

2018 Todd C. Smith Florida Student Journalist of the Year

Entries must be uploaded by Friday, Feb. 9

Submissions for FSPA's top student honor, the Todd C. Smith Florida Student Journalist of the Year award, will be accepted via the FSPA online contest platform. Once that system is live in mid-January, specific instructions for accessing the database will be posted and provided to advisers.

The contest is open to Florida students whose publications belong to FSPA. The first-place winner will receive \$1,000. Runner-up will receive \$600. The third-place winner will receive \$400. All three top finishers will be recognized at the FSPA convention banquet on Friday, April 13 at the Wyndham Orlando Resort. The Florida winner will compete against other state winners for the Journalism Education Association's national award. The winning student's adviser must be a member of JEA to compete at the national level. Multiple Florida winners have been national finalists in recent years.

The SJOY award is Category 72 on Florida's online contest platform. Entrants, using their publication's account on the platform, will need to submit the following items for consideration. Entries will be limited to one link and one attachment, so be sure to bundle portfolio materials together. You may want to place all public-facing documents (portfolio, action photo, resume) in one and private documents (transcripts, letters, etc.) in another. But you will be limited to **one link and one attachment**.

- A portfolio of work, either as a PDF attachment or weblink
(Most state and national winners in recent years have utilized websites)
- A self-analytical essay (see the published [rubric](#) for more info about essay expectations)
- A resume
- A transcript or counselor statement, including journalism classes taken, grades and current GPA
- An action photo of the applicant involved in some aspect of student media
- Up to three letters of recommendation

Feb. 9 at 11:59 p.m. is a firm deadline for this contest. No entries will be accepted after that time.

The [JEA website](#) provides a wealth of information about the SJOY award, including the same rubric Florida's judges will use, samples of past winners and tips to the applicants. NOTE: There is also an application on the JEA website. That is for the Florida winner to utilize later, so please do not complete it at this time.

As noted at JEA.org, work samples in the portfolio should be categorized using these 11 areas:

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| Design | Editing |
| Entrepreneurship | Law and Ethics |
| Leadership and Team Building | Multimedia Broadcast |
| News Gathering | News Literacy |
| Photojournalism | Web |
| Writing | |

The site also notes this: "The candidate's goal to impress the judges should be about quality, not quantity. They are encouraged to NOT try and find an example for every one of these categories IF they don't have examples for all of them. These are just the labels to attach to the work they are exhibiting to the judges."

All portfolios will be reviewed by a panel of evaluators, who will narrow the initial pool to select finalists. Those entries will then be reviewed by a broader group of out-of-state educators and professionals.

Questions about the SJOY process can be directed to

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