



AAUW California  
Speech Trek

# Speech Trek Policies and Procedures

August 2021

A project of AAUW California

## **1. Definitions**

### **1.1. Speech Trek Mission Statement**

Speech Trek mission: To promote understanding and communication of gender equity issues among high school students through their research, preparation, and presentation of high-quality speeches, while promoting the value of public speaking as a life and leadership skill.

### **1.2. Speech Trek History**

Speech Trek was established by AAUW CA in 2007. In 2009, it was renamed the Eleanor Stem Allen Memorial Speech Trek Contest in honor and memory of an AAUW member and teacher who recognized the importance of public speaking skills in teaching students about issues that matter to AAUW, and in gratitude to her family for providing ongoing financial support for the project. The Allen family concluded its sponsorship of Speech Trek with the 2020 contest, and new sponsor(s) have been secured beginning with Speech Trek 2021.

### **1.3 Leadership Structure**

- 1. AAUW California (AAUW CA) and AAUW California Board of Directors (AAUW CA BOD):** Speech Trek is a state project under the jurisdiction of the AAUW CA BOD.
- 2. AAUW California Special Project Fund (AAUW CA SPF):** The AAUW CA SPF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that serves as the fiduciary agent for Speech Trek. It is a pass-through funding entity and is not involved in the policies and procedures of the project.
- 3. AAUW CA AAUW CA BOD:** The AAUW CA BOD has direct supervisory authority over the project.
- 4. State Speech Trek Program Director:** The state Speech Trek Program Director is appointed by the AAUW CA president and reports to the AAUW CA BOD. The state Speech Trek Program Director is responsible for coordinating the project for all participating branches.
- 5. Speech Trek Treasurer:** The Speech Trek treasurer is appointed by the AAUW CA president and reports to the AAUW CA BOD. The Speech Trek treasurer is responsible

for the financial oversight of the project and is the overall project treasurer.

6. **Branch Speech Trek Chair:** Each participating AAUW CA branch has a contact person to coordinate all aspects of the local Speech Trek competition and to upload the winner's unedited video to YouTube (per branch toolkit instructions) for consideration as a state finalist.

See Section 5 for detailed job descriptions.

## **2. Speech Trek Contest Rules**

### **2.1. Branch Participation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Each participating AAUW CA branch signs an annual branch participation memorandum of understanding (MOU) with AAUW CA agreeing to adhere to the rules of the project. The branch mails or emails the signed MOU to the AAUW CA office and to the state Speech Trek Program Director. A copy of this signed Memorandum of Understanding (either hardcopy or electronic scanned copy) is to be kept on file at the branch by the branch president and the branch Speech Trek Chair. AAUW CA will retain the original of this MOU in the state Speech Trek Program Director's files at the AAUW CA office.

### **2.2. Eligibility**

Speech Trek is open to all actively enrolled high school students in California. The contest is open to girls and boys enrolled in any public and private high schools, as well as home-schooled students. Students who were among the three finalists at the state competition in prior years may participate in local Speech Trek competitions but are ineligible to repeat as state finalists. Students who received honorable mention but did not compete at the state competition are eligible to compete another year.

### **2.3. Participant Requirements**

1. Students must submit an application and signed parent permission form (if contestant is under 18 years old) to the branch chair by the branch's declared deadline.
2. Students must turn in a signed affidavit authorizing the branch and state's use of the student's name and image.
3. Students must perform an original speech of his/her own that addresses the announced topic and is 5-6 minutes long.
4. Speeches must be presented live before an audience, at a date and location arranged by the branch. If an in-person performance is not possible, the branch may conduct the

contest via a video conferencing tool such as Zoom. All other competition rules remain in place.

5. For virtual contests, students must present speeches in real time, at a date arranged by the branch.

#### **2.4. Branch Competition Rules**

1. Branch speech competitions must be judged by a minimum of three judges. Judges may be AAUW members but branches are encouraged to reach out into the community for non-member judges. If a judge indicates a personal acquaintance with a contestant, that judge should withdraw and be replaced to avoid a potential conflict of interest. The judge's ballot is located in the Branch Toolkit and the Student Toolkit. Participants should be judged on:
  - a. Delivery -- 50%.
  - b. Content -- 50%.
2. Timing begins when the contestant first speaks, not including microphone tests. Students are to prepare an original 5- to 6-minute speech with a 30-second grace period on either side. Speaking under 4 minutes and 30 seconds or over 6 minutes and 30 seconds will result in disqualification.
3. The contestant may, optionally, use notes, as long as they are contained on a single card no larger than 4x6 inches.
4. The performance will be videoed during the branch contest. The video must at least show the contestant's torso and face, as well as all movement around the stage, if speech is given in front of a live audience. If speech is given virtually, it is most important that the contestant can be clearly seen and heard.

#### **2.5. State Competition Rules**

1. The first-place winner of each branch competition is eligible for the state competition.
2. Each branch submitting an entry for the state final must send the state Speech Trek Program Director the following by the March 1 deadline:
  - a. Entry fee of \$25, made out to "AAUW CA SPF" with "Speech Trek" and the branch name in the memo line of the check.

- b. Contestant affidavit allowing use of contestant's name and image.
  - c. The contestant's link to the video from the branch competition, which must be uploaded to the AAUW CA YouTube channel, with the following identifying information: 1) name of contestant; 2) 1st place; 3) branch name; 4) Speech Trek year. Only the unedited video taken by the branch, or via a video conferencing tool as previously described (Section 2.3.4), may be used for entry into the state competition, not one made at a later date. A submission using a video taken after the branch competition is automatically disqualified from the state competition. The video shall include the contestant's speech, and the YouTube time stamp shall be used by the judges to confirm the speech meets the time requirements (Section 2.4.2).
3. For the semi-finals, a minimum of three judges, plus a tie-breaking judge, none of whom are Speech Trek Committee members or participants, will be selected by the state Speech Trek Program Director to review the videos of the winners of the branch competitions, using the same judging criteria as the branch competitions (see 2.4.1). They will select and rank 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> place honorable mention winners and name the top three as finalists who will be invited to participate in the state final competition. Judges will not discuss the competitors during the viewing or competition. In case of a tie, a tie-breaking judge's ballot will break the tie and determine the winner.
4. A student may participate in the branch contest in multiple years but is only eligible to be a state finalist once.
5. If one of the top three finalists cannot attend the final, the fourth place honorable mention winner may be invited to compete in the state final if adequate travel budget funds are available. If the fourth place contestant is unavailable, the fifth place honorable mention winner may then be invited if adequate travel funds are available.
6. The state final competition shall be held in front of a live audience in conjunction with the AAUW CA annual meeting or convention, following the same guidelines as those outlined in Section 2.4-Branch Competition Rules. If the in-person annual meeting or convention does not take place, then the final competition will be held via a video conferencing tool such as Zoom (Section 2.3.4).
7. For the final competition, three different judges, plus a tie-breaking judge, none of whom may be relatives of state or branch Speech Trek committees, will be selected by the state Speech Trek Program Director to judge the three state finalists, using the same judging criteria as the branch competitions (see 2.4.1). Judges will not discuss the competitors

during the viewing or competition. In case of a tie, a tie-breaking judge's ballot will break the tie and determine the winner.

8. Judges for the state semi-final and final competitions may be AAUW members, but an effort should be made to select non-members from the wider community. National AAUW members who are not members of AAUW CA are eligible to be judges of the state final competition. Anyone who judged a branch competition is ineligible to judge the state final.
9. The finalists' speech videos will be posted on the AAUW CA website after the state competition.

## **2.6. Topic**

1. The topic of the speech must be directly related to the AAUW mission, drawn from AAUW initiatives, public policy priorities or similar sources.
2. The state Speech Trek Program Director consults with the AAUW CA Speech Trek Committee to determine the topic and submits it to the AAUW CA BOD for approval.
3. Next year's contest topic is announced at the state final competition at the AAUW CA convention or annual meeting.

## **2.7. Prizes**

1. Each branch will determine awards for their contestants at the branch competitions, which may be monetary awards, merchandise, or certificates.
2. The top three state finalists and one chaperone for each contestant will have their expenses covered to attend the final competition (within the limitations outlined in Section 3.3).
3. Cash prize awards shall be:
  - a. Fifth place honorable mention: \$150
  - b. Fourth place honorable mention: \$250
  - c. Third place finalist: \$500
  - d. Second place finalist: \$1,000
  - e. First place finalist: \$1,500

4. For in-person competition: The top three finalist prizes are awarded only to finalists who attend and are judged before a live audience at the state final. There is no cash award for an invited finalist who fails to attend. Anyone named a state finalist who does not attend the final competition will instead be mailed a certificate of achievement.

For virtual competition: Judges will view the top three finalists' videos. The top three videos will be shown at the virtual annual meeting and awards will be announced at that time for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. The cash awards will be mailed to the winners after the virtual annual meeting.

5. All cash prizes, including the honorable mention awards, will be mailed to the contestants after the state final competition, after the judges' decisions are announced and vouchers have been signed and processed by AAUW CA SPF.

### **3. Finances**

#### **3.1. AAUW CA Special Projects Fund (SPF)**

1. AAUW CA SPF is the fiduciary agent for Speech Trek. Speech Trek follows AAUW CA SPF policies and procedures for all deposits and vouchers for payments.
2. The SPF fiscal year is from January 1 to December 31. It is different from the standard AAUW fiscal year, which is July 1 to June 30.

#### **3.2. Budget Authority and Approval**

Speech Trek must submit proposed budgets and final financial reports in accordance with both SPF and AAUW CA BOD requirements.

1. Speech Trek treasurer submits SPF required reports per SPF policy by the SPF deadline of January 1.
2. Speech Trek treasurer submits a proposed budget to the AAUW CA BOD prior to the July leadership meeting.
3. Proposed project budget is presented to the AAUW CA BOD for approval at their fall meeting.
4. Spending may never exceed budgeted amounts without prior authorization from the AAUW CA BOD.
5. The state Speech Trek Program Director shall consult with the AAUW CA president,

meetings planner, and (in a convention year) convention manager to recommend fees for the state board's approval for anyone to attend just the Speech Trek state final without attending the annual meeting or convention.

### **3.3. Budget Requirements**

1. Donations. Per AAUW CA requirements for any state project, Speech Trek must be self-funded, with adequate income to cover all expenses. Using AAUW CA SPF as the fiduciary agent allows all donations to be tax deductible. Adequate funds must be in place each year BEFORE the state finalist prize amounts are announced and the proposed budget is submitted to the AAUW CA BOD for approval.
  - a. Donor funding (or formal promissory note guaranteeing donation) shall be received no later than July, and the funds must be deposited by March 1.
  - b. Each branch submitting an entry in the state final competition shall pay a \$25 entry fee to help offset some of the expenses of the event.
  - c. Additional donations may be solicited from AAUW branches or other sources, as deemed necessary by the project leadership. Donations must be made out to "AAUW CA SPF" with "Speech Trek" on the memo line in order to be tax deductible.
  - d. Should the primary source of funding be significantly reduced or eliminated, a task force shall be established by AAUW CA BOD to evaluate other funding possibilities to ensure the project's long-term sustainability.
2. Expenses. The budget must include:
  - a. Cash awards for the two honorable mentions and top three finalists (See 2.7.3).
  - b. Travel expenses for the state top three finalists and one chaperone for each to attend the state final competition, if competition is held in person.
  - c. Travel expenses for the state Speech Trek Program Director to attend the state final competition, if competition is held in person.
  - d. The SPF administration fee.
  - e. Lunch expense for non-AAUW judges.
  - f. Contingency line item for unanticipated expenses for virtual competition.

### **3.4. Reimbursement for Expenses (if held in person)**

1. Travel and meal (per diem) expenses eligible for reimbursement will be according to current AAUW CA reimbursement policy. (See AAUW CA Policy 1006, Reimbursement Procedures).
2. Lodging is only provided if the distance traveled requires an overnight stay, and must be arranged in advance in consultation with the meetings planner to be included in AAUW CA's master billing for the event (annual meeting or convention). Speech Trek reimburses AAUW CA for the lodging expenses after the event.
3. The reimbursement combination of travel, hotel, and meals that is LEAST expensive to the project is the highest priority in arranging attendance at the state final.
4. SPF voucher forms must be filled out completely with receipts attached for ALL reimbursements. The state Speech Trek Program Director must approve all vouchers.
5. No travel expenses to attend the state final may be paid in advance. However, if a contestant does not have the financial resources to attend without prior assistance, the sponsoring branch shall be notified that they may pay the contestant and chaperone's initial travel expenses and submit a voucher to be reimbursed within the limits of the project's reimbursement policy. The contestant and chaperone may then be reimbursed for any additional expenses as long as their documentation makes clear which expenses were incurred by the branch.
6. Contestants and their chaperones do not have to pay registration fees for the AAUW CA convention or annual meeting to participate in the speech competition, unless they wish to attend any other part of the convention or meeting that requires guest fees.
7. Any invoices or bills for goods or services from a vendor or company should be submitted with a voucher for payment directly to the vendor or company. Any individual may not personally pay bills totaling \$1000 or more and seek reimbursement without prior approval from the Speech Trek Program Director and the AAUW CA chief financial officer.

### **3.5. Insurance**

AAUW CA liability insurance covers the Speech Trek project at no additional cost to the project. This includes branch and state Speech Trek competitions. Insurance claims shall be handled in accordance with AAUW CA procedures, in consultation with the AAUW CA Chief Financial Officer.

#### 4. Timeline and Deadlines

Timeline and deadlines for the overall state project are as follows:

July	Speech Trek treasurer submits proposed budget to AAUW CA BOD for approval.
August	State Speech Trek Program Director prepares Speech Trek competition toolkits (branch and student) to be uploaded to AAUW CA website. State Speech Trek Program Director reviews website materials and updates them as needed and sends changes to toolkits and student forms to AAUW CA BOD for review and comment prior to release.
Fall	Branches contact schools and plan local Speech Trek competitions, whether in-person or virtual.
November 1	Deadline for branches to submit AAUW CA program annual branch participation memorandum of understanding (MOU) to state Speech Trek Program Director and AAUW CA office.
Winter	Local Speech Trek competitions take place.
March 1	Deadline for AAUW CA branches to submit entry for state final, including the link to the branch winner's contest video, entry fee, and contestant affidavit.  Deadline for key donor deposit.
March	State Speech Trek Program Director consults with Speech Trek Committee to determine next year's topic and proposes it for AAUW CA BOD's approval.
March 10	State finalists are announced and the top three are invited to attend AAUW CA annual meeting or convention in April for state competition, if held in person.
April	State final competition is held in conjunction with AAUW CA annual meeting or convention. If held virtually, the top three finalists' videos will be showcased at the annual virtual meeting, and 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will be announced.
April-May	Videos of winners are posted on YouTube and linked to state website. State Speech Trek Program Director contacts key donor to secure funding for next year's contest.
May-June	Speech Trek treasurer submits year-end budget report to the AAUW CA BOD.

## **5. Job Descriptions**

### **5.1. Speech Trek Program Director Job Description**

The State Speech Trek Program Director oversees the entire state project and is the liaison between the branches and the state organization. Appointment is for a 1-year term by the AAUW CA president, with the term of office running from July 1 to June 30. Individuals holding this position may be reappointed for up to five 1-year terms.

#### Qualifications:

1. AAUW CA member.
2. Good organizational, communication, and people skills.
3. Basic knowledge of budgets and familiarity with Microsoft Excel and Word.
4. Accepted by the AAUW CA BOD as meeting all requirements of an AAUW CA committee chair.
5. Knowledge of speech competitions.

#### Duties:

1. Secures the funding for the project.
  - a. Confirms donation from key donor.
  - b. Consults with the AAUW CA BOD to identify other sources of revenue if the key donor's donation is insufficient to cover anticipated expenses.
2. Consults with the Speech Trek treasurer to prepare a project budget, based on the available funds. Submits the proposed budget to the AAUW CA BOD for review and approval prior to the July AAUW CA BOD meeting.
3. Ensures annual branch participation MOU forms are kept on file for one year and student affidavits are kept on file for two years, and that an historical list of branch participation is maintained to track branch contacts and the project's growth.
4. Communicates with branches to encourage them to participate and assist them.
  - a. Uploads Speech Trek toolkits on AAUW CA website.
  - b. Provides articles about the project and highlights deadlines through all state communications, including:

1. Board-to-Board emails from state to branch leadership.
2. California Connection.
3. AAUW CA website.
4. Social media.
5. Maintains content on the Speech Trek web page on the AAUW CA website, including:
  - a. Speech Trek Branch Toolkit and Student Toolkit.
  - b. Contest topic.
  - c. State finalist cash prize award amounts.
  - d. Announcement of contest winners and posting the videos of the three state finalists.
6. Assembles a panel of at least three judges, plus a tie-breaking judge, with appropriate expertise to rank the videos submitted by the branches to determine the top five speeches. (See section 2.5.)
7. Notifies all the participating branches of the top three finalists and two honorable mentions in advance of notifying the contestants.
8. Assembles a panel of at least three judges, plus a tie-breaking judge, with appropriate expertise for the state final competition. (See section 2.5.)
9. At the end of the state final, signs vouchers for cash prizes to be awarded to the two honorable mention winners and top three finalists.
10. Signs all expense vouchers. In consultation with the Speech Trek treasurer, monitors the project budget and ensures spending never exceeds budgeted amounts without authorization from the AAUW CA BOD.
11. Consults with the Speech Trek Committee and AAUW CA BOD to decide on the next year's speech topic and announces the new topic at the end of the state final competition.
12. Reviews all forms and makes revisions and updates in consultation with the Communications Committee.
13. Prepares annual report to the AAUW CA BOD at the close of program year.
14. Performs such other duties as requested by the AAUW CA president.

## 5.2. Speech Trek Treasurer Job Description

The Speech Trek treasurer is responsible for the financial oversight of Speech Trek and is the overall project treasurer. Appointment is for a 1-year term by the AAUW CA president, with the term of office running from July 1 to June 30. Individuals holding this position may be reappointed for up to five 1-year terms.

### Qualifications:

1. AAUW CA member.
2. Good organizational, communication, and people skills.
3. Necessary accounting skills for financial oversight of the state project, and familiarity with Microsoft Excel and Word.
4. Accepted by the AAUW CA BOD as meeting all requirements of an AAUW CA member in good standing.

### Duties:

1. In consultation with the state Speech Trek Program Director, prepares the annual proposed budget.
2. Submits the annual application to AAUW CA SPF for project approval.
3. Ensures sound fiscal management of the project, including detailed financial records.
4. Assists state finalists in determining the most economical travel arrangements to the state final competition.
5. Prepares and mails certificates of achievement for fourth and fifth place winners. Mails an invitation to the top three finalists to attend the state final competition, providing them with all required information and forms, including:
  - a. Date, time and location of final competition.
  - b. Detailed instructions on travel and meals reimbursement (See Section 3.4), and the importance of providing receipts for all reimbursements.
  - c. W-9 form (required for awarding cash prize)
  - d. AAUW membership brochure for the contestant and family to know more about the organization.
6. Consults with branches if they have a state finalist in need of financial assistance with advance travel expenses. (See Section 3.3.5.)
7. Consults with the AAUW CA meetings planner to manage invoicing for any lodging

expenses incurred at state finals. (See Section 3.3.2.)

8. Provides the state Speech Trek Program Director with any financial forms required of state finalists, to be sent as a part of their packet inviting them to the state final.
9. Secures state Speech Trek Program Director's approval for every expense voucher prior to submission to SPF.
10. Submits year-end financial report to the state Speech Trek Program Director and AAUW CA BOD.
11. Performs such other duties as requested by the state Speech Trek Program Director.

## **6. Publications and Forms**

### **6.1. Speech Trek Toolkit for Branches**

1. Speech Trek process and schedule
2. Speech topic
3. AAUW CA Speech Trek annual branch participation MOU
4. Sample letter to school administrators
5. Sample letter to teachers
6. Instructions for greeter
7. Instructions for timer
8. Instructions for judges
9. Judge's ballot
10. Sample press releases
11. Sample publicity flyer

### **6.2. Speech Trek Toolkit for Students**

1. Rules of competition
2. Speech topic
3. Student application and parent permission
4. Affidavit for permission to use contestant's name and image
5. Judge's ballot

### **6.3. W-9**

Required for all state finalists and honorable mentions in order to award cash prizes.

#### **6.4. SPF Expense Voucher and Deposit Forms**

Because SPF is the fiduciary agent for Speech Trek, the SPF forms must be used to handle all deposits and payments, in accordance with SPF policies and procedures.