



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 31, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

Thane Phelan Director of Marketing,
Communications, and Creative Services
Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance
319.730.1402 (direct)
tphelan@cedarrapids.org

National Civics Bee Returns to Eastern Iowa in 2027

Middle school students compete for \$100K and chance to advance to national championship in Washington D.C.

CEDAR RAPIDS — The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance Foundation will host the 2nd Regional Civics Bee® in spring 2027, inviting middle school students throughout Eastern Iowa to demonstrate their knowledge of civics and share their ideas for making their communities better.

The National Civics Bee®, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, challenges students in grades 6-8 to think critically about their communities, develop solutions to local challenges and strengthen their civic knowledge. Students begin by submitting an essay, with selected finalists advancing to live regional and state competitions. Students compete for cash, prizes and recognition, including a \$100,000 contribution to a 529 Education Savings Account for the 2027 National Champion.

The 2027 regional competition follows a successful inaugural Bee in 2026, when 37 students from five counties and 11 schools participated. Seventeen students advanced to the live regional competition held at the Indian Creek Nature Center in May, with the top three earning the opportunity to compete at the Iowa State Competition in Des Moines.

Cedar Rapids' regional first-place winner went on to achieve an impressive second-place finish in the state competition. The Iowa state champion, an 8th-grade student from the Sioux City area, will compete in the 2026 National Civics Bee® in Washington, D.C., later this fall. The event will be live-streamed, allowing students, educators and community members across Iowa to see the competition in action and cheer on Iowa's representative.

"We saw firsthand last year how much talent, curiosity and civic-mindedness our young people have," said Barbra Solberg, Senior Vice President of Public Policy & Partnerships for the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance. "The Civics Bee gives students an opportunity to take what they're learning in the classroom and apply it to real issues in their own communities. We're excited to see even more students participate in 2027."

The winner of the Iowa State Civics Bee will have the opportunity to compete at the National Championship in Washington, D.C., in fall 2027.



The application period for the 2027 National Civics Bee opens September 7, 2026, and closes February 2, 2027. The regional live competition will take place in spring 2027, with the date and location to be announced.

“Educators, school administrators, parents, youth organizations, community leaders and others who work with middle school students can play an important role in helping us get the word out about the National Civics Bee®,” said Solberg. “The resources make it easy to incorporate the Bee into classroom and youth programming while giving students an opportunity to connect what they’re learning to real-world issues, develop their own ideas and think about how they can make a positive difference in their communities.”

Resources are available to help students and educators participate: <https://www.cedarrapids.org/public-policy/national-civics-bee/>.

For more information about the Cedar Rapids Regional Civics Bee, contact Barbra Solberg at bsolberg@cedarrapids.org.

###

About Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance

The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance was formed in 2011 to drive economic growth for the region via economic development, public policy and regulatory support, and community development activities. Representing and supporting the Cedar Rapids Regional market the vision is to be the top economic region in the United States. For more, visit cedarrapids.org.