

Scholarship Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What scholarships does the AHLA Foundation offer?

We offer two types of scholarships:

Self-nominated - open to all hospitality-related degree seeking students enrolled in a U.S. college or university.

Students can apply directly to AHLA Foundation to compete for the **Hyatt Minority, American Express, Ecolab, Incoming Freshman, Banks Brown Graduate and Opening Doors to Opportunity Scholarships**. Students do not have to be attending AHLA Foundation affiliated schools nor do they need to be nominated by their schools.

All hospitality students, regardless of where they attend school, have access to more than \$500,000 in scholarships offered through the Foundation's self-nominated scholarships:

- [Banks Brown Graduate Scholarship](#)
- [American Express](#)
- [Ecolab](#)
- [Hyatt Hotels Fund for Minority Lodging Management Students](#)
- [Incoming Freshman](#)
- [Opening Doors to Opportunity](#)

School-nominated – requires school affiliation with the AHLA Foundation.

For the **Academic Scholarship Program, Community College Scholarship Program, Arthur J. Packard, and Rama Scholarships**, the school selects the recipient. Students receiving these scholarships must be attending specific schools that

have applied for and been approved for AHLA Foundation affiliation.

School-nominated students are encouraged to also apply for self-nominated scholarships.

[Our generous donors have also created a number of scholarship funds administered under the Annual Scholarship Grant Program.](#)

How much is available?

In 2023, AHLAF distributed more than \$1 million in scholarships to nearly 300 students and hospitality professionals. Since its inception, AHLA Foundation has disbursed more than \$16 million in academic scholarships. The Foundation can accomplish these initiatives through the donations of industry leaders and companies that have given back to the industry.

This year, the Foundation will disburse over \$1 million through its ten hospitality management scholarship programs for students ranging from first-year students to graduate students. Some scholarships are reserved for current hotel employees or minorities. Others are open to full-time or part-time students. Award amounts range from \$500 to \$7,500.

Who is eligible?

Applicants must be enrolled in an undergraduate hospitality-related degree-granting program, with the exception of the Rama and Graduate scholarships, at a U.S. college or university.

Qualifying majors include programs such as hotel/restaurant

management, culinary arts, travel/tourism, and hotel administration. Each scholarship has additional requirements as well, so be sure to read them all before deciding which ones to apply for.

Scholarship Availability

	INCOMING FRESHMAN	GRADUATE	HYATT	ECOLAB	AMERICAN EXPRESS	OPENING DOORS	ANNUAL GRANT	PACKARD	RAMA
Nominated by a Specific School	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Class Status as of Fall '22	Incoming Freshman	Graduate	Junior or Senior	Undergrad	Undergrad	Undergrad	Junior or Senior	Junior or Senior	Any
Minimum Overall GPA	2.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.0	3.5	2.5
Must be a Minority Student	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Enrollment Status	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full or Part-time	Full-or part-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full or Part-time
Enrollment Fall & Spring Semesters	Yes	No, if Dec. graduate	No, if Dec. graduate	Yes	No, if Dec. graduate	No, if Dec. graduate	No, if Dec. graduate	No, if Dec. graduate	No, if Dec. graduate
Employed 20+ hrs at a Hotel	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Letter of Recommendation	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
U.S. Citizenship or U.S. Permanent Residency	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

How are applicants evaluated?

Applicants are evaluated on a combination of many things. Applicants must be enrolled in an undergraduate hospitality-related degree-granting program, with the exception of the Banks Brown Graduate scholarships, at a U.S. college or university. Other things the scholarship committee reviews include:

- GPA

- Extracurricular activities
- Honors and awards
- Work experience, including hospitality work experience
- Financial need
- Personal attributes
- Responses to essay questions

All these factors are examined to award the most deserving students. We are not looking for a "cookie cutter" profile. Some scholarships may also require recommendations.

What is the timeline for your scholarship process?

Our online application opens in Winter and closes in March. It is anticipated that scholarship winners will find out about their scholarships in May.

Recipients receive their scholarship award in one installment per academic year. Scholarship checks are sent directly to the college/university during the summer before the start of the academic year. Half the award amount is applied to the fall semester and half to the spring semester.

What does it mean to be an affiliated school?

Affiliated colleges and universities are approved to participate in the Foundation's academic scholarship program. These schools receive award allocations each Fall and may nominate eligible students to receive those awards.

Affiliated schools agree to co-administer and promote AHLA Foundation

scholarships to the students on your campus. Learn more about important details on our [affiliated schools](#) page.

How can my school get involved?

Every three to four years, the Foundation initiates a review process of both existing and new colleges and universities wishing to participate in the scholarship program as affiliated schools. It is anticipated that the Foundation will be undertaking this process in 2024.

More information on how to become an affiliated school will be coming soon.

Other Foundation Programs

While the funding of scholarships remains one of AHLA Foundation's primary objectives, over the years the Foundation has extended its programs to all facets of the industry, from career development programs to research grants and professional development. The Foundation supports recruitment and retention and equips the industry to respond to critical and emergent issues that impact them.

- **“A Place to Stay”** is a national ad campaign to fill hundreds of thousands of open hotel industry jobs. The multi-year effort helps diverse job seekers discover the 200+ career pathways and many perks that the industry offers.
- The **Empowering Youth** program aims to prepare youth for long-term careers in hospitality through partnerships with community-based organizations.

- **ForWardThinking** brings female executives to speak at hospitality schools and encourages students to join the hospitality industry through speakers' stories about successful careers and fulfilling lives.
- The **Apprenticeship Program** has trained more than 1,400 lodging managers, hotel cook and maintenance apprentices to help advance their careers in hospitality and get them to the next promotion.
- AHLA Foundation provides **professional development scholarships** exclusively to individuals currently working at a member hotel who want to advance their careers with courses and credentials.
- The **Leadership Academy** is a six-month facilitated learning experience focused on inclusive leadership and courageous conversations for C-suite executives in the industry.
- Two leadership programs, **BUILD and ELEVATE**, strengthen and accelerate the industry's commitment to elevate women in hospitality.
- **No Room for Trafficking**, the AHLA Foundation's national awareness program, unites the industry around one comprehensive approach centered on elevating issue awareness; providing best practice guidance on policies, procedures, and technologies; educating and training employees; and supporting partnership with law enforcement agencies.

More information about AHLA Foundation programs can be found [here](#).

Additional scholarship questions?

Contact scholarships@ahlafoundation.org