



2026 PLANTERS EMC WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR

ESSAY TOPIC

The Seven Cooperative Principles are:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

ESSAY TOPIC:

Planters EMC is an electric distribution cooperative. Briefly discuss the seven cooperative principles that guide all types of cooperatives. Which cooperative principle do you think is the most important and why?

LENGTH:

500 - 1,000 words

For more than 50 years, Planters EMC has sponsored high school juniors on the Washington Youth Tour. The Washington Youth Tour is a weeklong leadership experience that offers participants the opportunity to tour Washington, D.C., and experience U.S. government and history firsthand while networking with over 100 other teens representing EMCs across Georgia.

CONTEST SCHEDULE

MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026

Essay Deadline

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026

Finalists Announced

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Finalist Interviews Begin

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026

Three Delegates Announced

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026 @ 7:00 P.M.

Planters EMC Youth Tour Banquet

**Delegates, parents and associated school personnel will be invited.*

FRIDAY, JUNE 12-19, 2026

2026 Washington Youth Tour

CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

The competition is open to all high school juniors enrolled in participating schools within Planters Electric Membership Corporation's service area. Home-school juniors are also eligible but must reside in the primary residence served by Planters EMC. The following rules and regulations will be adhered to:

1. Any student who has previously won the Washington Youth Tour is not eligible to enter the contest.
2. Any student who is a son or daughter of a Planters EMC employee or director must enter the statewide Washington Youth Tour contest. Contact Whitney Zeagler for details.
3. Each participant must be an "actively enrolled" junior in an accredited Georgia public or private high school or academy located in a county served by Planters EMC. Home-school juniors are also eligible but must reside in the primary residence served by Planters EMC.
4. All participants must be 16 years old at the time the tour takes place.
5. Each contest participant must submit a typed report using the printing format of Times New Roman, 12 point font with double spaced lines.
6. Each essay should be written on the topic provided. The length of the essay should not be less than 500 words but no more than 1,000 words.
7. The application form should be completed and attached to the essay.
8. Essays will be turned over to an independent panel of impartial judges who will evaluate each entry according to set criteria. Students should be advised that the judges will be giving consideration to such qualities as grammar, neatness, composition, originality, research, and knowledge of the subject. (Note: Students should simply follow the same methods utilized when writing a required report or term paper for a school class.)
9. Following the evaluation of all written work by the judges, a smaller group of finalists will be chosen. At this point, a personal interview will be held with each student on an individual basis. Interview judging criteria include knowledge, speaking ability, poise, personality and appearance.
10. The final decision on Planters EMC's three (3) representatives on the Washington Youth Tour will be based on the student's ability to communicate in writing as well as the ability to communicate "one on one."
11. All essays along with the "Washington Youth Tour Application" form attached as a cover sheet should be turned in at any Planters EMC office or received by email sent to: Whitney Zeagler, whitney.zeagler@plantersemc.com, no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, January 26, 2026.
12. All essays become the property of Planters EMC and may be used in EMC publications.
13. The 2026 Washington Youth Tour will begin on June 12, 2026 in Atlanta and conclude on June 19, 2026, also in Atlanta. All expenses (food, lodging, and airfare) with the exception of souvenirs will be covered by the EMC. Transportation to Washington, as well as the return trip, will be provided by one of the major airlines serving Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Transportation to and from Atlanta will be the responsibility of Planters EMC unless the parent or guardian wishes to provide transportation for their son or daughter.
14. Planters EMC will award each 2026 Washington Youth Tour winner with a \$1,000 college scholarship. The scholarship will be submitted to their school of choice after the delegate graduates high school. The funds can be used for any educational expenses.
15. Direct questions about the Washington Youth Tour to:

Whitney Zeagler
(478) 982-4722 Ext. 229
whitney.zeagler@plantersemc.com

Planters Electric Membership Corporation
P.O. Box 979 | Millen, GA 30442-0979



2026 PLANTERS EMC WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR

2026 APPLICATION

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY OR TYPE ANSWERS & ATTACH ESSAY ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

STUDENT NAME (Full Name as appears on Drivers License [First, Middle and Last Name]):		
PREFERRED NAME (For Delegate Name Badge [First & Last]):	T-SHIRT SIZE: ☐ S ☐ M ☐ L ☐ XL ☐ 2X ☐ 3X	
HOME MAILING ADDRESS:	HOME PHONE:	
CITY, STATE & ZIP:	CELL NUMBER:	
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	U.S. CITIZEN ☐ YES ☐ NO	SEX ☐ M ☐ F
SOCIAL SECURITY #: XXX - XX -	AGE:	DATE OF BIRTH (MM/DD/YY): _ _ / _ _ / _ _
NAME OF SCHOOL:		GRADE LEVEL:
MOTHER'S FULL NAME:	FATHER'S FULL NAME:	
MOTHER'S E-MAIL ADDRESS:	FATHER'S E-MAIL ADDRESS:	
MOTHER'S CELL NUMBER:	FATHER'S CELL NUMBER:	

I certify with my signature that all information reported on this application is true and correct.
I also certify that the essay was solely written from my own ideas and composition.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

DATE

Direct questions about the Washington Youth Tour to:

Whitney Zeagler
whitney.zeagler@plantersemc.com
(478) 982-4722 Ext. 229

RETURN TO ANY PEMC OFFICE
OR EMAIL TO:

whitney.zeagler@plantersemc.com

EXTRACURRICULAR AND COMMUNITY SERVICE:		
NAME OF ORGANIZATION	OFFICE(S) HELD	DATE(S) ACTIVE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

HONORS AND RECOGNITIONS RECEIVED:		
NAME OF ORGANIZATION	HONOR/AWARD	DATE RECEIVED
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

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