



of San Antonio

Girls Inc. of San Antonio in collaboration with  
The San Antonio 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Committee is hosting  
a city-wide essay competition to celebrate a big year in civic life.

**WHO:** **All Youth in San Antonio ages 6 – 18** Three winners for each of the groups listed below:

- 6 – 8 years old (50 - 100 words)
- 9 – 12 years old (200 – 450 words)
- 13 – 18 years old (500 - 750 words)

**WHAT:** **Interview and Write an Essay**

Students are asked to interview the oldest female in their family about their voting experiences. Who might that be? Perhaps your Great Grandmother, an Aunt or Cousin. Interviews can take place in person or telephone or Facetime. The idea is for you to interview your family member about what voting and being engaged in their community means to them.

**WHEN:** **Submission Deadline**

- Monday, August 31, 2020

**WINNERS:** **Prizes and Judging**

- A panel of judges will follow an anonymous judging protocol to review the essays and choose three winners for each age group.  
**1<sup>st</sup> place winners:** Chromebook and the opportunity to interview a city leader  
**2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners:** H-E-B Gift Basket, Whataburger Gift Card, more!  
*In addition, all winners will receive a certificate, and their essay will be archived in the newly established National Institute of Mexican American History of Civil Rights at Our Lady of the Lake University.*
- All winners will be notified in September 2020
- Entries will be judged, and winners chosen by a diverse panel of female leaders. The decisions of the judges are final.

**HOW:** **To Enter**

- Submit your essay in English or Spanish a word document or PDF and email to Belen Plasencia to at [bplasencia@girlsincsa.org](mailto:bplasencia@girlsincsa.org) by August 31, 2020.
- Email submissions **must** include
  - Students first name and last initial
  - Students gender and age
  - Students grade and school
  - Photo of the student and the person being interviewed (if possible)
  - Email to [bplasencia@girlsincsa.org](mailto:bplasencia@girlsincsa.org)
  - Use "ESSAY CONTEST" in the subject line
- *Participating in the contest gives Girls Inc. of San Antonio, The San Antonio 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Committee, and the National Institute of Mexican American History of Civil Rights permission to reproduce the essay in marketing materials, social media, print, email, and other internal and external communications.*

## **ABOUT THE THEME:** Inspired and Engaged in Civic Life

Girls Inc. of San Antonio in collaboration with The San Antonio 19th Amendment Centennial Committee is taking the opportunity to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. While 2020 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, an important occasion – it is also crucial to address the racial disparities of this milestone. For decades after the passage of the 19th Amendment, women of color struggled to exercise their right to vote because of legalized prejudicial practices that blocked them from casting ballots. Women across the United States fought for decades for the right to vote, finally achieving this goal in 1920. They encountered numerous obstacles across their long journey, both from other women and from more preeminent national politics. But such struggles did not end in the early 1900s. While the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment did not enfranchise all women; it was a big step towards progress and equality. This historic centennial offers an unparalleled opportunity to commemorate a milestone of democracy and to explore its relevance to the issues of equal rights today.

**The Essay Prompt:** Learning your history is an essential tool, and a call to action. Learning about our past creates a path to building a better future. In the spirit of the many people who fought for voting rights throughout history –who is the first woman (*grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, sister, cousin, etc.*) that voted in your family? What were some of the obstacles they encountered in trying to vote? Discuss one challenge that you think is significant. The essay prompt is designed to encourage discussion and hope to ignite the spark to inspire a thoughtful conversation.

**Below are questions that can spark a lively conversation or create a new memory in unexpected ways!** *You can use some the questions below or come up with your own. Don't forget to ask a parent if you do not understand the question.*

- What was the first election you voted in? How old were you?
- Where was your first election? In Texas? Someplace else?
- When/what was your first memory of voting? How old were you and what motivated you to vote?
- Did you experience any difficulties to voting? How did you overcome those barriers?
- What did you think your life would be like when you were older? If future generations of our family read this essay what would you want them to know about voting and civic engagement?
- Consider the last hundred years after the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and how far we've come – how far do we still have to go? What do you hope to see change in the next 100 years?
- One hundred years later, the country is continuing to grapple with many of the same questions the suffragists raised, not only who gets to vote, but also what it means to be a citizen and how to ensure that all people are equal in the eyes of the law. And as we mark this centennial, why do you think we are still in the fight to find more ways to make our communities more inclusive and empowering?