corporations, partnerships, institutions, and other entities are not eligible. Entries may be submitted by one individual only; joint, group, and co-authored entries are not eligible.

The following are not eligible: employees, officers, trustees, and contractors of NORC and of the University of Chicago, and their immediate family members and household members; members of the judging panel and their immediate family and household members; and any person whose participation would create an actual or apparent conflict of interest with NORC's research, funding, or client relationships.

The Contest is void, and entries will not be accepted, from residents of Quebec, Italy, Brazil, and India, and from any individual ordinarily resident in, or a national of, a country or territory subject to comprehensive United States sanctions, currently Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Russia, Belarus, and the Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. The Contest is also

void wherever else prohibited or restricted by law. NORC may add jurisdictions to this list at any time where legal requirements make participation impracticable.

5. How to enter

Submit your entry through [the NORC.org website]. You must provide your name, email address, and country of residence. One (1) entry per person. If more than one entry is received from the same individual, only the first will be considered. Entries submitted by automated means, through multiple or false accounts, or on behalf of another person are void.

6. Submission requirements

Each submission must:

- be on the subject of [Data Journalism
- be submitted in English [or specify permitted languages];
- be submitted via our submission form;
- be your own original work; and

Submissions must not contain unlawful, defamatory, obscene, harassing, or discriminatory content, must not disclose confidential or personal information about any identifiable third party without that person's consent, and must not include advertising or promotional material.

7. Use of artificial intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence tools may be used only to a limited extent and only if disclosed. At the time of entry you must disclose whether and how you used any generative AI tool in creating your submission, identifying the tool and describing the role it played, including research, outlining, drafting, editing, and translation. The substantial creative and expressive content of the submission must be authored by you. A submission generated in substantial part by an AI tool is not eligible, whether or not it is disclosed. Failure to disclose use of a generative AI tool is grounds for disqualification at any time, including after a prize has been announced, and for recovery of any prize already paid.

8. Judging

A jury will judge the entries in each category. The jurors will recommend up to three entries to NORC leaders, who will select the final winners. Judging will occur between January 23, 2027 and March 31, 2027. The panel's determinations are final and are not subject to appeal or review. NORC does not provide feedback or scores on individual entries.

9. Prizes

Three Grand Prizes of up to US $10,000 each. And one student award prize of up to US $5,000. There are no prizes for finalists or runners-up. The total prize pool is up to US $35,000.

Prizes are awarded in United States dollars. No substitution, transfer, or assignment of a prize is permitted, and no cash or other equivalent will be provided except at NORC's sole discretion. NORC reserves the right to award fewer prizes, or no prize, if in the panel's judgment no entry or an insufficient number of entries meets the standard required.

Prize amounts are stated gross. Prizes will be paid less any withholding required by law. Prizes are not grossed up, and NORC will not reimburse any tax, levy, bank charge, intermediary fee, or currency-conversion cost.

10. Winner notification, verification, and conditions of payment

Potential winners will be notified at the email address provided at entry on or about March 31, 2027. You must respond within seven (7) days of the first notification. A potential winner who does not respond within that period, who cannot be reached, whose notification is returned undeliverable, who declines the prize, or who fails to satisfy the verification conditions below within thirty (30) days of notification forfeits the prize, and NORC may select an alternate winner.

Before any prize is paid, a potential winner must provide, as applicable:

- complete onboarding in NORC's internal system to ensure accurate payment processing
- a completed and signed IRS Form W-9 (US persons) or Form W-8BEN or W-8BEN-E (non-US persons);
- government-issued photographic identification, and proof of address;
- full legal name, date of birth, mailing address, and banking or payment-service details sufficient to effect payment;
- a signed affidavit of eligibility, originality, and AI-use disclosure, and a liability release and publicity release, in the form NORC provides; and
- any additional information NORC reasonably requires to screen the winner against applicable sanctions, denied-party, debarment, and excluded-parties lists, and to assess conflicts of interest.

NORC will not pay a prize to any person who appears on an applicable sanctions or excluded-parties list, who is ordinarily resident in an excluded jurisdiction, or whose payment would in NORC's reasonable judgment violate applicable law or NORC's obligations to its funders or clients. In those circumstances the prize is forfeited and an alternate winner may be selected.

11. Taxes

Prizes are taxable. Each winner is solely responsible for all federal, state, local, and foreign taxes arising from the prize, and for any reporting obligation in the winner's own jurisdiction.

For US winners, NORC will issue IRS Form 1099-MISC where the prize is US $2,000 or more in a calendar year. For non-US winners, prize payments constitute US-source income and are generally subject to United States federal withholding at a rate of thirty percent (30%), reported

on IRS Form 1042-S. A reduced treaty rate may apply if the winner is eligible and provides a valid Form W-8BEN or W-8BEN-E including a US or foreign taxpayer identification number and a claim of treaty benefits. NORC does not provide tax advice, and winners are encouraged to consult their own advisers.

12. Payment

Prizes will be paid by wire transfer / ACH within sixty (60) days after all verification conditions are satisfied. Where payment is made in a currency other than United States dollars, conversion is at NORC's bank's prevailing rate on the date of payment. The winner bears all bank, intermediary, and currency-conversion charges.

13. Intellectual property

You retain all copyright and ownership in your submission. By entering, you grant NORC a non-exclusive, worldwide, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, fully paid-up, sublicensable, and transferable license to reproduce, distribute, publicly display, publicly perform, excerpt, translate, adapt for format, archive, and otherwise use your submission, in whole or in part, in any medium now known or later developed, for purposes relating to the Contest and to NORC's research, educational, promotional, and institutional activities. NORC is under no obligation to use your submission.

You represent and warrant that the submission is your own original work; that it has not been previously published in any medium; that it does not infringe, misappropriate, or violate the copyright, trademark, privacy, publicity, confidentiality, or other rights of any third party; that you have obtained all consents necessary for any third-party material, identifiable person, or source referenced in it; that your disclosure of generative AI use is complete and accurate; and that your entry and its publication will not breach any agreement by which you are bound, including any employer, institutional, publisher, or funder agreement.

To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, you waive, and agree not to assert, any moral rights or rights of integrity or attribution in the submission that would prevent NORC from exercising the license granted above. Where those rights cannot be waived under applicable law, you consent to NORC's exercise of the license notwithstanding them. NORC will credit you as the author whenever it is reasonably practicable to do so.

14. No confidential relationship

NORC receives entries on a non-confidential basis. No confidential, fiduciary, agency, employment, or other special relationship is created between you and NORC by your entry, and nothing in these Rules obliges NORC to keep any submission confidential. Do not submit material you wish to keep confidential or that is subject to an obligation of confidentiality owed to another person.

15. Publicity

Except where prohibited by law, by accepting a prize you consent to NORC's use of your name, photograph or likeness, voice, biographical information, city and country of residence, and professional or institutional affiliation, in connection with the announcement, promotion, and reporting of the Contest and of your submission, in any medium, worldwide, without further notice, review, approval, or additional compensation. You are responsible for obtaining any consent your employer or institution requires before that affiliation is identified.

Where NORC relies on your consent to use your personal data for publicity, you may withdraw that consent at any time by contacting commhelp@norc.org. Withdrawal takes effect prospectively and does not require NORC to recall, alter, or remove materials already published, distributed, or archived.

16. Personal data

At entry. NORC collects your name, email address, country of residence, your AI-use disclosure, and the contents of your submission, in order to administer and judge the Contest. Data relating to entrants who are not selected as finalists or winners will be deleted within ninety (90) days after winners are announced, except where retention is required by law.

Finalists and winners. NORC collects the additional information described in section 10, for the purposes of paying the prize, meeting its tax-reporting obligations, screening for sanctions, debarment, and conflicts of interest, and maintaining audit records.

Lawful bases. NORC processes this information: to take steps at your request and to perform its obligations to you in connection with the Contest and the prize; to comply with legal obligations, including tax reporting, sanctions and anti-corruption compliance, and audit; in reliance on its legitimate interests in operating the Contest with integrity and protecting against fraud and ineligible entries; and, as to publicity use of your name and likeness, on your consent.

Retention. Tax and payment records are retained for seven (7) years, or longer where law requires. Screening and eligibility records are retained for the period necessary to evidence compliance. Winning submissions and associated author credits are retained indefinitely as part of NORC's archive.

Transfers and rights. NORC is located in the United States, and your information will be transferred to and processed there and by its service providers. Where you are located in the European Economic Area, the United Kingdom, or Switzerland, transfers are made under [Standard Contractual Clauses / the EU-US Data Privacy Framework — confirm which mechanism NORC relies on], and you have the rights described in NORC's Privacy Notice at https://www.norc.org/privacy.html, including rights of access, correction, deletion, restriction, objection, portability, and complaint to a supervisory authority. NORC's Privacy Notice governs its handling of your information and is incorporated into these Rules. Where the two conflict as to data handling, the Privacy Notice controls.

17. Disqualification

NORC may disqualify any entrant, and may rescind and recover any prize already awarded or paid, where NORC reasonably determines that the entrant has breached these Rules, including by submitting work that is not original or that was previously published, by failing to disclose or by misrepresenting the use of generative AI, by plagiarism or fabrication, by submitting multiple entries or using multiple or false accounts, by tampering with the entry or judging process, by providing false information, or by acting in a manner that is disruptive, abusive, or damaging to NORC's reputation.

18. Modification, suspension, and cancellation

NORC may modify, suspend, extend, or cancel the Contest, in whole or in part, at any time and for any reason, including where the Contest cannot be conducted as planned because of technical failure, insufficient or inadequate entries, fraud, or any cause beyond NORC's reasonable control. Material changes will be posted at https://www.norc.org/fact-forward-awards.html and will take effect on posting. If the Contest is cancelled, NORC may award prizes from among eligible entries received before cancellation, or award no prize.

19. Release and limitation of liability

By entering, you release and hold harmless NORC, and their respective trustees, officers, employees, agents, contractors, judges, and funders from and against any claim, loss, injury, or damage arising out of your participation in the Contest, the submission of your entry, the award, receipt, use, or misuse of any prize, or any tax liability relating to a prize.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, NORC's total aggregate liability arising out of or relating to the Contest will not exceed the value of the prize you were awarded, or US $100 if you were not awarded a prize, and NORC will not be liable for any indirect, incidental, consequential, special, exemplary, or punitive damages, or for lost profits, revenue, opportunity, or goodwill. Nothing in these Rules excludes or limits liability that cannot lawfully be excluded or limited, including liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence or for fraud.

20. Indemnity

You will indemnify and hold harmless NORC, and its trustees, officers, employees, and agents, against any third-party claim, demand, proceeding, loss, liability, damage, cost, and expense, including reasonable legal fees, arising out of or relating to a breach of your representations and warranties in section 13, or to the content of your submission.

21. Governing law and disputes

These Rules and any dispute arising out of or relating to the Contest are governed by the laws of the State of Illinois, United States, without regard to its conflict-of-laws principles, and the parties submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state and federal courts located in Cook County, Illinois. Each entrant waives any objection to venue in those courts. Nothing in this section deprives a consumer resident in the European Economic Area or the United Kingdom of

the protection of mandatory provisions of the law of their country of residence, or of the right to bring proceedings there where that right cannot lawfully be excluded.

22. General

These Rules are the entire agreement between you and NORC regarding the Contest and supersede any prior or contemporaneous statement, including any statement in promotional material; in the event of a conflict, these Rules control. If any provision is held invalid or unenforceable, it will be modified to the minimum extent necessary, or severed, and the remaining provisions will remain in full force. NORC's failure to enforce any provision is not a waiver of it. You may not assign your rights under these Rules. Headings are for convenience only.

23. Winners list

A list of winners will be available at https://www.norc.org/fact-forward-awards.html on or about April 15, 2027 and for six (6) months thereafter, or on written request to commhelp@norc.org.

24. Questions

Questions about the Contest may be directed to Lindsay Arends at arends-lindsay@norc.org. Questions about NORC's handling of personal data may be directed to privacy@norc.org.