

FCCLA Member of the Year 2025-2026 Award Guidelines

The **FCCLA Member of the Year Award, presented by the U.S. Army**, is the highest honor an FCCLA Member can receive. This prestigious award recognizes an outstanding FCCLA Member who has demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities while embodying FCCLA's mission and the core values of the U.S. Army: **loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage**. These values lay the foundation for this award, which highlights members who have made a transformative impact within their FCCLA Chapters, schools, and communities. Each candidate for this award represents the future of leadership, exemplifying both dedication to FCCLA's goals and a commitment to positive influence through service and integrity.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **DECEMBER 17, 2025 (WEDNESDAY)** - Application Opens (Application Period – 66 Days)
- **FEBRUARY 20, 2026 (FRIDAY)** - Application Closes at 11:59 PM Eastern Time
- **FEBRUARY 23 – MARCH 6, 2026** - Round 1 Evaluations
- **MARCH 9, 2026 (MONDAY)** - Top 15 Semi-Finalists Notified & Provided Semi-Finalist Interview Time
- **MARCH 13, 2026 (FRIDAY)** – Top 15 Semi-Finalists Must Respond & Confirm Acceptance of Interview Time (By Noon ET)
- **MARCH 17, 2026 (TUESDAY)** – Top 15 Semi-Finalists Announced Publicly
- **MARCH 18, MARCH 19, AND MARCH 20, 2026** - Top 15 Semi-Finalist Interviews
- **APRIL 16, 2026 (THURSDAY)** - Top 5 Finalists Announced
- **JULY 6-10, 2026** - National Leadership Conference in Washington, DC; Member of the Year announced live during a general session.

AWARD:

- **TOP 5 FINALISTS:** Each of the top five (5) finalists will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and will be recognized on stage during a general session at the 2026 National Leadership Conference in Washington, DC>
- **MEMBER OF THE YEAR:** One finalist will be announced as the FCCLA Member of the Year live at the conference and will receive an additional \$2,000, totaling \$3,000 in prize money.

DEADLINE:

- **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** All applications must be submitted by the student member applying for the award through the official form on the FCCLA Website by Friday, February 20, 2026, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- **FCCLA WEBSITE PAGE:** <https://fcclainc.org/lead/awards/member-awards>

ELIGIBILITY:

- **FCCLA MEMBERSHIP:** Applicants must be nationally affiliated FCCLA Members for the 2025-2026 school year.
- **ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS:** To ensure fairness in applications, the following FCCLA Members are **not eligible to apply**.
 - FCCLA Members currently serving on the FCCLA Board of Directors
 - FCCLA Members currently serving on the Competitive Events Advisory Team
 - FCCLA Members who are currently, or who have previously served as a National Officer
 - If a student was previously a national officer candidate, but was **not elected to office**, they **are eligible to apply**.
 - FCCLA Members who will/are/or intend to be a National Officer Candidate for the 2025-2026 year.
- **OFFICER POSITION:** Applicants are **not required** to have held an FCCLA officer position (at any level) to be eligible for this award.

REQUIREMENTS

- **SEMI-FINALIST INTERVIEW:** Should applicants advance to the top 15, they must be available for the three (3) designated interview dates outlined in the Important Dates section (**March 18, March 19, and March 20, 2026**). FCCLA will provide each semi-finalist with their specific interview date and time; all interviews will occur between **1:00 PM and 5:00 PM Eastern Time** on the two dates listed. **Under no circumstances may a candidate request a specific date or time, nor request an alternative interview date.**
- **NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE:** Applicants must intend to attend the 2026 National Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. Attendance is required if selected as one of the top five finalists, as the Member of the Year will be announced live on stage during a general session. FCCLA does not cover any costs associated with traveling to or attending the conference. Finalists are responsible for their travel and accommodation expenses.

APPLICATION

- **CORE VALUES:** Applicants must be able to demonstrate the U.S. Army's core values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage through their activities and contributions.
- **CONTRIBUTION PERIOD:** This award will specifically recognize contributions made between August 1, 2024, and the date of application submission. **Any activities or contributions completed before August 1, 2024, will not be considered**, as the focus is on recent achievements within the current (2025-2026) and prior (2024-2025) FCCLA affiliation years.
- **DOCUMENTATION OF DATES:** Applicants must provide specific dates for all activities, projects, or contributions to ensure clarity on when each achievement occurred within the eligible period.
- **APPLICATION SUBMISSION:** All applications must be submitted through the official form on the FCCLA Website. Detailed information about the applicant must be entered directly into the text boxes provided within the application form. Links to outside documents will not be reviewed. Any required fields left blank may result in disqualification.
- **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:** Applicants are required to upload three (3) letters of recommendation with their application. Each letter must provide specific examples of how the nominee embodies the U.S. Army's core values and has made significant contributions to FCCLA. Each recommendation letter must be no longer than one (1) page; if multiple pages are submitted, only the first page will be considered.
 - One (1) letter from the nominee's chapter adviser
 - One (1) letter from the nominee's school principal
 - One (1) letter from the nominee's state adviser or another school administrator*

**Note: Because school administrator titles can vary by school, this may include, but is not limited to, a counselor, assistant principal, CTE director, or school board member. The school principal has the final say in who can qualify as a school administrator.*

EVALUATION:

- **APPLICATION REVIEW:** Applicants will be evaluated on their submitted application materials based on the rubric provided below, which assesses their alignment with the U.S. Army's core values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Additionally, applicants will be assessed on the impact and significance of their contributions to FCCLA and their communities.
- **SELECTION OF SEMI-FINALISTS:** Based on application scores, the evaluation committee will identify the top 15 applicants who will advance to the semi-finalist interviews. These semi-finalists will be notified of their advancement and provided with specific details regarding the interview process.
- **INTERVIEW ROUND:** During the interview round, semi-finalists will be further evaluated on their ability to communicate their achievements, their commitment to FCCLA's mission, and their embodiment of the Army's core values. This round allows applicants to elaborate on their contributions and demonstrate their leadership and impact.
- **FINAL SELECTION:** Following the interview round, the evaluation committee will select the top five (5) finalists who will receive national recognition on stage at the 2026 National Leadership Conference, where the winner will be announced.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES & DISCLAIMERS

- **EVALUATOR DECISIONS:** All decisions made by the award evaluators are final, and feedback on individual applications will not be provided.
- **RESUBMISSION POLICY:** Once submitted, applications cannot be edited or resubmitted. Ensure all materials, including recommendation letters, are final before submission.
- **RUBRIC EVALUATION FOCUS AREAS:** The evaluation rubric will review each applicant on key criteria including alignment with the U.S. Army core values, depth of FCCLA impact, leadership demonstrated, and commitment to community service.
- **TAX AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:** Due to federal nonprofit finance regulations, finalists are required to submit a W-9 form to FCCLA prior to receiving any cash prizes. This is necessary for compliance with IRS regulations for awards above certain thresholds, as FCCLA must report prize earnings as income. The W-9 form will be used solely for tax documentation purposes in accordance with nonprofit guidelines.
- **PRIZE DISTRIBUTION:** Cash prizes will be distributed to each finalist following the National Leadership Conference and upon successful completion of the required documentation. Finalists should be aware that prize amounts may be subject to applicable federal or state income taxes. It is the responsibility of each finalist to consult a tax advisor regarding any tax obligations associated with prize earnings.

FCCLA Member of the Year 2025-2026 Evaluation Rubric

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WRITTEN ESSAY (0-75 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, evaluators will look for the breadth and depth of the applicant's contributions within FCCLA. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants who demonstrate significant roles, impactful projects, or meaningful changes in their chapter, school, or community. Evaluators will focus on how the applicant's involvement has positively influenced FCCLA and their commitment to its mission, prioritizing clear, tangible outcomes and sustained dedication.

CRITERIA	0-5 POINTS	6-10 POINTS	11-15 POINTS	16-20 POINTS	21-25 POINTS
Leadership and Initiative	Minimal leadership demonstrated; no measurable outcomes or impact.	Basic involvement with some initiative; limited impact or influence.	Moderate leadership demonstrated with specific roles; moderate impact on FCCLA activities or members.	Strong leadership evident through specific initiatives; significant positive impact on chapter or school.	Exceptional leadership demonstrated; substantial and lasting impact on FCCLA, with measurable outcomes.
Community and Member Impact	Little or no evidence of positive impact on community or members.	Basic involvement with minimal impact on chapter or community.	Moderate impact through service or mentorship; some positive change evident.	Significant impact on chapter, school, or community with documented positive outcomes.	Outstanding contributions that greatly benefited chapter, school, or community; demonstrated significant positive change.
Advocacy and Representation	Little or no evidence of advocacy or promotion of FCCLA's mission.	Limited promotion of FCCLA's values; minimal engagement with peers or community.	Moderate advocacy; some evidence of promoting FCCLA and engaging others.	Strong advocacy efforts that effectively represent FCCLA's values and mission; encouraged active involvement of peers or community.	Exceptional promotion of FCCLA's mission; highly impactful advocacy that fostered widespread awareness and engagement.

VIDEO ESSAY (0-75 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, evaluators will look for the applicant's ability to communicate values, character, and commitment to FCCLA's mission effectively. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants who articulate their ideas clearly, speak confidently, and engage viewers in their responses. Evaluators will consider both clarity and authenticity, awarding higher scores to applicants who convey a strong alignment with FCCLA's core values and approach to leadership, service, and overcoming challenges.

CRITERIA	0-5 POINTS	6-10 POINTS	11-15 POINTS	16-20 POINTS	21-25 POINTS
Loyalty and Duty	Little or no evidence of loyalty or duty to FCCLA.	Basic dedication demonstrated; minimal examples provided.	Moderate dedication shown with specific examples of prioritizing FCCLA's needs.	Strong sense of loyalty and duty; significant examples of prioritizing FCCLA and supporting others.	Exceptional dedication and loyalty; consistently prioritized FCCLA's mission and needs of members.
Selfless Service and Respect	Little or no evidence of selfless service or respect toward others.	Basic selfless service with limited respect shown; minimal impact.	Moderate selfless service demonstrated; respect for others evident in examples provided.	Strong example of selfless service and respect; significant positive impact on chapter or community.	Exceptional selfless service with profound respect for others; highly positive influence on chapter or community.
Integrity and Personal Courage	Little or no evidence of integrity or courage in handling challenges.	Basic integrity shown; limited courage demonstrated in examples.	Moderate integrity and courage evident in handling challenges; positive outcomes.	Strong integrity and courage shown in addressing challenges; inspired others.	Exceptional integrity and personal courage; handled difficult situations with inspiring strength and positive outcomes.

FCCLA Member of the Year 2025-2026 Evaluation Rubric

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AWARDS AND RECOGNITION (0-30 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, evaluators will look for the applicant's level of recognition and leadership within FCCLA and the broader community. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants with a range of notable achievements, awards, and honors that demonstrate commitment to FCCLA, school, or community service. Evaluators will prioritize achievements that showcase the applicant's dedication, influence, and positive impact.

CRITERIA	0-2 POINTS	3-5 POINTS	6-7 POINTS	8-9 POINTS	10 POINTS
Awards	Little or no awards listed; minimal or no relevance to FCCLA or community.	Limited awards with some relevance; minor achievements.	Moderate awards that demonstrate commitment to FCCLA or community, showing growth and involvement.	Strong awards with clear relevance and impact within FCCLA or the community.	Exceptional awards that highlight dedication and outstanding achievements; highly recognized and impactful.
Leadership Positions	Little or no leadership positions held within FCCLA or related activities.	Basic leadership roles with minimal impact or limited responsibilities.	Moderate leadership roles demonstrating commitment and some influence in FCCLA or community.	Significant leadership roles with meaningful responsibilities and positive impact on FCCLA or community.	Exceptional leadership roles with high responsibilities; demonstrated impactful leadership with widespread influence.
Honors	Little or no honors or recognitions listed; minimal impact.	Limited honors or recognitions with basic significance.	Moderate honors that show commitment to FCCLA, school, or community with some impact.	Strong honors or recognitions indicating commitment and positive influence on FCCLA or community.	Highly prestigious honors with significant impact; widely recognized and respected achievements.

OVERALL APPLICATION (0-20 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, evaluators will look for the overall quality and professionalism of the application, including clear and organized writing, professional tone, and effective communication in video essays. Higher scores will be awarded to applicants who submit polished, cohesive applications that demonstrate attention to detail, professionalism, and strong communication skills. Evaluators will also assess creativity and innovation, community engagement, and evidence of growth and development through FCCLA experiences.

CRITERIA	0-1 POINTS	2 POINTS	3 POINTS	4 POINTS	5 POINTS
Writing and Professionalism	Writing lacks clarity, has numerous errors, or shows minimal attention to detail; lacks professionalism.	Basic clarity but with frequent errors or inconsistencies in professionalism.	Generally clear with minor errors; professional tone but some areas could be polished.	Very clear and well-organized with few errors; highly professional throughout.	Exceptionally clear, concise, and professional writing with minimal errors; polished and cohesive.
Communication and Clarity in Video Essays	Video essays are difficult to understand; lack of confidence or clarity in communication.	Basic communication skills evident but lacks polish or engagement.	Good clarity and confidence; ideas are conveyed effectively with minor hesitations.	Very clear and confident communication; applicant engages the viewer and presents ideas effectively.	Exceptional communication; applicant speaks confidently, clearly, and with strong engagement and impact.
Creativity, Innovation, and Impact	Little or no original thinking or community impact; minimal unique contributions.	Basic creativity or limited impact beyond FCCLA; ideas lack significant engagement.	Moderate creativity with examples of new ideas that benefited FCCLA or the community.	Strong creativity with meaningful improvements or community impact, showing innovation.	Exceptional creativity and innovation; ideas significantly enhanced FCCLA programs or community, leaving lasting impact.
Growth and Development	Minimal evidence of personal growth or skill development within FCCLA.	Basic self-awareness or limited growth; minor skill improvement.	Moderate growth in key areas like resilience or leadership with some skill development.	Strong evidence of personal growth, showing self-improvement and adaptability.	Exceptional personal growth and skill development, demonstrating resilience and self-awareness.

FCCLA Member of the Year 2025-2026 Application Questions

To help you best prepare to submit your nomination for the **FCCLA Member of the Year Award**, presented by the U.S. Army, be sure to carefully read and reference the evaluation rubric when compiling your application. The information below outlines the content and materials you should gather and submit to complete your application.

Please note: All content in this application must reflect activities, achievements, and contributions from **August 1, 2024, to the present**.

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

- Full Name
- Member ID Number
- Contact Information (Email, Phone Number)
- Parent/Guardian Name
- Partner/Guardian Contact Information (Email, Phone Number)

2. CHAPTER INFORMATION

- Chapter ID Number
- Chapter Name
- State Affiliation
- Chapter Adviser Name
- Chapter Adviser Contact Information (Email, Phone Number)
- Principal Name
- Principal Contact Information (Email, Phone Number)

3. WRITTEN ESSAY (0-75 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, applicants will provide a comprehensive essay that reflects their FCCLA contributions, focusing on leadership roles, initiatives, projects, and advocacy efforts that demonstrate their influence and commitment. This section evaluates the breadth and depth of the applicant's involvement, the measurable outcomes of their actions within FCCLA, and the values they have developed through these experiences that align with the U.S. Army's core values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. The purpose is to highlight the impact applicants have made through their work, showcasing their dedication to advancing FCCLA's mission, positively influencing others, and embodying these core values.

Note: Responses must focus solely on contributions and impact made from August 1, 2024, to the present. To ensure fairness, applicants are not permitted to mention involvement prior to August 1, 2024, in their responses. When mentioning involvement or events that took place during the permitted time frame, applicants must include the month and year that the event occurred.

The essay response must be submitted as a single PDF document using the following required format:

- **Margins:** 1-inch on all sides
- **Font:** Times New Roman
- **Font Size:** 12-point
- **Spacing:** Single-spaced
- **Length:** Maximum of 2 pages

Applicants must address the following areas within their essay:

- **Leadership and Initiative:** Describe specific instances where you demonstrated leadership or took initiative within FCCLA, showcasing the development of values such as duty, honor, or personal courage. Highlight roles or projects where you made a meaningful difference, such as starting impactful projects, leading a team, or guiding chapter activities. Emphasis should be on measurable outcomes or lasting impact, such as growth in member engagement, successful events, or improvements in chapter activities.
- **Community and Member Impact:** Provide examples of how your involvement in FCCLA has benefited your chapter, school, or community, focusing on how values such as respect, selfless service, and integrity were demonstrated. Include organizing events, participating in service projects, or mentoring members. Focus on the results and positive changes your contributions brought about, like strengthened relationships, community recognition, or enhanced chapter presence.
- **Advocacy and Representation:** Describe how you represented FCCLA values and mission to others, aligning with Army values such as loyalty and respect. Examples may include promoting FCCLA's goals, advocating for relevant causes, or encouraging involvement in FCCLA events. Emphasis should be on fostering awareness or engagement with FCCLA among peers and community members.

4. VIDEO ESSAY (0-75 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, applicants will showcase their personal qualities and character traits as they relate to the U.S. Army's core values. While the Written Essay section focuses on the outcomes of applicants' actions, the Video Essay emphasizes personal qualities—such as loyalty, respect, integrity, and courage—that applicants bring to FCCLA and how these values guide their approach to challenges, service, and leadership.

Note: Responses must reflect activities and contributions from August 1, 2024, to the present. To ensure fairness, applicants are not permitted to mention involvement prior to August 1, 2024, in their responses. When mentioning involvement or events that took place during the permitted time frame, applicants must include the month and year that the event occurred.

Applicants must submit a single video response with the following requirements:

- **Length:** Maximum of 2 minutes (120 seconds)
- **Orientation:** Recorded horizontally
- **Format:** Uploaded as an original file (links to YouTube or other video platforms are not permitted)
- **Editing:** No edits or effects may be added to the video

For more details and tips, applicants are encouraged to review the video recording resource available on the FCCLA Website.

Applicants must address the following areas within the video:

- **Loyalty and Duty:** Describe how commitment to FCCLA has influenced your dedication to serving your chapter and community. Share a specific example that highlights your loyalty and sense of duty, showing how you prioritize the needs of your chapter or support others.
- **Selfless Service and Respect:** Describe an instance where you engaged in selfless service, focusing on how you demonstrated respect for others in your chapter or community during this experience.
- **Integrity and Personal Courage:** Share a challenge you encountered within FCCLA or your school and describe how you approached it with integrity and personal courage, highlighting the character traits you demonstrated.

5. AWARDS AND RECOGNITION (0-30 POINTS POSSIBLE)

In this section, applicants will list any awards, honors, leadership positions, or recognition they have received within FCCLA or in other academic or community capacities. Responses must include the date of each award, the awarding organization, and a brief description of the honor or role.

Note: Responses must reflect awards, leadership positions held, or recognition from August 1, 2024, to the present. To ensure fairness, applicants are not permitted to mention involvement prior to August 1, 2024, in their responses. When mentioning involvement or events that took place during the permitted time frame, applicants must include the month and year that the event occurred.

6. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Upload three (3) one-page letters of recommendation. Each letter must provide insight into your alignment with the Army's core values and your contributions to FCCLA. **Each letter must be no longer than one (1) page; if multiple pages are submitted, only the first page will be reviewed.**

- One (1) letter from the applicant's Chapter Adviser
- One (1) letter from the applicant's School Principal
- One (1) letter from the applicant's State Adviser OR another School Administrator

7. APPLICANT HEADSHOT

Applicants must provide a high-quality headshot wearing the FCCLA official red blazer for marketing and promotional purposes. Please ensure that any lapel pins or name badges are removed from the blazer. The headshot should feature the applicant in a professional white or black shirt. Acceptable neckwear options include neckwear from the official emblematic supplier, a black or red tie, a black or red bow tie, a single strand of pearls, a red, black, and/or white scarf, or no neckwear. Headshots must be taken against a solid, neutral-colored backdrop.