

# Speech Trek Policies and Procedures

July 2018



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.

#### 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 Project Oversight Committee:** The Project Oversight Committee has direct supervisory authority over the project on behalf of the AAUW CA BOD.
4. **Speech Trek State Coordinator:** The State Speech Trek Coordinator is appointed by the AAUW CA president and reports to the Project Oversight Committee. The State Speech Trek Coordinator 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 Project Oversight Committee. The Speech Trek Treasurer is responsible for the financial oversight of the project and is the overall project treasurer.
6. **Branch Speech Trek Coordinator:** Each participating AAUW CA branch has a contact person to coordinate all aspects of the local Speech Trek competition and to submit the winner's unedited video to the State Speech Trek Coordinator (per Branch Tool Kit instructions) for consideration as a state finalist.

See Section 5 for detailed job descriptions.

## 2. Speech Trek Contest Rules

### **2.1. Branch Participation**

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. This document is kept on file at the branch level, with the State Speech Trek Coordinator, the AAUW CA President and the AAUW CA office.

### **2.2. Eligibility**

Speech Trek is open to all 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 Coordinator 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.

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

1. Branch speech competitions must be judged by a minimum of three judges, none of whom may be an AAUW member or a relative of the Branch Speech Trek committee or participant. 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 5-6-minute speech with a 30-second grace period on either side. Speaking under 4 minutes-30 seconds or over 6 minutes-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 videotaped during the branch contest. The video must at least show the contestant's torso and face, as well as all movement around the stage.

## **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 Coordinator 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 videotape from the branch competition, which must be uploaded to YouTube. Only the unedited video taken at the branch competition in front of a live audience 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 only the contestant's speech, and the YouTube time stamp shall be used by the judges to confirm the speech meets the time requirements (Section 2.3.3).
3. A minimum of three judges, none of whom are AAUW CA members or relatives of State Speech Trek committee members or participants, will be selected by the State Speech Trek Coordinator 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, but they should confer after to determine the standings, and if necessary to break a tie by consensus.
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.

7. Three judges, none of whom may be AAUW CA members or relatives of State or Branch Speech Trek committees, will be selected by the State Speech Trek Coordinator 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, but they should confer after to determine the standings and, if necessary, to break a tie by consensus. 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.
8. The finalists' speech videos will be posted on the AAUW CA website after the state competition.

## **2.6. Topic**

3. The topic of the speech must be directly related to AAUW mission, ideally from recent AAUW research reports.
4. The State Speech Trek Coordinator consults with the Project Oversight Committee to determine the topic.
5. 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. Top-three finalist prizes are only awarded for 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 will instead be mailed a certificate of achievement.
- 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 CASPF 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.

#### **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 Project Oversight Committee prior to the July leadership meeting.
3. The Project Oversight Committee submits proposed project budget 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 Coordinator 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**

4. 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.

The primary source of funding for Speech Trek since 2009 has been the Allen family. The Speech Trek Coordinator or Treasurer shall contact the Allen family and receive the funds (or formal promissory note guaranteeing their donation) no later than July, and the funds must be deposited by March 1.

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.

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.

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.

**5. 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.
- c. Travel expenses for the State Speech Trek Coordinator to attend the state final competition.
- d. The SPF administration fee.
- e. Lunch expense for non-AAUW judges.

**3.4. Reimbursement for Expenses**

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 State Coordinator 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 State Coordinator 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 Projects Oversight Committee for AAUW CA BOD approval.
August	State Speech Trek Coordinator prepares Speech Trek competition toolkit to be included in administrative packets sent to branches from the AAUW CA BOD. State Speech Trek Coordinator reviews website materials and updates them as needed and sends changes to toolkit and student forms to Project Oversight Committee for review and comment prior to release.
Fall	Branches contact schools, and plan local Speech Trek competitions.
<b>November 1</b>	Deadline for branches to submit AAUW CA Program Annual Branch Participation Memorandum to State Speech Trek Coordinator, AAUW CA State President and AAUW CA office.
Winter	Local Speech Trek competitions take place.
<b>March 1</b>	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.
March	State Speech Trek Coordinator consults with Program Committee to determine next year's topic and proposes it for Project Oversight Committee's approval.
March 10	State finalists are announced and top three are invited to attend AAUW CA annual meeting or convention in April for state competition.
April	State final competition is held in conjunction with AAUW CA annual meeting or convention.
April-May	Videos of winners are posted on YouTube and linked to state website. State Speech Trek Coordinator contacts Allen family to secure funding for next year's contest.
May-June	Speech Trek Treasurer submits year-end budget report to the Project Oversight Committee.

## 5. Job Descriptions

### 5.1. State Speech Trek Coordinator Job Description

The State Speech Trek State Coordinator 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:

6. AAUW CA member.
7. Good organizational, communication, and people skills.
8. Basic knowledge of budgets and familiarity with Microsoft Excel and Word.
9. Accepted by the AAUW CA board of directors as meeting all requirements of an AAUW CA committee chair.
10. Knowledge of speech competitions.

#### Duties:

1. Secures the funding for the project.
  - a. Contacts the Allen family no later than June to verify the amount they intend to donate for the next year and negotiates the timing of the deposit of that donation.
  - b. Consults with the Project Oversight Committee to identify other sources of revenue if the Allen family 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 Project Oversight Committee for review 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. Distributes Speech Trek Toolkit in fall branch administrative packets and on 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 Perspective newsletter.

3. AAUW CA website.
5. Maintains content on the SPEECH TREK web page on the AAUW CA website, including:
  - a. Speech Trek Toolkit and Student Packet.
  - 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 five judges with public speaking 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. 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.
9. Assembles a panel of three judges with public speaking expertise for the state final competition. (See section 2.5.)
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Consults with the Project Oversight Committee to decide on the next year's speech topic and announces the new topic at the end of the state final competition.
13. Reviews all forms and makes revisions and updates in consultation with the Project Oversight Committee.
14. Prepares annual report to the Project Oversight Committee at the close of program year.