

The Nebraska Latino-American Commission invites youth of Nebraska to participate in the 7th Annual Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest.

The Nebraska Latino-American Commission (NLAC), a statewide independent government agency serving as a link between the Nebraska State Government and the Latino community, is currently accepting essays in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, which is from Sept. 15 - Oct. 15, 2013.

With the theme, "How Latino Culture Strengthens My Community," students are asked to share their personal stories, opinions and experiences on how Latino culture has made their community a better place. Latino culture includes history, arts, traditions, ethics, and values. Their community includes their home, neighborhood, school, circle of friends and city. In the essay, they can write about an individual, a group of people, an event or an aspect of Latino culture that has changed their perspective and outlook.

Middle and high school students of all ethnicities and backgrounds are eligible to enter, and essays are welcome in English and Spanish. The essay must be original, typed or legibly handwritten in blue or black ink. Typed essays must be double spaced. The word length is 250 - 400 words for middle school students and 500 - 700 words for high school students. The Hispanic Heritage Month Committee reserves the right to disqualify submitted essays that contain offensive language, political messages, and derogatory statements.

All essay and entry forms are due by Sept. 18, 2013 at 5 p.m. and may be submitted by email, preferably as a PDF, to Jasel.Cantu@nebraska.gov, via fax at 402-471-4381 or mailed to Nebraska Latino American Commission, Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest, Attn: Jasel Cantu, PIO, P.O. Box 94965, Lincoln, NE 68509-4965

The top three winning essays in both middle school and high school categories will be recognized at the Hispanic Heritage Month State Commemoration presented by NLAC, Southeast Community College and Wells Fargo. The state commemoration will take place on Oct. 4, 2013 at the State Capitol in Lincoln, Nebraska. The six winners will be publicly recognized at the state commemoration ceremony held on the second floor rotunda. The first place winners will also be asked to read their winning essays.

The Nebraska Latino American Commission will publish all of the winning essays on its website, newsletter, Facebook and submit the winner's information and essays to online and print media. For printer-friendly guidelines and entry forms in both English and Spanish, visit our website: <http://www.latinoac.nebraska.gov/>

For additional information or questions, please call Jasel Cantu and (402) 471-2791 or email Jasel.Cantu@Nebraska.gov.