



The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes celebrates inspiring, public-spirited young people from across the U.S. and Canada. Established in 2001 by author T. A. Barron, the Barron Prize annually honors 25 outstanding young leaders ages 8 to 18 who have made a significant positive impact on people, their communities, and the environment. Fifteen top winners each receive \$10,000 to support their service work or higher education.

Since its inception, the Barron Prize has awarded nearly two million dollars to hundreds of young heroes who represent great diversity from across the U.S. and Canada. The Prize has won the support of Girl Scouts of the USA, Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots, The Wilderness Society, and National Youth Leadership Council, among other organizations.

"Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world," says Barron. "And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes – people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Gloria Barron Prize: to shine the spotlight on these amazing young people so that their stories will inspire others."

TWO-PART APPLICATION PROCESS

Beginning with our 2026 awards cycle, the Barron Prize has moved to a two-step application process. Applicants must complete a short online pre-application as Step 1. If you meet our eligibility requirements, you will receive an email with instructions for accessing our full application (Step 2).

The pre-application link is available from January 7 – March 15, 2026 on our website's "Apply" page.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Step 1 (pre-application): March 15, 5 pm Mountain Time

Step 2 (full application): April 15, 5 pm Mountain Time

Pre-applicants will be notified via email within 10 days of submitting the pre-application regarding their eligibility to proceed with Step 2 of the application process.

Visit our website to read past winners' bios and learn about their inspiring work!

www.barronprize.org

GLORIA BARRON PRIZE FOR YOUNG HEROES APPLICATION INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY

The Barron Prize welcomes applications from public-spirited young people from across the U.S. and Canada who meet the following eligibility criteria on April 15 of each year:

- are between the ages of 8 and 18 (not yet age 19)
- are permanent, legal residents of the U.S. or Canada with a social security number or valid tax i.d. number
- are currently residing in the 50 U.S. states, District of Columbia, or Canada. Residents of U.S. territories are not eligible to apply due to territories' differences in contest rules.
- are currently working on an inspiring service project that meets the Service Project Criteria below

The Barron Prize does not discriminate against its applicants based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

SERVICE PROJECT CRITERIA

1. Applicant has organized and led an extraordinary service activity that is clearly benefitting other people or the planet. This can include research projects that are already helping or have very real potential to help other people or the planet.
2. The service activity must have been initiated primarily by the applicant and cannot have been done solely to complete an assignment for school or work.
3. Applicant must be currently working on his/her inspiring service project or has done so within the past 12 months.
4. Applicant is working as an individual (or possibly with one other person) to lead their service work. No more than two co-applicants may apply together (and if selected as a winner, co-applicants share one award).
5. Applicant has demonstrated heroic character qualities such as courage, compassion, dedication, generosity, perseverance, and high moral purpose.
6. Applicant has done more than survive a difficult personal challenge. Their heroism must have made an impact on the world beyond themselves.

Please read these requirements carefully before you begin the application process.

1. Applicants **must submit a short online pre-application (Step 1) by March 15, 5 pm MT**. The pre-application opens on our website Jan. 7, 2026, 9 am MT and closes March 15, 5 pm MT.
2. Pre-applicants will be notified via email within 10 days of submitting the Step 1 pre-application form regarding their eligibility to proceed to Step 2 of the application process.
3. Pre-applicants who meet our eligibility requirements will receive an email with instructions for accessing our full online application (Step 2).

4. Full applications **must be completed and submitted online** by our deadline of **5:00 p.m. MT on April 15** each year, when the system will automatically close.
5. We do not accept applications via email, fax, U.S. mail, or any other carrier.
6. Please contact us well in advance of our deadline for any technical assistance you anticipate needing. **We do not accept late applications.**
7. Parental consent is required for applicants who are not yet 16 years of age or older. This consent is found at the bottom of the first page ("Profile") of the online application.
8. Applicants must provide three Letters of Recommendation from individuals who are not related to the applicant. Applicants request their letters through our online application system.
9. One of the letters must be written by the Lead Reference. A Lead Reference is simply an adult advocate who has solid knowledge of the applicant's heroic activities. Examples of Lead References include teachers, librarians, school counselors, and youth service officials.
10. Letters of Recommendation must be uploaded directly by the reference writers through our online application system. Applicants cannot upload letters.
11. All required application materials, including an applicant's requests for three Letters of Recommendation, must be included at the time of submission. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**
12. Contents of the application are considered public information once submitted and should not include private or privileged information.

WHAT WINNERS RECEIVE

- \$10,000 Cash Award
- Recognition Gifts
- Young Heroes Materials
- Networking Opportunities
- Media Coverage

MATERIALS REQUIRED TO APPLY

If you are deemed eligible to move forward to Step 2 (our full application), you will be required to submit the following materials.

1. Completed Application Form
2. Project Summary (250 word limit)
3. Project Essay (1,000 word limit)
4. Letter from the Lead Reference
5. Two additional Letters of Recommendation
6. One color photo of the applicant

By submitting an entry in the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes contest, each applicant acknowledges reading and understanding all the selection criteria and application requirements published on the Barron Prize website and agrees to observe them. Further, each entrant (or his/her parent if the entrant is not yet 18 years of age) acknowledges and agrees that, as a condition of receiving the prize, the selected individual will cooperate in publicizing the Barron Prize and will grant publicity rights in the applicant's materials to the Barron Prize in connection with the foregoing (other than for residents of Tennessee or where otherwise prohibited by law).

FULL APPLICATION FORM – STEP 2 OF 2-STEP PROCESS

SAMPLE ONLY – APPLICATIONS ARE ONLY ACCEPTED ONLINE

Your name and other contact info. will be pulled from the Profile you created when you first set up your WizeHive account.

Project Website Address (if applicable):

Project Facebook Page (if applicable):

Project YouTube Address (if applicable):

Project Twitter Account (if applicable):

Project Instagram Account (if applicable):

Type of Project:

Please select either Humanitarian or Environmental depending on the focus of your project.

Project Title and Short Description:

Please limit to 50 words.

How did you hear about the Barron Prize?

Please select one option from the dropdown list.

Name of School Applicant is Currently Attending:

Current Year in School:

School Mailing Address:

School City:

School State:

School Province (if a resident of Canada):

Zip Code or Canadian Postal Code:

School Country:

School Phone Number:

SUMMARY AND ESSAY FROM THE APPLICANT

Project Summary

Your summary should not exceed 250 words. Feel free to include any personal challenges you have overcome.

Using the dropdown box, choose to include the Project Summary by (1) copying or typing it in the appropriate text box/text format or (2) uploading a digital file (.PDF, .Doc, or .Docx). After your selection, a text box or an upload field will appear.

Project Essay

Your essay should not exceed a total of 1,000 words and must address the following three questions:

- What inspired you to organize this service activity?
- What did you hope to accomplish by leading this service activity, and what did you actually accomplish? If the two are different, then why?
- What have you learned from the experience—both about yourself and about the world?

Using the dropdown box, choose to include the Project Essay by (1) copying or typing it in the appropriate text box/text format or (2) uploading a digital file (.PDF, .Doc, or .Docx). After your selection, a text box or an upload field will appear.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Applicants are required to include three Letters of Recommendation – one from a Lead Reference plus two Additional Letters of Recommendation. A Lead Reference is someone who knows your service work well and can answer specific questions about it.

Applicants request their letters from recommenders using a separate form found on the application's Homepage. Recommenders then submit their letters directly and confidentially through the online application system.

Once you request your three letters using the form on the application's Homepage, the system will send an email to your recommenders that includes the following guidelines:

GUIDELINES FOR THE LEAD REFERENCE LETTER

A Lead Reference is someone who knows the applicant's service work well and can answer specific questions about it.

- A family member cannot serve as the Lead Reference.
- The letter should not exceed 1,000 words.
- The letter should answer the following five questions:

1. What is the relationship between the Lead Reference and the applicant?
2. What service activity did the applicant perform and what was the applicant's specific leadership role in that activity?
3. What obstacles or challenges did the applicant overcome while leading this service activity?
4. What were the verifiable results of the applicant's service activity?
5. How has the applicant demonstrated heroic character qualities such as courage, compassion, dedication, generosity, and perseverance?

GUIDELINES FOR THE TWO ADDITIONAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Letters should verify the applicant's service achievements.
 - Letters should attest to the applicant's general character and include how he/she has demonstrated heroic character qualities such as courage, compassion, dedication, generosity, and perseverance.
 - Letters should include how the recommender knows the applicant.
 - Letters should not exceed 500 words.
 - Family members cannot provide Letters of Recommendation.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to track Letters of Recommendation using the online application system and to remind references to submit their letters by April 15.
- Applicants may submit their application before all three letters have been received in our system.

PHOTOS

Please upload at least one color photo of yourself. It is ideal if you can upload a close-up of yourself as well as one or two other photos of you involved in your project work (for a maximum of three (3) photos allowed). Our system will only accept .JPG files.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

You may provide links or uploads for up to five (5) total Supplemental Materials (e.g., media articles) that you'd like our judges to review. For videos, please provide links rather than upload video files.

SAVING AND SUBMITTING

- "Save Draft" to save your work if you are not ready to submit the entire application.
 - "Mark Complete" if you have completed all required fields and are ready to submit.
 - You will be redirected to the previous page where you can click "Edit" to make any final changes.
 - You must click the green "Submit" button to officially submit your application (and once you do so, you will not be able to make any changes or additions).
- If your application was complete and successfully submitted, you will immediately see confirmation to the left of the "Submit" button. You will also receive confirmation via email. • The system will not allow you to submit any materials after the application deadline (though your references will be able to submit their letters for a few days past the deadline).

Questions?

Visit our Frequently Asked Questions page on the website.

Email Carolyn at admin@barronprize.org

