



CHARLOTTESVILLE UTILITIES **STORM DRAIN ART CONTEST OFFICIAL RULES**

STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION: ONLY RAIN DOWN THE DRAIN!

STORMWATER IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

The City of Charlottesville, Virginia's ("City"), Department of Utilities manages the City's stormwater conveyance system through a network of built infrastructure and natural stormwater features. The system manages stormwater runoff, which is precipitation that flows over the ground and into the stormwater system or directly into our creeks, streams, and rivers. As this runoff flows over land or impervious surfaces, such as paved streets, parking lots, or building rooftops, it picks up pollutants like trash, chemicals, oils, and sediment. These pollutants can harm the City's waterways, negatively impact the ecological function of surrounding plant and animal habitats and diminish City resident's ability to enjoy outside recreation. Keeping the City's stormwater conveyance system clear and clean is essential to the health of City local waterways.

THIS CONTEST'S INITIATIVE

To help promote stormwater awareness, and ensure that only rain goes down the drain, the City invites the community to creatively express the importance of stormwater pollution prevention with the painting of three (3) stormwater drain inlets! With two (2) submission categories, Youth (ages twelve (12) – seventeen (17) and Open (ages eighteen (18)+), this is a great opportunity to illustrate "Only Rain Down the Drain" by visually communicating an educational and inspirational message on how and why pollutant-free stormwater is essential to the health and vitality of the City's creeks, streams, and rivers. These art installations will be a visual reminder of the interconnectedness between daily actions and the health of the City's waterways, and are designed to help engage, educate, and motivate the community to prevent pollutants from entering City local waterways through storm drains. Three (3) winners will have their artwork painted on one (1) of three (3) stormwater drain inlets, as well as receive a \$500 gift card.

ELIGIBILITY

The contest is open to all community members aged twelve (12) years or older. Submissions from those under the age of eighteen (18) will require a parent or guardian signature to be accepted.

CONTEST RULES

- All entries must convey the theme of the contest, "Stormwater Pollution Prevention: Only Rain Down the Drain!"
- Entries must be the work of one (1) individual, if submitted by someone who is over the age of eighteen (18).
- Entries from those age twelve (12) – seventeen (17) have the option to submit a collaborative entry. Only one (1) submission per individual or collaborative team.
- Original artwork only. Entries submitted with copyrighted characters or images, and AI-generated art will not be accepted.





- Artwork must be appropriate for all ages.
- Artwork must not advertise any product, company, service, religious affiliation, or political organization or view.
- Artwork must be submitted in full color, easily replicated on a concrete surface, and can be adapted to the dimensions of the storm drain inlet.
- Please use the storm drain template to create your artwork. If your design includes the area surrounding the storm drain, please indicate that on your submission.
- Artwork may include the street, sidewalk, or both.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

- Submissions can be made digitally through the electronic upload form (JPEG/JPG, PNG, PDF, or GIF files), by mail to Charlottesville Utilities, 305 4th Street NW, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903, or in-person at the City's Utilities Administration Building located at 305 4th Street NW.
- The official entry form must be attached to all entries.
- Submissions must be made by 5 PM on Monday, February 9, 2026.

ENTRY GUIDELINES AND CONTEST DETAILS

Entries will be judged on whether the art:

- Incorporates education on water quality as related to streams, storm drains, or general water-related environmental topics. Examples include litter, pet waste, oil/chemicals, yard waste, or how the water that enters storm drain is untreated and leads to local waterways. Text is encouraged to help better communicate an educational stormwater pollution prevention message.
- Easy to recreate. An overly complicated design might be difficult to replicate.
- Creativity! Make the design original, colorful, and eye-catching. Approach the Project as an educational tool that will be easily noticeable.
- Coherent and easy to understand message.

CONTEST TIMELINE

- Contest opens Monday, November 17, 2025, in conjunction with Stormwater Awareness Day.
- All entries must be submitted by 5 PM on Monday, February 9, 2026, using one (1) of the official submission methods.
- A panel of judges will be selected by City Utilities to select two (2) winning designs – one (1) design from the Youth Category and one (1) design from the Open Category. City Utilities reserves the right to select more than one (1) entry from either Category.





- A third (3rd) Fan Favorite winner will be selected by online voting from the top entries at www.charlottesville.gov/stormwater starting on February 16 – March 9.
- An entry may not win both the Judges' Pick and the Fan Favorite. If an entry is chosen for both, the Fan Favorite runner-up will win the Fan Favorite prize.
- Three (3) \$500 gift cards will be awarded.
- The winners will be contacted after March 9 (Press Release after).

Painting Event

- The painting of three (3) storm drains will occur in Spring.
- Artists are required to attend an educational session presented by City Utilities before painting can begin. The session will cover basic information on storm drains, stormwater, and day-of-event safety standards and expectations.
- Artists must sign a waiver agreeing to:
 - Complete the artwork
 - Use only the specialized paint provided by City;
 - Paint the City-approved design they submitted;
 - Understand and accept that, due to the public nature of this artwork, it may be at risk of being damaged, altered, or removed without notification;
 - Release ownership of the artwork to City, giving City exclusive rights to reproduce, distribute, use, and display it in any medium; and
 - City retains the sole right to remove all or a portion of the artwork at its discretion.
- Only paint brushes may be used. No spray paint is permitted, due to proximity to storm drain inlet entrance.
- Artists must not allow paint or brush rinse water to go down the storm drain.
- Artists must use the traffic paint provided. Each artist will receive one (1) quart of red, yellow, blue, white, and black paint that may be mixed to create an individual palette.
- Storm drains will be cleaned prior to painting. If the area becomes dirty again, only a broom or clear water may be used to clean the drain. No soap may enter the storm drain.
- Traffic cones will be on-site and safety vests will be provided.

