

FAQ

Q: What is the Looking@Democracy challenge?

A: Looking@Democracy is a national competition to bring attention to ideas, perspectives and stories that are not currently featured in our mainstream political conversation.

The competition offers a total of \$100,000 in prize money for short, provocative media pieces that either (a) tell a story about why government is important to our lives, or (b) tell how we might together strengthen American democracy.

Q: Who is conducting the competition?

A: Looking@Democracy is a project of the Illinois Humanities Council, with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The Illinois Humanities Council is an educational organization dedicated to fostering a culture in which the humanities are a vital part of the lives of individuals and communities. Through its programs and grants, the IHC promotes greater understanding of, appreciation for, and involvement in the humanities by all Illinoisans, regardless of their economic resources, cultural background, or geographic location.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society.

Q: What should I submit to the competition?

A: Media pieces can come in many formats such as compelling short videos; funny audio clips, satirical animations; music videos, public service announcements, infographics, graphic art, Facebook apps, iPhone apps, etc. – maybe even an animated rap song!

Audio and Video entries should be under three (3) minutes in length.

Submissions can be informative, persuasive, serious, funny, satirical, personal, inspirational or critical. They all just need to be digital so they can be shared and disseminated electronically— other than that, it's up to YOU!

All entries must address issues related to democracy in the United States.

Q: Who should submit an entry to the competition?

A: We're looking to hear from independent media makers, investigative reporters, students, artists - anyone with creative ideas to help engage Americans that may be a little cynical about the role of our government and the state of our democracy.

The competition is open to US citizens and residents with a US social security number.

Q: When should I submit an entry?

A: We will start accepting submissions on February 4, 2013.

The deadline for submissions is 3pm EST on April 16th 2013.

Q: How do I submit?

A: Entries must be submitted using the application form on this site:

www.lookingatdemocracy.org.

Submissions can be uploaded directly (for example, a PDF document) or you can submit a link to media hosted elsewhere (for example, a YouTube video).

Q: Why should I submit an entry?

A: We are offering the following cash prizes:

First Place for Best Entry: \$25,000

Second Place for Best Entry: \$20,000

Third Place for Best Entry: \$15,000

People's Choice Award: \$5,000

Emerging Artists (7): \$5,000 Intended for students, young people, and nonprofessionals.

Winning entries will also receive the honor of recognition by the MacArthur Foundation and the opportunity to have their entries disseminated nationally across multiple platforms.

Q: Who will judge my entry to the competition?

A: A panel of national experts has been assembled to determine winning entries:

- Maria Hinojosa, host of NPR's Latino USA;
- Byron Hurt, filmmaker of the award-winning 2007 documentary Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes,
- Ian Inaba, Director of the 2006 Sundance Award-winning documentary American Blackout,
- Kevin Coval, Co-Founder & Artistic Director of the Louder Than a Bomb Teen Poetry Festival,
- Wendy Levy, co-founder of Sparkwise, and past recipient of the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions at the Bay Area Video Coalition.

Q: How will my entry be judged?

A: A panel of national expert judges will judge submissions on the following criteria:

Style:

- Does the piece immediately engage and make sense?
- Is the piece provocative? Does it elicit an emotional response? Will it lead to discussion and debate?
- Would the piece appeal to a wide audience?

- Is the length of the piece appropriate?

Substance:

- Does the piece directly address a topic related to democracy in the U.S?
- Does it offer a fresh approach to the topic?
- Does it address common perceptions about democracy, the electoral process, campaigns, politicians or government? Does it provide some new insight or unexpected angle on a well-covered issue?
- Does it provide an alternative to the spread of misinformation and negative rhetoric common in our political process?

Q: Where can I find examples of possible submissions?

A: http://lookingatdemocracy.org/details/example_ideas

Q: When will the awards be announced?

A: Awards will be announced online in early May, 2013

Q: Where can I find more information about the Looking@Democracy challenge?

A: Visit www.LookingAtDemocracy.org or contact the Illinois Humanities Council at LookingAtDemocracy@prairie.org.