



The Scholarship

The Sunflower Initiative will award another Harriet Fitzgerald Scholarship up to the amount of \$10,000 for the 2026-2027 academic year to a student who **in the Fall 2026 term will begin attending the first semester of college at an undergraduate women's college in the United States.**

Completion of Application materials: during the month of January, applicants will be able to check on the status of their application materials — which items we have and which we do not yet have — in order to remind letter-writers or counselors who must submit letters and transcripts to us directly but have not yet done so. The confirmation email that applicants receive after submitting their application form will contain instructions about how to create a password to check on the progress of their application materials toward completion.

Deadline: We must receive applications, confidential letters of recommendation uploaded at our web site by recommenders, transcripts uploaded at our web site by high school counselors or registrars, and official reports of standardized test scores by **February 1, 2026**, by 11:59 pm EST.

Notification: The Scholarship Selection Committee will notify the winner of the award in April 2025.

Payment: The Sunflower Initiative pays the scholarship directly to the college each term after confirming the Scholar's enrollment.

Renewal: The Harriet Fitzgerald Scholarship is awarded for one year with the possibility of renewal each year based on continued high performance.

Who is eligible?

The Scholarship Committee welcomes applications from highly motivated students who are passionate about learning and desire to attend a woman's college in the United States. The successful candidate must

- possess a stellar high school record,
- provide outstanding references,
- have a sincere desire to contribute to society, and show evidence of strong character and leadership qualities, as well as breadth and depth of interests.

For best consideration, applicants should have

- an unweighted GPA of at least a 3.7 and
- either a composite SAT score of at least 1350 or a composite ACT score of at least 27, with no single ACT score below 25.
- International students should be able to arrange to take the SAT or ACT in their home countries.
- **For applications due on 1 February 2026, SAT and/or ACT test scores are optional, but we welcome them if available.**

All students expecting to start their first full term of college at an undergraduate women's college in the Fall 2026 term are eligible to apply. These include

- graduating high school seniors,
- those who have taken a gap year since graduating from high school,
- students who matriculated at college but left prior to the completion of their first semester and now plan to start college again, and
- dual enrollment students who have taken a college course or two early while completing high school.



What components are required for a complete application?

- an application form completed online at our website, including the following supplements in PDF format so that our readers can read them:
 - ◊ an essay [**in PDF format**] uploaded within the online application form,
 - ◊ responses to questions about your activities, achievements, awards, and so on, which you may also supply by uploading an optional résumé [also in PDF format] within the online application form.
- three (3) confidential letters of recommendation **on letterhead, dated, and in PDF format. Please make sure your recommenders understand that we need letterhead to establish authenticity.**
 - ◊ At least two of the letters should come from people who can comment on your academic qualifications (teachers and counselors);
 - ◊ The third letter may come someone who can also comment on your extracurricular activities and personal character (this could also be a teacher or counselor, but perhaps a community member, club advisor, employer, or other non-family member).
 - ◊ These letters **must be confidential letters submitted on-line to our website directly by the letter-writer.**
 - ◊ Official high school or GED transcripts uploaded at our website by your high school counselor or registrar. Please make sure your counselors know that we **need Fall 2025 grades and Spring 2026 course schedules as well**, in order to know how you are spending your senior year of high school. **To include this information (depending on procedures and labels used by your school), your counselor may need to upload report cards or schedules in addition to what your school defines as a transcript.**
- Optional for applications due on 1 February 2026 Official reports of SAT (code 7230) or ACT (code 1715) scores **sent to us electronically by the testing service or uploaded by your high school counselor or registrar.**
- Incomplete applications and late materials will not be considered.

How should one gather application materials?

Applicants may not send letters, test scores, or transcripts themselves.

- As is standard with official documents where authenticity and confidentiality are important, we will accept these materials only directly from letter-writers, testing services, or high school counselors or registrars.
- Letter-writers should **use official letterhead** to verify the authenticity of their affiliation, and both recommenders and counselors should submit documents **in PDF format** so that we will be able to read all of these materials.

Applicants are responsible for checking with the other parties who are uploading and sending test scores, transcripts, and letters to make sure that these materials are sent before the deadline.

- Because letter-writers, counselors, registrars, and testing services are extremely busy during the college application season, **applicants should make their requests several weeks ahead of the due date, and check afterward with senders to make sure that they have sent the necessary documents.**
- From early January until the February 1 deadline, applicants will be able to learn which of their supplementary materials we have received up to that point. We will update this information every two or three days until the deadline of February 1.

How does The Sunflower Initiative's selection process work?

We review applications in February through early March. Semifinalists are identified, in early March, and Finalists are notified in mid-to-late March and interviewed in late March. **We may ask for additional information from applicants at the semi-finalist or finalist stage.** We hope to notify winners in early April so they can incorporate news of the scholarship into their decision-making about colleges. Because negotiations with the colleges are sometimes necessary, to ensure that the scholarship can be provided in a manner that is most helpful to our Scholars, we are not always able to post the names and biographies of Winners on this website or notify the Semifinalists until May.