

2026-2027 Scholarship Program

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*Still have more questions? Please submit **additional** questions [to this form](#).*

Program Overview

Who is eligible to apply?

Eligibility varies by scholarship. To review all of the scholarship opportunities and the eligibility criteria, scroll to [Page 6](#) of this document or [visit our Scholarships webpage here](#).

When is the application deadline?

This year, for new **and** returning applicants, the deadline is **Wednesday, January 28th, 2026, at 11:59 PM**.

When is the Letter of Recommendation due?

What is it?

All applicants are required to have at least one letter of recommendation. A letter of recommendation is a testimonial written by a teacher or someone with authority who can vouch for your academic performance, community involvement, or, if applicable, athletic performance.

How do I get one?

You will need to coordinate with a teacher, advisor, or community member who is familiar with your academic performance or community involvement to obtain one. If eligible for an athletic scholarship, you will need to request a letter from your coach or another member of your school's Athletics Department.

How do I submit it?

Towards the end of the application, there is an option to send a request to your recommender via the Scholarship Portal, so that your recommender can upload the letter directly to your application. If the letter was sent to you directly, you will also have the option to upload your letter(s) yourself.

Should I start my application early to give my recommender time to fulfill my request by the deadline?

It may take time to coordinate, so plan ahead! Letters of Recommendation are due by the application deadline, January 28, 2026, at 11:59 PM.

- *Please note: You will **not** be able to submit your application without a Letter of Recommendation*

What is the Program Timeline?

November 1, 2025 – Application opens!

- New applicants can log into www.cfsc.org/scholars
- Renewal application opens (CFSCC will email renewal applicants a link)

January 28, 2026 – Deadline for both new applications **and** renewal applicants (11:59 PM)

February-April 2026 – Application review period

April 2026 – All applicants will be notified of their status via email and/or phone call

June-July 2026 – Scholarship Award funds disbursed

How are recipients selected?

Selections are made by a group of community representatives and trustees who serve on the Community Foundation Santa Cruz County's Scholarship Committee. Awards are approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors, based on the criteria outlined for each scholarship and the recommendations of the Committee.

[Click here](#) to review all of the scholarship opportunities and the eligibility criteria.

Required Documents

Does my transcript have to be official?

Contact your school's Administration Office to request your official transcript. Ultimately, your completed application needs to include an official transcript with your grades for the current year through December 2025. You do not need a version with your school seal, but your transcript must contain the most recent grading period's grades and show your cumulative GPA.

Should I submit all of my information before I request a letter of recommendation?

No, please request! You should request your recommendation letter as early as possible to ensure there is sufficient time for the recommendation to be submitted by the deadline. You do not have to wait until all other portions of your application are complete before requesting your recommendation. Select 'Save' on the application form to save your progress and return to it at a later date.

What supporting documentation is required for this application?

All Applicants:

- Official High School Transcript(s)
- FAFSA Submission Summary or Dream Act Application
- Letter(s) of Recommendation

If applicable:

- SAT/ACT Scores: If you've taken either or both, please include your scores.
- College/University Transcript: Incoming College Sophomores and Juniors

Where and when should I send my supporting documents?

All required supporting documents must be uploaded directly to your online application by the application deadline, January 28, 2026. Only documents that meet the required criteria and are uploaded by the deadline will be accepted.

What should be visible on my documents?

All uploaded documents must show your name. If you are using an online portal to access your required documentation, and all that is visible is the salutation and your first name (Example: Welcome Joe!), this will meet the name requirement.

How long does it take to process my uploaded documents?

If your document was uploaded before the deadline, it will be processed. You will receive a verification email after completing your application and hitting the 'Submit' button on your application. If additional materials are needed, you will be asked to add them to your application when you hit the 'Submit' button and prompted to hit 'Submit' again once the materials have been added. It is your responsibility to ensure your document has been successfully submitted.

Notifications

How will I be notified about the status of my application?

Notifications are sent primarily via email to the email you used to create your account. Please use an email address you will have access to all year. Ultimately, it is your responsibility as the applicant to verify your application status

by checking your [Student Portal](#).

What notifications will be sent to me?

Application Deadline Reminder:

If you have started your application but have not yet submitted, a reminder will be emailed to you two weeks prior to the submission deadline. Applications must be complete/submitted to be eligible.

Renewal Reminder & Instructions:

If your previously awarded scholarship is renewable, you will be sent a reminder notification in mid-November and again two weeks prior to your renewal deadline. If your email address has changed since your initial application, **please contact Channing Baker at cbaker@cfsc.org for assistance.**

Selection Results:

All applicants will be notified of their application status in early May.

Funds Disbursed:

Scholarship Award recipients will receive an email announcement including directions for submitting their ACH electronic bank transfer information. You will be notified when funds have been sent to you via ACH transfer.

Application Status

How do I know if my application is complete?

Your application status will show as "Submitted" in your [Student Portal](#) under the 'Active Requests' tab on your Dashboard. You will also receive a notification email to the email address that you entered on your application, verifying your application submission.

As the applicant, what are my responsibilities?

It is your responsibility to make sure your application is submitted, that all information is true, and your account information is kept up to date. Your online application form must be submitted, all required documents uploaded, and all required supplements (if requested) added on or before **Wednesday, January 28th, 2026, at 11:59 PM.**

Award Details

What are the selection criteria?

The Foundation's Scholarship Committee will evaluate the applications and select recipients based on the criteria outlined for each scholarship. All applicants must be residents of Santa Cruz County, and depending on the scholarship, must be either a graduating senior or a student at a local 2-year college to qualify.

What are the details of the award?

- Award details vary based on the scholarship opportunity. [Click here](#) or scroll down to review all of the scholarship opportunities and the award details.
- Scholarship awards can be used towards tuition, fees, books, supplies required for coursework, room and board, and other related expenses at accredited institutions while actively attending school. These institutions include two-year colleges, four-year colleges, vocational schools, and technical schools.

Is my award renewable?

Click [here](#) to return to the first page, and if you have **additional questions**, please submit them [to this form](#).

Some scholarships are renewable, but not all. [Click here](#) to review all of the scholarship opportunities and the renewal details.

What are my responsibilities if I am chosen as a recipient?

[Click here](#) or scroll down to review all of the scholarship opportunities, award details, and recipient responsibilities.

What are the details of the award?

- Award details vary based on the scholarship opportunity. [Click here](#) or scroll down to review all of the scholarship opportunities and the award details.
- Scholarship awards can be used towards tuition, fees, books, supplies required for coursework, room and board, and other related expenses at accredited institutions while actively attending school. These institutions include two-year colleges, four-year colleges, vocational schools, and technical schools.

How and when are funds issued?

Your funds will be issued via ACH electronic payment directly to the bank account listed on your ACH Electronic Transfer Form through June and July of 2026. Scholarship Award recipients will receive an email award announcement including directions for submitting their ACH electronic bank transfer information, and will be notified when funds have been issued via ACH electronic transfer.

How do I change my college choice?

Changes in your choice of college may affect your eligibility status for certain scholarships. If the colleges you entered on your application as your first or second choice change, **please contact Channing Baker at cbaker@cfsc.org**.

Are scholarships taxable?

Scholarships are normally not taxable. The scholarship recipient is responsible for taxes, if any, that may be assessed against his or her scholarship award. We recommend consulting a tax adviser for more guidance.

You can also consult [IRS Publication 970](#) for additional information.

2026-27 Scholarship Program

Eligibility Requirements

You only need to submit one application to apply for all scholarships listed, except for Graduate Students applying to the [Doane Environmental Scholarship](#).

Scholarship awards are subject to change from year to year. Scholarship awards range in amount from \$1,000-\$20,000 total and include both one-time awards and renewable awards.

Barbara J. Thompson Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or current graduating seniors from any accredited high school physically located within the Santa Cruz City School District. No other schools per contract.
- Current graduating seniors must have a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Must have participated in three of the following activities during their high school term:
 - Employment
 - Family Care
 - Community Involvement
 - Volunteer Work
 - Sports
- Must have lived in Santa Cruz County for three of the past four years
- Must be a U.S. Citizen

Award Details

- A one-time award will be granted per eligible high school and is not renewable
 - The award amount will vary based on funding available

Bert and Carolyn Post Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Watsonville High School or Pajaro Valley High School
- Must have the intention of becoming a public-school teacher
- Must demonstrate financial need
- Must have a minimum 3.0 GPA
- ❖ *Priority will be given to a student who is first in their family to attend college*
- ❖ *Priority will be given to students who are bilingual in English and Spanish*

Award Details

- Multiple one-time awards of \$2,500 or more

Burton Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or current graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County
- Must have a minimum 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale for two consecutive years
- Must be a U.S. Citizen
- Must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- Multiple awards of up to \$5,000 will be awarded, and are renewable for up to three additional years based on academic achievements and continued financial need

Click [here](#) to return to the first page, and if you have **additional questions**, please submit them [to this form](#).

- Must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA
- Recipient must enroll full-time at any accredited two- or four-year college/university

Doane Environmental Scholarship

Eligibility

One or more awards are available to students who are currently enrolled and in good standing as a **graduate student** at the University of California, Santa Cruz, San Jose State University, OR California State University, Monterey Bay.

We've created a separate application and [FAQ](#) specific to this opportunity. Please apply in the same [portal](#) but select the *2026-2027 Environmental Scholarship Application*.

Award Details

Inspired by Jim Doane, the founder of this scholarship, and his vision of a world where human ingenuity and environmental stewardship thrive together, we invite you to share how your work advances this balance. We welcome graduate applicants committed to solutions that benefit both people and the planet to apply for the Doane Environmental Endowed Scholarship. Please visit our [FAQ](#) for more information.

Emmett and Elsie Geiser Athletic Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Watsonville, Pajaro Valley, or Aptos High Schools
- Have earned at least one letter in an athletic program
- Financial need is considered but is not required

Award Details

- Multiple awards of up to \$3,000 will be granted to a graduating senior from each of the three Pajaro Valley Unified high schools, and are renewable for up to three additional years based on academic performance and continued enrollment
 - Must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0
 - The award amount will vary based on funding available

Ernest V. Cowell Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or current graduating seniors of public high schools in the Santa Cruz City Schools District, with priority to Santa Cruz High School
- Must demonstrate financial need
- Recipient must attend a University of California campus in the fall following graduation
- The recipient may attend part-time or full-time

Award Details

- A One-time award up to \$1,000 is available

Giles Family Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County involved in arts, crafts, or music programs
- Have a minimum GPA of 3.0
- Intend on committing to Cabrillo College, San Jose State University, or the University of California at Santa Cruz

- Must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- One award of up to \$5,000 is available, renewable for up to three years based on academic performance, program of study, and continued enrollment

Hank Garcia Jr. and Family Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Aptos High School, Monte Vista High School, Pajaro High School, St. Francis High School, and Watsonville High School
- Must have a minimum 3.5 GPA
- Must be a U.S. Citizen
- Must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- Multiple awards of \$2,000 will be awarded and are renewable for up to three additional years based on continued enrollment
 - If there is no eligible applicant from one school, that award may be allocated to another eligible student from another school.

Isabel Fowler Sewell Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Pajaro Valley High School, or any public high school in Santa Cruz County
- Must have a minimum 3.0 GPA
- Will be attending college at Cabrillo or an accredited 4-year college or university full-time

Award Details

- Multiple one-time awards of up to \$5,000

John L. Turner Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Watsonville High School or Pajaro Valley High School
- Have a minimum GPA of 2.0
- Must be a U.S. Citizen
- Must demonstrate financial need
- ❖ *Priority will be given to a student who was involved in activities, worked part-time, or assisted with family care while in high school*

Award Details

- A one-time award of \$1,000 is available
- The recipient may attend a college, university, or vocational school

Judy Anton Woman of Valor/Lupita Loves to Read Project Scholarship

Eligibility

- Female Latina
- Must demonstrate financial need
- Reside in the Live Oak or Watsonville area at the time of application
- Graduates or current graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County, **OR** a student at Cabrillo College
- ❖ *Priority will be given to a student whose parents are not eligible for public assistance*

Award Details

- One award of \$1,000 or more, which is renewable for up to three additional years based on continued enrollment
- Recipient may attend part-time or full-time with no minimum credits required
- Enrollment at an accredited college or vocational school

Louis J. and Mary Ellen Schultz Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or current graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County
- Must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- One award of \$2,000 or more, renewable for up to three years based on continued enrollment
- Recipient must enroll full-time at any accredited college, university, or vocational school
- The number of awards and award amount will vary based on funding available

R.H. Beel Memorial Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Santa Cruz High School
- Must demonstrate academic achievement or improvement
- Must show a history of service activities, volunteer work, or social responsibility
- Must demonstrate financial need
- Applicant must contribute personally to their educational costs
- Must be a U.S. Citizen
- ❖ *Priority will be given to students who do not receive other scholarships*

Award Details

- One award of \$1,000 or more, renewable for up to three years based on academic performance, continued full-time enrollment, and continued personal contribution to education costs
 - Award amounts vary based on funding available
 - Enrollment must be continuous for the entire academic year

Richard and Theresa Crocker Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from any high school in Santa Cruz County, students enrolled at Cabrillo College, or students who have experience working in a desired trade/career path
- Must have a minimum 3.0 GPA
- Must demonstrate financial need
- Recipients may attend any accredited community, vocational, or two or four-year college
- ❖ *Priority will be given to students who are going to get degrees in trades/vocations*

Award Details

- One or more awards of \$5,000, renewable for up to three years based on academic performance and continued full-time enrollment.

Santa Cruz County Scholarship Endowment

Award Details

Thanks to community donors, one or more awards (amounts vary) are available for graduating seniors from any high school in Santa Cruz County or students enrolled at Cabrillo College who have a minimum 3.0 GPA or

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experience working in a desired trade/career path and who demonstrate financial need. Recipients may attend any accredited community, vocational, or two or four-year college.

Simunovich Family Agriculture Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or current graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County or the Pajaro Valley, **OR** students at Cabrillo College or Hartnell Community College who were residents of Santa Cruz County or the Pajaro Valley at least two years before their Cabrillo or Hartnell registration
- Must plan to study Agriculture at an accredited four-year college/university

Award Details

- Multiple awards of at least \$1,000, renewable for up to three years based on academic performance, program of study, and continued enrollment
 - The recipient must be enrolled at any accredited four-year college/university
 - Recipient must remain enrolled in the field of agriculture

Other Scholarship Opportunities to Explore:

2026 Ruben Mejia Memorial (WHS students interested in STEM)

Alice & Rodney Misumi Scholarship

Alicia Schoellhamer Memorial

Arlene Solari (WHS Foundation)

Artistic Minds

Avelina Almazan Fuerte Memorial

Beth Nelson Women In STEM

Bob Sheetz Memorial

Bruce Church Educational Foundation

California School Employees

Association PV Chapter

California Women for Agriculture (CWA)

(CWA) Women Pursuing Degrees in Agriculture

Center for Farmworker Families Students Scholarship

Charles Dick Memorial

Charles Wait Memorial

Class of 1965 honoring Mas Hashimoto

Class of 1976 Chuck Lucas Leadership Award

Codiga Family Scholarship for Higher Education

Health & Human Services Corralitos Women's Club

David Toriumi Scholarship Fund

Delta Kappa Gamma Society Inter.

Zeta Epsilon Chapter

Donald L. Grunsky Memorial

Elks Most Valuable Students Program

Federico Castañeda Memorial

Hofmeister Scholarship

Florence Flake Memorial

Horatio Alger State Scholar

ISTW Charity & Scholarship in

Memory of Manuel Cabral

Iris & Arthur Rodgers Industrial

Jacob Young Financial

Joan Dufour Memorial

Judy Stobbe Scholarship

Kathryn Wait Memorial

Knight of Columbus

Lois Hick Hastie Memorial

Lola Picazo Memorial

M. Gomez Agriculture Scholarship

Rotary of Watsonville

Migration & Adaptation in the Americas (MAIA) Scholarship

Native Daughters of the Golden West

Santa Cruz Parlor No. 26-Mae B.

Santa Cruz Community Credit

Wilkin/ Phyrne Lorenz Scholarship

Union Education

Nethercutt Digital Nest

Santa Cruz DAR Good Citizen

NHORA Agent for Change Program

SCFF for Environmental Opportunity Scholarship
Soroptimist International of Watsonville Managers
Pajaro Valley Certified Farmers'
Steve Thompson Memorial
Market in Memory of Counselor T.S. MacQuiddy
The Catherine Rodgers Memorial
Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce & The Fawcett Family
The Korean American Grocer
Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers Association of Central Ca. Student Scholarship
Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group
Pay it Forward
Future Health Professionals
PEO-PH Raising Star
The Tomas Alejo Jr. Comm.
Personnel Commission in honor of Service Scholarship
Questbridge (Boston College)
Radcliff Scholarship
Raoul Teilhet Scholarship
REBELE
Refugio "Cuco" Pinedo Memorial
Rosales Sisters' Scholarship
Vivian Moutafian Mathematics