

Dell Scholars.org

Why We Do What We Do

While many students dream of obtaining a college degree, life sometimes gets in the way – particularly for those dealing with personal responsibilities at home or in their communities. The Dell Scholars program, an initiative of the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, recognizes students who have overcome significant obstacles to pursue their educations. In turn, these scholars serve as positive role models and change the trajectories for their families, friends and their communities.

We award 300 scholarships annually and since 2004, have provided students with over \$60 million in college scholarships and support services. The Dell Scholars Program places greater emphasis on a student's determination to succeed than just academic record and test scores. Our GPA requirement is Grit, Potential and Ambition. We reward low-income, highly motivated students who are better than their numbers indicate and demonstrate the drive to succeed despite personal obstacles. Our scholars have demonstrated grit, potential and ambition in their quest for a college education:

- *Grit* by overcoming personal challenges in their lives related to their families, schools or communities
- *Potential* by participating in college readiness programs and seeking out academic rigor
- *Ambition* by dreaming of obtaining a college degree

More Than a Check

We know how tough it can be to succeed in college, so we provide our scholars with the support and assistance they need to make it through. We've seen what works over the last 10 years, and we want more students to have the opportunity to earn a college degree. We have a very realistic view, through hands-on experience, of what it takes to complete college, and we've designed our program to meet those needs.

Well beyond the financial support of \$20,000, a laptop and textbook credits, we also provide ongoing support and assistance to address all of the emotional, lifestyle, and

financial challenges that may prevent our scholars from completing college. These pressures range from dealing with stress, to getting out of debt, to tackling substance abuse or child care if life circumstances should require it.

Criteria for Application

To be eligible to apply for the Dell Scholars Program scholarship, you must meet the below listed criteria:

- Participating in a Michael & Susan Dell Foundation [approved college readiness program](#) in grades 11 and 12
- Graduating from an accredited high school this academic year
- Earning a minimum of a 2.4 GPA
- Demonstrated need for financial assistance
- Eligible to receive a [federal Pell grant](#) in first year of college
- Planning to enroll full-time in a bachelor's degree program at an accredited higher education institution in the fall directly after your graduation from high school

Dell Scholars are students who demonstrate their desire and ability to overcome barriers and to achieve their goals. Your application will be evaluated on your:

- Individual determination to succeed
- Future goals and plans to achieve them
- Ability to communicate the hardships you have overcome or currently face
- Self motivation in completing challenging coursework
- Demonstrated need for financial assistance

If you do not meet the criteria to apply for the Dell Scholars Program, you may want to click on the sites listed below to help you continue on the path to a college education:

- To get a head start on your financial aid for college, please visit [Fafsa4Caster](#).
- For additional information on financial aid, please visit [www.finaid.org](#).
- For information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](#), where you can complete the application online.
- To search scholarships you may be eligible for, visit [Scholarships.com](#), [www.fastweb.com](#), and [www.zinch.com](#).

- To learn more about college access programs and how they help more students attend college, visit www.collegeaccess.org.

College Readiness Program Guidelines

The Dell Scholars Program is available to students participating in approved college readiness programs. If your school/area has a program that you believe meet the criteria below, please submit the informational request for your program to be reviewed for inclusion in the Dell Scholars Program.

College readiness program requirements for inclusion in the Dell Scholars Program:

- Reaches students in the academic middle, underserved populations, or first generation college students
- Academic preparation through rigorous coursework, AP courses, IB programs, dual enrollment, college admissions preparation, academic workshops, and meetings to improve students' academic readiness for college
- Financial preparation through completion of the FAFSA, financial aid education, application assistance
- Philosophy of not relying on the "numbers" but rather a focus on non-cognitive evaluation
- Personal preparation of student for college through mentoring/advising
- Begins working with students no later than junior year
- Meetings/programs with students and advisors no less than monthly during school year
- Sufficient data indicating success of program
- Ability to be replicated at other schools/locations

Acceptance of college readiness programs into the Dell Scholars Program is at the sole discretion of the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. For more information, please [send us an email](#).

Approved College Readiness Programs

The Dell Scholars Program works with college readiness programs who prepare students with demonstrated financial need for college. Several studies have shown that completing rigorous academic curriculums in high school and providing students opportunities to learn about colleges, financial aid, and campus life helps students overcome socioeconomic disadvantages. Preparing more completely for college in high school tends to result in increased college completion rates.

NOTE: College Readiness Programs may have similar names or only operate in certain geographies. Please read a full description of each college readiness program to ensure your program is on the approved list. You can see a brief description of the program by placing your mouse over the program name. Clicking on the program name will direct you to the program's website where you can read more details.

Programs currently approved to participate in the Dell Scholars Program

- [Alliance College-Ready Public Schools](#)
- [AP Strategies](#)
- [ASPIRE Public Schools](#)
- [AVID](#)
- [Bottom Line](#)
- [Breakthrough Austin](#)
- [College Forward](#)
- [Cristo Rey Network](#)
- [Fulfillment Fund](#)
- [GEAR UP](#)
- [Genesys Works](#)
- [Green Dot Public Schools](#)
- [IDEA Academy](#)
- [KIPP Academy/ KIPP Through College\(KTC\)](#)
- [Mastery Charter Schools](#)
- [Noble Charter](#)
- [One Goal](#)

- [Philadelphia Futures](#)
- [Upward Bound](#)
- [Upward Bound - Math Science](#)
- [YES Prep Public Schools](#)
- [Uncommon Schools](#)
- [Uplift Education](#)

How to Apply

Completing the online application is the first step to becoming a Dell Scholar. Once submitted, all applications will be assessed, and a group of Dell Scholar Semifinalists will be selected. Semifinalists are asked to submit a current copy of their high school transcript, a complete Student Aid Report (SAR) from their FAFSA, and an online recommendation. After the semifinalist information is submitted, all information is reviewed by an independent selection committee.

The Dell Scholars Program Class of 2017

If you will be graduating from high school in the spring of 2017 and a senior in high school this year, make note of the following important dates! ***The next application cycle will open November 1, 2016 with the following important dates to keep in mind.***

Important dates

- **November 1, 2016** — Application opens
- **January 15, 2017** — Application deadline
- **February 1, 2017** — Semifinalists announced
- **March 10, 2017** — Semifinalist materials deadline
- **April 10, 2017** — Dell Scholars announced

The application will ask about the following:

- The different responsibilities you have in addition to school at both work and home
- You will be able to describe your life at home, tell us about your family, your greatest challenges and adversities, how you overcame them, and why you have the determination to succeed
- Information about your classes, your college readiness program experience, and future plans for college
- Information on your level of financial need
- We don't focus on just your grades/test scores but how you have prepared yourself for college
- We don't ask for a laundry list of activities and club involvement
- We do ask for a drive to push yourself to earn a bachelor's degree

Sample Application Questions

If you would like a preview of the questions that the application will contain, [take a look at this blank application](#). Please note that this is a sample application and is being provided for informational purposes only. Do not print this sample application nor submit it to the Michael & Susan Dell

Foundation by fax/mail/email, as it will not be considered. The official Dell Scholars Application can only be found at this web site and must be submitted on-line during the specified application period.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you have a question about the application process or Dell Scholars Program, please [contact us](#).

When can I apply for the scholarship?

The application process opens on November 1 and closes the following January 15.

When will the semifinalists be announced and how do I find out if I am a semifinalist?

All applicants will be able to check their scholarship status on or after February 1. Semifinalists will be able to review the required next steps and deadline for the next stage of the application process on or after February 1.

Is there a minimum Grade Point Average requirement?

All applicants must have a minimum of a 2.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

I have a 2.4 GPA, do I have a chance to receive the scholarship?

Yes. The scholarship program is primarily a need-based scholarship rather than merit based. The GPA requirement reflects the Foundation's mission to reach underserved students who are academically prepared and college ready, and to provide them with scholarship funds to achieve a college education.

How do I know if I have demonstrated need for financial assistance?

All applicants must have financial need. Financial need will be confirmed through eligibility for a Federal Pell Grant.

How do I know if I'm eligible for a Federal Pell Grant?

This eligibility is determined by the financial aid office at your school from the FAFSA information you provide and takes into account such factors as your EFC (Expected Family Contribution), enrollment status, and attendance cost for your designated school. If you are currently eligible for the free or reduced cost lunch program – e.g., National School Lunch Program (NSLP), you should apply for the Dell Scholars Program scholarship.

Do I have to be a United States Citizen or Permanent Resident to apply for a scholarship?

All applicants must be United States citizens or have an immigration residency status that allows the applicant to qualify for federal financial aid after completing the FAFSA.

I am a home-schooled student, can I apply?

No. Only seniors who have participated in an Dell Scholars Program approved college readiness program are eligible to apply for the scholarship program.

I received a General Education Diploma (GED), can I apply?

No. Only seniors who have participated in an Dell Scholars Program approved college readiness program are eligible to apply for the scholarship program.

I attend an American Sponsored Overseas School or Department of State school, can I apply?

Yes, if you have participated in a Dell Scholars Program approved college readiness program at your school. Please check with your principal or counselor to confirm.

Is there a fee to apply?

No, there are no fees to apply for the Dell Scholars Program.

Are paper applications accepted?

All applications must be completed online. No paper applications will be accepted.

What is the FAFSA?

Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This application is required to receive any federal financial aid (such as Pell Grant, Perkins, Stafford, etc.). You may complete this application online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

What does the scholarship pay for?

Scholarship funds may be used for tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Upon the Foundation's approval, you may also be able to use your funds for approved internships and study abroad programs.

Can I use the scholarship at any college and for any major?

One of the goals of the Dell Scholars Program is to improve the outcomes of underserved students through the opportunities a bachelor's degree can provide. As a result, the scholarship may usually be used at any regionally-accredited two-year or four-year nonprofit institution in the United States where credits can be earned towards a baccalaureate degree, including community and junior colleges. Any credits earned should generally be transferrable to a four-year institution, and all institutions should participate in Federal financial aid programs as well as award significant aid of their own. The scholarship may not be used at technical colleges, vocational programs, and for profit colleges. Scholarship recipients may pursue any baccalaureate degree program of their choice.

Where does funding for the Dell Scholars Program Scholarship come from?

The Dell Scholars Program Scholarship is funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, a private family foundation funds programs that foster high-quality public education and childhood health, and

improve the economic stability of families living in poverty. The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation is not affiliated with Dell, Inc., the computer company.

Who are Michael and Susan Dell?

[Please click here to learn more about Michael and Susan](#)

[Please click here to learn more about the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation](#)

Do you have any hints for my application?

Having reviewed a large number of applications, we offer you the following words of advice to consider while completing your application.

- Don't use abbreviations or slang in your answers.
- Proofread your essays before you submit your application.
- Use the essays to tell the rest of the story that other questions don't ask.
- Choose a recommender that will be able to answer questions about you from a personal and academic perspective.