

**To be eligible for consideration, applicants must:**

- **Be a resident of or attend school in one of the areas served by Benchmark's full-service branches in Virginia** (*Brunswick, Charlotte, Greenville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, or Prince Edward Counties or the City of Emporia*) **or North Carolina** (*Franklin, Granville, Vance, or Wake Counties*); **OR**
- **Be a customer of Benchmark Community Bank; AND**
- **Be a high school senior** expecting to graduate and go on to post-secondary school; **AND**
- **Complete and submit a SmartStart Community Commitment Scholarship application.** (*Incomplete applications will not be considered, and any evidence of artificial intelligence assistance on the essay portion will result in automatic disqualification.*)

**Eligibility Notes:**

- This scholarship is not open to Benchmark employees and immediate family members (*spouse, sibling, or child*) of employees or board members.
- Applicants are not required to be current, past, or future participants in the SmartStart program.

**Applications will be taken:**

- Starting at 8 a.m. on **Monday, December 15, 2025.**
- Up to 11:59 p.m. on **Sunday, February 15, 2026.**
- Online at [BCBforLife.bank/scholarship](https://BCBforLife.bank/scholarship).

**Only one application per student will be considered.**

**Judging by employees, officers, and/or members of Benchmark's board of directors will:**

- Take place between **Tuesday, February 17, and Friday, March 13, 2026.**
- Be done in a non-partial manner.
- Be based solely on the information contained in the application.

**Scholarship recipients will be notified by Wednesday, March 18, 2026.**

**To receive an award,** selected applicants must have completed the following by Friday, May 1, 2026:

- **Accepted** at an accredited college or technical school for the 2026-27 school year at the time of award notification.\*
- **Enrolled** as a student at an accredited college or technical school for the 2026-27 school year at the time of award presentation.\*

*\*Note: If an applicant is named as a recipient and chooses not to enroll or to negate enrollment at an accredited school, the bank has the right to nullify the offer of the scholarship award. Additionally, if an applicant has other scholarships that compensate for 100% of matriculation fees, award may be rescinded and re-awarded to an applicant demonstrating funding need.*

**Presentation of the scholarship certificates will be made during the award ceremony at each recipient's respective school.**