

IOWA UNITED METHODIST FOUNDATION

2026-2027 Scholarship Guide

Your Complete Guide to IUMF's **Scholarship Program**

WHAT: Each year, the Foundation offers 100+ scholarships to United Methodist students across Iowa who demonstrate academic and community excellence. **Thanks to our generous donors, we awarded over \$440,000 in the 2025-2026 academic year,** and cannot wait to get the next scholarship season started!

WHO: Scholarships are available for high school seniors, students attending both non-Methodist *and* UM colleges, and seminary students who are answering the call to join the ministry. With such a range of scholarships available, there may be one for a student in your congregation!

WHEN: Applications are accepted online from **December 1st—March 1st**. See the timeline of events on pages 2-4.

HOW: You can find more information and scholarship criteria anytime on our website: <https://iumf.org/scholarships>. Starting December 1st, there will be an **APPLY NOW** link to click when you are ready to start the application process.

QUESTIONS? See our updated FAQ on page 4, or contact Cassie Parks at cassie.parks@iumf.org. For questions about the application portal, email help@mykaleidoscope.com.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

Best Practices for Applicants

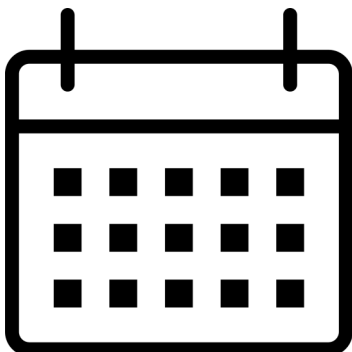
5 Tips for Crafting a Winning Application

Written for applicants by an IUMF scholarship judge

1. **Write a thoughtful personal statement.** This essay is your chance to let the judges get to know you *beyond* what is already provided. If you simply recount activities and awards from other sections of the application, it does not give the judges any new information or set you apart from your peers. Use this chance to promote yourself and your uniqueness! We recommend selecting one essay prompt and answering it thoroughly with as much reflection as possible, rather than trying to briefly address multiple prompts in one essay. A focused response is often more impactful than several surface-level answers.
2. **Complete ALL parts of the application.** Every section matters and is scored separately. We often see entire sections left blank, resulting in zero points in those categories. Even if you only participated in one activity, volunteered occasionally, or held a part-time or seasonal job, include it. Judges can only evaluate the information you provide.
3. **Double, triple, quadruple check your recs!** We hate to see an application get disqualified because one or more recommendation letters were not submitted. Ask your references for letters as early in the process as possible, and follow-up (thank them!) afterward. Check your application status in Kaleidoscope regularly to monitor which recommendations have been submitted and which are still pending.
4. **Use every opportunity to emphasize your accomplishments.** For instance, if you played basketball, lettered, and were team captain, list these as three separate achievements. If you received a promotion at work, include both positions to demonstrate growth. Make sure your application aligns with your recommendation letters; judges are confused when a recommender highlights major involvement that is not mentioned anywhere else in the application.
5. **Read and complete the application *carefully*.** One strength of the IUMF application is that the submission portal automatically matches applicants to scholarships *based on the responses provided*. This benefits the applicant because you only submit one application and can potentially be matched to 50+ scholarships. However, it also means every question matters. Incomplete or inaccurate answers could unintentionally disqualify you from certain scholarships, so read and answer each question completely and truthfully.



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE OF EVENTS:



NOW—December 1st

PREPARE: check out criteria on our website, brainstorm essay topics, notify leaders in your life that you may ask for a letter of recommendation.

December 1st—March 1st

APPLY: applications can only be submitted through our online portal and only during these dates! Click the **APPLY NOW** link on our website to begin.

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Shaping the Future



Leave a Lasting Legacy with a Scholarship at IUMF

Creating a scholarship fund is a meaningful way to make a positive impact that can last for generations. Whether it is to honor a loved one, empower future leaders, reap the tax benefits—whatever your reason for establishing a scholarship, IUMF can help!

This scholarship will ease the financial burden of graduate school as I prepare for a career in public service. More than that, it encourages me to continue working toward a life of service rooted in empathy, understanding, and goodwill.

-2026 IUMF scholarship recipient

If you want to set up a scholarship fund, either now through a tax-savvy gift, or in your will, check out the free gift-planning tool on our website <https://iumf.giftlegacy.com/> or contact us at 515-974-8927 or info@iumf.org. Our staff will walk you through the process. You can also donate to an existing scholarship anytime by clicking **GIVE** on our homepage.

March 5th, 2027

April—May

June 1st, 2027

CHECK YOUR RECS:
all letters of recommendation must be submitted by midnight on Friday, March 5th.

WAIT: the Foundation's Scholarship Committee reads and assesses every application, then makes award selections. Applicants will be notified of their status by early May.

ACCEPT: all recipients must accept their scholarship(s) online by June 1st. Unacknowledged scholarships will be awarded to alternates.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can you reimburse me/my parents for books or materials already purchased?

A: No. Scholarship funds can ONLY be sent directly to the college or university. Checks CANNOT be made out to individuals. Any reimbursement situation must be worked out between the student and the school.

Q: Why do I have to submit a Verification of Enrollment (VOE)?

A: Many applicants change their mind about which school they will attend, or about attending school at all, between the time they submit their application and the time school starts. We must verify that each recipient is attending school in order to fulfill the wishes of our donors.

Q: When will my scholarship be sent to my school?

A: Checks for fall semester are mailed on July 15th and checks for spring semester are mailed on November 15th. All VOEs must be received by the 10th of the month for those scholarship funds to be paid on the 15th. If a VOE or other requested information is not received on time, the funds will be disbursed the following month. *We recommend that you notify the Office of Financial Aid at your school as soon as you know the amount you expect to receive in scholarships.* They will usually deduct this amount from your tuition statement.

Q: If I received a scholarship last year, do I have to apply again?

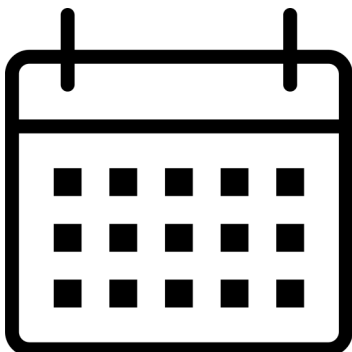
A: Yes! All scholarships are awarded on an annual basis.

Q: What can I do if this did not answer my question?

A: Scholarship questions should be directed to Cassie Parks: cassie.parks@iumf.org. For questions about the application portal or help logging in, use Kaleidoscope's Help Center: <https://help.mykaleidoscope.com/category/4-applicants> or email: help@mykaleidoscope.com.



SCHOLARSHIP ACCEPTANCE TIMELINE OF EVENTS:



June—July

July 10th, 2027

BEFORE CLASSES START:
submit your Verification of Enrollment (VOE) and any requested documents to IUMF. Notify your Financial Aid Office of the amount you will receive so they deduct it from your tuition.

LAST CALL: VOEs must be received by this date in order for scholarship funds to be disbursed on July 15th. If yours is late, funds will be mailed to your school on August 15th.