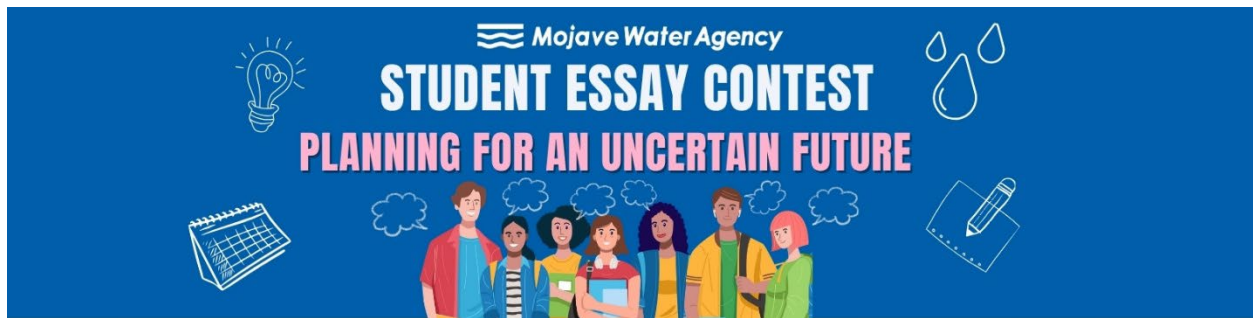




Planning For an Uncertain Future

Water managers make decisions today that will affect people who have not yet been born. In the Mojave Desert, population growth, prolonged drought, aging infrastructure, groundwater sustainability, imported water supplies, environmental stewardship, and changing technology all create uncertainty about our region's water future.

This year's essay theme is: **Planning for an Uncertain Future**

Essay Question:

If you were responsible for securing the Mojave Desert's water supply for the next 50 years, what would be your highest priorities, and why?

The Mojave Water Agency invites high school students in its service area to imagine themselves as leaders responsible for planning the region's long-term water future. Imagine you have been appointed **Director of Water Planning for the Mojave Desert**. What would your long-term strategy be?

Your essay should address:

- The biggest challenges facing the Mojave region over the next 50 years;
- The investments or policies that deserve the highest priority;
- How your plan balances environmental protection, economic development, and reliable water supplies; and
- Why your strategy prepares the region for future generations.

Think like a **planner and leader** rather than simply listing household water conservation tips. Consider the difficult choices, investments, policies, and tradeoffs that will be necessary to secure a reliable water supply for the Mojave Desert over the next 50 years.

Winning essays will demonstrate strong writing, creativity, a clear understanding of the Mojave region's water challenges, and thoughtful, innovative strategies that could realistically help shape the region's water future.

Three finalists will be selected to develop their essays into presentations that will be delivered live to a panel of judges.

Contest Rules:

1. Open to high school students living in the Mojave Water Agency boundaries enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private, or home school. (Past finalists are not eligible.)
2. All essays must be submitted via the Google Form by **4 p.m. on September 28, 2026**. Please submit in Word or PDF format. Make sure your name, contact information and school name are on the top of your essay.
3. The body of the completed essay must be between 550 and 900 words.
4. To participate, you **must** fill out an [online application](#) and submit your essay with a short video with your name, city/town, school, grade and what you learned while writing your essay. (Cell phone video is fine.)
5. The top three finalists will be assigned a community mentor/coach to polish their presentation for a verbal presentation tentatively scheduled on **Thursday, November 19** to a selection panel in front of a small audience, which may include family.
6. The essay contest winner must present the essay at the 2027 Innovators High Desert Water Summit in February. (Additional details to come.)
7. Essays will be judged on writing skill (quality, clarity, organizational structure and style), contextual knowledge about local water conservation, and the innovation and feasibility of the proposed solutions.
8. Use of artificial intelligence to produce essays is prohibited. All essays will be checked to ensure they are not a product of AI.
9. The winner will receive a scholarship of \$3,000, and the remaining two finalists will each receive a scholarship of \$1,000.
10. The top three finalists must agree to participate in a video produced by Mojave Water Agency.
11. All entries become the property of the Mojave Water Agency.

→[Click here to fill out the on-line application](#)←

Or visit: <https://forms.gle/cFsKN4JND41i6jMz8>

Or scan the QR code:

