



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Celebration Steering Committee, Inc.

39TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION
SANFORD, FLORIDA

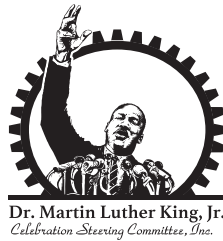
ORATORICAL CONTEST & SCHOLARSHIP FUND 2025 – 2026

Sponsored by:

The City of Sanford Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee, Inc.
In Partnership with Seminole State College



MLK SANFORD



2025 – 2026 High School Seniors Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Contest & Scholarship Fund Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship fund is to honor Dr. King's accomplishments as well as encourage our youth, through education and experience, to continue to strive to become productive citizens and give back to their communities through seeking higher education beyond high school. We are encouraging Seminole County high school seniors who plan to attend a college or university to compete in an Oratorical Contest to receive scholarship funds.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee will offer a scholarship to the first, second and third place winners. If one of these winners attend Seminole State College, they will be awarded a \$3,000 scholarship. If the first, second, or third place winner does not want to attend Seminole State College this scholarship will be offered to the next contestant.

Event Date: Friday, January 16, 2026 @ 6:00 p.m.

Seminole State College
100 Weldon Blvd., Room C-108, Sanford, Florida 32773

Deadline to submit application and speech: January 9, 2026

Sponsored by: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee
In Partnership with Seminole State College
& The City of Sanford, Florida

Contact: Oratorical Chairman Mr. Kenneth Bentley – 321-262-5075

VIRTUAL SPEAKING COACH

A Public Speaking Coach will be accessible to all applicants who submit an Oratorical Application. The coach will offer tips on the mechanics of effective speaking and provide constructive feedback that applicants may use to improve their speech. Participation in a virtual coaching session is optional, but strongly recommended. Two separate coaching sessions will be conducted via Zoom on the following dates:

Applicants who plan to take advantage of a virtual coaching session should have their speech prepared and be willing to read or recite it aloud (the speech should be memorized for the competition). Coaches will only provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Coaches cannot assist in speech writing or re-writing.

Virtual Coaching Zoom Dates

1. Monday, December 22, 2025 - 11am - 1pm
2. Sunday, January 11, 2026 - 3pm - 5pm

Interested applicants should email barbaraann612@gmail.com to secure a spot and for Zoom information. Please use MLK Speech Review for the email subject.

REQUIREMENTS

- Candidate must be a high school senior planning to attend a college or university after graduation;
- Candidate must currently have a 2.5 overall GPA earned in high school;
- Candidates must submit a copy of his/her speech along with a completed application by January 9, 2026.

ORATORICAL CONTEST TOPICS – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Create a speech that will allow you to apply one of Dr. King's below quotes to a challenge our country is currently facing.

(Choose One Quote)

1. "Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."
2. "We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope."
3. "Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve."
4. "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right."

GUIDELINES

- Candidates must write an original speech (oral presentation of between 4 – 6 minutes) and present a copy along with their application. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.
- Candidate must perform an oral presentation (memorization of speech) without any notes on one of the contest topics.
- Candidate will be judged on content, originality, and presentation. Oration must be performed on contest topics.

COMMEMORATIVE BANQUET

Saturday, January 17, 2026 @ 6:00 p.m.

Sanford Civic Center

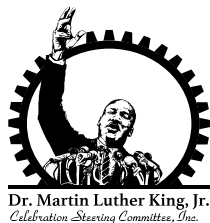
401 E. Seminole Boulevard, Sanford, Florida 32771

We encourage all candidates and parents/sponsors to attend our Annual Commemorative Banquet. There is always a dynamic speaker, and a buffet dinner will be served. All candidates will be provided two tickets, one for the student and one for a parent, to the banquet. Any additional tickets must be purchased. All candidates will be given award certificates at the banquet.

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

- Scholarship funds will be given to candidates after they have received their fall semester class schedules from their college. Scholarship winners and a parent must sign a Release of Funds document verifying the student's enrollment status, scholarship amount, and intention to use the funds to defray college expenses.
- It is the responsibility of the candidate to provide any change of address or new phone number to the scholarship contact person.

DISCLAIMER: Scholarship funds must be claimed by the end of the student's first academic year in college following graduation. Otherwise, the funds will be forfeited.





Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Celebration Steering Committee, Inc.

ORATORICAL CONTEST & SCHOLARSHIP FUND APPLICATION

(APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 9, 2026)

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____ Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone # _____ - _____ - _____ Cell Phone # _____ - _____ - _____ Grade Point Average (GPA) _____

High School _____ City/State _____ Expected Graduation Date _____

Counselor's Name

Counselor's Signature

Please be sure to fill out the **ENTIRE APPLICATION** and obtain **ALL SIGNATURES**.

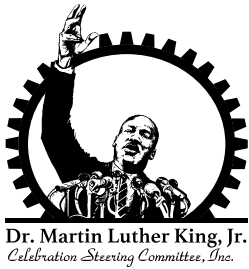
Also, submit a **COPY OF YOUR SPEECH** and make a copy for yourself.

Send documents to:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Steering Committee
Oratorical Scholarship Contest
P. O. Box 500
Sanford, FL 32772-0500

For additional information, please call:

Mr. Kenneth Bentley, Oratorical Scholarship Chairman
Contact Number: 321-262-5075



2025 – 2026 HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ORATORICAL CONTEST & SCHOLARSHIP FUND
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Print Your Name

SECTION 1: GOALS

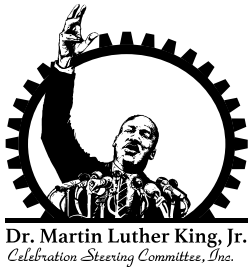
Describe your future plans and career you wish to pursue. Include college/university you plan to attend.

SECTION 2: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Summarize your school activities emphasizing those that helped to develop citizenship. Include the most important activity and all offices you have held.

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY SERVICE

List community service activities that demonstrate your leadership involvement and abilities.



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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ORATORICAL CONTEST & SCHOLARSHIP FUND
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Print Your Name

SECTION 4: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

What do you feel are your greatest accomplishments so far?

Explain how receiving this scholarship will make a difference in your life? Additionally, briefly explain how you plan to give back to your community after college.

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____