COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
at the Jack & Peggy Baskin Center for Philanthropy
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2027-2028 Scholarship Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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*Still have more questions? Please submit **additional** questions **to this form**.*

Program Overview

The Community Foundation Santa Cruz County Scholarship Program connects local students with a range of scholarship opportunities through one shared application. Eligibility and award amounts vary by scholarship, with one-time and renewable awards supporting attendance at accredited colleges, universities, vocational schools, and technical programs. Applicants are matched with opportunities based on each scholarship's criteria, and recipients are selected through a community review process with final approval by the Foundation's Board of Directors. Learn more about our Scholarship Program on our website.

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?

Thursday, January 28th, 2027, at 11:59 PM.

When is the Letter of Recommendation due?

What is it? 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? Letters of Recommendation are due by the application deadline. It may take time to coordinate with your recommender, so request your letter early. You do not need to finish the rest of your application first. *Please note: You will **not** be able to submit your application without a Letter of Recommendation*

What is the Program Timeline?

November 2, 2026: Application opens!
- New applicants: log in at **cfscc.org/scholars**
- Renewal applicants: watch your email for your link

November – January: Prepare your application
- Ask for your Letter(s) of Recommendation now
- Request your transcript (final grades through December 2026)
- Complete your FAFSA or CA Dream Act Application

January 28, 2027 11:59 PM - Deadline for new and renewal applicants
February–April 2027 – Application review
Late April 2027 – You'll be notified by phone call and email
Summer 2027 – Award funds are sent to you

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 return to the first page, and if you have **additional questions**, please submit them **to this form**.*

Required Documents

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

No, please request early on! 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:

- High School Transcript, with final grades through December 2026
- FAFSA Submission Summary or CA 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, 2027. 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.

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

What notifications will be sent to me?

If you have started your application but have not submitted it, we will email you a reminder two weeks before the deadline; applications must be submitted to be eligible. Renewal applicants will receive reminders in early November and two weeks before their renewal deadline; if your email address has changed, please contact Channing Baker at **cbaker@cfscc.org**. Award recipients will receive an email with directions for submitting their electronic bank transfer information, and you will be notified when funds have been sent to you via direct deposit.

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 that 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 **Thursday, January 28th, 2027, 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 graduation from a Santa Cruz County High School or, depending on the scholarship, must be a student at a local 2-year college to qualify. Applicants applying to the Environmental Scholarship are not required to be residents in Santa Cruz County.

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?

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

Where can I find the award details for each scholarship?

- Award amounts, renewal terms, and other details differ for each scholarship. You can find them in the Eligibility Requirements section starting on Page 6 or on our Scholarships webpage.

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

How and when are funds issued?

Your funds will be deposited directly into the bank account you provide after receiving your award notification, through summer 2027. The award announcement email and the notification that funds have been sent are described under Funds Disbursed in the Notifications section.

Are scholarships taxable?

Scholarships are normally not taxable when spent on IRS-approved educational expenses. Qualified education expenses are tuition and fees required to enroll at or attend an eligible educational institution, and course-related expenses such as fees, books, supplies, and equipment that are required for the courses at that institution. These items must be required of all students in your course of instruction. Expenses that don't qualify include room and board, travel, research, clerical help, and equipment or other expenses that aren't required for enrollment in or attendance at an eligible educational institution. 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.

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Eligibility Requirements

You only need to submit one application to apply for all scholarships listed, *except* for Graduate Students applying to the Environmental Scholarship.

Scholarship awards are subject to change from year to year. Scholarship awards range in amount from $2,500-$20,000 total and include both one-time awards and renewable awards.

Barbara J. Thompson Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or graduating seniors of accredited high schools in the Santa Cruz City School District (no other schools per contract); minimum 3.0 GPA for graduating seniors
- Participated in three of: employment, family care, community involvement, volunteer work, sports
- Lived in Santa Cruz County three of the past four years; U.S. citizen

Award Details

- One-time award per eligible high school (not renewable); amount varies based on funding available

Bert and Carolyn Post Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Watsonville High School or Pajaro Valley High School
- Intend to become a public-school teacher; minimum 3.0 GPA; must demonstrate financial need
- *Priority given to students who are first in their family to attend college or bilingual in English and Spanish*

Award Details

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

Burton Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County
- Minimum 3.0 GPA (4.0 scale) for two consecutive years; U.S. citizen; must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- Multiple awards of up to $5,000, renewable for up to three additional years based on academic achievement and continued financial need; must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA and enroll full-time at an accredited two- or four-year college/university

Environmental Scholarship

Eligibility

One or more awards are available to currently enrolled **graduate students** in good standing at the University of California, Santa Cruz, San Jose State University, OR California State University, Monterey Bay. A separate application and FAQ exist for this opportunity. Apply in the same portal and select the *2027-2028 Environmental Scholarship Application.*

Emmett and Elsie Geiser Athletic Scholarship

Eligibility

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

Award Details

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

- Multiple awards of up to $3,000 (amount varies with funding), one for a graduating senior from each of the three Pajaro Valley Unified high schools; renewable for up to three additional years based on academic performance and continued enrollment (minimum 2.0 GPA)

Ernest V. Cowell Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or graduating seniors of public high schools in the Santa Cruz City Schools District, with priority to Santa Cruz High School
- Must demonstrate financial need and attend a University of California campus (part- or full-time) the fall after graduation

Award Details

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

Giles Family Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors of any Santa Cruz County high school involved in arts, crafts, or music programs
- Minimum 3.0 GPA; must demonstrate financial need
- Intend to commit to Cabrillo College, San Jose State University, or the University of California at Santa Cruz

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, Monte Vista, Pajaro, St. Francis, and Watsonville High Schools
- Minimum 3.5 GPA; U.S. citizen; must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- Multiple awards of $2,000, renewable for up to three additional years based on continued enrollment; if no eligible applicant applies from one school, that award may go to an 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
- Minimum 3.0 GPA; attending 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
- Minimum 2.0 GPA; U.S. citizen; must demonstrate financial need
- *Priority given to students who were involved in activities, worked part-time, or assisted with family care in high school*

Award Details

- One-time award of $1,000; recipient may attend a college, university, or vocational school

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

Eligibility

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

Award Details

- One award of $1,000 or more, renewable for up to three additional years based on continued enrollment; part- or full-time at an accredited college or vocational school (no minimum credits)

Louis J. and Mary Ellen Schultz Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or graduating seniors of any Santa Cruz County high school; must demonstrate financial need

Award Details

- One award of $2,000 or more (number and amount vary with funding), renewable for up to three years based on continued enrollment; must enroll full-time at an accredited college, university, or vocational school

R.H. Beel Memorial Scholarship

Eligibility

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

Award Details

- One award of $1,000 or more (amount varies with funding), renewable for up to three years based on academic performance, continuous full-time enrollment for the academic year, and continued personal contribution to education costs

Richard and Theresa Crocker Santa Cruz County Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from any Santa Cruz County high school, students enrolled at Cabrillo College, or students with experience working in a desired trade/career path
- Minimum 3.0 GPA; must demonstrate financial need
- May attend any accredited community, vocational, or two- or four-year college
- *Priority given to students going on to earn 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

Thanks to community donors, one or more awards (amounts vary) are available to graduating seniors from any Santa Cruz County high school, or Cabrillo College students, who demonstrate financial need and have either a minimum 3.0 GPA or experience working in a desired trade/career path. Recipients may attend any accredited community, vocational, or two- or four-year college.

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Simunovich Family Agriculture Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduates or graduating seniors of any high school in Santa Cruz County or the Pajaro Valley, **OR** Cabrillo or Hartnell College students who lived in either area for at least two years before registering
- 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; recipient must remain enrolled in agriculture at an accredited four-year college/university

Dr. Robert P. Quinn Memorial Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from Aptos High School; minimum 3.5 GPA; must demonstrate financial need; may attend any accredited community college, vocational school, or two- or four-year college

Award Details

- One one-time scholarship of $2,500 is available

Graniterock/Woolpert Family Scholarship

Eligibility

- Graduating seniors from any high school in Santa Cruz, Monterey, or San Benito County; minimum 3.0 GPA; U.S. citizen; may attend any accredited community college or four-year college
- Preference to female students pursuing a four-year degree or attending community college to study civil engineering or construction management; if none are eligible, may be awarded to a male student

Award Details

- At least one scholarship of $2,500, renewable for up to three additional years

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Other Scholarship Opportunities to Explore:

Women Pursuing Degrees in Agriculture

2026 Ruben Mejia Memorial (Watsonville High School students interested in STEM)

Community Health Trust of Pajaro Valley Scholarships

California School Employees

California Women for Agriculture

Center for Farmworker Families Students Scholarship

Charles Dick Memorial

Elks Most Valuable Students Program

Future Health Professionals

Hofmeister Scholarship

Horatio Alger State Scholar

Jacob Young Financial

Knight of Columbus

Migration & Adaptation in the Americas (MAIA) Scholarship

Monterey County Leader's Council High School Scholarship

Native Daughters of the Golden West

Nethercutt Digital Nest

NHORA Agent for Change Program

Omega Nu Scholarships

Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group

Pay it Forward

PEO-PH Raising Star

QuestBridge

Raoul Teilhet Scholarship

Rosales Sisters' Scholarship

Santa Cruz DAR Good Citizen

Santa Cruz Sunrise Rotary Club Youth Scholarships

SCFF for Environmental Opportunity Scholarship

Soroptimist International of Watsonville Managers

The Korean American Grocer

Union Education

Wilkin/ Phryne Lorenz Scholarship

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