

Southern Area Poster Art Contest: *Nourish Every Neighbor*

2026-2027 Toolkit

THE ARTS FACET

IN COLLABORATION WITH NATIONAL TRENDS AND SERVICES
AND SERVICES TO YOUTH FACETS



Leading with
INTENTIONAL
Friendship AND Service



Introducing the

2026-2027 SOUTHERN AREA POSTER ART CONTEST

Nourish Every Neighbor

Where student creativity raises
awareness about food insecurity.



ALIGNED WITH
NATIONAL CTA
CREATIVE
COMPETITIONS



LED BY
THE ARTS FACET

FISCAL YEAR
2026-2027

THEME
Nourish Every Neighbor

COLLABORATION
The Arts • National Trends
& Services •
Services to Youth



TOOLKIT
AVAILABLE

Comprehensive
resources and
materials guide
chapters through
planning, promotion,
judging, and
participation.



RECOGNITION

Southern Area
Best in Show winners
will be recognized
during the
49th Southern Area
Conference
Tampa, Florida
and, as applicable,
featured in the
Southern Area
Cookbook.

THEME

Nourish Every Neighbor

Encouraging students to use visual art to educate, inspire, and mobilize
their communities around food insecurity while reinforcing the values of
service, compassion, dignity, and collective responsibility.



ART INSPIRES.
SERVICE NOURISHES.
EVERY NEIGHBOR MATTERS.

Southern Area Poster Art Contest

The Situation: Food Insecurity

Problem: Millions of Americans, including many Black families and children across the Southern Area, experience food insecurity despite living in communities with abundant resources.

- Black households experience food insecurity at much higher rates than many other groups, with nearly **1 in 4 households (24.4%)** struggling to consistently access enough food.
- About **1 in 4 Black children** live in households facing food insecurity, making them **twice as likely** to experience hunger as White children.
- These disparities are rooted in **long-standing inequities**, including systemic racism and economic barriers that affect access to stable employment, income, and affordable, nutritious food.

Why it Matters: Food insecurity affects health, education, economic stability, and quality of life. It disproportionately impacts communities The Links has long served.

Our Opportunity: Through education, advocacy, service, and the arts, The Links can help raise awareness while engaging young people as creative advocates for change.

Source: Feeding America, 2025, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), July 2026

Nourish Every Neighbor



Southern Area Poster Art Contest National Priorities

Nourish Every Neighbor

Integrating with our Southern Area Focus: The Emerald Plate

In support of National Trends and Services' vision to eliminate disparities by reducing barriers to services through advocacy, education, and service, **The Emerald Plate** is the Southern Area's food insecurity initiative.

Through education, community engagement, and strategic partnerships, the initiative seeks to address the systemic causes of food insecurity while expanding equitable access to nutritious food for those most affected, including BIPOC communities, HBCU students, low-income families, veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and other underserved populations.



Southern Area Poster Art Contest

The Case for Poster Art

Nourish Every Neighbor

- Art has long been one of society's most powerful tools for education, advocacy, and social change.
- Poster art has inspired public action around civil rights, public health, voting, environmental stewardship, and community engagement.
- Through this contest, students across all grade categories gain exposure to the arts while using creativity to raise awareness about food insecurity and inspire compassion, dignity, and action.



Classics Through The Ages (CTA) Creative Competitions Supporting Activity

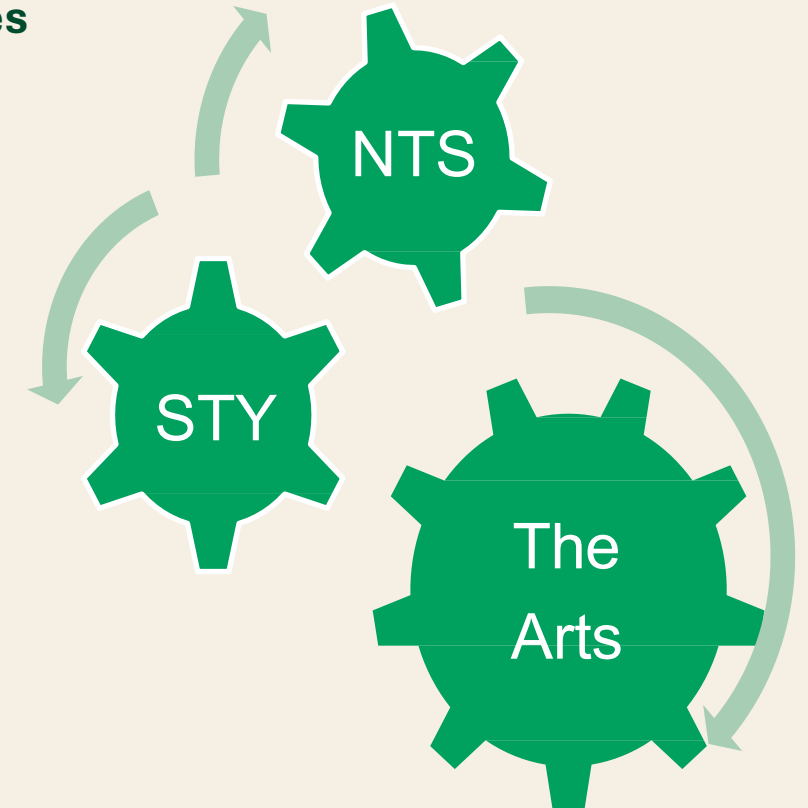
- **Mission:** To cultivate, mentor and inspire youth of African ancestry in underserved communities through the gift of artistic expression in all mediums and genres
- **Vision:** Transform the lives of Black children, families and communities through exceptional programming, which celebrates, supports and advances our artistic culture and heritage.
- **Target Population:** Students of African descent in underserved communities
- **Supports:**
 - Classics Through the Ages and Creative Competitions National Signature Program
 - Southern Area Emerald Plate Initiative



Southern Area Poster Art Contest Alignment to National Signature Program

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- The **Southern Area (SA) Poster Art Contest** is a **Classics Through the Ages (CTA) Creative Competition** and serves as a supporting activity within National Arts programming.
- Chapters can implement the SA Poster Art Contest as:
 - An activity within a Tier 1 or Tier 2 CTA program
 - An arts activity supporting one or more of its other chapter programs implementing a National Program or National Initiative
 - A stand-alone activity that is **not eligible to be submitted in the chapter program report due Feb. 1st**



Southern Area Poster Art Contest

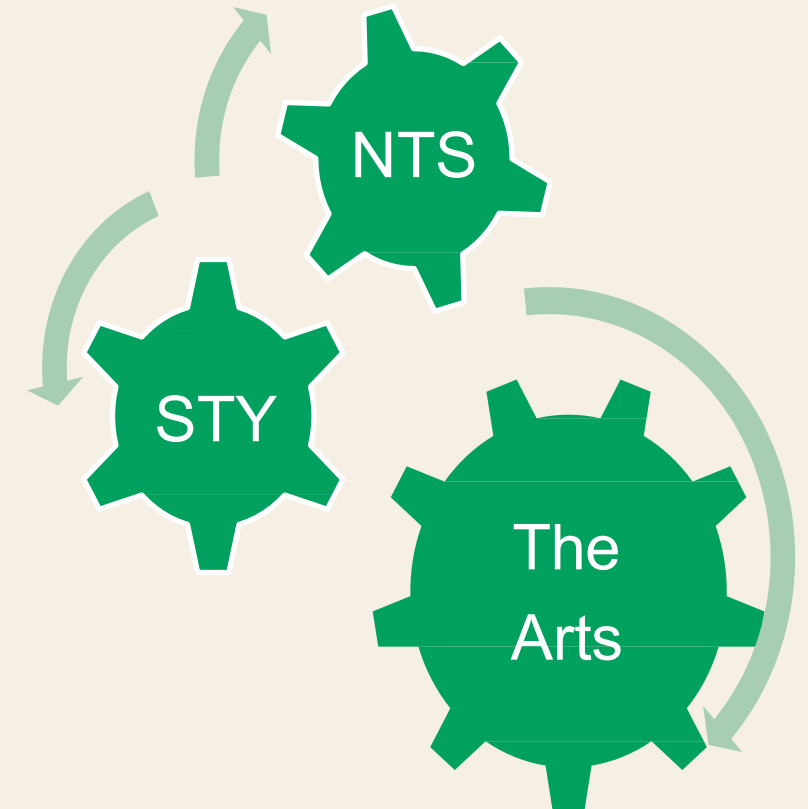
Competition Purpose

Nourish Every Neighbor

The **Southern Area Poster Art Contest** engages students in using visual art to educate, inspire, and mobilize their communities around the issue of food insecurity while reinforcing the values of service, compassion, and collective responsibility.

The competition invites students to create original visual artwork that interprets the theme **Nourish Every Neighbor**, illustrating how individuals and communities can respond to hunger with care, dignity, and social responsibility.

Through creativity and artistic expression, students become advocates who raise awareness, inspire meaningful conversations, and encourage action to help nourish every neighbor.





Southern Area Poster Art Contest

Steps for Local Chapters to Get Started

Nourish Every Neighbor

- Leverage the **Southern Area Poster Art Contest Toolkit** to access contest guidelines, resources, timelines, and required materials.
- Partner with local schools and community partners to invite K-12 students to participate.
- Promote the contest through schools, community partners, social media, newsletters, and local media.
- Collect student entries by the chapter's submission deadline.
- Judge the artwork and recognize winners in each grade division, celebrating student achievement with certificates, awards, or a recognition event.
- Showcase the student artwork at schools, libraries, community centers, chapter events, or on chapter social media (with appropriate permissions).
- Select one **"Best in Show" poster from among your four grade categories** to submit to the Southern Area, along with all required documentation by the designated deadline.



Southern Area Poster Art Contest

Student Categories and Eligibility

Nourish Every Neighbor

Student Categories

Category I
Grades K - 3

Category II
Grades 4 - 6

Category III
Grades 7 - 9

Category IV
Grades 10 - 12

Eligibility Requirements

- Students **must** be affiliated with a participating Links chapter.
- Artwork **must be** the student's original work.
- Each student may submit **one** poster entry.
- AI-generated artwork will **not** be accepted.
- All required entry and release forms must accompany each submission.

Note: In accordance with The Links, Incorporated Ethics and Standards policies, relatives of any Links member, including members outside the sponsoring chapter, are **not** eligible to participate.

Advancing to the Southern Area Competition

- Following local judging, each participating chapter will select one "**Best in Show**" poster from among its four grade categories **to represent the chapter in the Southern Area Poster Art Contest.**
- Southern Area contest winners will be announced and recognized during the 49th Southern Area Conference in Tampa, Florida and acknowledged in the Southern Area Cookbook, as applicable.

Southern Area Poster Art Contest

Rules and Guidelines

Nourish Every Neighbor

Artwork Expectations

Each poster should:

- Clearly interpret the theme **Nourish Every Neighbor**
- Reflect the student's original ideas and creativity.
- Be appropriate for the student's grade level.
- Communicate a message about addressing food insecurity through service, compassion, dignity, or community action.
- Be photographed or scanned clearly for digital judging.

Important scoring note:

Only posters that clearly interpret the theme **Nourish Every Neighbor** are eligible for judging.





Southern Area Poster Art Contest

Rules and Guidelines

Nourish Every Neighbor

Artwork Specifications

Size and materials

- Students are not limited by material size.
- Common sizes include 9" × 12" and 11" × 14".
- Recommended surfaces include paper, canvas, or art board.
- Chapters are encouraged to use standard, accessible materials.

Digital readiness

- Select a size that can be photographed or scanned clearly.
- Ensure the full poster is visible in the image file.
- Use lighting that preserves color, detail, and student work.
- Avoid shadows, glare, cropped edges, or background clutter.

Chapter Guidance: Prioritize accessibility, quality of image capture, and fairness across student submissions.



Southern Area Poster Art Contest Rules and Guidelines

Nourish Every Neighbor

Required Student and Poster Information

Collect the following information for each entry on the Student Entry Form:

- Poster title
- Student first name
- Student last name
- Student school
- Student age
- Student grade
- Poster category
- Poster medium
- Signed [release and other forms](#) outlined in the **Forms & Resources** section

Public-facing fields may include poster title, student first name, school, and poster category. Confirm local privacy expectations before sharing.

Southern Area Poster Art Contest

Digital and Release Requirements

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The Southern Area Poster Art Contest will be conducted digitally through an online submission process.

- Chapters may accept physical artwork locally, but Southern Area submissions should be uploaded digitally.
- If physical entries are collected locally, chapters are encouraged to return artwork to students after the chapter competition concludes.
- Student and parent/guardian release forms are required before submission.
- The release should allow the Links chapter, the Southern Area, and The Links, Incorporated to reproduce, display, and share the entry.





Southern Area Poster Art Contest

Key Dates and Milestones

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- **August 2026** **Southern Area Poster Art Contest** and Nourish Every Neighbor them announced
- **September – October 2026** Chapters engage schools, community partners, and judges
- **October 31, 2026** Chapters submit the **Southern Area Chapter Intent to Participate Form**
- **November 20, 2026** Chapters conduct local competitions, including judging, selection and recognition of winners, and select a **Best in Show** poster
- **November 21 – December 7, 2026** Chapters submit their **Best in Show** poster from among their four grade categories along with required documentation to the Southern Area
- **December 7, 2026 (Midnight EST)** **Southern Area Poster Art Contest** submission deadline
- **December 8 – 19, 2027** Southern Area reviews and judges chapter submissions
- **May 2027** **Southern Area** recognizes **Best in Show** Poster Art Contests winners at Southern Area Conference



Southern Area Poster Art Contest Chapter Action Checklist

Nourish Every Neighbor

Before submitting to the Southern Area, each chapter should confirm:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| ☒ | Confirm your chapter's Best in Show submission. | ☒ | Student and parent/guardian release is signed |
| ☒ | Student is entered in the correct grade category | ☒ | Digital image is clear, complete, and ready for upload |
| ☒ | Required student and poster information is complete | ☒ | Chapter submission is completed by the published deadline |

Contact Your Southern Area Arts Facet



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INTENTIONAL
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