

ELCA Fund for Leaders

for this church and for our future

Guidelines for congregation scholarship funds - 2026

Nominations due by May 1

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Students must be:

- Enrolled at an ELCA seminary
- Registered for classes, internship or CPE
- Enrolled in MDiv (deacon or pastor), MA (deacon) or PhD degree program - OR - Enrolled in TEEM, TEIL certificate programs
- Pursuing rostered ministry in the ELCA (word and service or word and sacrament)
- Considered by the synod to be in good standing in the ELCA Candidacy Process

Examples of eligible students:

- TEEM, TEIL candidates
- Students receiving any other type of Fund for Leaders scholarship
- MDiv graduates from any seminary fulfilling Lutheran learning and formation candidacy requirements at an ELCA seminary (aka “Lutheran year”).
- TEEM graduates returning to seminary and entering a MDiv or MA degree program

SELECTION PROCESS

- Congregations may make their selection decisions however they wish (award funds based on merit or need). Scholarships can be awarded equally or in differing amounts.
- Congregation scholarships are awarded for one year.
- All congregation awards are meant to be additive to other assistance a student may already be receiving and can be used for non-tuition expenses associated with their studies. *Note: scholarship funds used to cover costs beyond tuition, books, and fees (e.g., room and board, insurance, etc.) will count as taxable income to students.*
- If there are no qualified students from your congregation, or if your congregation 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.

2026 TIMELINE

Please submit nominee information to Fund for Leaders by May 1 and e-mail instructions to students by May 15.

Mid-April	May 1	May 15-June 5*	First week of July	Mid-Sep & Mid-Jan
FFL informs congregations of Full Tuition scholarship awardees	Deadline for congregations to submit names of nominated students to Fund for Leaders	Students register and apply online in ELCA GrantMaker https://elca.fluxx.io	Students accept Grant Agreement online in ELCA GrantMaker	FFL payments to ELCA seminaries: Fall 1/2 in Sep. Spring 1/2 in Jan.

*No funds can be awarded to students who have not completed an application during the scholarship cycle.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Instructions for students applying through ELCA GrantMaker: [Our Scholarships - Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](#) Scroll to: Interested in applying? Learn more [here](#).
- Any questions? Please contact us, or have students contact us, at fundforleaders@elca.org or 773-380-2496