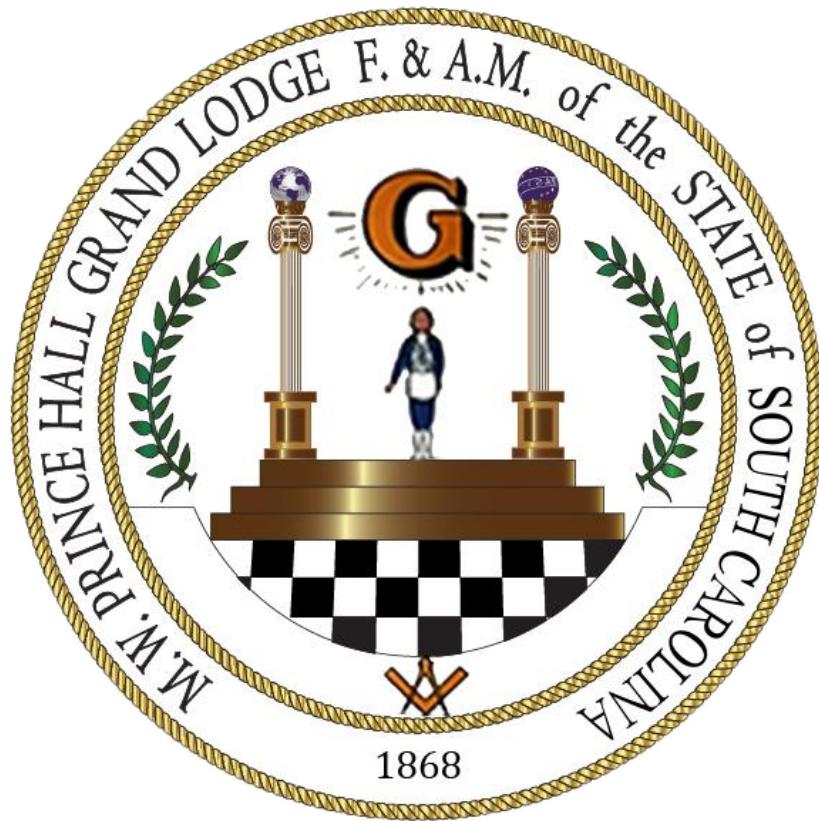


Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of South Carolina Free & Accepted Masons



Annual Scholarship Program for 2026

Guidelines for the Awarding of Scholarships

Writing Prompt and Instructions for Preparing the Essay

GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS

1. The Grand Lodge will award three (3) four-year scholarships, to be paid in annual installments of \$1000.00 each, to the three finalists who have competed on the statewide level and have satisfied, all requirements as set forth by the official Scholarship Committee of the Grand Lodge.
2. All monies will be paid directly to the colleges or universities of the winners' choices.
- 3. The funds will be disbursed over a four-year academic period.**
- 4. Each winner must give his or her chosen college or university permission to send periodic grading reports to the Chairman of the Scholarship Committee.**
5. The scholarship will be terminated if the student fails to maintain passing grades suitable to remain in school.
- 6. One of the main criteria for the awarding of a scholarship will be on the basis of a written essay, with a minimum of five (5) paragraphs and a maximum of eight (8). The topic will be based on a research question chosen by the Scholarship Committee. THE ESSAY MUST BE ORIGINAL. Detailed guidelines for the preparation of the essay will be given to each participant.**
7. The essay must be typed and prepared in MLA (Modern Language Association) format.
- 8. The following items must also be included in each contestant's scholarship packet:**
 - a. Scholastic rank in present graduating class
 - b. Written comments from at least three (3) character witnesses, which should include leadership qualities
 - c. A statement of contestant's academic achievement
 - d. A list of school, church, and community activities in which the contestant has participated
 - e. A letter of recommendation by a school official where contestant is presently attending or last attended school
 - f. SAT or ACT score
 - g. A copy of high school transcript
- 9. ALL DISTRICT FINALISTS MUST APPEAR IN PERSON AT THE STATEWIDE LEVEL BEFORE A PANEL OF JUDGES FOR AN ORAL INTERVIEW.**
10. Each of the Masonic Districts may present one finalist only to appear as one of the statewide finalists.
- 11. District finalists' complete scholarship packets must be in the hands of the Chairman of the State Scholarship Committee not later than SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2026.**
12. District Deputies will secure their own judges to judge their essays. Further, all deputies must ensure that all other required items in #8 are submitted to them, along with the essays. **DO NOT ACCEPT INCOMPLETE PACKETS.**
13. The State Scholarship Committee selects the judges for the state elimination.
14. Contestants may be male or female.

15. The final (state) elimination will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026, 10:00 a.m., at the Grand Lodge Masonic Temple, 2324 Gervais Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29202.

16. The rating for the state elimination of each district finalist will be divided into three equal parts:

- a. One-third-content of essay
- b. One-third-oral interview
- c. One-third-other criterial guidelines

17. In the case of a scholarship winner (at the state level) not accepting the initial scholarship award by September 15, or the year in which the scholarship was won, or if a winner fails to use the total amount of the scholarship award due to dropping out of school because of failure, the unused money will be prorated among all eligible winners presently enrolled in a college or university.

18. Only high school seniors are eligible to participate in the Grand Lodge Scholarship Contest.

Information for District Deputies Concerning Guidelines for Judging the Essays

IMPORTANT: District Deputies, so that there will be uniformity and fairness across the state in the judging of the essays, please be sure that all participating students get a copy of the grading rubric and the explanation page (“Grading Rubric for Written Assignments”). **Further, your panel of judges for your district MUST USE this rubric to grade the essays.** When you submit your winning essay and other supportive (required) documents to the State for the final judging, the grading rubric for that district winner MUST be submitted, as well, in the packet.

Argumentative Writing Prompt and Instructions for Preparing the Essay

To what extent does Kyren Lacy's death reveal the lack of mental-health support systems available for young Black men in America?*

“Kyren Lacy was a 6-foot-2 Southeastern Conference football player with a broad, if often absent, smile, a love for Buffalo Wild Wings and lemonade. Some sports analysts even predicted that the Louisiana State University senior might go to a National Football League team as early as the second round of the draft this year. Instead, Lacy died by suicide at 24 and was buried on the final day of the NFL draft. The reason why a young person would end [his or her] life was, for a few weeks, the subject of rampant speculation, mostly on social media, websites, and podcasts that cater to Black audiences and the sports obsessed.

“Lacy had talked with friends for years about wanting into the NFL and the league pay that would eliminate his family’s financial worries, friends said. Then, in his final months, a tangle of events appeared to endanger that. Just before his death, Lacy was charged with negligent homicide and felony hit-and-run in connection with a fatal accident. [Consequently] in an interview in October, Lacy’s attorney said investigators found that the young football star had not caused the crash. His vehicle was 72 yards away from the fatal accident, said his attorney, Matt Ory, according to a district attorney’s report.

“Speculation about the reasons Lacy ended his life, experts say, is common but not productive or sensitive to family members left behind. ‘Also, there is rarely a single reason,’ said Janelle R. Goodwill, who has spent the past decade studying Black mental health and suicide prevention.”

Read this *Capital B* (<https://capitalbnews.org/black-men-mental-health-2/>) article, dated October 6, 2025 by Janell Ross, “Kyren Lacy’s Death at 24 Sheds Light on Black Male Suicide Crisis,” in its entirety, and in a detailed argumentative essay of at least five (5) and no more than eight (8) complete paragraphs, state your opinion about to what extent does Kyren Lacy’s death reveal lack of mental-health support systems available for young Black men in America.

Further, within your essay, answer each of the following questions relevant to the article:

- Should colleges and athletic programs be required to provide mandatory, ongoing mental-health counseling for student-athletes—especially Black male athletes who face unique social pressures?
- Is the rising suicide rate among young Black men primarily the result of societal pressures, cultural stigma around seeking help, or systemic neglect in mental-health services?
- To what degree is racism—structural and everyday—contributing to increased stress, depression, and suicidal ideation among young Black men?
- Should the media bear responsibility for how they portray Black men, and could changing those portrayals reduce suicide vulnerability?
- How might hyper masculinity in sports culture discourage young Black male athletes from seeking help, and should athletic organizations work to change this culture?

Use this source and at least two (2) other current sources that you choose to support your argument presented in your thesis statement. **Remember that your thesis statement should be**

the last sentence in your first paragraph, and be sure to underline it. One of your other sources can also be an interview with a licensed, certified psychiatrist or psychologist who is familiar with this particular case. Be sure to cite the sources, according to MLA format, in the body of the paper and on a Works Cited page at the end of your essay.

*This writing prompt was taken from *Capital B*, and the instructions were prepared by Mrs. Anna Stevens Bright, Minister, Retired English Educator, Journalist, Author, and Community Activist.

Grading Rubric for Written Assignments

Criteria	Levels of Assessment			
	Inadequate=D (Below Standard)	Adequate=C (Meets Standard)	Above Average=B (Exceeds Standard)	Exemplary=A (Far Exceeds Standard)
Organization	Writing lacks logical organization. It shows some coherence but ideas lack unity. Serious errors.	Writing is coherent and logically organized. Some points remain misplaced and stray from the topic. Transitions evident but not used throughout essay.	Writing is coherent and logically organized with transitions used between ideas and paragraphs to create coherence. Overall unity of ideas is present.	Writing shows high degree of attention to logic and reasoning of points. Unity clearly leads the reader to the conclusion and stirs thought regarding the topic.
Level of Content	Shows some thinking and reasoning but most ideas are underdeveloped and unoriginal.	Content indicates thinking and reasoning applied with original thought on a few ideas.	Content indicates original and reasoning applied with sufficient and firm evidence.	Content indicates synthesis of ideas, in-depth analysis and evidences original thought and support for the topic.
Development	Main points lack detailed development. Ideas are vague with little evidence of critical thinking.	Main points are present with limited detail and development. Some critical thinking is present.	Main points well developed with quality supporting details and quantity. Critical thinking is woven into points.	Main points well developed with high quality and quantity support. Reveals high degree of critical thinking.
Grammar & Mechanics	Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors create distraction, making reading difficult; fragments, comma spllices, run-ons evident. Errors are frequent.	Most spelling, punctuation, and grammar correct allowing reader to progress though essay. Some errors remain.	Essay has few spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors allowing reader to follow ideas clearly. Very few fragments or run-ons.	Essay is free of distracting spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; absent of fragments, comma spllices, and run-ons.
Style	Mostly in elementary form with little or no variety in sentence structure, diction, rhetorical devices or emphasis.	Approaches college level usage of some variety in sentence patterns, diction, and rhetorical devices.	Attains college level style; tone is appropriate and rhetorical devices used to enhance content; sentence variety used effectively.	Shows outstanding style going beyond usual college level; rhetorical devices and tone used effectively; creative use of sentence structure and coordination.
Format	Fails to follow format and assignment requirements; incorrect margins, spacing and indentation; neatness of essay needs attention.	Meets format and assignment requirements; generally correct margins, spacing, and indentations; essay is neat but may have some assembly errors.	Meets format and assignment requirements; margins, spacing, and indentations are correct; essay is neat and correctly assembled.	Meets all formal and assignment requirements and evidences attention to detail; all margins, spacing and indentations are correct; essay is neat and correctly assembled with professional look.

Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of South Carolina

Student _____ District # _____

District Deputy's Name _____

Student's Address and Phone _____

Name(s) of Parent or Guardian _____

School _____ Total Points _____/100

Essay Grading Rubric for 2026 **Levels of Assessment**

Criteria	Inadequate	Adequate	Above Average	Exemplary
Content (24)	(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-18)	(19-24)
Development (20)	(1-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)	(16-20)
Grammar & Mechanics (12)	(1-3)	(4-6)	(7-9)	(10-12)
Style (20)	(1-5)	(6-10)	(11-15)	(16-20)
Format** (24)	(1-6)	(7-12)	(13-18)	(19-24)

****BE SURE THAT THE STUDENT SHOWS EVIDENCE OF HAVING USED THE
REQUIRED SOURCES FROM THE INSTRUCTIONS, AND THAT THE ESSAY IS
PREPARED IN MLA FORMAT.**

**Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of
South Carolina
Annual Scholarship Program 2026**

District Level Contest

To be Completed by District Level Judges

District Deputy: _____ Packet Due: March 28, 2026

Student _____

Submission Packet Checklist

Components	Included (Yes-V)/(No-X)	Comments (if needed)
Essay		
Three Character References		
Academic Achievement/School, Church, and Community Activities		
SAT/ACT Score		
High School Transcript		
Statement from School Official		

IMPORTANT: DISTRICT LEVEL PARTICIPANTS

RETURN COMPLETED SCHOLARSHIP PACKET TO:

District Deputy _____

Masonic District # _____

Address _____

DEADLINE DATE

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026

Thank you kindly for participating!