



2026 WNC Regional Scholarships Information and Instructions for High School Counselors

The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina is pleased to offer the WNC Regional Scholarships program, which is funded by several scholarship funds that were established to assist Western North Carolina students in furthering their education.

Residency requirement: Graduating seniors from each public high school or certified home school in the 18 westernmost counties: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey and including the Qualla Boundary.

In addition to meeting the residency requirement, applicants must be graduating seniors of a qualifying school defined as follows: a WNC public high school, the NC School of Science and Mathematics, the UNC School of the Arts, or a WNC home school registered with the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education.

Students must submit their applications online by **January 16, 2026 (this deadline INCLUDES the two required letters of recommendation)**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The application link, along with more information about this scholarship, is located here: <https://cfwnc.org/scholarships/wnc-regional-scholarships>.

Following the deadline, CFWNC will assign qualified applications from each school to the school's primary scholarship counselor in the SmarterSelect software. A school committee of at least three people should then evaluate these applications and select **one student** to submit to CFWNC as a semi-finalist, who will then compete with other schools' semi-finalists. The desired applicant qualities are: proven academic ability/achievement (based on GPA and SAT or ACT test scores); demonstrated financial need; involvement in community service (school and community), extracurricular activities, and/or work experience; and strong moral character. **Your school's selection must be submitted online via SmarterSelect by Friday, February 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.**

The CFWNC scholarship committee will then evaluate semi-finalist applications in February and March, and students selected as finalists by the committee will be invited to interview in April. Once recipients are selected by the CFWNC committee, they will be notified via SmarterSelect and will receive a letter via mail to accept the award and an electronic form to provide information for the school they will be attending.

All CFWNC scholarships are competitive, and recipients, semi-finalists, or finalists may not be pre-selected. All interested and eligible students **MUST** be provided with applications and permitted to apply for CFWNC scholarships. Selection must occur objectively, by a committee of at least three people, at every level of the process.

We are very pleased to administer the WNC Regional Scholarships program and look forward to announcing the recipients. Thank you for your invaluable help in this selection process.

If you need further information or have any questions, please contact me.

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