



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is the Scripps National Spelling Bee offering this new program?**

The National Finals is a special experience for spellers and their families. The Scripps National Spelling Bee constantly explores ways to grow our program to expose more children to opportunities for learning. RSVBee is a chance for more students who have earned champion status to experience all the wonderment of Bee Week.

### **Who can apply?**

The Scripps National Spelling Bee welcomes applications from parents of students attending a school currently enrolled in the Bee program who won that school's (2017-2018 school year) spelling bee or who formerly participated in the National Finals, including all students who traveled to Bee Week to compete – not just spellers who made it to the Thursday Finals.

Parents of interested students must complete the full application. If invited to compete based on the successful completion of the eligibility requirements, the student's family must pay an entry fee and is responsible for all accommodations and travel to/from Oxon Hill, Maryland, the location of the 2018 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

### **Can I apply for my child if my school is not enrolled?**

School enrollment in the Scripps National Spelling Bee program is a requirement. [Check to see if your school is enrolled.](#)

### **Can I apply for my home-schooled child?**

Yes, you can apply for your student as long as your child is the current (2017-2018 school year) declared champion of your home school spelling bee program. [Check to see if your school is enrolled.](#)

### **How do parents apply for their children to be considered?**

Visit [spellingbee.com/rsvbee](http://spellingbee.com/rsvbee) and complete the application on behalf of the student.

There is no fee to apply. There is a \$750 participation fee for those whose applications are approved and who confirm their intention for their child to participate in the National Finals.

### **What is the application deadline?**

The deadline to apply for RSVBee is March 23, 2018.

## **What if I apply for my child and then he/she wins the local regional bee – the one in my community that determines who gets a sponsored trip to the National Finals?**

Applying for RSVBee does not exclude your child from competing in a regional bee competition. If your child wins the regional bee, you may [contact us](#) to request withdrawal of your application.

## **How will the Scripps National Spelling Bee determine which applicants to invite?**

We will issue no more than 225 invitations. If we receive 225 or fewer applications, all applicants will receive invitations. If there are 226 or more applications, we will base invitation decisions on a point system:

- Six points for a former Semifinalist or Finalist
- Five points for a former Preliminaries participant (these points cannot be combined with points for Semifinalist/Finalist)
- Four points for an 8th grade student
- Three points for a 7th grade student
- Two points for a 6th grade student
- One point for a 5th grade student
- Zero points for 4th grade or younger students

Applicants with the most points – but no more than 225 applicants – will receive invitations. In the event of more than 225 applicants and a tie score for some, we will send invitations to those who applied earliest in the process. Applying early gives an advantage over those who wait.

Here is a hypothetical example:

| Total Points | Total Number of Applicants Achieving This Score | Cumulative Number of Invitations  |
|--------------|---|---|
| 10           | 100   | 100   |
| 9            | 75  | 175   |
| 8            | 35  | 210   |
| 7            | 50  | 225 (The first 15 applications submitted with this point total will receive invitations.) |

## **When will the Scripps National Spelling Bee determine which applicants receive invitations and send out official invitations?**

The Bee will email invitations to accepted applicants on Monday, March 26.

## **If my child is selected, what is the entry fee? When do I pay?**

Upon delivery of an official invitation, spellers' families will have one week to confirm plans to attend and submit the fee of \$750.

## **What does the participation fee cover?**

The participation fee is for resources utilized in the administration of Bee Week and the National Finals. It includes two tickets for both the Memorial Day Barbecue and the Awards Banquet; a swag bag of items including a t-shirt, promotional items and a Bee Keeper, the official autograph book of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

## **Is there flexibility in arranging travel and lodging? Can RSVBee families choose travel and lodging that best meet their families' needs?**

Yes, as families make their arrangements to attend, they can choose the best mode of transportation and lodging for their needs. There is no requirement to stay at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center where the competition takes place.

## **Is fundraising allowed to cover the costs of the participation fee and Bee Week travel expenses?**

Yes, you may fundraise or ask individuals and organizations to sponsor you, but doing so is not a requirement. Fundraising is the sole responsibility of an RSVBee speller's family.

## **Are there additional expenses for those attending Bee Week through RSVBee?**

Families will be responsible for covering all travel costs, lodging, meals (outside of the Memorial Day Barbecue and Awards Banquet) and any incidentals.

## **Will the experience during Bee Week differ for those who win regional bees and those who are invited through RSVBee?**

The experience offered to RSVBee spellers and spellers who win their regional bees will be the same.

## **How will the Scripps National Spelling Bee schedule the onstage spelling rounds during Bee Week?**

The schedule for the Preliminaries (the Round One Preliminaries Test as well as Rounds Two and Three of onstage spelling) will be announced once the number of RSVBee participants becomes clear.

Regardless of the number of RSVBee participants, the rules are not changing from the 2017 National Finals for advancing to the Thursday Finals. Students will earn points through a multiple-choice test and through the onstage spelling in Round 2 and Round 3 to earn a Preliminaries score. The scores will determine the no more than 50 spellers who will advance to the Thursday Finals.

## **Will the number of students advancing to the Thursday Finals change?**

The rule regarding determination of Finalists remains consistent with the 2017 Scripps National Spelling Bee. No more than 50 spellers will advance to the Thursday Finals.

## **Will spellers still advance to the National Finals with the support of a sponsor?**

Participation in most national finals experiences in sports, academics and other pursuits comes as a result of parents and/or booster organizations paying entry fees and all associated trip expenses. In the array of these competitions, the Scripps National Spelling Bee proudly stands as one who goes the extra mile in fostering a broad and deep long-standing national network of more than 250 local spelling bee sponsors – sponsors who, among many things, provide free trips for local spelling champions and their parents to participate in the national finals experience.

We've been in the business of fostering that network since 1925 – working with the nation's finest newspapers, universities, television stations, community charities, school districts and more. Together, we've made possible more than 9,000 free trips to Bee Week. In 2018, the tradition will continue, with more than 275 free trips offered to winners of local spelling bee programs. This number is on par with our numbers going back to the early 90s. In 2018, the tradition will continue, with more than 275 free trips for winners of local spelling bee programs, representing an investment of at least \$1.1MM from local program sponsors.

Through the years, in special circumstances we and our local sponsors have gone further. When we have learned of children who cannot avail themselves of the free trip because of extraordinary family hardship, we have stepped in, or facilitated others stepping in, to ease the hardship. In implementing RSVBee, we will listen closely for word of extraordinary need and, as we have done in the past, we will make efforts to ease the hardship.

## **Are there any concerns RSVBee might be considered unfair for those who can't afford the program or unfair for some spellers?**

RSVBee is our sincere effort to take a step toward fairness. We believe the National Finals are as fair as possible, but the path to Bee Week is not a consistent or equal journey. Throughout our 90-year history, we have had sponsored regions and unsponsored regions. This means students in a sponsored county have a shot at advancing to the National Finals while students in a neighboring county without a sponsor have no shot. The sizes of sponsored regions also are not created equal – only one speller in all of Georgia can currently advance to D.C., while Ohio sends 18 spellers.

There are many spellers who have worked diligently and triumphed locally and yet because of the restrictions of the program, they don't get their opportunity on the national stage. RSVBee is a way to bridge the opportunity gap for spellers and more completely fulfill our mission to have a positive impact on the lives of children.