

## Topical Prize Sponsorship and Judging Guidelines

**These guidelines apply to National History Day in Minnesota Regional/District contests and the Minnesota State History Day contest.**

### **What are Topical Prizes?**

Topical Prizes are additional awards recognizing outstanding student work at State History Day. The prizes recognize entries that fall under a specific content focus (e.g. women's history, labor history, etc.) or students who did something specific in creating their entry (e.g. such as using a particular library). In addition to recognition, award winners receive a monetary prize determined by the prize sponsors (often ranging from \$50 to \$500 per entry). Prize Sponsors determine the total number of awards; most commonly there is one award in the Junior Division (grades 6-8) and one award in the Senior Division (grades 9-12).

### **Who sponsors Topical Prizes?**

Individuals and organizations sponsor prizes. They work with the History Day staff to determine the specific criteria and prize focus. Sponsors are encouraged to recruit their own judges, who are then trained at State History Day. If a sponsor is unable to recruit judges, History Day will work with the sponsors, whenever possible, to provide judges for the prize.

### **How are Topical Prizes judged?**

Topical Prizes are evaluated separately from, but at the same time as the regular State History Day competition. A project's ranking in the competition does not impact any Topical Prizes that may be awarded.

- **NOMINATION:** Students nominate their entries for Topical Prizes during the State History Day registration process. Students must submit their thesis statement and any other materials the prize sponsors require. Incomplete nominations cannot be considered for prizes.
- **SCHEDULES:** Nominating an entry does not guarantee that a project will be reviewed by Topical Prize judges at State. History Day staff review nominations to create the schedule for review. Not all projects nominated for a prize will be reviewed by the Topical Prize judges. Topical Prize judge schedules are not posted or shared with student competitors.
- **JUDGING:** Topical Prize judges will watch Documentaries and Performances as they are presented. Topical Prize judges will view Exhibits, Papers, and Websites without students present. There are no interviews for Topical Prizes.
- **SELECTING WINNERS:** Judges select prize winners according to the award criteria and historical quality. Prize winners are announced at the awards ceremony and posted online with contest results.
- **REDEEMING AWARDS:** Prize winners will receive additional information on how to receive the award. In general, students will submit financial paperwork (W9) for the individual student or group leader. Award checks are processed by the Minnesota Historical Society or sponsoring organization and mailed to the student.



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### **Can my organization sponsor a Topical Prize?**

Our capacity to offer Topical Prizes depends on event capacity and prize focus.

- **Capacity:** Topical Prizes are currently offered only at State History Day. We have a limited amount of space to train and host judges. Each year, organizations that have previously sponsored prizes are offered the opportunity first. Any additional sponsor spots are made available at the discretion of the Minnesota History Day program.
- **Prize Focus:** History Day staff will work with organizations to determine the prize focus. In general, staff works to ensure limited overlap between awards and a broad enough focus to allow the prize to be competitive.

**Please contact Minnesota History Day staff with any questions  
about these guidelines.**