



National Youth Cutting Horse Association

NYCHA Youth Convention Out-of-Arena Contest

Information & Rules

\$10,000 in scholarships to be awarded

Public Speaking – Essay – Art - Photography

2026 NYCHA Convention Theme – *Gold Buckle Dreams*

Your Gold Buckle Dream isn't just about winning—show us who you're becoming along the way.

The out-of-arena contests are open to **all NYCHA youth members** in good standing with an active membership. With the exception of the Public Speaking Contest, you do not have to attend the 2026 Great American Insurance Group Summer Cutting Spectacular or the Youth Convention to participate in the out-of-arena contests. Scholarships will be awarded in both Junior and Senior divisions in all contests.

The NYCHA out-of-area contests allow you to develop and sharpen your skills and showcase your talents outside of the show pen. Your participation, both in and out of the show pen, furthers the mission of the National Youth Cutting Horse Association.

Age Divisions:

Senior (14-18) as of June 1, 2025

Junior (13 and under) as of June 1, 2025

Contests Prompt: 2026 NYCHA Convention

What does it mean to be a champion in and out of the arena?

A Gold Buckle Dream represents more than winning a class or standing in the spotlight. It symbolizes the pursuit of excellence through dedication, grit, and integrity. In the arena, it reflects preparation, partnership, and perseverance. Outside the arena, it reflects character—how you lead, learn, respect others, and carry the values of Cutting



into everyday life.

Being a champion isn't just about the buckle you earn—it's about the person you become while chasing it.

NYCHA Essay Contest

Junior Essay Champion - \$600.00

Junior Reserve Essay Champion: \$300.00

Junior Essay Third Place: \$200.00

Senior Essay Champion - \$600.00

Senior Essay Reserve Champion: \$300.00

Senior Essay Third Place: \$200.00

Topic: Gold Buckle Dreams

What does your Gold Buckle Dream mean to you?

Reflect on what it takes to be a champion in and out of the arena. How has the pursuit of excellence in Cutting shaped your work ethic, resilience, or confidence? What lessons have you learned through success, setbacks, and dedication to your horse(s) and the sport?

Share how chasing your Gold Buckle Dream has influenced who you are—not just as a competitor, but as a leader, teammate, and individual.

Guidelines

1. Eligibility
 - a. The NYCHA Essay Contest is open to youth members in good standing with the National Cutting Horse Association.
 - b. Previous winners are eligible to enter the contest in subsequent year(s).
2. Entry Application
 - a. There is no entry fee for the NYCHA Essay scholarship contest.
 - b. All entries must be postmarked/submitted to the address below no later than midnight (CST) on July 1, 2026.
 - i. NCHA Youth Director, Rianna Storey, 260 Bailey Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107
 - ii. You are permitted to email your essay to rstorey@nchacutting.



- c. Each essay entry must be submitted as a Word Document.
 - i. Please use 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font.
 - ii. The document can be double-spaced.
 - d. Please include the following in your heading at the top of the first page:
 - i. Name of the Youth member
 - ii. NYCHA Member Number
 - iii. Age and date of birth.
 - iv. Phone Number
- | |
|------------------|
| Name |
| 1234567 |
| 16, 1/22/2007 |
| 1 (234) 567-8900 |
3. Contest Format
- a. **Essays must be the original work of the student.** Plagiarism or use of AI assistance (yes, we can tell it was used) will not be tolerated and is cause for automatic disqualification.
 - b. Essays will be scored in the following areas:
 - i. Writing Style: Well-organized and focused, begins and ends effectively, no grammatical errors, use of appropriate vocabulary and tone.
 - ii. Originality: Demonstrates creativity or originality, strongly shows the writer's attitude or point of view in a meaningful and original way.
 - c. The NYCHA Essay Scholarship contest will be evaluated by a qualified judge with no NYCHA affiliation.
 - d. The National Youth Cutting Horse Association, and its partners, reserves the right to reprint submitted essays and release the winning essays to media for publication.
4. Notification of Contest Winner
- a. A list of contest winners will be posted to the NYCHA social media accounts once the judges scoring is final. Winners will be recognized at the NYCHA Banquet.
5. Awarded Scholarships
- a. Scholarships will be held under the students' name with the NYCHA Foundation until the student is ready to utilize their available scholarship funds. All scholarship payment requests must be made via the on-line portal, located under the "Scholarship" tab of the NYCHA Foundation web page. All scholarship payouts will be made directly to the educational institution of choice.
 - b. Students have until their 25th birthday to utilize scholarship funds.
 - c. For questions or assistance accessing scholarship funds, contact – scholarships@nychafoundation.org



NYCHA Photo Contest

Junior Photo Champion - \$600.00
Junior Reserve Photo Champion: \$300.00
Junior Photo Third Place: \$200.00

Senior Photo Champion - \$600.00
Senior Photo Reserve Champion: \$300.00
Senior Photo Third Place: \$200.00

Topic: Gold Buckle Dreams

Capture the essence of a Gold Buckle Dream through your lens.

Whether it's the focus of a rider, the intensity of a horse, a quiet moment of preparation, or the emotion after a run—let your photo tell the story of dedication, partnership, and the pursuit of excellence. How does your image reflect what it truly means to be a champion?

Guideline

1. Eligibility
 - a. The NYCHA Photo Contest is open to youth members in good standing with the National Cutting Horse Association.
 - b. Previous winners are eligible to enter the contest in subsequent year(s).
2. Entry Application
 - a. There is no entry fee for the NYCHA Photo scholarship contest.
 - b. **Contestants MUST submit a hard copy of their photo via mail.** Photo entries must be postmarked by July 1, 2026, to the following address:
 - i. NCHA Youth Director, Rianna Storey, 260 Bailey Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107
 - ii. When mailing your artwork, please package it correctly to prevent any damage.
 - c. One photo submission per NCHA youth member.
 - d. Your photo will not be returned.
3. Contest Format
 - a. Photographs submitted must have been taken within the last year.
 - b. All submissions must be printed as an 8" x 10" at minimum.
 - c. Photos will be judged on composition, exposure, and originality.
 - d. Photos may be in color or black & white.
 - e. Please do not frame/mount photos.
 - f. Place the photo in a sheet protector for mailing.



- g. On a separate sheet of paper, please include the following:
- NCHA Youth Member's name
 - NCHA Membership Number
 - Age and date of birth
 - Location and title of photo
- | |
|---------------|
| Name |
| 1234567 |
| 16, 1/22/2007 |
| Location |
| Photo Title |
- h. By submitting an image, the National Youth Cutting Horse Association, and their partners, reserves the right to reprint and release the winning photos to media for publication.
- The winning photographer will be credited and recognized in the media or promotional materials where their image may appear.
 - The NYCHA Photo Scholarship contest will be evaluated by a qualified judge with no NCHA affiliation.
4. Notification of Contest Winners
- A list of contest winners will be posted to the NYCHA social media accounts once judges scoring is final. Winners will be recognized at the NYCHA Banquet.
5. Awarded Scholarships
- Scholarships will be held under the students' name with the NCHA Foundation until the student is ready to utilize their available scholarship funds. All scholarship payment requests must be made via the on-line portal, located under the "Scholarship" tab of the NCHA Foundation web page. All scholarship payouts will be made directly to the educational institution of choice.
 - Students have until their 25th birthday to utilize scholarship funds.
 - For questions or assistance accessing scholarship funds, contact – scholarships@nchafoundation.org

NYCHA Artwork Contest

Junior Artwork Champion - \$600.00
Junior Reserve Artwork Champion: \$300.00
Junior Artwork Third Place: \$200.00

Senior Artwork Champion - \$600.00
Senior Artwork Reserve Champion: \$300.00
Senior Artwork Third Place: \$200.00

Topic: Gold Buckle Dreams

Bring the Gold Buckle Dream to life through your chosen medium.

Show what it means to strive for greatness—through movement, emotion, discipline, or growth. Whether your artwork highlights competition, connection, or personal



development, let it reflect the journey of becoming a champion in and out of the arena.

Guidelines

1. Eligibility

- a. The NYCHA Art Contest is open to youth members in good standing with the National Cutting Horse Association.
- b. Previous winners are eligible to enter the contest in subsequent year(s).

2. Entry Application

- a. There is no entry fee for the NYCHA Scholarship Art contest.
- b. One artwork submission per NCHA youth member.
- c. Artwork will not be returned.
- d. Artwork must be the NCHA Youth ~~members~~members' own work and have been drawn, painted, sculpted or otherwise created within the last year.
- e. When submitting your artwork, please include a sheet of paper with the following:

- i. NCHA Youth Members Name
- ii. NCHA Membership Number
- iii. Age and date of birth
- iv. Title of your art piece

Name
1234567
16, 1/22/2007
Artwork Title

- ii. The winning artists will be credited and recognized in the media or promotional materials where their artwork may appear.
- f. Artwork will be judged on creativity and originality.
- g. The NYCHA Artwork Scholarship contest will be evaluated by a qualified judge with no NCHA affiliation.
- h. By entering the contest, you agree to grant the National Cutting Horse Association, and its partners, the use, reproduction, and ownership of the artwork submitted to the National Cutting Horse Association.

3. Notification of Contest Winner

- a. A list of contest winners will be posted to the NYCHA social media accounts once judges scoring is final. Winners will be recognized at the NYCHA Banquet.

4. Awarded Scholarships

- a. Scholarships will be held under the students' name with the NCHA Foundation until the student is ready to utilize their available scholarship funds. All scholarship payment requests must be made via the on-line portal, located under the "Scholarship" tab of the NCHA Foundation web page. All scholarship payouts will be made directly to the educational institution of choice.
- b. Students have until their 25th birthday to utilize scholarship funds.
- c. For questions or assistance accessing scholarship funds, contact – scholarships@nchafoundation.org



NYCHA Speech Contest

Public Speaking Contest – Scholarship Payout

1st Place Senior Champion - \$1,000.00

2nd Place Senior Reserve Champion - \$500.00

3rd Place Senior Division - \$200.00

1st Place Junior Champion - \$1,000.00

2nd Place Junior Reserve Champion - \$500.00

3rd Place Junior Division - \$200.00

Speech Topic: Gold Buckle Dreams

In Cutting, success is measured by more than scores and buckles—it's measured by character.

As a youth member, you represent the future of the sport. Use your speech to explain what your Gold Buckle Dream is and what it truly means to be a champion in and out of the arena. How has Cutting shaped your values, leadership, and responsibility? Share how you plan to carry these lessons forward and inspire others through your actions as you continue to chase your dreams.

Guidelines

1. Eligibility
 - a. The Public Speaking Contest is open to NYCHA members 18 years of age and under.
 - i. Junior Division: participants must be 13 years of age or under as of June 1, 2025.
 - ii. Senior Division: participants must be 14 to 18 years of age as of June 1, 2025.
 - b. The NYCHA Art Contest is open to youth members in good standing with the National Cutting Horse Association.
 - c. Previous winners are eligible to enter the contest in subsequent year(s).
2. Entry Application
 - a. The entry application for the Public Speaking Contest is available online at www.nycha.us.
 - b. Entries are due by midnight on July 1, 2026.
 - c. Please include your name, NCHA member number, age, date of birth, and phone number on the top right-hand corner of your speech.
 - d. **In addition to your online entry form, a copy of your speech must be submitted to NCHA Foundation Executive Director, Julia Buswold, by midnight on July 1, 2026. Please email a copy of your speech to jbuswold@nchacutting.com.**
 - e. **No late entries or speeches will be accepted.**
3. Contest Format
 - a. The Public Speaking Contest will be conducted in person.
 - b. Speeches will be evaluated and scored by a panel of judges.
 - i. There will be a brief question and answer session with the judges following your speech.
 - c. Contestants will be judged on the following:
 - i. **Time** - Ability to deliver their speech within the allotted time (2 ½ - 3



- minutes). Time penalties will be assessed in the form of one point deducted for every 10 seconds over or under the time allowed.
- ii. **Content** - Does your speech follow and answer the prompt?
 - iii. **Audibility** - Is the voice expressive? Was the speaker natural, conversational, and sincere? Did the speech flow smoothly with no unnecessary pauses?
 - iv. **Presentation** – Ability to maintain composure and deliver your speech to the judges. Were the speaker’s main talking points easy to follow? Do they have good eye contact? Are gestures natural, and do they contribute to the talk? Did the speaker use correct grammar and vocabulary? Overall quality of presentation and answers.
- d. Contestants will be placed in a randomly drawn speaking order, within their age group, and will be evaluated and ranked by the judges.
 - e. Only the contestant, judges, and timekeeper will be allowed in the contest room.
 - f. A brief question-and-answer period will follow each speech.
 - g. The question-and-answer portion is not included in the time allowed for the speech.
4. Notification of Contest Winner
 - a. A list of contest winners will be posted to the NYCHA social media accounts once judges' scoring is final. Winners will be recognized at the NYCHA Banquet.
 5. Dress Attire
 - a. Contestants should wear presentable clothing. Business attire or Official NYCHA attire is recommended. Example – clean jeans or slacks, button down or blouse, groomed hair.
 6. Presentation Time
 - a. Each speech shall be a minimum of two and a half (2 ½) minutes in length and a maximum of three (3) minutes. Time point deductions will apply as follows:
 - b. Under two and a half minutes - one point per ten seconds
 - c. Over three minutes - one point per ten seconds
 7. Props
 - a. The use of pets, signs, electronics, objects, or props of any kind are prohibited. Any violation of this rule will result in contestant disqualification.
 8. Speech Topic
 - a. Each contestant will enter a single speech. The contestant’s speech must clearly address the given topic and make it clear to the judges.
 9. Tie Break
 - a. In the event of a tie, the judges will meet to review their notes and decide on a clear order of place. The ruling of the judges is final.
 10. Awarded Scholarships
 - a. Scholarships will be held under the students’ name with the NCHA Foundation until the student is ready to utilize their available scholarship funds. All scholarship payment requests must be made via the online portal, located under the "Scholarship" tab of the NCHA Foundation web page. All scholarship payouts will be made directly to the educational institution of choice.
 - b. Students have until their 25th birthday to utilize scholarship funds.
 - c. For questions or assistance accessing scholarship funds, contact –



scholarships@nchafoundation.org

****All entries are the property of NYCHA and will not be returned. All entries may be used for media/promotional purposes.

****All contestants not meeting the above guidelines will be disqualified.

****NYCHA is not responsible for damage to photos or artwork during shipping. Please package accordingly to ensure the safe arrival of your entry. Should an entry arrive damaged, the contestant will be notified.

All photos, artwork, and accompanying cover sheets must be postmarked by July 1, 2026, and mailed to:

National Youth Cutting Horse Association
Attn: Rianna Storey, NCHA Youth Director
Contest: NYCHA Out of the Arena Scholarships
260 Bailey Avenue,
Fort Worth, TX 76107

