

Presbyterian Scholarship for Undergraduates

Guidelines for Applicants



Awards

Range of Awards

Up to \$4,000 in need-based aid. People of color are eligible for up to \$2,000 in supplemental aid.

Number of Awards

25-30 Freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors are awarded. Up to 60 people of color will receive supplemental aid.

Deadlines

Student Deadline

Second Monday in May (May 13)

Recommender Deadline

First Monday in June (June 3)

Eligibility

- Presbyterian Church U.S.A. member

Membership exceptions are offered to:

- the children of PCUSA mission co-workers serving outside of the United States.
- People participating in new worshipping communities sponsored by PCUSA presbyteries.
- Must attend an accredited college or university in the United States full-time, seeking a first bachelor's degree.
- Must be in good standing and demonstrate financial need.

Over 500 people will apply for one of the 100-120 awards from the Presbyterian Scholarship for Undergraduates. This program serves Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) members all over the country. Selection is made through a combination of weighted scoring emphasizing relieving poverty and reducing the impact of systems of white supremacy. Over 63% of our awardees in 2023-2024 were people of color.

Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope is the Presbyterian Mission Agency's online scholarship application partner. Make support@mykaleidoscope.com a trusted sender.

Process

Start here www.pcusa.org/college and register. When you create an online account, you can work on your application at your own pace. Your work will be saved.

Complete the FAFSA and apply for financial aid through the college or university you plan to attend.

Gather contact information for people who will be asked to provide information or recommendations.

1. Name and email address of clerk of session or pastor to verify membership.
2. A person who knows you well enough to tell the reading committee about you and your commitment to the Presbyterian Church.
3. Your financial aid counselor.

Most endorsement requests will be sent only after you have submitted the application. We will not ask endorsers to work on the application until your application is complete. Financial Aid counselors will not be prompted to provide financial information before April 15.

Follow the instructions in the application and complete the application steps by the second Monday in May. The deadline for recommendations and financial information is the first Monday in June.

Log in to your student account to check the status of your application and follow up with third party endorsers and recommenders until the application is complete.

Essay & Awards

Essay Overview

Awardees are required to write an essay each year. The purpose of the essay is to explore vocation by thinking about who God created you to be. Over the next four years we would like to partner with you to come to a deeper understanding of your place in the world. What gifts do you have? What inspires you and brings you joy? We'll ask you to think about community, how you see and experience the Gospel in the world now, and ways you are challenged to see the Gospel in new and surprising ways. Before you graduate, we'll challenge you to think about the ways you are called.

Essay Guidelines

Your essay should be 500—1,000 words long. Readers will be instructed to consider how creatively and comprehensively you address the question. Readers will expect your work to be appropriate to grade level and thoroughly proofread.

The essay should be written in the language of instruction; students attending college in Puerto Rico may submit their essay in Spanish.

Use of Award

Presbyterian Scholarship for Undergraduate and the People of Color supplemental award may be used for expenses including but not limited to: tuition, books, fees, housing, subsistence, transportation, and incidental expenses generally considered part of the student budget. We verify expenses by checking the cost of attendance described on the college or university's website. We will ask the financial aid office to submit additional expenses in the areas of dependent care and medical necessity only if we are unable to document need using cost of attendance.

After the expenses normally paid to the college or university have been fully discharged, the college or university receiving the award on behalf of the student may release the residual to the student.

Presbyterian Scholarship for Undergraduate and the Supplemental grants for People of Color cannot be used for study abroad, or for the elementary, secondary, or post-secondary education of a dependent or spouse. Dependents and spouses who are also PCUSA members attending college should apply to this program. At this time, the Presbyterian Mission Agency does not offer assistance for elementary or secondary education.

Students who are the dependents of teaching elders or church workers participating in the Board of Pensions for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should also visit www.pensions.org and search for Transition to College to learn about aid for the families sending a student to college for the first time.

Contingent Awards

Applicants may be selected to receive Presbyterian Scholarship for Undergraduate on a contingent basis. Typically this is due to an unresolved aspect of eligibility that does not include information used for selection. Contingent Awards are offered with an expiration date. All Contingent Awards must be finalized by November 1 of the year of award or the award is withdrawn.

Vacated Award

From time to time awardees may reduce hours to below full-time or withdraw from their program. At that time, the award will be considered vacated and will be cancelled or recovered from the college. Vacated awards cannot be assigned to another term or academic year.

Other Information



Full-time study

In prior years we have used the phrase ‘normally enrolled full-time’ to describe those periods when a student might not be considered full-time because a required course is not available, or the student is participating in supervised ministry. We have also used normally enrolled to give the greatest consideration to what is considered full-time enrollment at the college or university the student attends.

An exception to full-time enrollment is made for students within twelve months of graduation who will satisfy requirements for the degree program attending less than full-time.

Deadlines & Extensions

Students with complete applications may be offered one extension for an element of the application completed by a church leader or financial aid office. Extensions are offered if the complete and eligible application pool is no more than 1.5 times the number of awards that can be offered.

The most common reason why applications are incomplete at deadline is that the applicant provided an incorrect email address for an endorser. Financial Aid for Service is not responsible for correcting defects in your application. Take your time, and make sure that the information you provide—especially for your endorsers—is correct.

Alternate Contacts

The online application system cannot be configured to support alternate contacts. Our online application is managed by a third-party service. We accept alternate email addresses but will not send email to an email address that clearly belongs to another person.

Confidentiality of Evaluations

Do not share your user ID/password, or any application links sent to your email after you have started the application.

Information collected to support your application is maintained by Kaleidoscope for the office of Financial Aid for Service. The church membership/pastor endorsement form, work product of the college or university the student attends, and the reading committee are confidential and will not be released to the student and/or parent/guardian. Applications are viewed only by staff members with responsibility for the Presbyterian Mission Agency scholarship program, reading committee members, and financial aid staff at the student’s selected college or university.

Apply now!
Start your application at
www.pcusa.org/college

