

Beautify Your School FAQ

How does the contest work?

Beautify Your School is a cleanup and beautification competition that rewards schools for improving their surroundings and engaging their students in environmental programs.

1. You enter a digital or physical poster showcasing photos documenting your project by May 1, 2026. Projects can take place anytime during this school year!
2. A panel of judges reviews the contest submissions.
3. Cash prizes and trophies are awarded to the top projects in all four categories!
4. Representatives from the first-place winning schools of each category are featured on WREG's Live at 9.

How many projects can I enter?

You can submit one project per category, so one school could submit four total projects. All projects must have a separate entry form and poster.

How can Memphis City Beautiful support my project?

City Beautiful has a variety of programs and resources to make your work successful!

- Borrow supplies from our [Tool Bank](#) including items for a cleanup, like litter grabbers, trash bags, etc., or for a gardening project, like shovels, rakes, hoes, etc.
- Request seed packets to plant.
- Request a donation of [mulch and/or compost](#) for your school garden efforts (quantity and availability may be limited).
- Request a speaker or presentation on topics like the following:
 - Lessons and games on what items can be recycled
 - The importance of nature on physical, mental, and social well-being
 - Story times and crafts on trees, recycling, or pollution
 - Pollinator species and their importance in our ecosystem
- Ask for guidance on improving or adding infrastructure like school signs or outdoor classrooms.
- Borrow recycling bins to help collect items for a campus recycling drive.

- Get advice on field trip opportunities like Tennessee Arbor Day and a tour of the regional recycling facility.

Call 901-636-4410 or email city.beautiful@memphistn.gov to explore any of these opportunities!

What are your recommendations for a successful entry?

- Judges want to understand the story of your project. Your entry can be simple, just make to convey what is unique about your school and students in your poster and project description.
- Take lots of pictures before, during, and after your project. We recommend using at least eight photos to showcase your student engagement and project impact.
- Consider making a short video and linking it to a QR code on your poster so the judges can see your students in action.
- Whether you design a trifold presentation board or make a poster online, telling the story of how your students learned, worked together, and improved their campus is key to a winning entry.

Are there any grants or funds that we could use?

Memphis City Beautiful does not offer funding, but you are welcome to use our resources like the Tool Bank, mulch/compost donations, and complimentary seed packets. There are also local grant opportunities with varying eligibility requirements and application periods. You can explore them through the links below:

- [City of Memphis Neighborhood Watch, Neighborhood Crime Prevention Grant](#)
- [Division of Housing and Community Development's SCIF Grants](#)
- [FedEx's Positively Memphis Community Fund](#)
- [International Paper Giving](#)
- [AutoZone's Grant Programs](#)
- [Junior League of Memphis' Community Assistance Fund](#)
- [Community LIFT's Memphis Empowerment Fund](#)
- [Memphis City Council Grants](#)
- [Shelby County Commission Grants](#)
- [State of Tennessee Grants](#)

How many prizes are awarded?

There will always be prizes awarded in every category, though there is not a definite number year to year. The number of prizes typically depends on how many total entries are submitted and how many the judges deem to be competitive.

Is there an online tool I can use to design a digital poster?

Yes! Canva is a design website with thousands of free templates, photos, fonts, and more. Many educators have access to [Canva Education](#), which is 100% free for teachers and students at eligible schools. Some general tips:

- When creating from a template, be sure that you are using a document large enough to print clearly and legibly on a sheet of 11x17 paper. The “Poster” or “School Board” sizes meet this criteria. The free version of Canva does not allow documents to be resized once created, so be sure you start with the right size!
- Premium templates are marked with a little crown, so if you’d like to use only free content, look for templates and graphic elements without it.
- “Photo collage” is a great search phrase when looking for a template to create your poster. Just make sure you filter results to only “Poster” or “School Board” under Category.