

REGISTRATION & CONTEST INFORMATION



NHD-OC Contest

March 14, 2026

Hosted by the Orange County
Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**Registration Deadline: Tuesday,
January 27, 2026**



Stefan Bean, Ed.D.
County Superintendent of Schools



★ Welcome

Congratulations, you have been selected to represent your school at the NHD-OC Competition! We encourage you to use the time prior to the contest to fine-tune your entry. Remarks from your coach are valuable resources as you prepare your entry for the county contest.

2026 NHD-OC Contest

Date: March 14, 2026

Location: Orange County
Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

2026 NHD-OC Awards Ceremony

Date: March 18, 2026

Location: Orange County
Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive, Bldg D
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

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Competition Schedule

2026 NHD-OC

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026

Orange County Department of Education

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

SATURDAY AM CONTEST: JUNIOR DIVISION

8:00–9:00 **SCHOOLS MAY SET UP IN COURTYARD**

SET UP FOR EXHIBITS – *Setup must be complete by 9:00 a.m.*

9:30-12:00 **PRELIMINARY ROUND JUDGING (END TIME IS APPROXIMATE)**

- Jr. Documentaries & Jr. Performances – Building D
- Jr. Exhibits – Building A Exhibit Hall
- Jr. Websites & Jr. Podcasts – Building B

FINALS ROUND JUDGING will take place immediately following preliminary rounds of judging
(only performance students are present during finals round judging)

9:30-11:30 **Website & Podcast public viewing** – Building A – Computer Lab

12:00-12:30 **Exhibit public viewing** (time approximate)

12:30-1:00 **FINALIST ANNOUNCEMENTS and AWARDS** – Courtyard

- School Recognition
- Junior Division Finalists
- Judges' Choice Awards

EXHIBIT REMOVAL – Immediately following announcements

SATURDAY PM CONTEST: ELEMENTARY & SENIOR DIVISIONS

12:00 **SCHOOLS MAY SET UP IN COURTYARD**

SET UP FOR EXHIBITS AND POSTERS – *Setup must be complete by 1:00 p.m.*

1:30-3:30 **PRELIMINARY ROUND JUDGING (END TIME IS APPROXIMATE)**

- Elementary Posters & Elementary Podcasts, Senior Exhibits, Senior Websites & Senior Podcasts - Building B
- Senior Documentaries & Performances – Building D

FINALS ROUND JUDGING will take place immediately following preliminary rounds of judging
(students are not present during finals round judging)

1:30-3:30 **Website & Podcast public viewing public viewing** – Building A – Computer Lab

4:30-5:15 **Poster & Exhibit public viewing** (time approximate)

5:15 pm **FINALIST ANNOUNCEMENTS and AWARDS** – Courtyard

- School Recognition
- Elementary Awards
- Senior Division Finalists
- Judges' Choice Awards

POSTER & EXHIBIT REMOVAL – Immediately following announcements

★ Key Dates

January 20, 2026 Tuesday	NHD-OC Regular Registration Opens Coaches will register students Student Fee \$60 (per student)
January 27, 2026 Tuesday (by 9:00PM)	NHD-OC Regular Registration Closes Student Fee \$60 per student To avoid a late fee, families must complete the waiver. • If paying by check: Enter the appropriate information in the “Name on Check” and “Check Number” fields Mail Checks to: OCDE NHD-OC Attention: Robin Silver 200 Kalmus Dr. Costa Mesa, CA 92626
January 27-30, 2026	NHD-OC Late Registration During this period students may register for NHD-OC. The Late Registration fee is \$70 per student
January 30, 2026 Friday (4:00 PM)	NHD-OC Late Registration Closes NO registration will be accepted after this date.

February 23, 2026 Monday (8:59 PM)	Project Submission Deadline: The following are due on February 23, 2026.		
	CATEGORY	PROJECT DUE	WRITTEN MATERIALS DUE
	Documentary	Yes	Yes
	Exhibit	No	Yes
	Performance	No	Yes
	Podcast, all divisions	Yes	Yes
	Elementary Poster	No	No
	Website	Yes	Yes
What if you find new sources after February 23rd? If you find additional sources after the submission date, you may give your judges a complete updated document (cover page, process paper, and annotated bibliography) at your interview. You must highlight all additions/ changes to you bibliography.			
By February 23, 2026	Student Interview Schedule Posted Check the NHD-OC website - Student & Family page . The schedule will include entry # and interview room, date & time.		
May 1-2, 2026	NHD-CA State Finals, Sacramento, California		
June 14 - 18, 2026 Sunday - Thursday	NHD National Contest, College Park, Maryland		

★ Registration Instructions

NHD-OC Registration is done through the school and the coach.

Through your school, your coach, and your family you will:

- Provide registration information about you and your entry.
- Provide essential contact and medical information.
- Submit payment for all applicable fees.

Who Must Register:

- All coaches may register up to two entries per category.
- Participating students with a parent/guardian will fill out a waiver. A parent/guardian will be required to enter contact and release information.

For contest information contact:

Julie Hull

Jhull@ocde.us

(714) 966-4328

Dr. Virginia Reischl

Vreischl@ocde.us

(714) 966-4231



Noteworthy Items:

Individual Entries

If you are entering an individual project, you must attend the contest.

Group Entries

- All group members must attend the contest.
- Each person in a group entry must fill out a waiver individually.

Parent/Guardian Information

Each student will need at least one parent/guardian listed on their waiver.

We recommend **not** using a school email. Each family must supply a working email address so that you can receive important information.

Medical Information

Every student registering for the NHD-OC competition must complete this information.

Nominating your Entry for Special Prize(s)

At the NHD-OC contest, a number of organizations and or individuals sponsor prizes that are awarded to the entry that best exemplifies the specific prize criteria. Special prizes are topic-specific. On our [website](#), you can nominate your entry for special awards and review the criteria. **NOTE:** Groups should designate one person to nominate their project.

Refund Policy

If an entry is withdrawing from the NHD-OC contest for any reason, the following refund policy will apply:

Registration Fee: If a cancellation request is received before or on **1/30/2026**, a full refund will be issued. After **1/30/2026**, no refunds will be issued.

Cancellation/Refund Requests

Please e-mail a request for a cancellation/refund to nhdinfo@ocde.us. Please include:

- Subject Line: "NHD-OC Cancellation Request"
 - Address
 - Telephone number
 - Student participant name/s
 - List of charges that were paid
 - How payment was made
-



Stefan Bean, Ed.D.
County Superintendent of Schools

NARRATIVE DIRECTIONS FOR REACHING THE ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

200KALMUSDRIVE,COSTAMESA,CALIFORNIA92626 • PHONE(714)966-4000

From Long Beach toward San Diego:

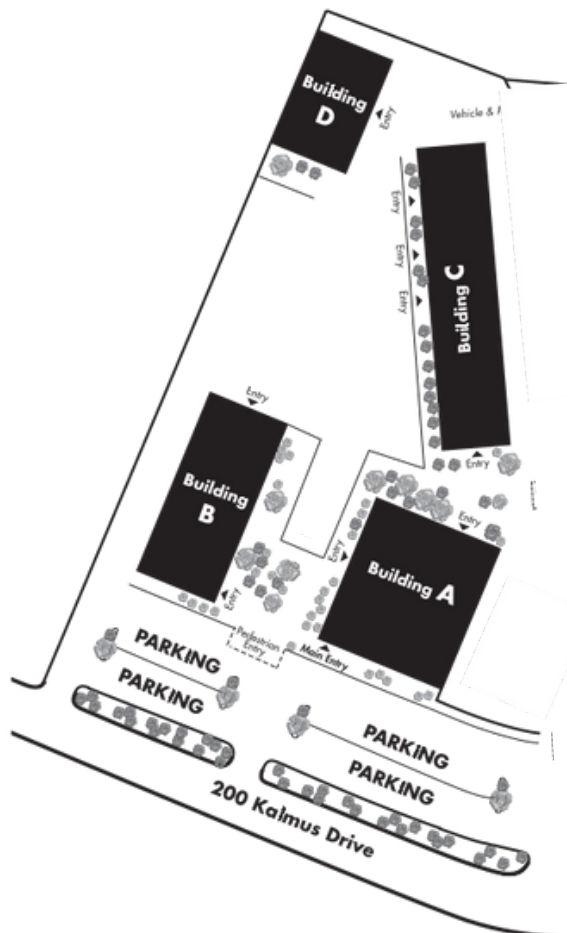
San Diego Freeway(405) south toBristol.
Right on Bristol to Baker. Left on Baker to
Red Hill. Right on Red Hill to Kalmus. Right
on Kalmus to Department of Education.
Turn right into the parking lot.

From Corona del Mar toward Newport- Costa Mesa Freeway:

CoronadelMar Freeway (73)north to
Newport-Costa Mesa Freeway (55). North
on Newport-Costa Mesa Freeway to Baker
offramp. Right on Baker to Red Hill. Right on
Red Hill to Kalmus. Right on Kalmus to
Department of Education. Turn right into the
parking lot.



Maps are not to scale.



From Corona del Mar – PCH: Pacific Cost Highway to Jamboree. Right on Jamboree to Bristol. Left on Bristol to Red Hill. Right on Red Hill to Kalmus. Left on Kalmus to Department of Education. Turn right into the parking lot.

From San Diego toward Los Angeles:

San Diego Freeway (405) to Newport-Costa Mesa Freeway (55). South on Newport-Costa Mesa Freeway to Baker off ramp. Left on Baker to Red Hill. Right on Red Hill to Kalmus. Right on Kalmus to Department of Education. Turn right into the parking lot.

Parking in front of Building A & B or on the street in front of Orange County Department of Education.
DO NOT PARK IN NEIGHBORING BUSINESSES

★ Check-In at NHD-OC

Check in with your coach prior to the contest to get your contest materials: name badge, event program, t-shirt, and other contest materials. Students should arrive at the contest at least 15 minutes prior to their interview time. Check with your coach to see if there is a meeting place on the day of the contest. Students **do not** need to check in with NHD-OC.

Students are encouraged to arrive early to find their contest room.

★ Code of Conduct

Students, parents, and teachers are expected to conduct themselves, both in person and online, in a manner that brings credit to themselves and to the schools they represent.

Rules and Policies for NHD-OC Participants

National History Day-Orange County is concerned not only for the safety and well-being of students, but also for upholding the wishes of parents, teachers, school principals, and the many supporters who have a vested interest in the students' participation. To ensure that your day is pleasant and trouble-free, you must observe the following rules:

- You may not physically harm, threaten to harm, harass or bully any person, including provoking and or engaging in physical fights or malicious and harmful behavior.
- Alcoholic beverages or other drugs are prohibited except those prescribed by a doctor.
- Possession of any weapons, firecrackers, or other flammable materials is prohibited.
- You may not tamper with the fire system or fire safety equipment.
- You may not vandalize or damage the competition facilities or other entries.
- Entries that are not appropriate for all ages will still be judged; however, the audience may be removed and a warning will be included with the entry.

★ Entry Information

ALL ENTRIES

- Each entry will be assigned to a specific room and interview time. The interview schedule will be posted by **February 23 , 2026** to the NHD-OC Student & Family page of the [website](#).
- Students should arrive at their designated interview location at least 15 minutes prior to their interview time.
- Students should refer to checklists in the [NHD-OC Rule Book](#) to make sure they have completed everything required for their entry.
- If your project advances to a final round, only performance students must be present.
- All entries will include a five-minute interview by the judge panel.

EXHIBIT ENTRIES

Written materials must be submitted by **8:59 p.m. PDT, Monday, 2/23/26**.

- You must bring a physical exhibit to the contest. Set-up is done before contest start time.
- Bring **three** copies of your written materials: title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography.
- When you have finished setting up, leave **three** copies at your exhibit and mark one “DISPLAY COPY.” You may also want to bring an additional copy for your reference.
- If you are using electrical equipment, you should bring an extension cord. You must request access to an electrical outlet.

DOCUMENTARY ENTRIES

Documentary and written materials must be submitted by **8:59 p.m. PDT, Monday, 2/23/26**.

- Instructions for submission can be found on the Teachers page of the NHD-OC [website](#).
- You do not need to bring ANY equipment. NHD-OC staff will load your documentary on computers that will be in the room you are assigned for your interview.
- Judging in this category includes the presentation of student documentaries to audiences. Students and supporters are invited to watch.
- Students are responsible for starting their documentary from the computer provided. Students can use the first few minutes (as the judges are getting settled) to adjust the volume.
- Bring **three** copies of your written materials: title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography.



PERFORMANCE ENTRIES

Written materials must be submitted by **8:59 p.m. PDT, Monday, 2/23/26.**

- You must provide ALL equipment and/or props used in your performance entry.
- Students will have five minutes to set up their own props prior to the performance and five minutes to remove items following the interview at the conclusion of the performance. You must be able to set up the props for your performance without the help of others.
- Judging in this category includes the presentation of student performances to audiences. Students and supporters are invited to watch.
- **Students whose entries advance to Finals MUST be present to perform.** There will be no interview during Finals Round Judging.
- Bring **three** copies of your written materials: title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography.
- Written materials should be given to judges before props are set up.

PODCAST ENTRIES

Elementary, Junior & Senior Division Podcast and written materials must be submitted by **8:59p.m. PDT, Monday, 2/23/26.**

- Instructions for submission can be found on the Teachers page of the NHD-OC [website.](#)
- Podcasts must be audio-only.
- Podcasts require the submission of **Show Notes** with your written materials.
- Bring **three** copies of your written materials: title page, process paper, annotated bibliography and show notes.
- You do not need to bring ANY equipment. NHD-OC staff will load your podcast on computers that will be in the room you are assigned for your interview.
- Judging in this category includes the presentation of student podcasts to audiences. Students and supporters are invited to listen. Students are responsible for starting their podcasts from the computer provided.
- **Elementary podcasts:** Awards will be presented at the Finalist Announcements on Saturday. Four entries will be selected to advance to NHD-CA.

POSTER ENTRIES

- You must bring a physical poster to the contest.
- Bring **three** copies of your written materials: title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography.
- When you have finished setting up, leave **three** copies at your poster and mark one “DISPLAY COPY.” You may also want to bring an additional copy for your own reference.
- Students are not present at Finals Round Judging.
- Awards will be presented at the beginning of the Finalist Announcements scheduled on Saturday.

WEBSITE ENTRIES

Be sure to complete and **publish** your final version of your website and upload your written materials by **8:59 p.m. PDT, Monday, 2/23/2026.**

- You **MUST** submit your NHDWebCentral URL (website address) 8-digit code to your coach so they can register your entry.
- Your process paper and annotated bibliography must be integrated into your website.
- Bring **three** copies of your written materials: title page, process paper, and annotated bibliography to your interview for your judges.
- Computers will be provided.
- Judging in this category will include presentation of website to an audience.
- Add your entry # to the home page of your website.

HISTORICAL PAPER ENTRIES

Beginning with contests in 2024, registration and submission of all historical papers will follow a different format from other categories. Historical papers will not compete at county contests. Instead, papers will be directly submitted to the state contest by the teacher.

Each school will be allowed to submit up to 3 papers. Please complete the [School Participation Form](#) to let NHD-CA know your school plans to participate.

Please find NHD-CA Historical Paper information [here](#).

★ Frequently Asked Questions

Do all students in a group have to be present at NHD-OC?

Yes, all students should attend the contest and be interviewed.

Do I have to be at the NHD-OC competition the whole time?

No, you must be present for your interview. If you are part of a performance that advances to a final round, you must be present for the final judging.

Can I pick what day my interview will be on?

No, all student interviews will be on the contest day. Time of interview window varies. If a specific time is needed, requests should be made from the coach by **January 27, 2026**.

What happens if I am a finalist?

- **Performances:** If you are part of a performance entry, you must be present during the final round of judging to provide judges with your Process Paper/Annotated Bibliography and to perform. There will be no interview during the final round. Your performance will be open to spectators, just as it was during the preliminary judging.
- **All other entry types:** If you have an exhibit, documentary, podcast, poster, or website entry you do not need to do anything. Participants do not attend final rounds.
- **Do I need to be at the Awards Ceremony?**
No. However, we encourage all finalists to attend.

Do students have to bring physical exhibits & posters?

Yes, all posters and exhibits must be physical. No virtual submission will be allowed.

Do coaches have to register for the contest?

All coaches must register themselves and their students using the registration forms.

Do parents/guardians have to register for the contest?

No. Parent/guardian information is submitted as part of the family waiver. A \$10 late fee will be added for waivers received after **1/27/26**.

How is payment made for the contest?

Your school or another agency (district, PTA, etc.) should send registration fee with a list of entries included. Please remit by **3/01/26**.

When can students set up their exhibits?

JUNIOR DIVISION

- Saturday from 8:00 – 9:00 AM

SENIOR DIVISION

- Saturday from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

When can students set up their posters?

- Saturday from 12:00 PM– 1:00 PM

When can posters be removed?

Posters may be removed on Saturday after the Elementary Awards Ceremony.

When can exhibits be removed?

Immediately following the finalist announcements.

What are the rules for poster/exhibit set-up?

Adults may help CARRY your project into the display hall and lift it onto the table if necessary. However, students must set up their own exhibit/ poster.

Is there a storage room for performance props?

No, Please bring props to the exterior doors of your contest room when your performance is on deck.

Where do I go to get my entry number?

Entry numbers will be listed in the Interview Schedule which will be posted online on the Student & Family Page by **February 23, 2026**.

Do I bring paper copies of my Process Paper and Annotated Bibliography if I have a website entry?

It is not required but strongly encouraged for the interview.

How and when do I get my judging sheets?

Judging sheets will be emailed to your coach after the awards ceremony. You can pick up your judging sheets from your coach.

Can parents and other participants watch an interview?

• Documentary & Performance

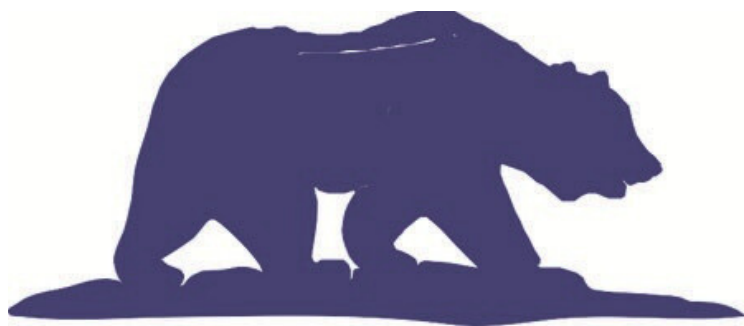
Rooms are open to the public (space permitting). Please only enter the room in between scheduled interviews. Phones must be on silent.

• Exhibit & Poster rooms are closed during judging. Public viewing will occur after judging concludes.

- No photography permitted.

• Podcasts & Websites are available for public viewing in the computer lab.

- Please bring headphones



NHD–California

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NATIONAL
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