



Otero County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

2026 Government-in-Action Youth Tour

Sponsored by Otero County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

CONTEST RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the contest, the student must:

- ☐ Be a high school sophomore, junior or senior.
- ☐ Be a dependent of an active Otero County Electric Cooperative (OCEC) member.
- ☐ Submit the completed application, two (2) written short essays and one (1) letter of recommendation from school or community leaders.
- ☐ Participate in a personal interview. Finalists will be picked based upon written application and will be interviewed by the selection committee. Winners will be chosen after the interview process is complete.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications will be considered when the following information has been received at Otero County Electric Cooperative:

1. Completed application with applicant's and parent/guardian's signatures.
2. Parent or guardian's current OCEC account number provided on the application (account number will be printed on most recent bill).
3. Two (2) essays—one (1) essay with topic chosen by OCEC; one (1) essay of the applicant's choice from three (3) suggested topics and with a minimum of 500 words.
4. One (1) letter of recommendation from school or community leaders.

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026

Return completed application to your local OCEC office or mail to:

Otero County Electric Cooperative, Inc.
ATTN: Member Services-Youth Tour
PO Box 1135
Alto, NM 88312

The 2025 Government-In-Action Youth Tour will be June 15-21, 2026.

*All information contained within the application is strictly confidential. The OCEC Government-in-Action Youth Tour Selection Committee reserves the right to require verification of all information provided by the applicant, if deemed necessary. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.***

2026 Government-in-Action Youth Tour Application

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
Student Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Birth Date:
E-mail:		
PARENT OR GUARDIAN INFORMATION		
Name of Parent or Guardian:		
Electric Service Address:		Account #:
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Home Phone:	Work Phone:	Cell Phone:
E-mail of Parent or Guardian:		
SCHOOL INFORMATION		
Name of High School or Home School Association:		
Address:		Phone:
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
High School Principal or Counselor:		
Phone:	Fax:	Grade:

STUDENT RELEASE

Selection will be made without regard to the applicant's race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, or physical handicap. Winners from OCEC will be selected for the Washington, D.C. trip. Selection is based on the completed application and interview process. The delegates selected to represent OCEC are required to travel with their state delegation for the full tour. The delegates are not allowed to travel independently from the delegation to, from or during the trip to Washington, D.C., except in the case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency, arrangements must be approved and will be coordinated through the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NMRECA). If a delegate cannot attend the entire Youth Tour, the delegate will be required to forfeit the trip and will become an alternate.

I certify that the information contained in this application is true, complete and accurate. I authorize release of information to confirm and/or verify this application. I further authorize release of my name and photos in connection with announcements of Youth Tour awards in the event that I am selected to be an OCEC Youth Tour recipient.

Applicant Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN RELEASE

I/We hereby grant permission for (name of student) _____ to enter the OCEC Government-In-Action Youth Tour competition. I/We further authorize release of the name and photos of my/our child in connection with announcements of Youth Tour awards in the event that he/she is selected to be an OCEC Youth Tour recipient. I/We understand that my/our child must attend the entire Youth Tour and travel both to and from Washington with the state delegation. Only in the event of an emergency will my/our child be able to leave the tour. I/We understand that coordination of my/our child's return in the event of an emergency will be coordinated through NMRECA.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

FOR OCEC OFFICE USE ONLY		
Date Application Received:	OCEC Account Verified: YES NO	OCEC Employee:
Application Complete: YES NO	Essays Included: YES NO	Recommendation Letters Included: YES NO

ESSAYS REQUIRED

Please answer all questions on separate sheets of paper. Print neatly or type and double space each answer using a 12-point font. NO HANDWRITTEN CURSIVE SUBMISSIONS. Number or letter each essay response with the corresponding question number/letter.

Prepare a brief essay on the following topic:

1. What is an electric cooperative; its purpose; method of operation, etc.? How is a cooperative different from an investor-owned electric utility?

Prepare a 500-word essay on one of the following questions:

- A. Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of electric vehicles and examine how their widespread adoption could affect your electric cooperative and surrounding community.
- B. Discuss the effects of rural broadband initiatives on the operations and outreach of electric cooperatives.