Student Showcase
Project Submission Guidelines

Submissions Due: March 12, 2026

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The 2026 SCAG Student Showcase challenges students to create posters and StoryMaps that illustrate the possibilities of open data to tell compelling stories, provide insights, and showcase plans and projects. The 2026 SCAG Student Showcase offers unparalleled opportunities for students to demonstrate their expertise to a large, influential network of skilled practitioners and future colleagues.

2026 Student Showcase finalists will receive complimentary event registration, hotel accommodation, and admission to SCAG's 2026 Regional Conference and General Assembly in Palm Desert on May 7-8, 2026. At the conference, participants will present their posters and StoryMaps to elected officials, industry leaders, and other experts from across Southern California. Over 900 attendees are expected at the event.

A panel of judges will select one poster and one StoryMap for the "Best in Show" award. During the conference, attendees will also vote for a poster and StoryMap to be recognized with an "Audience Award." All four awards, each worth $1,500, will be announced at the end of the conference.

Contact

For more information on the Student Showcase, please contact:

Sebastian Shetty
(213) 630-1533
shetty@scag.ca.gov

Application Guidelines

SCAG is requesting posters or StoryMaps for student-led projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to sustainability-related planning issues on a local or regional scale. Eligible submittals include any applied projects or research. Students may submit a poster and StoryMap to the competition; however, they may only be selected as a finalist for either a poster or StoryMap.

Evaluation Criteria

SUSTAINABILITY

Promotes sustainable practices such as emissions reductions, land use and transportation integration, natural resource conservation, resilience, active transportation, energy efficiency, and housing.

INNOVATION

Introduces a new concept or challenges and improves upon current planning processes.

TRANSFERABILITY

Includes strategies and concepts that can be applied to different locations or programs.

FEASIBILITY

Has realistic potential to be implemented.

PRESENTATION

Demonstrates excellent writing, visualization, and overall organization.

Submission Guidelines

SCAG is requesting posters and StoryMaps for student-led projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to sustainability-related planning issues on a local or regional scale. Eligible submissions include any applied projects or research.

Competition Due Dates

The following due dates apply to both the Poster Challenge and the StoryMap Challenge.

- **Application Opens: <u>Jan. 26, 2026</u>**
- **Final Projects Due: <u>March 12, 2026, at 10 a.m.</u>**

Poster Challenge

The jury will select five Poster Challenge finalists to attend the SCAG Regional Conference and General Assembly as conference fellows on May 7-8, 2026, in Palm Desert. SCAG will also print and mount the posters for the five finalists.

Poster Challenge Rules

- This challenge is open to college students currently enrolled in a university, community college, or graduate program within the SCAG region, taking classes towards a degree objective, or who have graduated within the previous 12 months. All work must be completed by students, not faculty or university staff.

- Submissions must be completed on an individual basis. Group submissions will not be accepted.

- The poster must focus on a topic relevant to the SCAG region.

- Any documents or images must be used with the respective permission of the author(s) and must be properly attributed.

- Submissions will be judged on their innovative use of data and visual communication, urban planning and sustainability relevancy to the Southern California region, transferability, feasibility, and overall quality of presentation.

Submitting Your Poster

Completed posters should be designed using the following guidelines:

- Dimensions: 24" x 36"

- Landscape Orientation

- Exported as a PDF file at 300 dpi or higher

Posters should include:

- Title

- Participants college or university

- List of data sources and references

Submit final posters [online](#).

StoryMap Challenge

SCAG recognizes the effectiveness of simple yet powerful ways to inform, engage, and inspire people through data and map-driven storytelling.

With this in mind, SCAG invites student participants to conceptualize, create, and submit ArcGIS StoryMaps. StoryMaps are a meaningful way to tell a story or provide insight, showcase plans and projects, engage supporters and stakeholders, illustrate the possibilities of data, and highlight the usefulness of open data at the regional level. The jury will select five StoryMap Challenge finalists to attend the SCAG Regional Conference and General Assembly as conference fellows on May 7-8, 2026 in Palm Desert. SCAG will also provide (display monitors) at the conference for the five finalists.

Obtaining an ArcGIS StoryMaps Account

To create a StoryMap, you must sign up for an ArcGIS Online Account. For more information on how to do that, visit the ArcGIS website.

StoryMap Challenge Rules

- This challenge is open to college students currently enrolled in a university, community college, or graduate program within the SCAG region, taking classes towards a degree objective, or who have graduated within the previous 12 months. All work must be completed by students, not faculty or university staff.

- Submissions must be completed on an individual basis. Group submissions will not be accepted.

- Any documents or images must be used with the respective permission of the author(s) and must be properly attributed.

- Participants may use data from SCAG's Content Library and/or other relevant data sources. Data sources and references should be properly cited and attributed.

- Submissions will be judged on their innovative use of data and Esri Story Maps, urban planning and sustainability relevancy to the Southern California Region, transferability, feasibility, and overall quality of presentation.

Submitting Your StoryMap

When your StoryMap has been completed, applicants will be requested to submit StoryMaps using the SCAG submission link.

List of required elements in StoryMap:

- URL of StoryMap
- Participant's college or university
- List of data sources

Submit final StoryMaps online.

SCAG
INNOVATING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

MAIN OFFICE

900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1700
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Tel: (213) 236-1800
www.scag.ca.gov

REGIONAL OFFICES

IMPERIAL COUNTY

1503 N. Imperial Ave., Ste. 104
El Centro, CA 92243
Tel: (213) 236-1967

INLAND EMPIRE

3403 10th St., Ste. 805
Riverside, CA 92501
Tel: (951) 784-1513

ORANGE COUNTY

OCTA Building
600 S. Main St., Ste. 1108
Orange, CA 92868
Tel: (213) 630-1599

VENTURA COUNTY

4001 Mission Oaks Blvd., Ste. L
Camarillo, CA 93012
Tel: (213) 236-1960