



January 7, 2025

Dear IMUA Utility Member/Scholarship Program Contact:

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of our IMUA Scholarship program, the 2025 IMUA Scholarship Essay Contest will offer eligible IMUA high school seniors the opportunity to win one of four (4) \$2,500 scholarship awards. This one-time financial reward represents a departure from the traditional \$1,000 scholarship awards made available through the statewide recognition program since its inception 25 years ago.

Since 2000, the IMUA Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$68,000 to 108 students from 30 different IMUA communities statewide. It has proven to be a very popular and successful program, rewarding achievement and providing recognition and a measure of college financial assistance to dozens of outstanding IMUA high school seniors in public-power communities throughout Illinois.

Enclosed are informational materials regarding the **2025 IMUA Scholarship Program**. These include an **application form, 2025 program guidelines and questions sheet, and a customized news release**. As a primary IMUA contact for your municipality, I'm asking that you distribute copies of these materials to the media outlets and high schools in your respective service territory. In particular, I suggest you contact teachers of senior English, Civics and Journalism courses who might want to include the essay competition as part of an extra credit project for students in their respective classes.

If you provide IMUA with your local high school(s) contact information, IMUA staff can distribute these materials directly to those schools in your municipality. In addition, these materials can be found on the IMUA [website](#). Please feel free to contact **DeeDee Bunch** at IMUA at **(217) 789-4632** or dbunch@imea.org should you have any questions in this regard.

There is no obligation or fee for IMUA members who participate in the program. However, any monetary donations to this worthwhile program are always welcome. If you'd like to contribute, I ask that you consider making a \$100 minimum donation in support of this year's program.

I strongly encourage your participation in the program. IMUA and its members have realized a number of positive benefits from the competition itself. First, scholarship recipients in IMUA member communities have enjoyed a significant amount of goodwill, recognition and publicity generated by the awards presentations themselves. Second, the program offers your municipality the opportunity to increase public awareness about the vital role your utility plays in local economic development and growth. Third, and perhaps most important of all, it enables the youth of your community to better understand the nature of the many diverse and complex energy issues and challenges facing consumers and the public power industry today.

On behalf of IMUA and the members of its Scholarship Judging Committee, we look forward to your participation and wish you and your community's students the best of luck in this year's competition!

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Gaden, President & CEO, IMUA

Illinois Municipal Utilities Association & the City/Village of _____ 2025 IMUA Scholarship Application



Student's Name: _____

Parent(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Village: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Utility Account Number: _____

Utility Billing Address: _____

High School: _____

Educational Institution you plan to attend: _____

Please list any extracurricular activities or awards (use separate sheet of paper if needed):

Please attach a copy of transcripts and completed essay of 500 words or less and mail to:

***Illinois Municipal Utilities Association
Attention: Scholarship Committee
3400 Conifer Drive
Springfield, IL 62711***

Postmark by Friday, March 14, 2025

or emailed to dbunch@imea.org (if emailing please send in .pdf format)

(Note: IMUA scholarships are not available to the employees, staff or immediate family members of the IMUA, IMEA and IPEA, to the immediate family members of the Board of Directors of the organizations, nor to immediate family members of those individuals who serve on the IMUA Scholarship Judging Panel & Committee.)



IMUA 2025 Scholarship Program Student Guidelines & Questions

Program Purposes: To promote and recognize scholastic achievement and to demonstrate the advantages of, and the issues faced by, municipally-owned and operated utilities.

Eligibility and Guidelines: Only high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are residential customers of an IMUA member utility may submit written essays to win a \$2,500 scholarship.

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1. Students must complete the enclosed application and submit, along with a photocopy of their transcripts, an essay of 500 words or less, typewritten and double-spaced.
2. Essay should **NOT** mention the student's hometown or hometown utility by name.
3. Sources of information regarding municipal utilities and utility-related issues can be found in the reference section of your library, periodicals, the Internet, or individuals employed by your local municipal utility. Search phrases might include: *municipal utility; local ownership; municipalization; public power; public gas system; utility deregulation; Public Utility Holding Company Act (PUHCA); public interest; and, municipal utility rates.* There are many other sources as well. The following websites and sources may also be useful obtaining information helpful in writing your essay:

- American Public Power Association (www.publicpower.org)
- American Public Gas Association (www.apga.org)
- Illinois Municipal Electric Agency (www.imea.org)
- Illinois Municipal Utilities Association (www.imea.org, then click on the IMUA link)
- Illinois Public Energy Agency (www.imea.org, then click on the "IPEA link")
- Energy Information Administration (www.eia.gov)
- Your local municipal utility superintendent
- American Water Works Association (AWWA) (www.awwa.org)
- Illinois Rural Water Association (ILRWA) (www.ilrwa)

4. Essays **MUST** address your choice of any one of the following five (5) issues/questions:

Climate Change

*Q. Climate change can affect our health, our ability to grow food, our housing, our work and even our overall safety. Conditions such as warmer temperatures, flooding, sea-level rises and saltwater intrusion have advanced to the point where entire communities have had to rebuild entirely or relocate. Protracted droughts are putting many people at risk of famine. What are some lifestyle changes **you** can make now to help mitigate the impact of climate change?*

Water

Q. Our nation's water supplies are under constant duress from threats such as climate change and overuse to contamination, pollution, drought and other factors. Examples of such water sources and supplies include lakes, rivers, streams, seas and aquifers. What actions and preventative measures can be taken to help ensure the long-term viability and integrity of these water sources as clean, adequate and reliable sources of water supply?

Benefits of Public Power

*Q. Public power has many distinct characteristics (compared to investor-owned utilities (IOUs), rural electric cooperatives and private energy companies) that directly and indirectly benefit consumers and contribute to community progress, economic development and growth. What are some of these many benefits and how do you see them contributing to your own community's betterment, including its quality of life? **Please cite specific examples.***

Artificial Intelligence

*Q. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used across a wide spectrum of industries, uses and applications, including computer research, learning systems and similar learning. Do you foresee AI playing a larger role in the utility and energy industries and if so, how? **Please explain and use specific examples.***

Other Industry Challenges

Q. What do you see as being the biggest challenges facing the electric utility and energy industries today? What actions, strategies and measures do you recommend to meet these challenges, and why?

5. The deadline for submitting written essays is **Friday, March 14, 2025**. Please send your essay, transcripts and completed application to the address listed on the bottom of the application.
6. A total of **four (4) finalists** will be chosen by the IMUA Scholarship Committee. Each finalist will receive a finalist certificate and a \$2,500 award from IMUA. **Winners will be announced sometime in April.**

GOOD LUCK!