

The 10 Biggest Scholarships in the World



Most students today need financial support to pursue a college education. Though it may not be surprising that the [cost of higher education](#) at national universities has risen 179% from 1995-2015, many are unaware of the sharp rise in [fees and other costs](#) outside of tuition, including technology fees and on-campus recreation center access costs. This totals an average of more than \$2,000 in recent years. Luckily, to help students offset these costs, there are many federal, state, and private groups and organizations that offer a variety of scholarships to eligible students based on merit, cultural background, and type of program.

While every scholarship is special, there are some exceptional standouts from organizations generous enough to give millions (or even billions!) in scholarship money every year to college students. From awards that provide a full scholarship, or “free ride,” to others that more than cover the bulk of expensive degree program costs, the size and breadth of the 10 biggest scholarships for college students will take your breath away. Read on to learn more about how to apply for and access these funds.

1. Miss America



- **Amount Awarded:** Varies, up to \$12,000
- **Deadline:** Varies

The [Miss America Foundation](#) is the largest provider of big college scholarships to young women in the U.S. The Miss America Organization, comprised of more than 50 licensed funding groups, is responsible for millions of dollars in scholarship aid at the local, state, and national level. In 2014 alone, Miss America awarded nearly \$6 million in scholarships. The organization offers several different types of awards, including Miss America Scholar, Miss America Community Service Scholarship, Quality of Life Awards, the Dr. & Mrs. David B. Allman Scholarship, and the Eugenia Vellner Fischer Award for the Performing Arts. A unique STEM-program scholarship is also available to women pursuing careers in this historically male-dominated field.

2. United Negro College Fund



- **Amount Awarded:** Varies
- **Deadline:** Varies

The [United Negro College Fund](#) (UNCF) is famous for providing the scholarship funds necessary to send more than 10,000 students to college each year. One of the best college scholarships and as the nation's largest minority scholarship provider of more than 400 different scholarships, internships, and fellowships, UNCF helps low- to moderate-income students attend college when they otherwise might not have had the opportunity. Among the most unique UNCF scholarship programs is the Merck Undergraduate Science Research Scholarship Awards, with awards ranging from \$35,000 to \$85,000 for students in bioscience and biotechnology programs.

3. The Gates Millennium Scholars Program



- **Amount Awarded:** \$12,785 (average)
- **Deadline:** January 13, 2018

As one of the biggest scholarships provided by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF,) the [Gates Millennium Scholars Program](#) helps an average of 1,000 college students attend college each year, averaging an award of nearly \$13,000 per student between 2000 and 2014. Offered alongside several post-secondary awards given through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Gates Millennium Scholars Program is a \$1.6 million initiative designed to support minorities pursuing a college education.

4. Davidson Fellows Scholarships



Davidson Institute *for Talent Development*

- **Amount Awarded:** Up to \$50,000
- **Deadline:** February 8, 2018

Although the [Davidson Fellows Scholarship](#) program does not reach annual giving goals as high as some other programs on this list, the program is especially impressive for its individual high-dollar awards. The award is one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships in the world, offering \$50,000, \$25,000, and \$10,000 scholarships to college students who have made significant contributions in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature, music, and philosophy. Students may also be eligible for a separate “Outside the Box” award. Since its inception, the Davidson Institute has given more than \$6.7 million to 286 scholarship recipients.

5. Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation



- **Amount Awarded:** Up to \$20,000
- **Deadline:** August 2017

Each year, Coca-Cola supports more than 1,400 students by providing \$3.45 million in scholarships across three national programs. The largest of these scholarships, the [Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation](#), awards big college scholarships of \$20,000 to 150 exceptional high school seniors entering college who are academically accomplished and show potential for outstanding leadership in their schools and communities. Additional awards provided by Coca-Cola include the Community College Academic Team and the Leaders of Promise program, each selecting 200 recipients annually for awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

6. Buick Achievers



- **Amount Awarded:** \$25,000
- **Deadline:** Varies

Like Coca-Cola, American car maker Buick generously channels much of its corporate wealth back into promoting student success in higher education through corporate scholarships. Funded by the GM Corporation, the [Buick Achievers Scholarship Program](#) offers large scholarships of \$25,000 — one of the biggest award amounts available — to 50 college students each year, for up to 4 to 5 years. During the course of their entire college career, a Buick Achievers Scholarship winner can potentially receive \$125,000 toward the full cost of their education. Designed to attract applicants interested in becoming the Buick car makers of the future, Buick also awards 1,000 one-time scholarships of \$2,000 annually to students interested in engineering, design, and business, in addition to this single large award.

7. Foot Locker Scholar Athletes Program



- **Amount Awarded:** \$20,000
- **Deadline:** December 30, 2017

Each year, Foot Locker gives twenty \$20,000 scholarships to student athletes who are high school seniors planning to continue their sports career at a four-year accredited university immediately after graduation. The [Foot Locker Scholar Athletes Program](#) is designed to promote not only academic leadership, but also fair sportsmanship and strong moral character among its candidates. In addition to the Scholar Athletes award, one of the 20 recipients will also be awarded the Ken C. Hicks Scholarship, which adds an additional \$5,000 to the total gift amount. The Scholar Athletes award of \$20,000 is separated into equal annual payments over the course of four years.

8. Gates Cambridge Scholarship



- **Amount Awarded:** Varies
- **Deadline:** October 12, 2017 (for U.S. residents)

The [Gates Cambridge Scholarship](#) was established in 2000 after Bill and Melinda Gates gave the UK university the largest-ever single donation of its kind, in the amount of \$210 million. The Gates' generous gift has provided "full-ride" scholarships for more than 1,400 Cambridge students, awarding nearly 100 new applicants each year. The award amount varies per student, but it is designed to include not only the full cost of tuition and fees relevant to the student's degree, but also childcare (if applicable), fieldwork, continuing education costs for graduate students, maternity/paternity funding, and maintaining a student visa. The award even includes a single economy airfare ticket at the beginning and end of each course.

9. D.C. Leadership 1000 Scholarship



- **Amount Awarded:** Up to \$25,000
- **Deadline:** April 14, 2017

Sponsored by various corporate and private benefactors aiming to support underprivileged college students in Washington, D.C., the [D.C. Leadership 1000 Scholarship](#) is unique in that its criteria can be somewhat customized on a case-by-case basis. Generally, eligibility is open to first-time and returning college students who plan to engage in full-time study in the coming fall term at a four-year institution in the D.C. area, though requirements may change slightly according to the donor of the award. Scholarships are typically \$5,000 per year for up to five years of college study, totaling \$25,000 over the course of the degree.

0. Dell Scholars Program



- **Amount Awarded:** \$20,000
- **Deadline:** January 15, 2018

Sponsored by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, the [Dell Scholars Program](#) is awarded annually to 300 college students who have overcome significant socioeconomic disadvantages to pursue a college degree. In addition to providing a laptop and textbook funding, Dell Scholars receive large scholarships of \$20,000 to put toward their undergraduate education. Eligible candidates are high school seniors who have completed the foundation's approved college readiness program in grades 11 and 12, and who are planning to attend a four-year program immediately after graduation.