



2011–2012 Instructions

Dear Student,

Thank you for your interest in applying for the Maurice B. Cohill, Jr. Young Investigator Award. The Cohill Award is being offered by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), in Pittsburgh, PA and is named after NCJJ's founder, the Honorable Maurice B. Cohill, Jr. Who currently is a judge in the U.S. Federal Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. Judge Cohill has dedicated his life to the pursuit of justice for young people in the juvenile justice system and developed NCJJ into the research organization that it is today.

NCJJ is the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), the oldest and largest judicial training organization in the United States. In honor of Judge Cohill's decades of dedication and service to the field of juvenile justice research, we are looking for the next generation of young law, justice researchers, and scholars who can demonstrate the curiosity, passion, insight, and creativity that underlies all great scientific thinkers.

The Cohill Award selects up to four students each year, from across the nation to receive recognition for their innovative ideas through the research paper each student writes.

Student application forms are available in English and Spanish on the NCJJ's Web site at www.ncjj.org/About/Cohill_copy1.

Until then, I wish you the best of luck in the application process and in your future career, wherever your dreams may take you. It is on the strength of your ideas that we will build a more just and peaceful world for young people, their families, and the communities in which we live.

Dr. Patricia E. Campie
NCJJ Director

Applicant Requirements:

- High School Junior or Senior
- U.S. Resident
- Attending College, University or Trade School upon Graduation

Deadline:

- May 1st, 2012

Required Materials:

- Student Application—Form A
- Paper Abstract—Form B
- Your Research Paper and Citation

Paper Requirements:

- 3-10 pages
- Double-spaced
- Times new roman font, size 12
- Page numbers in sequence
- Written in English

Send Finished Application & Paper to:

(Pick one of three options)

- Email —hyland@ncjj.org
- Fax—(412) 227-6955
- Mail:
National Center for Juvenile Justice
Attn: Nina Hyland
3700 S. Water Street, Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Do you have questions?

Please contact:

Nina Hyland
E-mail: hyland@ncjj.org
Phone: (412) 227-6950



Step 1: Choosing a Topic

Step 1: Choose a topic (Select one of the following)

Juvenile Law and Public Policy

Research papers in this category need to address laws affecting juveniles or public policies that pertain to juveniles or impact juvenile justice practices. Examples would be laws that define delinquent or criminal behavior (for example, truancy), or laws that direct the ways in which juveniles are processed in the legal system (for example, juveniles being charged as adults for particular crimes). Public policies could include formal or informal agreements for the way juveniles are handled in a particular situation, such as agreements between police and schools to divert non-violent school-based incidents to a third-party mediator, rather than serving school suspension or being referred to juvenile court.

Juvenile Courts and Probation

Research papers in this category need to address issues affecting juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments as they impact youth outcomes. Juvenile court practices and processes, such as the way hearings are conducted, use of lawyers, family involvement, or the role of the juvenile court judge are examples of court-related issues that could be explored. Juvenile probation-related examples could include the role of the juvenile probation officer, the process or assignment of probation itself, the services available or restrictions involved while on probation, alternatives to probation, or the role of probation in schools or the community are all examples of issues that could be explored under this category.

Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency

Research papers in this category need to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency or child abuse and neglect that may lead to dependency or foster care cases in the child welfare system. Papers in this category may cross-over between issues of delinquency and dependency. Those papers discussing child abuse and neglect may focus on either the perpetrators (abusers) or victims (children) when explaining root causes of the problems. Papers that focus on this topic area must present recommendations for preventing or reducing the future likelihood of delinquency, or dependency arising from child welfare cases of abuse and neglect.

Juvenile Crime and Law Data Analysis and Interpretation

Research papers in this category need to either address the current way(s) in which juvenile crime and law data are analyzed and interpreted or investigate new methods for analyzing and interpreting juvenile crime and law data. Data analysis-related papers may focus on particular types of data based on where the data come from (for example, FBI statistics, court statistics, etc.) or what the data are used to represent (for example types of crime/delinquency, victims, etc.). Data-interpretation-related papers may focus on the way(s) in which historical or current data have been interpreted either by the social science research field, public policymakers, or the media. Suggestions for using new data methods or ways of reporting must be clearly explained in the recommendations section of the paper.



Step 2: Paper Outline

Step 2: Follow the Outline/Write the Research Paper

Your Paper Must Include the Following Sections (Using Section Titles as Written Below):

Section 1 – Issue Statement: *This section must provide background on the issue you will be exploring in your research paper. In this section you should provide: a) a basic description of the issue that your paper will be addressing and any definitions or terms you will be using, b) information that puts this issue into context and c) how this issue currently impacts youth today.*

Section 2 – Background on the Issue: *This section must define the issue you are writing about and provide the reader with any needed background on the issue so that they can understand the remainder of your paper, your pro and con arguments, and your final recommendations for improving on current practices. In this section you must provide: a) a definition of the issue you are writing about; b) a short history of how the issue has developed over time to be what it is today; and c) the main purpose or driving force behind the issue.*

Section 3 – Pros and Cons: *This section must describe the pros and cons of the current issue you are exploring in your paper. In this section you should provide: a) Pros- or good reasons for the current way the issue is being handled; and b) Cons- or potential problems with the current way that the issue is being handled.*

Section 4 - Recommendations: *This section must describe the solutions and specific steps you would recommend for addressing the issue impacted by the question you researched. In this section you should provide a) recommendations that logically connect to the pros and cons section of the paper as well as the section you wrote on the history and impact of the issue; and b) action steps for how the recommendations could actually be applied in a real world setting.*

References: *This section should contain your information references (articles, books, etc.) or any other supporting information you feel is important to include. References should contain a) the title of the reference (book title, newspaper article title, etc.); b) the name of the author; c) the date/year the work was published/made available publicly; and, d) the place where you found the reference (newspaper name and page, website URL, magazine or journal, etc.). *Note: You may use a standardized reference style such as APA or MLA for your reference listing, but this is not a formal requirement of the competition.**



Step 2: Example Outline

Step 2: Shortened Example

Your Paper Must Include the Following Sections (Using Section Titles as Written Below):

Section 1 – Issue Statement:

In this paper, I will be discussing the problem of school zero-tolerance policies that result in more youth being referred to juvenile court. The number of schools that are having students arrested or referred for disciplinary action for minor problems has been on the rise since the shootings at Colorado's Columbine High School in 1999. The impact of these school zero-tolerance policies for minor misconduct, is that fewer students are staying in school and completing their high school degrees, which only sets them up to fail in the future.

Section 2 – Background on the Issue:

School zero-tolerance policies target student behavior that automatically (zero-tolerance) results in youth being removed from school and referred to juvenile court or law enforcement. Zero tolerance policies were developed in the 1990s in response to highly publicized and rare school violence events involving students. The main goal of zero tolerance policies is to remove students who pose a threat to other students and teachers and create a safer environment in which to learn and as a result help teachers have more time to focus on their academic responsibilities in the classroom .

Section 3 – Pros and Cons:

Pros of School Zero Tolerance Policies: On paper, it might seem like having zero-tolerance policies in schools would send a strong message to students to take their education seriously, or else face swift punishment at the hands of local law enforcement. Zero tolerance policies may also help teachers feel more empowered to remove disruptive students from their classrooms, so they have more time and energy to focus on their teaching responsibilities. Students, themselves, may also feel safer at school if they know that dangerous and violent students will be removed at the first sign of trouble.

Cons of Zero Tolerance Policies: In reality, zero tolerance policies may go too far and punish students for non-violent behavior or even behavior that has been approved by their parents, such as carrying headache medicine in their backpacks-which schools sometimes see as a drug falling under zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance policies may also contribute to teachers and school administrators removing disruptive students who are undiagnosed as learning disabled and are actually in need of better educational supports, not removal, to help them pay attention and act better in class. According to some research, students who are removed from schools and referred to police or juvenile court for behavior that is not criminal, violent, or delinquent may become more at-risk for future criminal and delinquent behavior as a result of their premature removal under these zero tolerance policies and placement in detention centers.



Example Outline—Continued

Step 2: Shortened Example—Continued

Your Paper Must Include the Following Sections (Using Section Titles as Written Below):

Section 4 - Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Review School Zero Tolerance Policies to Target the Most Dangerous Behaviors and Limit the Number of Non-Violent Student Behaviors that Would Result in a Referral to Law Enforcement or the Juvenile Court.

Action Step: Create a school task-force made up of students, teachers, parents, law enforcement, and juvenile court judges to review their school's zero tolerance policies and identify changes that should be made.

Recommendation 2: Increase awareness of what the zero tolerance policy is, how it should be used, and how the policy will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis.

Action Step: Train school staff, students, parents, law enforcement and juvenile court judges on the zero tolerance policy, how it should be used, and how the policy will be reviewed and revised in the future.

References:

"The Heavy Price of School Zero Tolerance Policies: A Three-Part Story." By: Jonathan Livingston Seagull. The Boston Globe. March 17, 2010.



Student Application—Form A

Directions:

Please complete all of the information on the application. If any information should change before the announcement of the winner, it is the student's responsibility to e-mail those changes to hyland@ncjj.org, or call the NCJJ office (412) 227-6950.

Required Materials:

- Student Application—Form A
- Paper Abstract—Form B
- Your Research Paper and Citation

Student/Parent Information (parent/guardian if under 18 years-old):

Name:	Home Phone Number:
E-Mail:	Cell/Alternative Number:
Address:	Parent/Guardian Name:
City, State, Zip:	Parent Guardian Number:
Age:	Parent Guardian E-mail:

High School Information:

School Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Grade:
Graduation Date:

How do you describe yourself?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Alaskan Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Native American | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to disclose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | _____ |

Type of school currently attending:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to disclose |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home School | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charter | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Placement Facility | |

