ELCA Fund for Leaders
for this church and for our future

Guidelines for synod scholarship funds

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA
ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarships provide tuition support to candidates for ministry who are studying at an ELCA seminary while pursuing rostered ministry within the ELCA. A synod may support its candidates with funds from its ELCA Fund for Leaders synod endowment providing candidates meet the following criteria:

• are enrolled at an ELCA seminary;
• are pursuing rostered ministry in the ELCA;
• are considered by the synod to be in good standing in the ELCA candidacy process; and
• will not be on internship during the upcoming year.

Students enrolled in non-residential learning, TEEM candidates, and Fund for Leaders full-tuition scholarship recipients are all eligible to receive synod scholarships. Students do not need to be enrolled full time to receive an award.

Scholarships can be awarded to all candidates equally or in differing amounts, or the synod can develop a competitive process to award funds to a select group, based on merit or need. Synod scholarships are awarded on a year-to-year basis, meaning students must be “re-selected” each year, even if the same student will receive a scholarship several years in a row.

Although Fund for Leaders awards are intended primarily to pay for tuition, books and fees, students who already receive full-tuition support through Fund for Leaders may also receive synodical scholarships to help with additional expenses. Note that scholarship funds used to cover costs beyond tuition, books and fees (such as room, board, insurance, etc.) will count as taxable income to students and should only be granted provided that there is a clear understanding between the synod and its donors about how the funds will be applied. Please work with seminary financial aid offices to make sure your students are aware of the tax implications of such scholarship awards.

Brenda Greenwald is an ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship recipient in her final year of studies at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, Calif.
SELECTION PROCESS

Each spring synods must identify qualified students to receive scholarship support for the upcoming academic year. ELCA Fund for Leaders will notify synods by February of the amount available to them to award in the upcoming academic year and by mid-April of full-tuition award decisions for the coming year so that synods may plan accordingly. We encourage you to prayerfully discern which rising candidates would benefit most from the support you can offer. Please note that beginning in 2018 the ELCA will use a new platform, ELCA GrantMaker, for awarding scholarships and grants. As in the past, we are looking forward to receiving the name(s) of the students your synod wishes to support in the upcoming year through synodical Fund for Leaders synod scholarships. Please submit all your nominations of students by May 31, 2019 by completing and returning the fillable PDF form provided. Synods should then direct their applicants of choice to the ELCA GrantMaker, where the applicants will register and submit their contact information to Fund for Leaders.

Student applications must be submitted no later than June 17, 2019. Applications received after this date run the risk of not being awarded in the fall semester. Students will not be considered for an award until Fund for Leaders has received BOTH a notification from the synod AND a completed application from the student.

Instructions for students applying through ELCA GrantMaker can be found at ELCA.org/fundforleaders. Any questions about the process should be directed to fundforleaders@elca.org or call 773-380-2936.

If there are no qualified students from your synod, or if your synod chooses not to award a scholarship for a particular academic year, the ELCA Fund for Leaders may reallocate scholarship funds to ensure that ELCA candidates from across all synods are being provided with as much assistance as possible.

TIMELINE FOR IDENTIFYING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

(This timeline is a suggested framework. As soon as ELCA Fund for Leaders has provided your synod with the annual report, including the amount available to award in the upcoming academic year, you are free to identify recipients, invite them to apply through ELCA GrantMaker and notify Fund for Leaders.)

- Review notification of amount of scholarship support available for upcoming academic year.
- Convene decision-makers to identify scholarship awards for the upcoming year.
- Submit names of scholarship recipients and amounts to Fund for Leaders and invite students to complete application in ELCA GrantMaker.
- Communicate with students about how to thank the donors who made the award possible.