

Official Contest Terms and Conditions

By participating in the “I’m Staying in Alabama” campaign (the “Contest”), each entrant unconditionally accepts and agrees to comply with and abide by these Official Terms and Conditions (“Terms”) and the decisions of DMCEC, which shall be final and binding in all respects.

1. Eligibility

The Contest is open only to:

- Legal residents of the United States;
- Individuals who are currently enrolled or have graduated within the last 24 months from a 2-year or 4-year accredited institution in the state of Alabama;
- Individuals who are 18 years of age or older at the time of entry.

Exclusions: Employees, officers, contractors, interns, and immediate family members or household members of DMCEC, Innovate Alabama, Brand Neue, and any associated agencies or vendors are not eligible to participate.

Void where prohibited by law.

2. How to Enter

To enter, participants must:

- Visit ImStayinginAlabama.com;
- Submit a written story (500 words or less) explaining why they chose to stay in Alabama;
- Upload 1–2 original images (JPEG or PNG format, maximum 10MB each);
- Provide their full name, email address, and other required contact information.

Entry Limit: One (1) submission per person.

All entries must be original. Plagiarized or AI-generated content will result in disqualification.

3. Contest Timeline

Monthly Contest Rounds (August – October 2025)

- 1st Place: \$2,000
- 2nd Place: \$1,000

- 3rd Place: \$500
Monthly winners will be contacted and must submit a short video (under 2 minutes) retelling their story.

Grand Prize Voting Round (December 2025)

Finalist videos will be published on the campaign website for public voting. Top entries will receive:

- Grand Prize: \$10,000
- Second Place: \$5,000
- Third Place: \$2,500

Announcement (January 2026)

All winners will be announced publicly and promoted through official DMCEC and Innovate Alabama channels.

4. Judging Criteria (Monthly Rounds)

Judges will evaluate submissions based on the following weighted criteria:

- Authenticity and clarity of the story (30%);
- Inspirational impact (30%);
- Connection to Alabama's future (20%);
- Quality of writing and images (20%).

All judging decisions are final and non-appealable.

5. Public Voting (Grand Prize Round)

- Finalist videos will be posted on the campaign site in December 2025;
- Each user may vote once per video per verified email address;
- Automated or fraudulent voting is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification;
- Votes will be verified, and any suspicious activity may result in removal of votes or disqualification.

6. Prizes and Payment Terms

- Prizes will be issued directly by DMCEC via check or ACH direct deposit;
- Winners are solely responsible for all applicable local, state, and federal taxes;
- Prizes are non-transferable and may not be exchanged or substituted for cash or other consideration.

Note: Prize values may be reported to the IRS as required by law.

7. Content Rights and Intellectual Property

By submitting an entry, participants expressly agree and acknowledge that:

- All entries become the exclusive property of DMCEC;
- DMCEC, Innovate Alabama, and Brand Neue shall have a perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use, publish, reproduce, adapt, and distribute any entry materials (including text, photos, videos, likeness, and names) for promotional, advertising, or educational purposes in any and all media, now known or hereafter devised, without additional compensation;
- DMCEC reserves the right to edit videos for style, clarity, or length.

Participants waive any moral rights they may have in their submissions.

8. Disqualification and Termination

DMCEC reserves the right to disqualify any entrant, in its sole discretion, if:

- The entry violates applicable laws, community standards, or these Terms;
- The entrant has engaged in fraud, plagiarism, or impersonation;
- The entrant attempts to interfere with the operation of the Contest.

DMCEC may cancel or modify the Contest at any time due to force majeure, fraud, or any other factor that impairs the integrity or fairness of the Contest.

9. Limitation of Liability and Indemnification

By entering, each participant agrees to:

- Release and hold harmless DMCEC, Innovate Alabama, Brand Neue, and all affiliated directors, employees, contractors, and sponsors from and against any claim, liability, loss, injury, or damage arising from or in connection with participation in the Contest or the awarding, receipt, or use of any prize;
- Assume full responsibility for any materials submitted and for obtaining all necessary permissions and rights to use any third-party content.

DMCEC is not responsible for:

- Lost, late, incomplete, illegible, misdirected, or undeliverable entries;
- Technical failures, delays, or disruptions in service;
- Unauthorized human or automated actions that tamper with the entry process.

10. Governing Law and Dispute Resolution

These Terms shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama.

Any dispute arising under or relating to these Terms shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state or federal courts located in Morgan County, Alabama.

11. Privacy

Personal information collected through the entry form will only be used for:

- Contest administration;
- Winner verification and prize delivery;
- Campaign-related communications.

DMCEC will not sell or share participant information with unaffiliated third parties for commercial purposes.

Please refer to the DMCEC Privacy Policy on the campaign website for more details.

12. Contact Information

For all inquiries related to this Contest, please contact:

Decatur-Morgan County Entrepreneurial Center

✉ Email: info@imstayinginalabama.com