



**“The New Jersey Amistad Commission’s African American History Day Contest,
Program Stipend for the 2026/2027 School Year” (Revised 9/4/26)**

The New Jersey Amistad Commission is introducing an event for elementary students to display their academic skills in Social Studies and History. This contest will highlight African American History within the context of New Jersey. This contest is designed specifically for students in **fourth and fifth grades** and will be held in February 2027.

The purpose of this contest is to develop elementary students’ historian skills as they connect to New Jersey’s African American History. Additionally, this will serve to prepare New Jersey’s elementary students for the National History Day Competitions while engaging in the implementation of the New Jersey Amistad Legislation.

The goal of this contest is to align the learning journey and student projects with the New Jersey Standards, while empowering students to successfully develop confidence, pride, research, writing, public speaking and critical thinking skills. Additionally, the program will encourage educators to explore a new avenue to meet the mandate of the Amistad Legislation.

The contest will have the following categories: Exhibit Poster, Essay (Paper), and Performance (poetry, dance, singing, skit or play). Students will be permitted to enter as a solo participant or in groups of two to four maximum. Each project will require a research paper of a minimum of 100 words, maximum of 300, listing all research, including interviews or other resources.

The Amistad Commission will fund a \$1,000 stipend for one school year to any individual (certified teacher) under contract in a school district, to start a **(NEW) fourth or fifth grade New Jersey Amistad Commission’s African American History Day Contest Program**.

The funds are designed to compensate a teacher for time outside of contractual hours for student contact and travel to the event. The funds will be provided to your district once all requirements are satisfied. The stipend amount of \$1,000 per educator for either fourth or fifth grade students. An educator can apply for just one grade level, however, a total of two teachers per building, one in fourth grade, one in the fifth grade will be permitted. The stipend can be shared with other staff members who participate, (media specialist). Each teacher will be required to do the following:

- Each teacher must submit a plan that outlines how they are going to recruit students to participate, a draft schedule of monthly meeting times/location, (Social Studies lesson during classroom time can be used), and maintain documentation of meetings with students.
- **Each application will be required to obtain Board of Education approval for district students to compete in the New Jersey Amistad Commission’s African American History Day Contest 2026/2027.**
- Each teacher will be required to have a minimum of six projects in their respected school.

Please submit your district’s board approval to trevor.melton@doe.nj.gov for this stipend before December 18, 2026.

The Commission will consider the first 15 educators who have board approval.

Dr. Patrick Lamy

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