

Welcome to the 2026 Wells Mountain Initiative (WMI) Scholars program application.

Introduction

The Wells Mountain Initiative (WMI) is a public charitable foundation based in Bristol, Vermont, USA, and recognized by the United States Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization. WMI expands access to higher education—primarily across Africa—and invests in outstanding young leaders through university scholarships, skills-building, leadership development, and start-up support for community impact projects.

Each year, WMI provides scholarships to students pursuing their **first undergraduate degree** at a university in their **home country or region**. Financial support may include:

- University tuition and fees
- Books and required course materials
- Accommodation and meals
- Transportation

Please note: **The WMI Scholarship is not a full scholarship.** It may not cover all university or living expenses, and applicants should plan for additional financial support if needed.

Scholarships are typically provided for the full duration of the degree program. To remain eligible each year, Scholars must:

- Maintain **above-average grades**
- Complete **100 hours of community service** annually
- Submit **bi-annual academic and community service reports** on time

Academic reports will include:

- Semester grade results
- Current bursary or fee statement
- Current academic calendar
- A completed Scholar Expense Tracker with receipts showing how WMI funds were spent

Community service reports will include:

- A summary of service activities
- Photos documenting the activities

WMI may discontinue a scholarship at any time in cases of unsatisfactory academic performance, dishonesty, misuse of funds, or failure to complete the community service requirement.

Scholarship awards are determined by trained volunteer reviewers and the Scholarship Management Team. Awards are granted **once per year**, with final decisions announced on **August 1**.

Eligibility:

Our Ideal Candidate

We seek exceptional, community-focused students who face significant financial barriers to university education. An ideal WMI Scholar:

- **Is 35 years of age or younger** as of August 1, 2026
- **Will study in their home country** (or within their home region when local programs are unavailable)
- **Has completed secondary school** or is in the final year, with **above-average or excellent grades**
- **Is applying to a university** OR is currently enrolled in their **first undergraduate degree or diploma program**
- **Plans to live and work in their home country or region after graduation**

- **Has previous volunteer experience** and is committed to completing **100 hours of community service each year** during their studies
- **Has some financial resources, but cannot afford university without additional support**
 - *The WMI Scholarship is a partial scholarship and does not cover all tuition or living costs.*
- **Is a first-generation university student** (preferred but not required)

Additional Details

- We highly recommend that you review the [WMI Scholars Program Information Flyer](#), [WMI Scholars Application Frequently Asked Questions Guide](#), and the [WMI Scholars Recommendation Letter Guidelines](#) documents on our website to assist you in preparing the most complete and competitive application possible.
- Applications must be successfully submitted via the application portal by March 1 at 11.59pm EST, each year to be considered.
- WMI Scholarship recipients are selected through an in-depth multi-step review process. The selected WMI Scholars will be emailed on August 1. Their names will also be published on our website homepage and the WMI Facebook page. Those who are not selected will also be notified after August 1.
- Please DO NOT type your responses in all capital letters.
- Scholars planning to study in the United States, Canada, Australia, the UK, or Western Europe will not qualify for a WMI Scholarship.
- Applications or application materials sent by email will not be considered. All applications and required uploads must be submitted through the online application portal.
- Family members of WMI Team Members and of current WMI Scholars are not eligible to apply.

Information You Need

Please prepare the following items before you start your application:

1. School Documents

- Secondary school transcripts (grades from all schools you attended)
- National exam results (if your country has them)
- University transcripts (only if you are currently studying or studied before)
- University fee structure (you can find this on the university's website if you are not yet accepted)

2. Personal Statements (Short Essays)

You must write two short essays. Each essay must be 500 words or less.

A. Please write a 350–500 word personal statement that describes your background and the experiences that have shaped your life. You may include information about your family, community, education, or any challenges or opportunities that influenced your path.

In your essay, please explain:

- What circumstances led you to apply for the WMI Scholarship
- Why you believe you are a strong candidate, including qualities, values, or achievements that demonstrate your commitment to your goals
- How this scholarship would support your long-term aspirations

B. In 500 words or less, please explain what inspired you to pursue your chosen field of study. Share the experiences, interests, or role models that influenced your decision.

In your essay, also describe:

- Why this field is a good fit for your strengths, talents, or passions
- How your degree will equip you to contribute to your community, nation, or region
- The impact you hope to create in the future

We encourage you to be specific and help us understand why this field matters to you and how it connects to your long-term goals.

3. Essay Question (500–1000 words)

Essay Prompt: This essay gives you the opportunity to share your ideas about issues affecting you and your community. (Note: This is a hypothetical scenario and not a funding request.)

- In 1000 words or less, answer the following: If you were given \$1,000 to address a challenge in your community, what issue would you focus on and why?

In your response, briefly explain:

- The root cause of the issue and why it persists
- Why this issue matters to you personally
- How your field of study connects to the issue or your approach
- What you would do with the \$1,000 grant to begin addressing the issue (a simple plan, not a detailed proposal)
- How you would measure success, including 2–3 realistic indicators

This prompt is designed to evaluate your ability to analyze a problem, think creatively, and propose a practical, meaningful solution.

Please note: You will be required to write personal statements and an essay.

- Ensure that the work that you submit fully originates from you. If you borrow ideas from another source, cite any quotations or references, or the essay will be deemed plagiarized.
- The use of AI-generated text or outline structures is not allowed.
- Using uncredited ideas, content created by other persons, and AI-generated text directly violates the scholarship application policy. Your personal statements and essay will be checked for plagiarism and the use of AI-generated text. Any applicants found to have plagiarized or used AI-generated content will be considered ineligible for a scholarship.

4. Recommenders

You must provide:

- **The name and correct email address for two people who will write recommendations for you.**

- [Click HERE for Recommendation Guidelines](#)

5. ID and Photo

You must upload:

- A headshot photo
- A national ID or another official photo ID

Opens: December 1, 2025 at 12:01AM EST

Closes: March 1, 2026 11:59PM EST

SECTION 1: PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with your personal contact information. Please **DO NOT** write in all capital letters (only capitalize the first letter)

First Name:

Middle Name (s):

Family Name

Email address:

Eligibility

Date of Birth – month/date/year

Do you plan to study in Australia, the US, Canada, the UK, or any countries in Western Europe? (Yes/No)

Are you seeking this scholarship for a Master's or PhD program? (Yes/No)

Have you completed a Bachelor's Degree? (Yes/No)

Additional Information:

What city do you live in?

Please select your country

Please select your gender

Please select your country of origin

Primary mobile telephone

Secondary mobile telephone (optional)

SECTION 2: FAMILY MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with the contact details of someone you trust. If we cannot contact you by the phone number(s) and email address you provided, we will try to contact this person. We will only contact him/her if we cannot reach you.

Family member contact full name: _____

What is their relationship to you? Please select from the options below.

- Mother Father Sister Brother Spouse
- Grandparent Uncle Aunt
- Other (Please specify): _____

Mobile telephone number:

Email address:

Confirm email address:

SECTION 3: PROPOSED PROGRAM OF STUDY

This is your opportunity to share your tertiary education plans with us. All responses should be accurate and reflect your current situation as a student and an applicant to university. Please **DO NOT** apply if you plan to study in a developed country (US, Canada, UK, Western Europe, Australia, etc.) or seek a scholarship for secondary school, Master's or PhD degree. This scholarship opportunity is for students pursuing their first higher education degree (diploma, Bachelor's degree.).

Program of study:

If Other, What is your Program of Study?

Please specify the level of your program of study

- Diploma
- Degree

Name of school:

City:

Country:

Website URL of your school:

Duration of Studies

Total duration of the program (start to finish in years):

What date will or did your studies begin (this is when you first attended university classes OR when you will first attend university classes, not when your next semester begins)?

What is your current enrollment status? Please select from the options below.

- Not yet accepted Accepted
- Currently enrolled and attending classes
- Began program of study, but currently in a dead year/not taking classes

If you are currently enrolled, how many years have you completed?

When do you expect to finish your required coursework? Please write a date in Month-Year form.

SECTION 4 FAMILY BACKGROUND

Marital Status Information

What is your current marital status? Please select from the options below.

- Single Married Widowed Divorced

What is the highest level of schooling your spouse completed? Please select from the options below.

- Primary Secondary Diploma Degree Master's PhD
- Unsure
- I do not have a spouse

Spouse's employment status. Please select from the options below.

- Self-employed part-time Self-employed full-time Employed part-time Employed full-time Casual labor Unemployed
- Retired Deceased
- I do not have a spouse

Spouse's average current monthly income (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate using the converter on this link: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>) _____

Spouse's current or last job/title (For example: primary school teacher, tailor, house help. etc.) _____

Children Information

How many children do you have?

Number of dependents - How many dependents are you responsible for? (any additional people who you provide financial support for, NOT including your spouse and children)

Parent Information

Are your parents alive?

- Yes
- Only mother Only father
- Both deceased

What is the highest level of schooling your mother completed? Please select from the options below.

- Primary Secondary
- Diploma Degree
- Master's PhD
- None Unsure

Mother's employment status. Please select from the options below. Self-employed part-time or self-employed full-time

- Employed part-time Employed full-time
- Casual labor Unemployed Retired
- Deceased

Mother's average current monthly income (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate using the converter on this link: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>) _____

Mother's current or last job/title (For example: primary school teacher, tailor, house help. etc.) _____

What is the highest level of schooling your father completed? Please select from the options below.

- Primary Secondary Diploma Degree
- Master's PhD None
- Unsure

Father's employment status. Please select from the options below.

- Self-employed part-time Self-employed full-time Employed part-time Employed full-time
- Casual labor Unemployed Retired
- Deceased

Father's average current monthly income (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate using the converter on this link: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>) _____

Father's current or last job/title (For example: primary school teacher, tailor, house help. etc.) _____

Do you have any siblings?

- Yes
- No

How many siblings do you have?

Are you the oldest sibling?

- Yes
- No

How many siblings are older than you?

SECTION 5: YOUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

We understand that all applicants come from different financial backgrounds. We ask that you complete the following section honestly. Students selected for a WMI scholarship are chosen based on many aspects, not financial need alone. The WMI

scholarship does not always cover the total cost of tuition and associated educational expenses. In this section, please detail how you will pay for the remainder of your academic expenses.

Do you have any prospects for employment part-time or otherwise while you are in school or between semesters, where you can earn income towards your educational costs?

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No

Our maximum scholarship is \$3000 USD, but we do not usually award that high an amount. If we provide less than the total yearly amount you have asked for in this scholarship application, is there any way you can make up the difference?

- Yes
- No

List all sources of income or support and the amount you expect to receive to help pay for your education from each source on an annual basis. Please ensure you are entering amounts in which will be provided to support your education annually. (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate using the converter on this link: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>)
Job:

Family:

Savings:

Awarded scholarships (do not include what you hope to receive from WMI):

Government loans:

Other loans:

TOTAL:

How have you been paying for school? And what has changed in your ability to pay so that you now need this scholarship?

Do you have debts with your university?

- Yes No

How much debt do you currently owe your school in USD? (Please convert using current exchange rate using the converter on this link: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>)

Does the school allow you to continue taking classes with this debt?

- Yes No

How much money are you requesting from WMI? Give the amount USD

SECTION 6: YOUR ACADEMIC COSTS

In this section, you will provide your best estimate of the costs for your academic program for ONE ACADEMIC YEAR. Please do not overestimate your financial costs; all calculations will be checked for accuracy in the final review stage.

Name of local currency:

Current exchange rate, \$1 US Dollar equals what amount of local currency
(Please convert using the current exchange rate. Please use <https://www.xe.com/>)

Date the current exchange rate was calculated - month/day/year:

Please enter estimated costs in your local currency

Tuition:

School fees, other than tuition. For example: lab fees, uniforms, activity fees: _____

Cost of accommodations:

Is the cost of accommodations included in the school fees?

Cost of meals:

Books & school supplies:

Total in local currency

Please enter estimated costs in US Dollars using the converter on this link: <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>)

Tuition:

School fees, other than tuition. For example: lab fees, uniforms, activity fees:

Cost of accommodations:

Is the cost of accommodations included in the school fees?

Cost of meals:

Books & school supplies:

Total in USD

Do you live on campus, off campus (hostel) or with family?
Off Campus (hostel, rented premises)

Please upload the fees structure from your university. If you are not yet accepted, provide the fees structure from the school's website.

SECTION 7: ABOUT YOU

Here is a chance to tell us more about your future and what you hope to do, which will help us learn more about you. Please provide a short answer on the lines provided.

What do you plan to do after you complete your education, including where you hope to live?

Do you know any current or past WMI Scholars?

- Yes
- No

If you selected yes, please provide the name(s) of the scholar(s) and what your relationship is.

Have you applied for a WMI scholarship in the past?

- Yes
- No

If you selected yes, please provide the years you applied: _____

How did you hear about WMI?

- WMI website
- WMI social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- WMI Scholar or Alumni referral
- University/college administrator or lecturer
- High school teacher or counselor
- Community-based organization or NGO
- Friend or family member
- Online scholarship platform
- Google search / Internet search
- Non-WMI Social media
- WhatsApp/Telegram group
- Online article or blog
- Poster or flyer
- Outreach event or information session
- Other (please specify) _____

SECTION 8: EDUCATION HISTORY

In this section, we will ask you to provide information on your past schools. Please enter your secondary, and tertiary (postsecondary) school information.

Add School: Set #1

Name of school

Location of school (Country)

Level

Year completed

Add School: Set #2

Name of school

Location of school (City)

Location of school (Country)

Level

Year completed

SECTION 9: OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Are you currently receiving scholarship support?
2. Have you applied to any other scholarships?
3. Please list the name and amount of each scholarship below.

SECTION 10: WORK/EMPLOYMENT HISTORY In this section, provide information on your current/past employment/ internships. If you do not have any current or past employment, you may skip this section.

Add Work: Set #1

Name of company/organization:

Employment Status. Please select from the options below

Employed part-time Employed full-time

Casual labor

Start date:

Do you currently work here?

End date (if you are currently working here, write "current"):

Brief description of responsibilities:

Monthly salary (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate):

Name of company/organization:

Employment Status. Please select from the options below

- Employed part-time
- Employed full-time
- Casual labor

Start date:

End date (if you are currently working here, write "current"):

Brief description of responsibilities:

Monthly salary (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate):

Name of company/organization:

Employment Status. Please select from the options below

- Employed part-time
- Employed full-time
- Casual labor

Start date:

End date (if you are currently working here, write "current"):

Brief description of responsibilities:

Monthly salary (in USD-please convert using current exchange rate using the converter on this link:

<https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>):

SECTION 11: VOLUNTEER HISTORY In this section provide information on your volunteer history.

Add Volunteer Activity: Set #1

Volunteer activity

Name of organization (if volunteering in an organization)

Brief description of volunteer activity:

Start date - month/year:

Are you currently volunteering with this organization OR are you currently undertaking the volunteer activity (if not volunteering with an organization)?

End date - month/year (if you are currently volunteering here, write "current"):

Total hours volunteered (estimated):

SECTION 12: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR YOUR APPLICATION The following documents are required for your application to be complete

Personal Statements & Essay Question

Please provide responses to the two personal statements and an essay question. All documents must be your own work in English, cannot be created using AI and must meet the word count. Cite any quotations or references; please do not plagiarize another's work.

The personal statements are very important in the review process. Please do not fabricate your life experiences. We can tell.

The essay question is your opportunity to share your ideas and feelings regarding issues impacting you and your community.

a) Personal statement on your background (500 words maximum)

Please write a 350–500 word personal statement that describes your background and the experiences that have shaped your life. You may include information about your family, community, education, or any challenges or opportunities that influenced your path.

In your essay, please explain:

- What circumstances led you to apply for the WMI Scholarship
- Why you believe you are a strong candidate, including qualities, values, or achievements that demonstrate your commitment to your goals
- How this scholarship would support your long-term aspirations

b) Personal statement on your chosen field of study (500 words maximum)

In 500 words or less, please explain what inspired you to pursue your chosen field of study. Share the experiences, interests, or role models that influenced your decision.

In your essay, also describe:

- Why this field is a good fit for your strengths, talents, or passions
- How your degree will equip you to contribute to your community, nation, or region
- The impact you hope to create in the future

We encourage you to be specific and help us understand why this field matters to you and how it connects to your long-term goals.

c) Essay Question

This essay gives you the opportunity to share your ideas about issues affecting you and your community. (Note: This is a hypothetical scenario and not a funding request.)

- In 500 words or less, answer the following: If you were given \$1,000 to address a challenge in your community, what issue would you focus on and why?

In your response, briefly explain:

- The root cause of the issue and why it persists
- Why this issue matters to you personally
- How your field of study connects to the issue or your approach
- What you would do with the \$1,000 grant to begin addressing the issue (a simple plan, not a detailed proposal)
- How you would measure success, including 2–3 realistic indicators

This prompt is designed to evaluate your ability to analyze a problem, think creatively, and propose a practical, meaningful solution.

Additional documents required

- Clear personal photo (similar to a passport photo).
- Official transcript of grades from secondary school, and if you have already completed one or more semesters at the tertiary level, it is required to submit an official grade report. Do not include grades from primary or junior high school.
- An official key or explanation to interpret your secondary AND tertiary grades (if applicable) issued by the institution. Ask your previous and current schools for a copy of this document. If they do not have an official version, you must provide a typed document with their seal and signature of authenticity.
- Results from your national exam.
- An official key to interpret your national exam results. Ask the national exam board for this document. If they do not have an official version, you will need to provide a typed document with their seal and signature of authenticity. For example, in some countries, "D" means below average, and in others, it stands for "Distinction".
- Official fee structure from your university (can be provided from the school's website if not yet accepted)
- Full names and contact details of two recommenders. Recommenders are people who know you, but are not family members or friends, such as employers, teachers, clergy, volunteer group leaders, etc., who can tell us about your character and abilities. Please ensure that their email addresses are correct. The application software company will contact your recommenders directly using these email addresses. The recommenders will then log into the portal to submit the recommendation letters on your behalf. Please note that your application will not be complete until we receive letters from both your recommenders. They must be submitted via the recommenders portal by March 1, 2026.1, 2026

Guidelines for Effective Application Recommendation Letters

An application must include two recommendation letters, each written by a different person. These letters give reviewers additional insight into your character, achievements, and potential from people who know you well. Please remember that recommendation letters are one component of a comprehensive application review process.

Tips for Those Writing Recommendation Letters for an Applicant

Letter Requirements

- Include the full name of the applicant.
- Indicate how long you have known the applicant.
- Describe the capacity and nature in which you have known the applicant.
- Most effective letters are not less than 400 words nor more than 500 words.
- Provide your letter on official letterhead with your contact information listed, i.e., phone number, WhatsApp number (if different), and email address.
- Please include your ink signature and date the letter. We do not accept recommendation letters that are more than a year old.

- The deadline for submitting the recommendation letter is March 1, 2026 at 11:59 pm EST

Suggested Areas to Write About

- Discuss why the applicant is a strong candidate for this specific scholarship. How does this applicant exemplify the personal qualities or selection criteria specified by the scholarship? Specific examples are critical.
- Discuss the applicant’s personal characteristics, capacity to work with others in a team, leadership skills, commitment to their community/country, and communication skills.
- Comment on the applicant’s proposed plan of study at the tertiary level and what past experiences witnessed by you that relate to the applicant’s aptitude, retained interest, completion of a degree in the subject matter, and benefit given to society upon graduation within this program.
- From your perspective, how effective is the applicant in establishing and maintaining relationships.
- To what extent does the applicant possess the traits of motivation and persistence.
- Share documented evidence of the applicant’s academic, leadership, or community service achievements.
- Does the applicant have any unique competencies, talents, or leadership abilities?

Helpful tip:

A short story or example that demonstrates the applicant’s strengths is more powerful than general statements.