



46th Annual NEED Youth Energy Conference & Awards



2026 Agenda
June 26 - June 29

FRIDAY, JUNE 26TH

- 11:00 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.** **Information Booth Open (Ballroom Level)**
- 11:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.** **Hotel Room Check-In and Luggage Storage**
- 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.** **Conference Registration (Ballroom Level)**
- 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.** **Energy Games & Icebreakers (Ballroom Level)**
Early arrival? Waiting for your hotel room? Join our Youth Staff for a variety of hands-on energy games & activities. It's the perfect way to stay energized, meet new friends, and kick off the conference experience.
- 4:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.** **Energy Industry Insights (Potomac I/II)**
Hear firsthand stories, career journeys, and industry insights from energy professionals across the field during this interactive Q&A session.
- 5:45 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.** **Welcome Banquet & Program (Regency Ballroom ABCD - Ballroom Level)**
Welcome to the 2026 Youth Energy Conference and Awards! Meet Youth and NEED staff and get acquainted with your fellow award winners through NEED activities and icebreakers. Attendees exchange trinkets and memorabilia from their home states with other attendees.
- 6:15 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.** **Teacher/Group Leader Meeting (Conference Theater - Ballroom Level)**
Teachers meet to discuss the weekend, share tips, and ask questions about the conference.
- After Welcoming Program** **Ice Cream Social (Regency Ballroom ABCD - Ballroom Level)**
Scoops of fun for everyone, stick around to make your own ice cream sundae!
- 10:00 p.m.** **Lights Out**

SATURDAY, JUNE 27TH

- 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** **Information Booth Open (Ballroom Level)**
- 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.** **Breakfast (Regency Ballroom ABCD - Ballroom Level)**
- 8:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.** **Energy STEM Challenge**
Students will split into grade level groups to engage in fun, hands-on energy STEM activities with peers from across the nation.
 - Elementary (Washington A/B - Ballroom Level)**
 - Intermediate (Lincoln/Roosevelt - 3rd Floor)**
 - Secondary (Arlington - 3rd Floor)**
- 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.** **Teacher Workshop (Conference Theater - Ballroom Level)**
Teachers can take a break from teaching and take on the role of student, engaging in some of NEED's hands-on energy lessons! Share ideas to take back with you in the fall. Group Leaders are welcome to join this session.
- 10:30 a.m.** **Tour Washington, D.C. (Lunch and dinner on your own)**
Open touring of Washington's memorials, Capitol Hill, Smithsonian museums, and other points of interest. Enjoy lunch and dinner at one of DC's many great restaurants or explore the local food truck scene near the National Mall. Youth Staff will walk groups to the Metro Station. Fuel up with a snack from our sponsor before you head out!
- 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.** **Optional! Enjoy Snacks & Games with the Youth Staff! (Regency Ballroom ABCD - Ballroom Level)**
Back from touring and dinner? Enjoy some snacks while participating in some fun games with the Youth Staff.
- 10:00 p.m.** **Lights Out**





SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Information Booth Open (Ballroom Level)

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Breakfast (Regency Ballroom ABCD - Ballroom Level)

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Tour DC on Old Town Trolley (Regency Ballroom)

Board the Old Town Trolley with your Group for a fun tour of the Monuments. Old Town Trolley will drop groups in DC at the end of the scheduled tour.

11:00 a.m.

Tour DC on Your Own (Lunch on your own)

Open touring of all our nation's capital has to offer. Enjoy lunch at one of DC's many great restaurants or explore the local food truck scene near the National Mall. Plan your touring adventures so you are back to the hotel before 4:00 p.m. to be ready to depart for our dinner cruise this evening!

4:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Board Buses to Spirit of Washington (Lobby Level)

Buses will take you to the pier for a tropical-themed cruise down the Potomac River to enjoy dinner, dancing, games, and a sunset view.

5:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.

Board Spirit of Washington

6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Spirit of Washington Dinner Cruise

8:30 p.m.

Return to Hotel

After the boat returns to the dock, NEED staff will ask groups to stay together in lines to facilitate easy bus loading to return to the hotel.

10:30 p.m.

Lights Out

MONDAY, JUNE 29TH

7:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Information Booth Open (Ballroom Level)

7:00 a.m. - NOON

Check-out (Front Desk - Lobby Level)

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Luggage Storage (Potomac Ballroom - Ballroom Level)

8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

46th Annual NEED Youth Awards Ceremony and Breakfast (Regency Ballroom ABCD - Ballroom Level)

8:00 a.m.

Breakfast Begins

8:30 a.m.

Awards Ceremony Begins

Awards announcements for the 2026 Youth Awards for Energy Achievement and the awards presented.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Alton Gayton

Alton's passion for science was sparked early through his time as a student involved with NEED in the classroom and beyond, from serving on Youth Staff to assisting at conferences and workshops across the country. His journey led from a fascination with nuclear energy to a deep curiosity about biology, cancer, and viruses, ultimately earning his PhD in Virology in 2026 from Harvard University. Alton's story is an inspiring example of how early hands-on science experiences can shape a lifelong path in research and discovery.

11:00 a.m.

Conference Concludes, Safe Travels Home!

A special thank you to our sponsors for their support of the 46th Youth Energy Conference & Awards!



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