



Bladen County Call to Artists 2025-2026 NC First in Freedom Festival Regional Art Contest



2026 represents the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the United States. The journey toward this historic milestone is an opportunity to celebrate through multiple forms of expression. One such form is the arts. Bladen County's America 250th Committee in partnership with Elizabethtown-White Lake Area Chamber of Commerce is announcing this Call to Artists for participation in the 2025-2026 NC First in Freedom Festival Regional Art Contest. The art contest will be a collaborative event between the NC First in Freedom Festival (FIFF) Committee, Moores Creek National Battlefield, Moores Creek Battleground Association, Bladen County's America 250 Committee, and Pender Arts Council. The art contest is comprised of 2 phases: Phase 1, the County Art Contest, to determine the winners to participate in Phase 2, the Regional Art Contest.

Guidelines: Phase One – Bladen County Call to Artists

- The theme of the art contest is ***“Freedom”***. This correlates with the NC First in Freedom Festival, relating to the celebration of our nation's 250th birthday.
- The contest is open to high school (public and private) and adult participants in Bladen County.
- **Digital art submissions** are due to Elizabethtown-White Lake Area Chamber of Commerce by **May 25, 2025**.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria: artwork encapsulates the concepts of freedom and patriotism, celebrates America at 250, and is inspirational.
- Contest entries must be original two-dimensional (2D) work created within the last 12 months using a medium of the artist's choice with a size not larger than 18" X 24" and no smaller than 8" X 10".
- Art must be gallery wrapped and “ready to hang” using eye bolts and wire. Frames are not required, but if the artist chooses to frame their art, the frame must be all black.
- Prizes for the 1st and 2nd Place Adult and Student Winners are being sponsored by Camp Clearwater. Prizes for winning entries will be awarded as follows:

1 st Place Adult	\$250.00	1 st Place Student	200.50
2nd Place Adult	\$200.50	1 st Place Student	200.50

- Email your high quality digital file to: admin@elizabethtownwhitelake.com. Once the digital file is received, you will receive instructions on where to bring the actual artwork.
- Subject Line: **FIFF Art Contest Entry**
- Include: Your name – Phone number – Student or Adult Category – Size – Medium - Brief description of the artwork submitted with a focus of how it portrays the meaning of “freedom”.
- Winners will be notified by **June 30, 2025**. Winners will advance to the First in Freedom Regional Art Contest.

Guidelines: Phase Two – Regional Art Show

- The NC FIFF committee in conjunction with Moore's Creek National Battlefield and Battleground Association is responsible for coordinating and conducting the regional competition.
- Bladen County will deliver its 1st and 2nd place winners to the NC FIFF Art Contest Committee by August 16, 2025 at Pender Arts Council, 111 South Wright Street, Burgaw, NC 28425.
- The 1st place winners of each category from Bladen County will be judged along with the submissions from the other seven counties (Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Bladen, Onslow, and Sampson) to determine the regional place winners, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. This phase will be completed by August 30, 2025
- The winning selection(s) for the regional art show will be made by the NC FIFF panel of judges and is final. First, second, and third place winners will be determined from the submissions in each of the two categories (high school and adult). The regional judges will use the same criteria to determine the overall regional winners: submitted artwork encapsulates the concepts of freedom and patriotism, celebrates America at 250, and is inspirational.
- The winning art submissions from each county will be on display at the Pender Arts Council, 111 S. Wright St, Burgaw, NC and then at Moores Creek National Battlefield from February 21-28, 2026 and possibly other venues TBD. The artwork will be released by the NC FIFF Art Contest Committee back to the appropriate counties as quickly as possible starting March 3, 2026.
- Prizes for winning entries will be awarded as follows:

1 st Place Adult	\$502.50	1 st Place Student	250.00
2 nd Place Adult	\$250.00	2 nd Place Student	202.5
3 rd Place Adult	\$102.50	3 rd Place Student	102.50

- In addition to the proposed awards above, the school from which the winning student submission comes will be awarded \$250 for the purchase of classroom supplies. The regional awards are in addition to whatever awards are given by the counties.
- The winning artwork submitted to the regional competition by the participating counties will be highlighted in the NC First in Freedom Festival Visitors guide.
- Pender County, NC First in Freedom Festival Committee, Pender Arts Council, Moores Creek National Battlefield, and Moores Creek Battleground Association maintain the rights to use photos of the art for marketing and promotion. The organizing committee reserves the right to not display any entry.

For questions or more information, please email: admin@elizabethtownwhitelake.com.

BLADEN COUNTY FREEDOM ART CONTEST

SUBMISSION FORM:

Please submit this information with a digital copy of your entry by Sunday, May 25, 2025 to the Elizabethtown White Lake Area Chamber – admiin@elizabethtownwhitelake.com. A confirmation email will be sent along with instructions on where to bring your actual artwork for display.

CHECK CATEGORY:

____ ADULT (18 YEARS OLD OR ABOVE)

____ STUDENT (UP TO AND INCLUDING 12TH GRADE)

GRADE: _____

SCHOOL: _____

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL: _____

TOWN: _____

I understand that my work or its likeness will be used to promote the America's 250th event in Bladen County and North Carolina, If I am one of the winners, my artwork will be submitted to the First In Freedom Regional Art Contest.

ARTIST SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT'S SIGNATURE IF 18 OR UNDER: _____

HOW DOES YOUR WORK REPRESENT FREEDOM? (short description up to 100 words)