

Scholarship Resources for California's Current and Former Foster Youth

Scholarships are money to help students pay for college that don't need to be paid back. They can be awarded from colleges, communities, community-based organizations, churches or businesses.

Scholarships can be awarded based on factors such as financial need, experience in the foster care system, ethnicity, special talents, academic performance, leadership ability, community service, or personal life experiences.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIPS:

- 1. Start your search early.** High school seniors are advised to begin applying at the start of their senior year.
- 2. Ask for help.** It's ok to have someone to review your essays and provide feedback.
- 3. Make a budget.** Determine how much money you need throughout the school year. Keep in mind costs that may occur during summer when you are not in school. Here is one resource that may be helpful: [tinyurl/mrynaue7](https://tinyurl.com/mrynaue7).
- 4. Stay organized.** Keep a log of all the scholarships you apply to. A document might include the name of the scholarship, website, award amount, deadline to apply, the date you applied and the status of your application (pending, received and not-awarded).
- 5. Create a general essay.** Many scholarships require essays. Write a general essay that you can edit and adjust to fit the requirements of each scholarship that you apply to. A typical essay might talk about why you would like to attend college, a challenge you have experienced and overcome and your future educational and career goals.
- 6. Be honest, but only share what feels comfortable.** There are many scholarship opportunities available to students. Find ones that are in line with your goals and experiences. Only disclose elements of your experience in foster care that you feel comfortable sharing.
- 7. Be patient and don't give up.** Applying to scholarships can be a lot of work and may take a long time before you get a response. Don't give up or be discouraged. Keep trying! Even small awards add up. Remember that receiving a scholarship is not a reflection of your worth.
- 8. Review your financial aid award letters carefully.** If you receive a private scholarship, a new law in California prohibits colleges and universities from reducing the amount that they are providing to offset the scholarship award (within the maximum that you are allowed to receive, known as Cost of Attendance). Make sure to review your financial aid letter before and after reporting any scholarships and discuss with the financial aid office if you think other forms of aid have been reduced as a result of reporting a scholarship. This applies only to students receiving the Pell Grant or aid through the CADAA.
- 9. Avoid scams.** You shouldn't have to pay to receive or apply for a scholarship. Avoid common scams such as these:
 - **Fees** – “Buy now or miss this opportunity.” Don't give in to pressure tactics. You shouldn't have to pay to search or apply for scholarships.
 - **Scholarship Guarantee** – “We guarantee you'll get aid.” A company could claim it fulfilled its promise if you were offered student loans or a \$200 scholarship. Is that worth a fee of \$1,000 or more?
 - **Credit card or bank account information needed** – “I've got aid for you; give me your credit card or bank account number.” Never give out a credit card or bank account number unless you know the organization you are giving it to is legitimate. You could be putting yourself at risk of identity theft. Never provide your social security number.
 - **Unsolicited scholarships** – “You've been selected.” If you are called to receive an award for which you never applied, be careful, it's likely a scam.
 - **Unsecure websites** – Check all websites in your browser and avoid websites that are not secure.



In addition to applying for private scholarships, remember these three key steps to explore other financial aid resources:



1. **Complete either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at fafsa.gov or CA Dream Act Application (CADAA) at dream.csac.ca.gov.** There are many financial aid resources through the state and federal government. Some of this financial aid is even for students who have experience in the foster care system! To learn more, please visit jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide/.
2. **Contact the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend to explore any institutional or local scholarships that may be offered.**
3. **Contact your local Independent Living Program (ILP) (also known as Independent Living Services Program (ILSP)) to learn about any additional funding you may be eligible for.**

Private Scholarships for Students with Experience in the Foster Care System

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and programs can change. If you are interested in a particular scholarship, please visit the program's website to view the most current information.

REGION	PROGRAM NAME & WEBSITE	HOW MUCH?	WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?	DEADLINE
Northern California	Dare to Dream Scholarship: www.voa-ncnn.org/dare-to-dream-scholarship-program	\$500 – \$5,000	• Current or former foster youth who are living or have lived in Northern California OR a Volunteer of America client, former client, or child of a present or past client. • A 2023 graduating high school student or student who has already earned a high school diploma or GED. • Students who expect to be accepted to an accredited four-year college/university, community college or vocational program. • Current GPA of 2.0 or higher.	April
Northern California	Foster Youth Education Fund: fyef.org/scholarship	\$500 – \$2,500	• Youth who have been in foster care in Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer and Yolo County OR were in foster care in California and are attending college in one of these four counties. • Students who receive a high school diploma or equivalent and planning to attend a two year or four-year college, university or accredited trade school.	June
Northern California (Greater Sacramento Area)	Fostering Success & Significance, Former Foster Youth Scholarship Program: fosteringss.org/programs	Varies	• Former foster youth for at least one day. • Physically living in the Greater Sacramento Area. • Enrolled full time or planning on attending college/university full time. • Maintain 2.00 GPA. • One meeting per month with a mentor and two community service events per year upon acceptance into the program.	Year Round
Northern California (San Joaquin County)	Mary Graham College & Trade School Scholarship and Support Program: marygrahamfoundation.org/scholarship/	Need Based	• Have been in foster care in San Joaquin County and/or must have been in foster care and be a current resident of San Joaquin County. • Be enrolled in school full-time (12 units or more) at the time the scholarship is awarded. • Have unmet financial need. • Have applied for financial aid and provide the FAFSA award paperwork (or application form if an award has not yet been made).	April
Northern California (Santa Clara or San Mateo County)	Pivotal College Scholarship: pivotalnow.org/youth-support/apply-for-a-college-scholarship	Up to \$5,000 per year	• Dependent of court (foster care or guardianship, including KinGAP) at least one day after 13th birthday. • Case in Santa Clara County or San Mateo County OR will be living or attending college in Santa Clara County or San Mateo County in the Fall. • Received or on-track to receive a high school diploma or GED. • Cumulative high school or college GPA of 2.0. • Apply for FAFSA or CADAA by priority deadline. • Accepted or planning to attend a community college, university or accredited vocational school.	March

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Northern California (San Francisco Bay Area)	Students Rising Above, Rising Stars Program: studentsrisingabove.org	Varies	- Northern California high school juniors (live within nine-county bay area). - Apply during their Junior year of high school.	March
Northern California (Contra Costa)	VESTIA, Foster Youth Scholarship Program: vestiainc.org/foster-youth-scholarships/	Typically around \$1,000, but amount varies.	- Youth who have been in foster care in Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer and Yolo County OR were in foster care in California and are attending college in one of these four counties. - Students who receive a high school diploma or equivalent and planning to attend a two year or four-year college, university or accredited trade school.	June 1 , however funding may be available after this deadline.
Los Angeles County	Aaron Ruben Scholarship: casala.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Aaron-Ruben-Scholarship-Application.pdf	\$1,500 – \$3,000	- Current or previous foster youth under the jurisdiction of the Dependency Court of Los Angeles County. - High school seniors and current college students.	November 1
Los Angeles County	April Parker Foundation Scholarship: aprilparker.org/scholarships	\$1,000	- Current and former foster youth given priority. - Current or former LA County student. - Age 17-24 years old. - Minimum GPA of 2.0. - Must be planning on attending an accredited trade school, college or university.	June
Los Angeles County	Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation Scholarship Awards: thebiddymasoncharitablefoundation.org/index.php/scholarships Email Jackie Broxton: jbbiddymason1@gmail.com	Varies	- Current or former foster youth in the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. - Enrolled in or accepted to an accredited education institution, secondary school, vocational school, community college, four year college or university.	June
Los Angeles County (San Gabriel Valley)	Friends of Foster Children Scholarship: aprilparker.org/scholarships	Up to \$1,000	- Foster child/court dependent from San Gabriel Valley or were in one of the residential treatment centers they serve. - Are or will be a high school graduate or equivalent. - Have a definite and verifiable educational plan for a vocational program, community college, college or university. - Can document financial need.	Varies
Orange County	Orangewood Advanced Studies Scholarships: orangewood4you.org/scholarships/	Varies	Must have been declared a dependent of Orange County and placed in out-of-home care OR must have been declared a dependent child or ward in another jurisdiction and have a current association with Orangewood Foundation program services AND completed a bachelor's degree or certificate and enrolling in an advanced degree.	May
Orange County	Orangewood Grants: orangewood4you.org/childrens-trust-fund	Up to \$500 per fiscal year	- Orange County dependent OR Orange County resident with other dependency. - Between the ages of 18-21. - Young adults connected to Orangewood Foundation, residing in Orange County.	Rolling
Orange County	Orangewood Undergraduate Scholarships: orangewood4you.org/scholarships/	Up to \$5,904 per year	- Must have been an Orange County foster youth. - Enrolled at an accredited university or community college. - Young adults connected to Orangewood Foundation, residing in Orange County.	February
National	Adoption STAR Academic Scholarship Program: adoptionstar.com/resources/scholarship/	Varies	- The applicant must have been adopted or in foster care and be known to have overcome adversity. - High school transcripts and/or other applicable test scores that reflect improvement and high achievement. - Should demonstrate good character and high achievement despite obstacles or special challenges. - Must have advanced education plans to a 4-year college. - Should have demonstrated academic progress during their four years of high school.	May

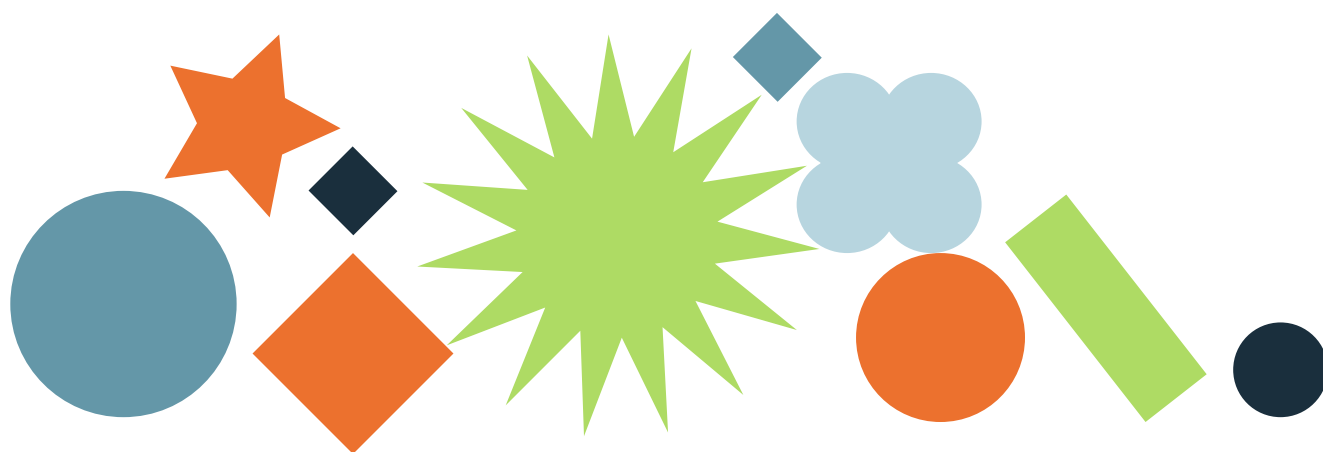
REGION	PROGRAM NAME & WEBSITE	HOW MUCH?	WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?	DEADLINE
National	All-Star College Scholarship: umpscare.com/scholarship/all-star-college-scholarship/	Up to \$10,000 per year for up to 4 years	• Been adopted or exited foster care to permanent guardianship at or after the age of 13. • Applicants must be incoming college freshmen under the age of 20. • Demonstrate financial need through the FAFSA.	May
National	American Industries Scholarship: togetherwerise.org/academic-services/american-industries-scholarship/	Up to \$10,000 per year for up to 2 years	• Current or former foster youth. • Graduated from high school or earned a high school equivalency certificate • Between the ages of 17-25 years old. • U.S. Citizenship. • Have been accepted into or expect acceptance into an accredited two- year public or nonprofit college or vocational-technical school.	August
National	Chafee Grant: chafee.csac.ca.gov	Up to \$5,000 per year for up to 5 years	• Current or former foster youth who were in foster care at least one day between the ages of 16-18. Learn more on the website. • Must be enrolled at least half-time in college. • Have not reached your 26th birthday as of July 1 of the award year. • Must have financial need • Can be used at public or private colleges or universities, or qualified career and technical schools in California or out of state. • Must also complete a FAFSA or CADAA. • Includes CA Dream Act eligible students.	Rolling, however earlier applicants are prioritized.
National	Family Fellowship: togetherwerise.org/family-fellowship/	Up to \$12,000 per year for up to five years	• The applicant has lived in foster care while living in the United States. • The applicant had either (a) lived in public or private foster care for the twelve consecutive months leading up to and including the applicant's 18th birthday; OR (b) was adopted or placed into legal guardianship from foster care after the applicants 13th birthday, OR (c) was orphaned for at least one year at the time of recipient's 18th birthday. • Graduated with a high school diploma or GED, or is currently a high school senior, with a GPA of 2.5 or higher. If currently attending college, a 2.5 GPA is also required. • The applicant must be 18-23 years of age during the application year. Applicants age 17 years old can apply with a guardian signature. Applicants turning 24 years before June 1st of the application year can apply. • Has been accepted to or expects acceptance to an accredited, Pell-eligible college or other post-secondary institution, and is attempting to complete an undergraduate degree. • U.S. Citizen.	May
National	Foster Care to Success Scholarship: fc2success.org/our-programs/information-for-students/	\$2,500 - \$5,000 (up to 5 years)	• Have been in public or private foster care for the 12 consecutive months leading up to and including their 18th birthday; OR have been adopted or placed into legal guardianship after their 16th birthday; OR have been orphaned for at least one year at the time of their 18th birthday and not subsequently adopted. • Have been in foster care or orphaned while living in the United States. U.S. citizenship is not required. • Be under the age of 25 on March 31 of the year in which they apply if they have not previously received scholarship funding from Foster Care to Success • Have been accepted into or expect to be accepted into an accredited, Pell-eligible college or other postsecondary school.	March
National	Fostering Educational Opportunities Foundation Scholarship Program: http://www.feof.education/application.html	\$1,000 - \$5,000	• Currently or formerly participated in foster care. • Minimum GPA of 2.0 and in good academic standing. • Demonstrates a need for financial assistance with higher education or training. • Attending or planning on attending college or a job training program. • Enrolled or planning on enrolling as a full-time (12 hours) student. • Be between the age of 18-26.	August

REGION	PROGRAM NAME & WEBSITE	HOW MUCH?	WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?	DEADLINE
National	George & Kathy Hicker Chapter for Success Textbook Fund: echoesofhope.org/programs-1/2018/8/14/chapters-for-success	Up to \$300 per semester	• Current or former foster youth, low-income, homeless, and/or undocumented students between the ages of 17-28 years old. • Must be enrolled in community college, four year, or vocational school.	Rolling referrals. Email the program.
National	International Student Foundation: isfsite.org/for-students	Varies	• Can demonstrate that they were orphaned or in foster care and are not currently adopted or supported by a parent or legal guardian. • Are of strong moral character and are willing to learn. • Are planning or applying to be a full-time undergraduate student for the next school year. • Have and are able to maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater. • Are 23 years of age or less on April 30th of the year of application. • Have submitted the FAFSA application. • Are willing to commit to a mentoring program of twice monthly phone conversations with assigned ISF mentor. • Demonstrate a commitment to personal growth and leadership development.	Rolling referrals. Email the program.
National	Joan Gendreau & Brendan Acosta Scholarships: www.csavc.org/scholarships.html	Up to \$300	• Court Dependent graduating high school students or GED equivalent. • Applying to at least one of the following: vocational/trade school, community college, four year college and/or applying to the military.	June
National	Legacy Scholarship: friendsoffosterchildren.com/legacy-scholarship	Varies	• Current or former foster youth. • High school graduate or equivalent.	May
National	National Foster Parent Association (NFPA): nfpaonline.org/youth-and-continuing-ed-scholarships	\$500	• Have a parent, or other supportive adult, that is a paid member of the NFPA, or will join. • Must be in your senior year of high school (regardless of age). • Must provide a copy of high school transcript. • 17 – 21 years of age. • A minimum of two letters of recommendation from foster parents, social workers, residential center, principal/teacher/guidance counselor, or employer. • Essay in 300-500 words (see website).	April
National	nsoro Foundation Scholarship Program: nsoro.submittable.com/submit	\$1,000 – \$10,000	• Certify that they are currently in foster care, a ward of the state, or eligible for ILP, having aged out of foster care as a young adult. • Be a high school graduate or equivalent and have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. • Have been accepted into an accredited, Pell-eligible college or another post secondary school. • Be under the age of 26 of the year they apply if they have not previously received funding from the nsoro Foundation. • Be a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident of the United States.	March

General Scholarship Search Websites

These free websites include a range of different private scholarships. These scholarships are not exclusive to youth in the foster care system and can be awarded based on a range of factors, such as financial need, ethnicity, special talents, academic experience, leadership ability, sexual orientation, community service or personal life experience. This is not an exhaustive list.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LEARN MORE:
FASTWEB	Helps students find, track and filter scholarships and internships. Students can create a profile and get automatically matched to scholarships that best fit their experience.	fastweb.com
COLLEGE BOARD	Students can enter their information to be matched to over 6,000 scholarship programs, as well as other college and career planning resources.	bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/scholarship-search
PETERSON'S	Helps students find, track and filter scholarships, as well as other college, career and test preparation resources.	petersons.com
UNIGO	Students can create a free account to get personalized scholarship results, along with other information about college stats and reviews.	Unigo.com
CAPPEX	Provides students with a large scholarship database, as well as their "What Are My Chances" tool, which attempts to calculate the odds of getting admitted into a college before you apply.	Cappex.com
NICHE	Helps students search for scholarships as well as explore K-12, college and graduate school programs to determine which school is the best fit.	Niche.com
HISPANIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND	Offers millions in scholarships each year to students with Hispanic heritage. Through their Scholar Support Services, students can also apply to conferences, internships, jobs, and other opportunities.	hsf.net/scholarship
LET'S GO TO COLLEGE CALIFORNIA	Provides information about applying for, paying for, and succeeding in college. Students can find scholarships, as well as other resources to help students succeed in college.	letsgotocollegeca.org



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