

2026-2027 "What Home Means to Me" Contest Application

ABOUT THE "WHAT HOME MEANS TO ME" CALENDAR

Since 2008, the "What Home Means to Me" Poster Contest has recognized the amazing, poignant art of children who live in affordable housing across the country. Their heartfelt messages about their homes underscore the importance of the work that housers and community development professionals do. Every year, NAHRO compiles a calendar featuring the posters of 12 children, which are distributed to NAHRO member agencies and Congress.

CONTEST OVERVIEW

The national poster contest is the culmination of numerous poster contests held by NAHRO member agencies, state organizations and regional councils across the United States. NAHRO does not accept national poster contest submissions directly from individuals, member agencies or state organizations.

Each of NAHRO's eight regions manage their own submission and judging processes, selecting three posters (one from each age category) from local and/or state organization submissions. The 24 regional winners are then judged by a national panel, and 12 national winners are selected to be featured in NAHRO's "What Home Means to Me" calendar for the following year.

All 12 national winners receive cash prizes. The grand prize winner, whose art is also featured on the calendar cover, will also receive a trip to NAHRO's Washington Conference to meet the NAHRO membership and their Congressional offices.

Eligibility

All artists, age 5-18, must reside in a household, or be provided a housing-related service, managed by a NAHRO member agency in good standing.

Poster Specifications — *non-compliant posters will be disqualified*

- Posters must represent the theme "**What Home Means to Me**"
- Posters must be at least 8.5 x 11in paper size (letter size). Larger posters will be accepted, up to 22 x 28in.
- Posters must have a LANDSCAPE (HORIZONTAL) orientation. Posters in portrait (vertical) orientation will be disqualified.
- Artists may use any art media (marker, crayon, paint, collage, textiles, etc.), but please consider that posters will need to be packaged, mailed, and reproduced.
- The artist's name, grade level, and housing agency must be written on the back of each poster entry.
- Posters may only be created by one eligible artist.

Note: *If selected, poster contest winners will be asked to provide a high-resolution headshot photo (of the artist).*



CONTEST SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

National winners are selected from region-level winning entries, which are selected from state and/or local entries. Additionally, some states do not conduct poster contests, sending all entries directly to the regional contest. As such, deadlines vary widely based on the artist's location, from as early as January to as late as June. State and regional deadlines (where available) and contact information are available on our website: www.nahro.org/poster.

NAHRO Member Agencies, State Organizations and Regional Councils: Please fill in your poster contest deadlines below before distributing the application, to assist applicants in navigating the tiered judging process!



Artists: Create your poster, **complete the application information form and essay (page 3 and 4)**, and return them to the designated staff member at your housing agency before their deadline.

Housing Agency _____ Deadline _____

Submit materials to _____

NAHRO member agency representative: Verify that the artist meets the eligibility criteria, the poster meets the specifications and the application is complete. Then **fill out the member agency section of the application verification (page 5)** and submit the materials to either your state (if applicable) or regional representative before their deadline.

State Organization _____ Deadline _____

Submit materials to _____

(if applicable) **NAHRO state representative:** Verify that the poster meets the specifications and conduct your state-level judging. **Fill out the state section of all winning posters' application verification (page 5)** and submit the winning materials to your regional representative.

Regional Council _____ Deadline _____

Submit materials to _____

NAHRO regional representative: Verify that the poster meets the specifications and conduct your region-level judging, selecting only one winner from each age category. **Fill out the region section of all winning posters' application verification form (page 5)**, and submit the winning posters, essays, and applications to the NAHRO Housing America Advisory Committee Liaison by July 1, 2026. Please send digital copies to housingamerica@nahro.org then mail the originals to NAHRO at 630 Eye Street NW, Washington D.C. 20001.



ARTIST INFORMATION FORM

Artist Name _____ Age _____

Address _____
Street Address City State ZIP Code

Name of Housing Agency _____
This organization must be a NAHRO member. Not sure? Email memberservices@nahro.org

Name of Parent or Guardian _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Age Category

What is the artist's grade level? (Check one)

- Elementary School (Kindergarten – 5th grade)
- Middle School (6th - 8th grade)
- High School (9th – 12th grade)

By signing below, I certify that:

- I meet the eligibility criteria to participate in the “What Home Means to Me” Poster Contest.
- I have provided true information to the best of my knowledge.
- I understand and agree that upon submission, the artist’s poster and essay will become the sole property of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). NAHRO shall have exclusive and full rights to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute the poster and essay for any lawful purpose and may retain the original documents.
- I grant NAHRO permission to use the artist’s likeness in a photograph, video, or other digital media in any and all of its publications, including web-based publications, without payment or other consideration in connection with the What Home Means to Me Poster Contest.
- I additionally waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product wherein the artist’s likeness, poster or essay appears and any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photo, poster or essay.

Artist Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

***DON'T FORGET TO COMPLETE THE VERIFICATION FORM ON PAGE 5!**



VERIFICATION FORM

NAHRO member agencies, state organizations (if applicable) and regional councils must complete their designated section of this form as part of the application! The contact person(s) listed may be contacted by a NAHRO representative as part of eligibility verification, or in the case that the poster is chosen as a national winner.

Section to be completed by a representative of the NAHRO Member Agency only

Agency Name _____
City _____ State _____ NAHRO ID # _____
Contact Person _____ Title _____
Phone Number _____ Email _____

Initials I certify that the artist resides in a household or is provided a housing-related service managed by this agency, that this application is complete and that my agency is National NAHRO member.

(If applicable) **Section to be completed by the NAHRO State Organization only**

State Organization _____
Contact Person _____ Title _____
Phone Number _____ Email _____

Initials I certify that this application is complete and has been selected to advance to the regional poster contest for their age group in accordance with our state organization rules/policies.

Section to be completed by the NAHRO Regional Council representative only

Region _____
Contact Person _____ Title _____
Phone Number _____ Email _____

Initials I certify that this application is complete, has been selected as the region's poster contest winner for their age group in accordance with our regional rules/policies, and will advance to the national poster contest.