71st State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida

Presented by the
Florida Foundation for Future Scientists
The RP Funding Center
March 31st, April 1st & 2nd, 2026

Administered by the Florida Foundation for Future Scientists
University of Central Florida, College of Community Innovation & Education
P.O. Box 67, Goldenrod, Florida 32733
www.sseffflorida.com

WELCOME!

The 71st State Science and Engineering Fair (SSEF) of Florida will be held March 31, April 1st & 2nd, 2026. at The RP Funding Center in Lakeland, Florida. This year's Fair will exhibit 800+ projects in Junior (grades 6-8) and Senior Sections (grades 9-12).

ARRIVAL/REGISTRATION

Only Regional Fair Directors, or their Official Designee, are permitted to register all the Finalists for their Region. Registration Packets will be available at The RP Funding Center.

Registration Packets contain materials for students to set up their projects, name tags, certificates, schedules, and maps.

ATTENTION PARENTS: Any student not traveling with his/her Region's Delegation must make arrangements to meet the Regional Fair Director to pick up registration materials. ***No packets will be opened to remove individual materials for those who are not with their Region Delegation. Students will NOT be allowed to set up their projects until the Region has registered.***

BUS DROP OFF

Finalists may be dropped off at Entrance 2 for easy access to the RP Funding Center.

PARKING

There will be no charge for parking at the RP Funding Center on Tuesday or Wednesday. There will be a charge of **$10.00** for the Grand Awards Ceremony.

SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PROCESS

More than 100 members of **the Scientific Review Committee** (SRC) met March 6th to review and certify the entry materials for the 2026 SSEF.

ALL students must have their original protocol papers and log books in their possession for SRC and/or Project Set Up.

The Fair Director will receive a packet which contains the ***Project Certification Cards*** and the ***Certified Abstracts*** for each student who has been approved to display his/her project. The ***Certified Abstract*** must be displayed on the left side of the display either on the display board (leave a space) or in a frame that does not have glass. The ***Project Certification Card*** must be left on the display for Display & Safety approval.

Students NOT receiving these items will have to go to SRC with their Fair Director (Hollingsworth A & B) with all paperwork.

Students NOT CLEARED for their research were notified by the Regional Director. Students with **needed corrections** will proceed directly to the **SRC Staging Room (Hollingsworth A & B)** upon arrival. Once students have corrected the discrepancies they will be allowed to set up their project.

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SSEF Administrative Staff

- **Ms. Nancy Besley**
  Executive Director
- **Ms. Tami Haddad**
  Program Assistant

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@FloridaSSEF
/SSEFFlorida

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CATEGORY ARRANGEMENTS

Load-in on Tuesday will be at the designated RP Funding Center unloading area—***Entrance 2.*** After the Fair Director has registered the Finalists and provided name tags, ***the students NOT needing to go the SRC should locate their assigned table space.***

All projects will be set up inside either the Exhibition Hall (Physical Sciences) or Jenkins Arena (Biological Sciences). Each table will have the Section (Junior or Senior) and Category (#) Number displayed on a card. Since the numbering system is identical for both sections, be sure to place your project on the card with the correct Section listed **(Junior/Green or Senior/Yellow).**

PROJECT SET-UP APPROVAL Display & Safety Procedures

- **Make sure you have your <u>original</u> protocol papers and log books for Set-Up.**
- Set up your Project. **Every item** you will use during Judging must be set up at this time.
- Follow D & S Approval Steps found in your space to set up your project correctly.
- **Display the Certified Abstract**
- If the abstract is checked that the project was done at a research institute **<u>DISPLAY FORM 1C</u>**. If the abstract is checked that the project is a continuation **<u>DISPLAY FORM 7</u>**.
- Get a member of the Display and Safety (D&S) Committee to review the physical display of the project.
- Digital items (video, PowerPoint, etc.) that are needed to support the display, will be previewed for approval to use during Judging.
- ***If approved***, D&S will sign the Finalist's Project Set-Up Card.

NOTE: There is NO electricity available on site for recharging.

NO FLOOR DISPLAYS ALLOWED.

All displays must be sturdy, meet the size requirements, and sit on a table.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS *After* Display & Safety Approval

Items removed from the exhibit on Tuesday and brought back into the exhibit area on Wednesday for Judging must be approved and labeled by The Display and Safety person who qualifies your display on Tuesday.

This may include:

- Log Books and Research Notebooks
- Equipment approved for display
- Electronic devices

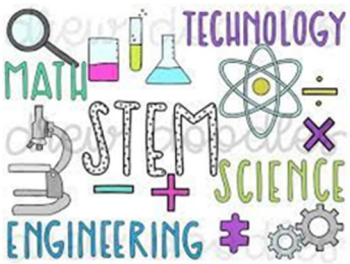
Any items without a label will not be allowed into the exhibit halls on Wednesday for Judging.

NOT RESPONSIBLE

We are **NOT REPONSIBLE** for any items left behind. Keep your electronic devices with you whenever you leave the exhibit hall.

Final Certification

During the Opening Ceremony, the Display & Safety Committee will make a final walk through to review projects. Any projects giving the D&S Committee concern will be asked to return at the end of the Opening Ceremony to solve the problems.



SCHOLARSHIP/OPPORTUNITY AWARDS

Application Forms and Descriptions for the Scholarship Nominations and Opportunity Awards <u>www.ssefflorida.com</u>

Read the descriptions for scholarship nominations carefully. Complete the Scholarship Application for each scholarship. **Applications are turned in at the Registration Table during set-up on March 31st, 2026.**

NOTE: Scholarships are **<u>nominations</u>** which must be confirmed by the Scholarship Donor. **Do not send applications or transcripts to the FFFS Office.**

NYSC OPPORTUNITY

GOVERNOR'S AWARD
NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE CAMP

Applicants (11th or 12th Grade) for the National Youth Science Camp (NYSC) must turn in the NYSC Application at the Registration Table on March 31st. Interviews take place on Judging Day. Check SSEF Website for FAQ's.

OPENING CEREMONY

JASON Colloquium
ISEF Delegation
Thermo Fisher JIC
Recognition

The **Opening Ceremony will be held in the Youkey Theatre at The RP Funding Center, Tuesday March 31st at 7:30 PM.** Students are encouraged to wear Region T-shirts, caps, etc. to represent their Region.

One of the highlights at the State Science and Engineering Fair of Florida is the **Junior and Senior Outstanding Narratives (JASON) Colloquium.** This event provides an opportunity to introduce talented young people who have brought honor to the State of Florida. Several students have been nominated and selected to present a brief three minute narrative about a meaningful experience.

The ***International Science and Engineering Fair Finalists and our Thermo Fisher JIC winners*** from each Region will also be recognized during this Ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY

All students will have an individual picture taken during Judging. Also, each awardee will have his/her picture taken off-stage at the Grand Awards Ceremony. You have the option of purchasing pictures as indicated on the enclosed order form. All proceeds support student science/STEM research in the state of Florida.

DRESS CODE
Judging &
Grand Awards Ceremony

Finalists should be dressed professionally.

Young men should wear dress slacks, shirts with collars, jackets/sports coat, tie (preferred), and dress shoes.

Young women should wear a dress, skirt, blouse, jacket or pantsuit and dress shoes. ***Jeans and shorts are not appropriate.***

JUDGING INTERVIEWS

Judging begins at 9:00 AM Wednesday morning and continues until 4:30 PM.

LUNCH

There is a "lunch on your own" break from 11:30 AM until 1:30 PM before Round 2 Judging begins.

All Finalists must leave the building during lunch. **No food is allowed to be brought into the RP Funding Center.**

JUDGING ETIQUETTE

Judging Interviews include both Category and Special Award/Scholarship Judges.

- Be alert for Judges approaching your you and your project.
- Be prepared to stand, SMILE, and introduce yourself (fist/elbow bumping is suggested)
- Electronic devices on silent
- Electronic devices can be used with headphones/earbuds (remove when being judged)
- Stay with your project. If you leave (bathroom), let your neighbor tell Judges you will return shortly.

SHOPTALK SESSIONS

These sessions will be held in Hollingsworth A & B. Parents, teachers, fair directors, and others are invited to attend the various Shoptalk Sessions during Judging on Wednesday. DOOR PRIZES!

ADULT HOSPITALITY

There will be a designated **Adult Hospitality Room on Tuesday and Wednesday (compliments of the Florida Association of Science Teachers).**

PUBLIC REVIEW
7:00—9:30 PM
Wednesday, April 1st

The public is invited to review the exhibits and work of the students during this time.

PROJECT TAKE DOWN
Wednesday, April 1st, 10:00 PM

Absolutely **NO projects** will be removed from the Exhibit Hall areas until after 10:00 PM Wednesday night. Participants who have an emergency and must leave early, are required to make arrangements for someone from their Region to pick up their project.

Any projects remaining after 11:00 PM will be discarded.

Schedule of Events

The RP Funding Center

Tuesday, March 31st

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Load-In Day & Registration
SRC & Display Approval
Scholarship & Opportunity Applications Due

7:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Youkey Theatre,
RP Funding Center
Opening Ceremony and JASON Colloquium
Final Certification Clearance

Wednesday, April 1st

8:30 AM—9:00 AM
Students may enter exhibit halls.
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Round 1 Judging
9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Shoptalks & Adult Hospitality

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Finalists lunch on your own
MUST leave the building
NO food allowed on site
1:30 PM – 4:30 PM
Round 2 Judging
(wait for dismissal announcement)

1:45 PM—3:30 PM
Shoptalks & Adult Hospitality

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Round 3 Judging (no students)

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Student Mixer

7:00 PM – 9:30 PM
Public Review of Exhibits

10:00 PM—11:00 PM
Project Take Down

Thursday, April 2nd

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM
RP Funding Center, Lake Parker
FFFS Board and Fair Directors Spring Meeting

9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Field Trips On Your Own

7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Grand Awards Ceremony
Youkey Theatre,
RP Funding Center
Parking $10.00

SSEF Finalists' Mixer

Mingle with Friends—New and Old

Games / Activities / DJ

Publix Field at Joker Marchant Stadium

Celebrates our SSEF Finalists!

2301 Lakeland Hills Blvd

Lakeland, FL 33805

Wednesday, April 1st

7:00 PM—10:00 PM

NOTE: **This is a PRIVATE EVENT for Finalists and Chaperones ONLY**

NO CHARGE for Finalists

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FIELD TRIPS

On your own

Thursday, April 2nd

Regions have the day to enjoy the beautiful Lakeland area. We encourage the Regions to review the options available for this. keep in mind that the Awards Ceremony begins promptly at 7:00 PM Thursday evening.

Contact: For discounted tickets

https://visitcentralflorida.org/floridastatescienceandengineeringfair/

GRANDS AWARDS CEREMONY

Thursday, April 2nd
7:00 – 10:00 PM
The RP Funding Center
Youkey Theatre

Finalists will be recognized for outstanding achievement for their science research.

Thank you to our sponsor : ***Right Trailers,*** *for providing our Category Place Awards.*

INSPIRING INNOVATION SSEF 70 YEARS

RP Funding Center

701 W Lime St
Lakeland, FL 33815

.Go to http://rpfundingcenter.com/ to get directions

Right Trailers Nationwide Inc. 833-31-RIGHT