

SECU Foundation

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SECU Foundation *People Helping People* Scholarship Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What scholarships does SECU Foundation provide for North Carolina public high school students, and how much are the scholarships worth?

The SECU Foundation *People Helping People* 4-year scholarship is valued at \$10,000 and payable at \$1,250 per semester, for a total of eight consecutive semesters. SECU Foundation does not select the recipients of the scholarship. Each LEA (Local Education Agency) or school district has a Scholarship Selection Committee that selects the recipients of the scholarship for the schools within their district. Recipients must be enrolled full-time for the entire eight consecutive semesters at one of the 16 universities in the UNC System. Recipients must continue as full-time students in good standing, with the exception of their final semester before graduating. SECU Foundation will recognize a “senior underloading” policy for students in their last semester prior to graduation, during which students will be considered full-time despite falling below the typical full-time credit hour requirement.

Q: The criteria state recipients must be graduating seniors from a NC Public High School who have been accepted to attend one of the 16 constituent campuses of the UNC system. Which universities qualify as the 16 constituent campuses of the UNC system for this scholarship?

Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, UNC School of the Arts, North Carolina A&T, North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, UNC at Asheville, UNC at Chapel Hill, UNC at Charlotte, UNC at Greensboro, UNC at Pembroke, UNC at Wilmington, Western Carolina University, and Winston-Salem State University.

Q: Who is eligible for the scholarship?

All graduating seniors from a North Carolina public high school who are either an SECU member or are eligible for membership through a parent/guardian and otherwise meet the eligibility criteria are considered for the SECU Foundation scholarship. Membership eligibility does not include Local Government Federal Credit Union or NC Press Association Credit Union members. Students attending private schools, being home schooled, going to out-of-state or private universities or residing out-of-state are not eligible for the *People Helping People* Scholarship. Proof of eligibility will be required during the application process.

Q: How does one apply for the SECU *People Helping People* Scholarship?

An application must be completed by the student. Application materials may be obtained through the school counselors’ office at the student’s high school. Individual students may not submit information to the SECU Foundation to apply for the scholarship. Recipients are selected by a Scholarship Selection Committee within each LEA and once selected, their information is given

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to SECU Foundation for approval. No individual applications are reviewed by the Foundation. Students must contact their school counselors' office to express interest in being considered for the scholarship.

Q: What expenses do the scholarships cover?

Scholarships are for full-time undergraduate and, potentially, graduate school tuition and fees.

Q: When is the SECU Foundation's submission deadline for recipient names?

Deadlines will vary slightly for application at each high school; please contact your school counselors' office for your application deadline. LEAs must notify SECU Foundation of the recipient winners no later than April 4, 2025.

Q: How and when are the scholarship funds distributed?

SECU Foundation contacts the financial aid office at the 16 UNC System campuses each semester to verify each recipient's continued full-time enrollment. Funds are distributed for spring and fall semesters after the registration period for each semester has ended and verification of enrollment is received from each university. Funds are paid directly to each university to be distributed to student accounts for tuition and fees in the amount of \$1,250 per semester.

The SECU Foundation will fund study abroad programs and internships only where the courses and professors are sanctioned by the university and the student is considered actively enrolled in the university during their participation. SECU Foundation will also fund full-time enrollment in summer school, but this payment will replace one of the recipient's future payments.

Q: What happens if the recipient changes universities?

Scholarships are **not** transferable to another university without prior approval of the SECU Foundation.

1. A written appeal for transfer must be made to SECU Foundation prior to transfer. Appeals may be emailed to secufoundation@ncsecu.org. Please note, if a student transfers to a university outside of the 16 constituent campuses of the UNC System, he or she will no longer be scholarship eligible.
2. After the request has been reviewed, the student will be notified in writing regarding the decision made by SECU Foundation. If accepted, confirmation of scholarship funding will also be sent to the university. Please note, SECU Foundation must receive proof of full-time status at the new university before any funds would be disbursed to the school.

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Q: If a student leaves their university for a semester, becomes part-time, or falls below the minimum 2.5 GPA, what happens to the funds for that semester?

No lapse in proper registration, or break in consecutive semesters, will be allowed. Should a student be unable to attend for any reason or their GPA falls below a 2.5, scholarship funding for that semester would be forfeited and it would be the responsibility of the student to contact SECU Foundation directly to advise of their return to full-time status or updated academic standing. The scholarship does not extend beyond the eight consecutive semesters.

Q: How does SECU Foundation define “full-time” status?

SECU Foundation relies on the university to define and determine full-time status. Each semester the financial aid office at the 16 UNC System university campuses reports to SECU Foundation the enrollment status for each of our scholarship recipients. Students should check with the financial aid office at their university if they have questions regarding enrollment status.

Q: What happens if the scholarship recipient graduates early?

If a student graduates early and enrolls in graduate school at one of the 16 UNC System universities, the student will still be eligible for scholarship payments if they are within their original 8 semesters of eligibility (the student will still need to be considered enrolled full-time as defined by the university and meet the GPA requirement). The student will need to notify SECU Foundation of their early graduation/graduate school enrollment so the Foundation may update its records.

Q: How are "public sector" employees defined?

Public sector employees include state, local or federal government, public health, and public education employees who live and work in North Carolina. Preference is to be given to students whose parents or guardians, and family members, are public sector employees who live and work in North Carolina.

Q: The eligibility criteria state that a student cannot be a recipient of “other large scholarships”. Is there a cutoff for the amount a student can receive and still be eligible for the *People Helping People* Scholarship?

Ultimately, SECU Foundation would like for each student awarded the *People Helping People* scholarship to be able to utilize the full scholarship payment each semester. If a student receives a scholarship that will not allow the *People Helping People* scholarship to be paid in full, we ask that they not be considered for the scholarship. SECU Foundation does not make decisions on what constitutes a “large” scholarship.

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Q: How does the SECU Foundation distribute scholarships to the Local Education Agencies (LEA)/school districts?

SECU Foundation will award one \$10,000 scholarship to each LEA. Additional scholarships will be awarded using a formula based on information provided by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) using the 12th grade average daily membership (ADM) as a percentage of the statewide 12th grade ADM. Please note this number is subject to change from year to year, based on fluctuation of ADM, therefore the number of scholarships awarded each LEA may change from year to year.

Q: Can the SECU Foundation reverse decisions of recipients made by the LEA?

The decision made by the Scholarship Selection Committee at each LEA is final and will not be reversed by the Foundation if all requirements, including scholarship eligibility requirements, have been met.

Q: Who should applicants contact if they have any questions about the process?

Students should contact the school counselors' office at their local high school if they have any questions about the scholarship. Their counselor will have a point of contact within the LEA that may be reached should the counselor need assistance in answering any questions.