

2027 Storyfest Award

Official Rules

NO ENTRY FEE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN.

VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.

- 1) Description.** The George Washington University ("University") through Planet Forward (a project within the University's School of Media and Public Affairs) offers the 2027 Storyfest Award (the "Award") as an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students who are currently enrolled in, or recently graduated from, an accredited university or college.
- 2) Eligibility.** The Award is open to any person who is (i) eighteen (18) years of age or older at the time of participation, and (ii) either currently enrolled in, or within six (6) months of graduating from, an accredited undergraduate or graduate university or college program ("Entrants"). Entrants may compete either as individuals or in collaboration with one (1) additional person.

The Award is void where prohibited or otherwise restricted by law, rule, or regulation. All applicable United States federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply to this Award and any Prize disbursement, including without limitation federal immigration or sanctions laws. By participating, Entrants agree to be bound by these Official Rules.

- 3) How to Enter and Qualify.** To enter and qualify for the Award, Entrants must complete and submit (i) an online Award entry form and (ii) produce an original story about initiatives, inventions and/or innovations that can move the planet forward (the "Story").

All Story submissions must be original works produced by the Entrants that do not infringe the ownership rights of any other person or entity or use generative AI large language models other than for research purposes. All Story submissions must include primary sources identified in the Story text.

Any Entrants with winning Story submissions made in any prior Storyfest competitions, who are Planet Forward student staff members, or whose Story has been previously edited for publication in a professional magazine or newspaper will be ineligible for Prize consideration. Stories previously edited for and published in student-run magazines and newspapers remain eligible. All data, facts, and claims must be cited through reliable sources to be eligible for the Award and Prize.

Entrants are allowed a maximum of three (3) Story submissions. The period to submit a Story for the Award begins on Friday, May 1, 2026, at

12:00 AM EDT and ends Friday, January 15, 2027, at 11:59 PM EST ("Submission Period"). Only Story submissions posted during the Submission Period will be considered for the Award.

There will be six (6) Winners from among the Entrants who compete for the Award. A Winner shall be selected for each of the categories noted in Section 4.

4) Award Categories. The Story should fit into one of the following categories:

a) Best Short Video

All video submissions should be one to eight (1-8) minutes in length with HD-quality audio and visual, and include an article, which should be fifty to two hundred (50-200) words describing the video without transcription. All video submissions must be oriented horizontally (16:9 aspect ratio) and uploaded to Vimeo or YouTube. If the entry is a documentary longer than nine (9) minutes, a trailer must be submitted that satisfies the run time requirement.

b) Best Social Video

All social media videos should be one to two (1-2) minutes in length with HD quality audio and visual, and include an article, which should be fifty to two hundred (50-200) words describing the video without transcription. All social video submissions must be uploaded to Vimeo or YouTube. All videos must be oriented vertically (9:16 aspect ratio).

c) Best Written Story

All written submissions should be six hundred to one thousand (600-1,000) words and include a minimum of one (1) image, where the image is preferably taken by the Entrant, and features primary source material (e.g., a first-person interview, peer-reviewed surveys, scientific reports, government documents, etc.)

d) Best Multimedia Story

All multimedia submissions must be authored by the Entrant and should include a combination of visual and/or audio elements including but not limited to photography, illustrations, text, embedded audio snippets or longer audio content, and music.

All photography submissions should utilize digital images with a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) dots per inch (dpi) and feature detailed captions, not to exceed two hundred (200) words for each photograph. All photography submissions must be accompanied by a written article between two hundred and four hundred (200-400) words and should summarize the submission. If a photography submission is prepared using Adobe Express or similar platform, then the submission must include an embed code and an

additional written summary of one hundred to two hundred (100-200) words and one (1) photograph to be featured.

e) Framing the Future Award

All Entrants will be eligible for the "Framing the Future Award." The "Framing the Future Award" will be selected by University staff and awarded to the Entrant whose submission most clearly demonstrates (i) outstanding originality, (ii) depth of subject matter research, (iii) compelling use of data, and (iv) engaging use of format & presentation.

f) Fan Favorite Award

All Finalists will be eligible for the "Fan Favorite Award." The "Fan Favorite Award" will be selected by a majority vote of 2027 Planet Forward Summit attendees and via public polling, advertised on social media such as Facebook, X, and Instagram. Voting for the "Fan Favorite Award" shall end on, April 7, 2027 at 5:00 PM EST. In the event the Entrant selected by majority vote was also selected as the Winner for another award category, the "Fan Favorite Award" shall be given to the Entrant with the next highest vote total that was not otherwise selected as a Winner for another award category.

5) Selection and Notification of Finalists. University staff will review all Entrants' Story submissions and select several to advance in the Award selection process ("Finalists"). Finalists for the Award will be announced on February 23, 2027 via email.

6) Selection of Winners. A panel of independent judges and University staff (the "Selectors") will award the Prize. The Selectors will determine the Award for categories 4a through 4d; University staff will determine the Award for category 4e. All judged categories (4a through 4d) will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- a) Creativity and excellence in storytelling;
- b) Variety and credibility of documentation and human sources;
- c) Factual accuracy, including attribution of facts, data and quotes;
- d) Exploration of a unique or underrepresented topic, community, or character; and
- e) Relevance of storytelling goals and interests as described in the Entry Form's short answer questions.

7) Prize. The Winners will receive the Award and be selected by Planet Forward staff to receive the Prize ("Prize Winners").

- a) The Prize shall consist of one (1) eight (8) day / seven (7) night Lindblad Expeditions: Alaska's Inside Passage, Endicott Arm and Prince Rupert from August 6, 2027 to August 13, 2027 aboard the "Greg Mortimer" (the "Trip"). The Trip is subject to restrictions and conditions, including those set forth below.

- b) The Trip consists of seven (7) nights of accommodation for each Prize Winner including:
- One (1) double occupancy cabin (category cannot be selected by Prize Winners) aboard the Trip. Each Prize Winner will share a double-occupancy cabin with another Prize Winner of the same gender.
 - Participation in a guided group travel experience;
 - Services of local experts;
 - Services of Expedition Staff;
 - On-tour luggage handling;
 - Crew gratuities;
 - Scheduled meals;
 - Alcoholic beverages (excluding certain premium brands); and
 - Basic wi-fi.
- c) The Trip includes certain restrictions as follows:
- Trip components are subject to change without notice.
 - The Prize is not a private tour and may be attended by other travelers.
 - The Sponsor reserves the right to delay, postpone or otherwise reschedule the Prize for different dates, even if already booked, as necessary for any reason in its sole discretion, including based on the Prize operator's health and safety protocols.
 - Winners without American citizenship must have an active passport and the ability to obtain the appropriate visas for international travel. Winners commit to accepting the Prize and attending the 2027 Planet Forward Summit. Winners also agree that they may be asked to talk about their Story submission on a panel or during a Workshop at the 2027 Planet Forward Summit.
 - Any Prize expenses not specifically included as part of the Prize are solely the responsibility of the Prize Winner, including, without limitation, the following: roundtrip airfare between the Prize Winner's residence and the originating and ending point of the Prize; roundtrip ground transportation between the Prize Winner's residence and the airport of origin; voyage tax; visa fees (if applicable); travel insurance or trip cancellation insurance; activities and ground transportation not expressly included in the Prize; meals not served as part of the Prize; airline baggage fees; customs and immigration fees; passport costs; laundry service, merchandise and souvenirs; parking; room service; service charges; spa services and other optional activities; telephone calls; and income and other taxes not expressly included in

the Prize; and all other costs and expenses not expressly included in the Prize.

- Certain terms and restrictions shall apply to the Prize, as determined by the Sponsor in its sole discretion. If Prize Winner does not agree with these restrictions, the Prize will be forfeited in its entirety.
 - Prize Winner shall be required to execute and return a signed, notarized agreement for the Prize, which includes a release of liability, assumption of risk, waiver of claims, indemnification and publicity (i.e., photo/video) release (where allowed by law) prior to participation, admissions tickets, if applicable, and any other documentation such as a W9 or W-8BEN depending on country of citizenship as required by Sponsor. Failure to return any required documentation within the specified time periods will result in Prize forfeiture.
 - Prize Winner acknowledges sole responsibility for any actions, claims or liabilities related to any use or misuse of the Prize or any related activity or travel.
- d) For Winners who are part of a team, the entire team will be recognized in any University Award presentation (e.g., certificate or plaque). For the avoidance of doubt, the Winners from a team must designate only one (1) team member to receive the entire Prize. In no instance shall a cash equivalent be provided to Winners from a team in lieu of the Prize or in exchange for the Prize's cash value.
- e) The Prize expedition must be completed at the designated dates and location for the Trip, or the offered Prize will be forfeited. If forfeited, the Entrant is still considered a Winner and maintains the accolade associated with the Award.
- f) All federal, state, and local taxes (including income and withholding taxes) arising from or relating to acceptance or use of the prize are the sole responsibility of the Prize Winner. The University makes no representation regarding tax obligations and will not provide reimbursement or additional compensation for any tax liability incurred. Prize Winners are advised to consult with their own tax professional.
- g) There are no Prize substitutions or options available. The Winners shall not be permitted to replace the Prize with another item or cash equivalent. The Prize is non-transferable. If the Prize becomes unavailable, the University reserves the right, exercisable at any time and in its sole discretion, to either substitute a prize of comparable value or not award any prize to the Winners. All Prize awards are at the University's sole

discretion. Winners should email storyfest@planetforward.org if they have additional Prize questions.

8) Winner Notification. The Winners of categories (a) through (e) will be publicly announced and notified via email on March 16, 2027. The Winner of category (f) will be notified at the Planet Forward Summit on April 9, 2027. Additionally, if a potential Winner is found to be ineligible or if the potential Winner does not comply with these Official Rules, such potential Winner will be disqualified and, at the University's discretion, an applicable runner-up will be notified. Any Entrants attempting to defraud or in any way tamper with this Award, and any Entrants who do not comply with these Official Rules, will be ineligible for the Prize. If during the Submission Period, for reasons beyond the University's control, the Award is not capable of running as originally planned, the University, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to cancel or modify the Award without liability, and to the extent feasible, will determine the Winners and award the Prize among Story submissions received prior to cancellation or modification.

9) License. All Entrants, and specifically each Winner as a condition of receiving the Prize, hereby grants the University a transferable, irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, fully paid-up, and royalty-free license to copy, distribute, publish, and display their individual Story on the Planet Forward website (as applicable), at the Planet Forward Summit, and in other Planet Forward marketing materials.

10) Representations and Warranties: All Entrants represent and warrant that:

- a) Entrant owns all rights, title and interest in and to the Story and has the full right, power, and authority to grant the License herein.
- b) The Story contains no libelous or otherwise unlawful material and does not infringe any proprietary right at common law or any statutory copyright.
- c) If any Story material is subject to the copyright or other intellectual property rights of a third party, Entrant shall acquire all necessary permissions prior to the Story's submission and share them with the University upon request.

11) Use of Name and Likeness. The Winners agree to allow the University to use their names and images on future Award promotional materials, with regards to the Planet Forward Summit and on the Planet Forward website for promotional purposes.

12) Release of Liability and Indemnification. By participating, all Entrants release and indemnify the University and its officers, directors, employees, and agents (collectively, "Released Parties") from any and all liability with respect to and in any way arising from participating in an Award

submission, based upon the Representations and Warranties, and/or acceptance or use of the Prize. Released Parties are not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, inconsistent, damaged, inaccurate, stolen, delayed, undelivered, or garbled Story submissions; or for lost, interrupted, or unavailable network, server, internet service provider, website; or for other errors or difficulties of any kind whether human, mechanical, electronic, computer, network, typographical or otherwise relating to or in connection with the Award, including, without limitation, errors or difficulties which may occur in connection with the administration of the Award, the Story submission, or the announcement of the Winners. Released Parties also are not responsible for any incorrect or inaccurate information, whether caused by other Entrants, tampering, hacking, or by any equipment or programming associated with or utilized in an Award submission. Released Parties are not responsible for injury or damage to any Entrants' computer or tracking device related to or resulting from participating in an Award submission. Entrants who tamper with or abuse any aspect of the Award submission process, who act in an unprofessional or disruptive manner or who are in violation of these Official Rules, as solely determined by the University, will be disqualified. Should any portion of an Award submission be, in the University's sole opinion, compromised by virus, worms, bugs, non-authorized human intervention, or other causes which, in the sole opinion of the University, corrupt or impair the administration, security, fairness, or proper play, the University reserves the right at its sole discretion to suspend, modify, or terminate the Award selection process and, if terminated, at its discretion and to the extent possible, determine Winners from all eligible Story submissions received prior to action.

13) Governing Law; Parties in Interest. These Official Rules are governed by all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The local and federal courts of the District of Columbia shall have sole jurisdiction of any controversies regarding the Official Rules and laws of the District of Columbia shall govern the Official Rules. All Entrants waive any and all objections to jurisdiction and venue in those courts and hereby submit to the jurisdiction of those courts.

14) Communications. Any Entrants with questions or comments regarding the Official Rules should contact storyfest@planetforward.org.