

2026 NHD® National Contest Registration Instructions



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Important Dates

Registration Opens: 12:00 p.m. ET on Wednesday, April 15

Registration Closes: 11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday, May 19

Project Deadlines:

ALL Categories: 11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday, May 19

Websites will be locked from editing at this time and will be unlocked at 12:01 a.m. ET on Friday, June 19.

**Shipping Items to Contest:
June 8-13, 2026**

Due to NHD Office:

Checks and Purchase Orders (if applicable): Friday, May 29



BEFORE YOU BEGIN REGISTRATION:

Carefully read all registration instructions and make sure you have all the required information ready. This will make the registration process quick and easy.



Preparing to Register

Who MUST Complete Registration:

✓ **Teachers of competing students**

Please note: Teachers are **not required** to attend the National Contest, but **must register if students are attending**. Registering will enable teachers to review evaluations following the National Contest. Only teachers attending the contest must pay the teacher registration fee.

✓ **Competing students, accompanied by their parents or guardians**

Please note: **ALL** students in a group entry must register and pay registration fees for an entry to be evaluated.

**REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE AT
11:59 p.m. ET ON TUESDAY, MAY 19,
2026.**

Registration Fees:

Students - \$165

Teachers - \$65

Before you register, please have the following information handy:

ALL registrants:

- ✓ Phone Number
- ✓ Mailing Address
- ✓ Email Address

Students must provide these additional items:

- ✓ Chaperone Name
- ✓ Teacher Name and School
- ✓ Entry Category, Division, Title
- ✓ Description of Entry
- ✓ Medical Information (prescriptions, doctor contact information, etc.)
- ✓ Medical Insurance Policy Number
- ✓ Credit Card Number (if applicable)



Registration FAQs

When Can I Register?

You will be able to register for the National Contest soon after the completion of your affiliate contest. You will receive an email from zFairs.com notifying you when registration is open for you. **Keep an eye on your spam folder.** If you have not received any notification several business days after your contest, please contact your affiliate coordinator. You can find your coordinator's contact information on the NHD website: NHD.Org/Affiliate.

What If I Cannot Attend?

Please contact your affiliate coordinator ASAP. There will not be any virtual judging components. All judging will take place in-person.

Why Do You Need Parent/Guardian Information?

Parents/guardians must assist you in completing the account creation and registration process. This includes agreeing to several waivers and authorizations within the system. You must provide contact information for at least one parent/guardian during the registration process, **even if your parent is not attending** the contest. If attending, parents and family members are able to sign up for on-campus housing with you during the registration process. Parents **should not** create a separate account.

Why Do I Need Chaperone Information?

All students must indicate a chaperone (name, email, and phone number) during the registration process. This chaperone is not required to be a parent/guardian. For instance, a teacher may be listed as a chaperone for a student. Chaperones are responsible for the behavior of their student(s) while at the University of Maryland.

Why is Medical Information Required?

Every student registering for the National Contest must complete this information, regardless of whether they are staying on campus or not. The information retained in this form is shared only with, and is required by, the University of Maryland Health Center to facilitate emergency medical treatment. Requested information includes medical conditions, medications, your doctor's name, and medical insurance. It is strongly recommended that you have this information ready before you begin the registration process. A parent/guardian must agree to the authorizations.

What are the On-Campus Housing and Meal Packages?

Staying on campus has many advantages, including close proximity to NHD events. If you plan on staying at the University of Maryland, you can sign up for a room and meal package within registration. **You are encouraged to purchase on-campus housing before the registration deadline.** View the options at NHD.Org/National-Contest. **To purchase housing and/or meal packages, in the Store, select the specific housing/meal package, complete all required fields, and click Add to Cart.** Parents and family members are able to sign up for on-campus housing/meal packages with you during the registration process. Parents **should not** create a separate account.



Registration FAQs

Can I Request a Roommate?

Yes! If you choose to include an on-campus housing package during registration, the system will guide you to add **one** roommate. This is where you can specify the name of your preferred roommate. Parents can also be listed as roommates for students. Feel free to reach out with any roommate-related questions by emailing NHDhousing@umd.edu.

Are There Hotel Options?

Yes. You can find a list of NHD's preferred hotels at [NHD.Org/National-Contest](https://www.nhd.org/National-Contest). If you choose to stay in a hotel, you can still purchase an on-campus meal plan.

How Do I Ship Items to the National Contest?

If you plan to ship items, you must purchase one NHD handling label per package during registration. These labels will be generated with the name and address you provide. Once you pay for your label(s), you will see the button **Print Handling Labels** in your **Store > Order History**. From there, click the **Print Handling Label** button to download and print your labels. This is only a handling and storage fee. You are still responsible for arranging and paying for the shipment of your exhibit, equipment, or props to and from the National Contest. You may mail the packages between June 14-18, 2026. For ease in finding your package(s) in our large storage room, consider marking the box(es) with colorful words like the name of your affiliate. You can find more information about the shipping process at

[NHD.Org/National-Contest](https://www.nhd.org/National-Contest).

How Do I Nominate My Entry for a Special Award?

Several organizations sponsor prizes awarded to the entry that best exemplifies specific prize criteria. Special prizes are topic-specific. To see if your entry is eligible, browse the list on the NHD website, [NHD.Org/Special-Prizes](https://www.nhd.org/Special-Prizes). To nominate your entry, you can either do it during the registration process or after. If after, log back into your account, go to **View & Edit Profile**. Then click the **Special Awards Nominations** tab. Find the special awards that interest you and click the **Nominate** button below the award. You may nominate your entry for **up to two awards only**. In the nomination, please include a short statement about how your project meets the prize criteria and why it should be considered.

How Do I Receive Emails from the Registration System?

You need to accept emails from [zFairs.com](https://www.zfairs.com) to receive the system's automatic email messages. If you do not receive a message, check your email spam folder. If you are using a school email address, check with your IT department to make sure you can receive outside messages and request that emails coming from [zfairs.com](https://www.zfairs.com) be approved to be received, or "whitelisted." If possible, please do not use a school email address.



Teacher Registration

Logging in to Your Teacher Account

Your teacher account from your affiliate contest has been promoted to the National Contest.

1. Go to National.NHD.Org.
2. Click **Login** and enter your regional/affiliate contest login credentials. ***DO NOT create a new account.*** If you forgot your username/password, click the **Help** button or contact it@nhd.org.
3. Read the welcome message, and click **Save and Continue**.
4. You will review the following pages in registration. Click **Save and Continue** after each section to move forward.
 - Personal Information
 - Teacher
 - Additional Questions
 - Permissions and Waivers
5. On the **Store** page, if you are attending the National Contest, please add the **Teacher Registration Fee** to your cart. Add any other items to your cart (if applicable). Choose your payment method—credit/debit card, check, or indicate if your school is covering it. If your school is covering registration fees, see **page 13** for further instructions. If your NHD Affiliate program is covering fees, follow their instructions for payment.
6. After you pay (or marked your payment option), you will see a registration confirmation screen. Keep an eye out for a confirmation email from zFairs. If you don't see it in your inbox, check your spam folder. If you used your school email, you might not get the email; that's okay. You can find all the info in the confirmation email on your **Teacher Home** page.
7. You can log back in any time before the Tuesday, May 19 deadline to edit any information or pay fees.
8. **Please note:** Your registration is considered complete once you complete your registration profile and pay your fees (if applicable).



Teacher Registration

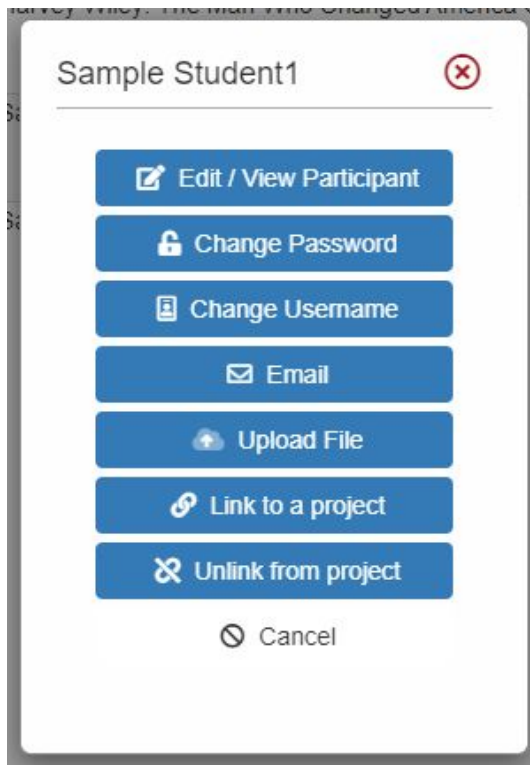
Logging Back In After Teacher Registration

Logging in to a Teacher Account (After Registering)

- Go to National.NHD.Org.
- Click **Login** under **Account Info**.
- Enter your username and password.
 - Forgot them? Click **Help** to reset. If you used a school email address, you may not receive the reset email. In that case, email it@nhd.org.

Editing Teacher Account Information

- After logging into your teacher account, click **View & Edit Profile** under **Important Links**.
- You can edit your personal information before registration closes on **May 19, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET**.
- If necessary, select **Change Password** to change the password for your account.



Checking Your Students' Registration Progress

- After logging in to your teacher account, click **My Participants** in the toolbar across the top of the page.
- This page lists each of your students. Click on a name to bring up a pop-up menu. You can **Edit/View Participant** profile (this includes uploading project PDFs or links), change **Password/Username, Link/Unlink** projects, and **Email Participants**.
- **Please note:** Checking student profiles can only be done **before** contest registration closes on **May 19, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET**.

Teacher Registration

Registration Symbol Key

Within the **My Participants** section, each student's entry is accompanied by a set of icons for quick reference:



- **Dollar Bill:** The color (red or green) indicates the payment status of the student's registration fee. Green signifies that the fee has been paid.
- **Map:** Hovering over the map will show you which affiliate the student is registered under.
- **Arrow:** This symbol appears only if the student has been promoted into the contest. Promotion occurs if the previous contest utilized zFairs and had advanced winners.
- **Conversation Bubble with Check Mark:** This icon indicates that the student has agreed to the necessary permissions and waivers during registration, a mandatory step.
- **Piece of Paper:** This symbol is present if the student's registration fee payment is associated with an invoice they or their teacher generated. If payment was made by credit card, this symbol will not appear.
- **No Team Members:** This text appears when a student registered as part of a group project but does not have other group members linked. In such cases, please reach out to registration@nhd.org to link students to their respective groups.

The three most important icons are the **dollar bill, conversation bubble, and piece of paper**. Students must have either a green dollar bill or piece of paper icon and the conversation bubble icon next to their name before registration closes.

Student Registration

Logging in to Your Student Account

Your student account from your affiliate contest has been promoted to the National Contest.

1. Go to National.NHD.Org.
2. Click **Login** under **Account Info** and enter your regional/affiliate contest login credentials. ***DO NOT create a new account.*** If you forgot your username/password, click the **Help** button or contact it@nhd.org.
3. Read the welcome message, click **Save and Continue**.
4. You will review the following pages in registration. Click **Save and Continue** after each section to move forward.
 - Personal Information
 - Additional Questions
 - School, Teacher, Grade Info
 - Entry Details
 - **Project submission:** Upload your project on this page. You can do it during registration or log back in later and upload an updated version before the registration deadline. See **page 15** for category submissions instructions.
 - Answer project-specific questions.
 - Review and nominate for up to **two** special prizes (or skip this now and do it later).
 - Complete permissions and waivers with a parent/guardian.
 - Fill out the Medical Waiver with a parent/guardian.
5. When you reach the **Payment** page, you'll find the **Student Registration Fee** in your cart. Add any other items to your cart (if applicable). Choose your payment method—credit/debit card, check, or indicate if your school is covering it. **Before making any payments, be sure to check with your teacher.** If your NHD Affiliate program is covering fees, follow their instructions for payment.
6. After you pay (or marked your payment option), you will see a confirmation screen. Your registration is now complete. Keep an eye out for a confirmation email from zFairs. If you don't see it in your inbox, check your spam folder. If you used your school email, you might not get the email; that's okay. You can find all the info in the confirmation email on your **Student Home** page.
7. You can log back in any time before the Tuesday, May 19 deadline to submit your project, nominate your project for special prizes, pay any fees, and complete your permissions and waivers (including the medical waiver).
8. **Please note:** Your registration is considered complete once you complete your registration profile, submit your project, pay your fees, and submit your permissions and waivers (including your medical waiver).



Student Registration

Updating Your Student Account

Logging In After Registration:

- Go to National.NHD.Org.
- Click **Login** under **Account Info**.
- Enter your username and password.
 - Forgot them? Click **Help** to reset. If you used a school email address, you may not receive the reset email. In that case, email it@nhd.org.

Editing Account and Project Info:

- After logging in, click **View & Edit Profile** under **Important Links**.
- Here you can edit personal, project, or registration details.
- You can log back in any time before the Tuesday, May 19 deadline to submit your project (**instructions on page 15**), nominate your project for special prizes, pay any fees, and complete your permissions and waivers (including the medical waiver).
- **Please note:** Your registration is considered complete once you complete your registration profile, submit your project, pay your fees, and submit your permissions and waivers (including your medical waiver).



Registration Fees

Student Registration Fees: \$165

Each student must pay a \$165 registration fee. Teachers can handle all student payments together. Confirm payment details with your teacher. If your NHD Affiliate program covers fees, follow their payment instructions.

If registration fees are not covered by your school or affiliate, use a credit card online or indicate you'll mail a check. **Please note:** The fee is per student, not per project. All group members must pay the registration fee for a project to be evaluated.

Late Fees:

If you do not complete the payment (either by credit/debit or create an invoice) before the Tuesday, May 19 deadline, you will face a \$50 late fee.

- On Wednesday, May 20 the late fee is \$50.
- On Thursday, May 21, the late fee increases to \$60.
- On Friday, May 22, the late fee increases to \$75.

If you need to complete your payment after the May 19 deadline, you must contact the NHD National Office. Contact information is on [page 16](#).

Teacher Registration Fees: \$65

Teachers attending the National Contest must pay a \$65 registration fee. **Please note:** Teachers are **not required** to attend the National Contest. This fee includes access to teacher resources, Monday night Teacher Social, Tuesday workshops, Smithsonian or White House Historical Association showcases, and other teacher activities.

A Note about Payments:

Individual fees cannot be split between multiple forms of payment (e.g., credit card and check). Each order must be paid in full by a single form of payment. For example, if your Student Registration Fees are being paid by a check from your school, the check must cover the full amount of your Student Registration Fees.



Registration Fees

Paying Registration Fees as a Teacher

For Teacher Registration Fees:

- Log in and go to the **Store** tab.
- Add **Teacher Registration Fee** (and anything else) to your cart.
- Click **Checkout and Pay**.
- If paying by credit card, choose **Pay Online**. Fill in the required details and click **Pay Now**.
- If paying by check, select **Generate Invoice**. Confirm accuracy, print the invoice, and present it to your school's finance office for a check. Mail the invoice and check as instructed to National History Day, 4511 Knox Road, Suite 205, College Park, MD 20740 by May 29, 2026.

For Student Registration Fees:

- Log in and go to the **Store** tab.
- If you want to add your teacher registration fee to the same order, add **Teacher Registration Fee** (and anything else) to your cart. If not, skip this step.
- Click on the **Students** tab next to **Order History**.
- Check the box next to the student(s) whose fees you are paying.
- Add fees to the cart.
- Click **Checkout and Pay**.
- If paying by credit card, select **Pay Online**. Fill in the required details and click **Pay Now**.
- If paying by check, select **Generate Invoice**. Confirm accuracy, print the invoice, and present it to your school's finance office for a check. Mail the invoice and check (made out to National History Day) as instructed to National History Day, 4511 Knox Road, Suite 205, College Park, MD 20740 by May 29, 2026.

Please Note: *If your NHD Affiliate covers fees, follow their payment instructions.*

Late Fees:

If you do not complete the payment (either by credit/debit or create an invoice) before the Tuesday, May 19 deadline, you will face a \$50 late fee.

- On Wednesday, May 20 the late fee is \$50.
- On Thursday, May 21, the late fee increases to \$60.
- On Friday, May 22, the late fee increases to \$75.

If you need to complete your payment after the May 19 deadline, you must contact the NHD National Office. Contact information is on **page 16**.



Registration Fees

Paying Registration Fees as a Student

Payment Options:

- Choose **Card** for credit card payment, **Check** for check payment, or **School** if your school covers the fee.
- **Reminder:** *Check with your teacher before proceeding. Credit card payments are preferred.*

Payment Methods:

- For credit/debit card payment, enter the information.
- For check payment, generate and print the invoice.

Submitting Payment:

If paying by check, mail the invoice and a check (made out to National History Day) to: National History Day, 4511 Knox Road, Suite 205, College Park, MD 20740 by May 29, 2026.

Accessing Records:

To view payment history or invoices, go to the **Store** tab, click **Order History**. Find records and pay an invoice by credit card by clicking **Order ID**, then the green **Pay Now** button.

Late Fees:

If you do not complete the payment (either by credit/debit or create an invoice) before the Tuesday, May 19 deadline, you will face a \$50 late fee.

- On Wednesday, May 20 the late fee is \$50.
- On Thursday, May 21, the late fee increases to \$60.
- On Friday, May 22, the late fee increases to \$75.

If you need to complete your payment after the May 19 deadline, you must contact the NHD National Office. Contact information is on **page 16**.



Category Submission

Documentary Category:

- In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials (title page, process paper, annotated bibliography).
- Upload an MP4 file of your documentary. This does not need to be a final version, but judges will have an opportunity to view your uploaded version before the contest.
- Need help? [Click here for submission assistance](#).
- **Reminder:** Only one student in a Group Project needs to submit the project PDF and MP4 file.

Exhibit Category:

- In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials (title page, process paper, annotated bibliography).
- Upload a single JPG image that shows your entire exhibit. This image is a backup, not a final project.
- Need help? [Click here for submission assistance](#).
- **Reminder:** Only one student in a Group Project needs to submit the Written Materials PDF.

Paper Category:

- In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Paper (title page, process paper, paper, annotated bibliography).
- Need help? [Click here for submission assistance](#).

Performance Category:

- In your registration profile, upload a single PDF with Written Materials (title page, process paper, annotated bibliography).
- Upload an MP4 file of your performance. This does not need to be a final version, this is a back up.
- Need help? [Click here for submission assistance](#).
- **Reminder:** Only one student in a Group Project needs to submit the Written Materials PDF and MP4 file.

Website Category:

- In your registration profile, insert your 8-digit NHDWebCentral® Site Key.
- Need help? [Click here for submission assistance](#).
- **Reminder:** Only one student in a Group Project needs to submit the project Site Key.



Contact Us

registration@nhd.org

For registration and contest questions

it@nhd.org

For technical support with project uploads into registration system

lorena@nhd.org

For payment and billing questions

nhdhousing@umd.edu

For housing, meal, and roommate questions

