

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025

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**GADSDEN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS INVITE  
GADSDEN COUNTY STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN INAUGURAL BLACK  
HISTORY MONTH ART AND ESSAY CONTEST**  
*Top Elementary, Middle, and High School Students to Win \$500 Prize*

**GADSDEN COUNTY, Fla.-** - The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners and the Gadsden County School Board are proud to announce the launch of the inaugural Black History Month “Remembering the Past, Celebrating the Future” art and essay contest. This contest invites students to explore the significant contributions of African American laborers to the growth and development of Gadsden County. Winning students will receive cash prizes, with a \$500 grand prize for top essays

“This contest offers an important opportunity for Gadsden County students to connect with the rich history of African American contributions to our community,” said Commissioner Eric Hinson, Chairman of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners. “By participating, students can showcase their creativity while learning about the lasting impact of African Americans in the workforce—not only in Gadsden County but throughout Florida.”

The contest is open to all K-12 students in Gadsden County. Students in grades K-3 are invited to participate in an art contest, while students in grades 4-12 are eligible to enter the essay contest. A panel of educators, artists, curators, and community leaders will serve as judges. Winners will be celebrated during the annual Black History Month Reception at the Gadsden Arts Center and Museum in Quincy on February 27 at 6 p.m.

“This year’s Black History Month theme reflects the legacy of Black residents in Gadsden County who fought for labor dignity and economic justice,” said Gadsden County Superintendent of Schools Elijah Key. “We encourage students to explore the achievements of African Americans in our community and use their voices to honor the past while looking forward to a future of equality and opportunity.”

**Essay Topic: "African Americans and Labor"**

The essay topic will encourage students to explore how African American laborers contributed to Gadsden County's development. Students are encouraged to research and discuss the perspectives of Black entrepreneurs, tradespeople, professionals, and other workers in the community. Additionally, students may reflect on the historical naming conventions such as "Negro," "Black," "Colored," and "Mulatto" as they relate to African American identity.

## **Contest Guidelines:**

### **Art Contest (Grades K-3)**

- Submit original two-dimensional artwork reflecting the history of African American labor in Gadsden County.
- Five winners will receive a \$100 gift card.

### **Essay Contest (Grades 4-12)**

- Students must submit a Modern Language Association (MLA)-formatted essay.
- Grades 4-5: 100-250 words
- Grades 6-8: 300-550 words
- Grades 9-12: 600-850 words
- Essays must demonstrate clarity, creativity, originality, and mastery of grammar and style.
- Plagiarism will result in immediate disqualification.

### **Prizes:**

- Three winners will be selected: one from each grade group (Grades 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12).
- Each winner will receive a \$500 prize.

### **Submission Deadline:**

Entries must be emailed to [blackhistoryessay@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:blackhistoryessay@gadsdencountyfl.gov) or mailed to the Gadsden County Public Information Office, 9-B East Jefferson Street, Quincy, FL 32351, by **5 p.m. on Monday, February 17, 2025.**

### **Partners:**

The Gadsden County Black History Month Celebration is made possible through the support of the Gadsden County Tourist Development Council (TDC), Gadsden County Sheriff's Office, City of Quincy, Quincy Police Department, Gadsden County Black History and Educational Organization, the National Hook-Up for Black Women Inc. Gadsden Chapter, Gadsden Arts Center and Museum, and the Shade Tobacco Museum.

“We look forward to seeing how our students will honor this important legacy through their essays and artwork,” said Commissioner Hinson. “This contest is an opportunity for young people to reflect on the contributions of African American laborers and use their talents to build a brighter future. We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us, and we hope this contest inspires the next generation to make their mark on history.”

For more information or to access a complete copy of the contest rules, visit the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners website at [gadsdencountyfl.gov](http://gadsdencountyfl.gov) or call 850-875-8671.

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