

Souls to the Polls: Innovative effort to encourage Wisconsin voting Nov. 8 offering \$10,000 in scholarships for creating best art for social media to turn out voters

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Milwaukee (Sept. 12, 2022) - A competition to create highly effective social media graphics that encourage voting, with \$10,000 in scholarship prizes for students and others who create the most effective designs, has been launched by a non-partisan coalition of organizations seeking to increase turnout at the polls Nov. 8.

Souls to the Polls WI launched the I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition on Sept. 1, in partnership with AIGA Wisconsin, The BrandLab Milwaukee, Imagine MKE, Greater Together, Milwaukee Artist Resource Network, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee People's Flag, United Adworkers, Urban Underground, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

The competition, which runs through Oct. 14, tasks individuals with producing impactful, nonpartisan designs, 2D art pieces or illustrative videos that inform, inspire and activate Wisconsin voters to go to the polls during the 2022 midterm elections Nov. 8. The competition will be overseen by AIGA, America's leading design organization.

The I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition is open to people residing or attending school in Wisconsin. High school students, college students and recent graduates

are encouraged to apply, as are other Wisconsin residents, regardless of age. The coalition behind the competition believes voting is critical to ensuring everyone's voices are heard in our democracy. BIPOC, immigrants and individuals of diverse backgrounds are encouraged to submit their design entries. No prior experience is needed.

How it works: Each entrant will share their work on social media using the hashtag "I Am A Voter WI" along with a caption explaining why voting is important. They will also tag I Am A Voter WI in their post on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and/or TikTok and submit their work on the I Am A Voter WI website, www.iamavoterwi.org.

The I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition will be judged by a diverse panel of advertising and design industry experts with extensive experience creating and developing campaigns for national and international clients in various industries. The judging panel will determine five of the six winners. The public will vote for the winner of the sixth award, the People's Choice Scholarship Award (valued at \$1,000).

Prizes: The I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition offers a total of \$10,000 in cash prizes, including two scholarships of \$3,000 each and 4 scholarships of \$1,000 each. Scholarship awards may be applied to current or future tuition and schooling costs, as well as student loans.

The I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition is open and will accept submissions until Oct. 14. People's Choice voting will take place Oct. 17 - 28 online at <https://www.iamavoterwi.org/peoples-choice-vote>. The winners of the competition will be announced Nov. 1.

More information and official rules and regulations are available at iamavoterwi.org/competition. Team representative Kiana Stockwell can provide resources and assistance to groups or individuals interested in getting involved with the initiative. She can be reached at kiana.limei@gmail.com.

The following quotes from coalition members highlight the importance of voting:

"At a time when our rights are being taken away, voting is essential. This scholarship campaign is about empowering our young people and creating spaces for their voices to be heard. The Brand Lab Milwaukee is a proud supporter of this

effort and its long-term impact.” - Kweku TeAngelo Cargile Jr., Executive Director of The Brand Lab Milwaukee

“I vote because I want to make sure my voice and the voices of other marginalized people are heard. As a Black woman, voting is essential because I want to see a change in our society and ensure that all people are treated equitably... We need to make our voices heard now more than ever, and I’m glad that the I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition is helping to make that possible.” - Natasha Lettner, Freelance Communications for Nafrini Communications LLC

“The I Am A Voter Scholarship Competition is an opportunity for young and emerging designers and artists to apply their imagination to spark civic engagement in our precious democratic election process. Art has always had a vital role in social change, oftentimes providing the very spark that ignites action. As educators, we can design a better future and use creativity as a tool to inspire young voters, first time voters, lapsed voters, all voters, by reminding them why their voice and their vote matters to our common future.” - Coe Douglas, Design for Good Chair, AIGA WI; Lecturer, Peck School of the Arts at UWM