

**Description & Eligibility**

Contestants will conduct research on the topic and present findings in a research paper and an oral presentation. Any secondary division contestant may enter this judged event. Contestants must be registered for the national competition before the submission deadline and compete in both parts of the event to be ranked. **Entries that do not follow the provided topic or the Copyright and/or Fair Use Guidelines will be disqualified.**

**Topic**

How important is earning a college degree in 2026? As financial costs (tuition, room & board, interest rates) rise for post-secondary education, and considering the economic costs of attending a 4-year college or university, should qualifying students be encouraged to earn a bachelor's degree?

In your response, consider:

- The economic costs of earning a college degree
- Potential financial debt from earning a degree
- Employment opportunities for degreed and non-degreed candidates in the labor market
- Positive externalities of a college educated community
- Future earning potential for degree and non-degreed candidates
- Theory of creative destruction on career prospects for degreed and non-degreed candidates

**Contestant Must Supply**

- Optional - Digital presentation tools and supporting equipment (device, software, projector, extension cords, etc.)

**Competition Notes**

- Method of evaluation: judged.
- Carry-in and set-up of equipment must be done solely by the contestant within the time allotted.
- No Internet access will be provided on-site at NLC; however, contestants may provide their own access to be used only for their presentation to the judges.
- Business Professionals of America assumes no responsibility for hardware/software provided by the contestant.
- Length of event: no more than three (3) minutes setup time, no more than seven (7) minutes presentation time, and no more than five (5) minutes for judges' questions.
- Each state is allowed three (3) entries.

**Technical Pre-Submit Specifications**

What to Submit at <a href="https://upload.bpa.org">https://upload.bpa.org</a>	Saved File Naming Convention	National Deadline
Research Paper, Works Cited and BPA Release Form(s) in one combined PDF file.	ERPI-ContestantID.pdf	April 1, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

**Contest Competencies**

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of basic economic concepts by exploring and analyzing global and domestic economic issues
- Evaluate research and communicate findings both orally and in writing
- Explore basic economic concepts that affect the workplace
- Identify economic systems
- Explain how economic growth can be promoted and measured
- Conduct research using various resources and methods
- Analyze economic issues

## Contest Specifications for this Event

- Follow the Report format located in the *Style & Reference Manual*. (Note: no Title Page is required.) Header information on the first page of the report should be as follows: Contestant ID Number (Sender's ID Number - XXXXXXXX), Harvey Rosen (Recipient's Name), Financial Services Department (Recipient's Department), and Current Date.
- Document length is limited to seven double-spaced, single-sided, numbered pages with one-inch margins. The Works Cited page(s) is not included in this limit, but graphs, tables, and charts are. Judges will not read beyond the seven allowed pages.
- Each research paper must reflect the contestant's own research, writing, and original thinking.

## Common Specifications for all BPA Judged Events

- This is a pre-submitted event. Regional and state conferences have specific deadlines prior to the national deadline. Please consult the regional or state conference administrator for those deadlines. For the National Leadership Conference, submit the URL to <https://upload.bpa.org> no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 1, 2026. **No changes can be made to the project after the date of submission.**
- Contestant ID is required for all submissions. Materials from non-registered contestants and/or those missing Contestant ID cannot be accepted.
- The contestant is responsible for securing a signed BPA Release Form(s) from any person, including oneself, whose image or work is used in the project.
- The contestant is responsible for citing all sources, including oneself, on the Works Cited page for any work used on the project. It is the policy of Business Professionals of America to comply with copyright law. The *Style & Reference Manual* contains guidelines for copyright and fair use. Participants will be disqualified for violations of the guidelines.
- Materials must follow the organization's BPA Graphic Standards and make proper use of the BPA logo and/or organization's name. Refer to the BPA Graphic Standards in the *Style & Reference Manual*.
- Judges' comments will be returned digitally through the online judging system at the national level. Materials submitted for technical judging will *not* be returned and will *not* be available at NLC.

## (155) Economic Research Individual

### Technical Scoring Rubric

<b>Required Elements</b> (If any question results in a NO, please assign a score of 0)				
Contestant followed the topic.				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Contestant followed Copyright and/or Fair Use Guidelines.				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
If answered no to either question, please stop scoring and provide a brief reason for the <i>disqualification</i> :				
<b>Submission and Formatting</b> (All points or none are awarded by the technical judge)				
Contestant submitted one (1) combined PDF file containing their Research Paper and Works Cited in the correct format according to the <i>Style &amp; Reference Guide</i> and BPA Release Form(s).				<b>/10</b>
Evaluation Criteria	Below Expectations 0-10 points	Meets Expectations 11-20 points	Above Expectations 21-30	Points Awarded
<b>Comprehension of Topic</b>	Shows limited understanding, with inaccuracies and shallow explanations. Ideas are unclear and poorly connected.	Demonstrates clear understanding with accurate explanations and relevant examples, with logical connections.	Exhibits deep understanding, explaining complex ideas clearly with insightful examples and thorough coverage.	<b>/30</b>
<b>Organization and Expansion of Ideas</b>	The argument lacks structure, with weak transitions and underdeveloped ideas.	The argument is logical and coherent, with clear transitions and well-developed points.	The argument is well-organized, with smooth transitions and thoroughly expanded points, demonstrating clear reasoning.	<b>/30</b>
<b>Introduction/Summary</b>	The introduction and summary lack clarity, with underdeveloped arguments and insufficient evidence.	The introduction and summary present a logical argument, with appropriate evidence supporting conclusions.	The introduction and summary are compelling, with strong evidence and a concise, impactful summary.	<b>/30</b>
<b>Creativity</b>	The response lacks creativity, using generic ideas and limited resources.	The response is creative, offering an original perspective with diverse resources supporting the ideas.	The response is highly original and inventive, with well-integrated resources adding depth and creativity.	<b>/30</b>
<b>Writing Accuracy</b>	Frequent grammar or spelling errors.	Contains some grammar or spelling errors.	Contains very few or no grammar or spelling errors.	<b>/30</b>
<b>TOTAL TECHNICAL POINTS</b>				<b>/160</b>

## (155) Economic Research Individual

### Presentation Scoring Rubric

Required Elements (If any question results in a NO, please assign a score of 0)				
Contestant followed the topic.				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Contestant followed Copyright and/or Fair Use Guidelines.				<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
If answered no to either question, please stop scoring and provide a brief reason for the <i>disqualification</i> :				
Evaluation Criteria	Below Expectations 0-5 points	Meets Expectations 6-10 points	Above Expectations 11-15 points	Points Awarded
Delivery & Engagement	Contestant rarely maintains eye contact, uses minimal gestures and body language, or has significant inconsistencies in tone and pace.	Contestant occasionally breaks eye contact, uses limited gestures and body language, or has some inconsistencies in tone and pace.	Contestant maintains good eye contact, uses appropriate gestures and body language, and varies their tone and pace adequately.	/15
Organization, Design & Structure	The presentation lacks coherence, and the speaker's structure is unclear. Transitions between points are awkward or missing, making it difficult to follow the overall flow.	The presentation has some structural gaps, and the speaker's organization is inconsistent. Transitions between points are present but choppy, affecting the clarity of the message.	The presentation flows logically, with a clear and well-integrated structure. The speaker transitions smoothly between points, enhancing the overall coherence and impact.	/15
Evaluation Criteria	Below Expectations 0-10 points	Meets Expectations 11-30 points	Above Expectations 31-50 points	Points Awarded
Content Knowledge	Presentation demonstrates a limited understanding of the topic and includes mostly irrelevant or inaccurate information.	Presentation demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic and includes a mix of relevant and irrelevant information.	Presentation demonstrates a good understanding of the topic and includes relevant and accurate information.	/50
Evaluation Criteria	Below Expectations 0-4 points	Meets Expectations 5-7 points	Above Expectations 8-10 points	Points Awarded
Judges' Questions	Responses lack depth and fail to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the topic.	Some responses lack detail or clarity. The understanding of the topic is partially demonstrated.	Responses are detailed, insightful, and effectively address the judges' questions.	/10
Timing	Setup lasted no longer than three (3) minutes, and the presentation lasted no more than seven (7) minutes.			/10
TOTAL PRESENTATION POINTS				/100

Props and/or additional items shall not be used as a basis for scoring.

**PRESENTATION WILL BE STOPPED AT SEVEN (7) MINUTES**