2025-26 Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship Program

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Program Overview

What are the categories and who is eligible to apply?
The Friends of the California State Fair offers 12 categories of scholarships with varying eligibility requirements:

- Agricultural Students (current college student)
- Agricultural Students (high school senior)
- Art Major
- Business Major
- California State Fair Exhibitors or Volunteers
- Culinary, Hospitality, or Event Planning Major
- International Agriculture Students (sponsored by Blue Diamond)
- Sacramento Region Top Achiever
- Teacher Credential Program
- Top 10 Percent of Class
- Trade School Program
- Wine & Grape Growing Major

Applicants may apply for one scholarship category of their choice per year. Applicants must meet all of the criteria for a specific scholarship to be an eligible candidate. Applicants must plan to enroll for both the fall 2025 and spring 2026 semesters. Students graduating after the fall 2025 are not eligible to apply, as this scholarship is intended for the full academic year. The scholarship categories and requirements are below:

Agricultural Students (current college student)
- Have successfully completed 12 units of coursework credit in Agricultural classes
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled as a college sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student in a four-year accredited college or university or an accredited community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Agricultural Students (high school senior)
- Plan to be an Agricultural Student in college
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be a current high school senior (or junior graduating in spring 2025) enrolling in a four-year accredited college or university, or an accredited community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Art Major
- Have a declared program/major of Art. This can include, but is not limited to, visual arts, dance, music, film, etc.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled as a college freshman, sophomore, junior or senior in a four-year accredited college or university in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Business Major
- Have a declared program/major of Business or Agricultural Business
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled in a four-year accredited college or university, or an accredited community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

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California State Fair Exhibitors or Volunteers
In Honor of Rex Hime
- Be one of the following:
  - A participant (exhibitor) in the California State Fair any year from 2021 through 2024 in the competitive programs for youth (livestock, horse, small animal, dog, and still exhibits)
  - -OR-
  - A volunteer any year from 2021 through 2024 in the California State Fair Youth Task Force or the California State Fair Kaiser Permanente Farm Programs as a guide, intern, or assistant either in preparation for the Fair, during the Fair, or off season
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled at a four-year accredited college/university or community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Culinary, Hospitality, or Event Planning Major
- Have a declared program/major of Culinary Cooking or Hospitality Management or Event Planning
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled in a four-year accredited college or university, a California culinary specialty school, or an accredited community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

International Agriculture Students (sponsored by Blue Diamond)
- Have an emphasis and interest in International Agricultural Trade, with a major of agriculture, economics, business, international studies, language studies, etc.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled in a four-year accredited college or university, or an accredited community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Sacramento Region Top Achiever
- Be a current high school senior
- Be recognized as a Sacramento Region Top Achiever (defined as the top 5 (five) percent of students in your graduating class)
- Be graduating from a school in one of these counties: Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sutter, Yolo, or Yuba County
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.75 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled at a four-year accredited college or university in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Teacher Credential Program
- Be enrolled in a Teacher Credential Program or be an undergraduate Education major
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled as a college sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student in a four-year accredited college, university, or an accredited community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025 (re-entry professionals included)

Top 10 Percent of Class
- Be a current high school senior in the top 10 percent of your graduating class
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.75 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled at a four-year accredited college or university in the state of California in the fall of 2025

Trade School Program
- Be a current high school senior with a plan to enter an accredited trade school program in California in fall 2025 or currently be enrolled in an accredited trade school program in California.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID

Wine Making or Grape Growing Major
- Have a declared program/major of Viticulture or Enology
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a California resident with a valid ID
- Be enrolled as a college sophomore, junior, senior or graduate student in a four-year accredited college or university, or as a student in a community college in the state of California in the fall of 2025

When is the application deadline?
March 3, 2025 at 11:59 PM PST

What is the Program timeline?
- Application Open: December 17, 2024
- Application Deadline: March 3, 2025
- Notification of Selection Results: May 2025
- Funds Disbursed: August 2025

Is this award renewable?
No.

Who administers this Program?
To ensure complete impartiality in the selection of recipients and to maintain a high level of professionalism and security, the program is administered by International Scholarship and Tuition Services, Inc. (ISTS), an independent company that specializes in managing sponsored educational assistance programs.

Award Details

What are the selection criteria?
An independent selection committee will evaluate the **Complete** applications and select recipients considering:
- Academic achievements and records
- Community involvement
- Volunteerism
- Essay content

Decisions of the selection committee are final and are not subject to appeal. No application feedback will be given.

What are the details of the award?
- Each applicant may apply to one scholarship category. Scholarships ranging from $1,000 - $2,500 are awarded.
- Students may reapply each year as long as they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.
- The scholarships will be applied to tuition, fees, books, supplies and equipment required for course load at accredited, nonprofit two- or four-year colleges/universities, or trade schools in California.
- Students may transfer from one institution to another and retain the award as long as individual scholarship requirements are still met.
- Eligible applicants may move forward to compete for the **Ironstone Concours Foundation/Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship.**
- Scholarships may <u>not</u> be applied to room and board.

What are the details of the Ironstone Concours Foundation/Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship?
The top scholarship winners in select categories (if applicant's score is at least 95%) may be invited to compete for the overall $5,000 Ironstone Concours Foundation/Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship. Qualifying categories with more than twenty eligible applicants may submit the runner up scholarship winner for consideration as well (if the applicant's score is as least 95%). The interviews will take place in the first couple weeks of May 2025 in Sacramento. The Ironstone Concours Foundation/Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship winner will be required to attend the award ceremony in June or July 2025.

What are my responsibilities if I am chosen as a recipient?
You must enroll as a full-time <u>undergraduate</u> student (or undergraduate/graduate student for the Viticulture/Enology, Agricultural Students (current college student), or Teacher Credential programs.) You must continue the entire academic year without interruption. Recipients must enroll for both the fall 2025 and spring 2026 semesters. Students graduating after the fall 2025 are not eligible to apply, as this scholarship is intended for the full academic year. You are responsible for delivering your scholarship check(s) to the proper office at your institution with its attached instructions. You should notify ISTS should your check not arrive within 30 days of the issue date. You will receive an email notification when your funds are issued.

How and when are funds issued?
Your funds will be issued via check in early August. Your check will be made payable to your institution listed on your **My Profile** page <u>only</u>. *Your scholarship check <u>cannot</u> be made payable to you, the applicant.* The check will be mailed to your home address so that you may deliver it to the correct office at your institution. You will receive an email notification once your funds have been issued.

How do I change my college choice?
Make sure your **Profile** page indicates your final college choice. It is your responsibility to make sure your **Profile** page is correct at least 30 days prior to the check issue date listed above. If your scholarship check needs to be reissued for any reason, a reissue fee may apply.

Application Details

Which school should I list on the application if I have not made a final decision?
You should list your first-choice school on the application. You can change your college choice any time prior to the application deadline. If selected as a recipient, you will be asked to confirm your final school choice. If your school changes after the acceptance deadline, you will be able to update this information on your **Profile** page.

What are the differences between Official and Unofficial Transcripts?

Official transcripts must be obtained through your high school administration office, or your college registrar's office. Transcripts are normally printed on official letterhead and/or state that they are official. Transcripts may contain or require a signature.
*Note: Your official transcript may come to you in a sealed envelope, stating it will become unofficial if opened. When scanning or copying your official transcripts, a watermark <u>may</u> appear noting that they are now unofficial. **Despite any watermarks or sealed envelopes, you may open the envelope if needed to upload the document. These documents will be considered official for our purposes.** Acceptable file types are **.pdf, .tif, .png, .jpeg, .jpg, .bmp and .xps.** When scanning or copying, you do not need to include a copy of the sealed envelope.*

Unofficial transcripts may be accessed through your school's online student portal. These pages must still be converted to one of the acceptable file formats. Unofficial transcripts **must** contain your name.

What supporting documentation is required for this application?
- High School Transcript: Upcoming College Freshmen and Sophomores only.
- College/University Transcript: Upcoming College Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, and Graduate students only.
- Class Verification Letter: Applicants to the Sacramento Region Top Achiever and Top 10 Percent of Class scholarship categories whose high school does not rank students.

Where and when should I send my supporting documents?
All required supporting documents must be uploaded to your online application by the application deadline. If you do not follow the upload instructions exactly, your application may remain incomplete. Documents that meet the criteria required for this application that are uploaded by the deadline will be processed and considered on time.

Notifications

How will I be notified about the status of my application?

Notifications are sent primarily via email to the email you used to create your account. Some programs offer text and voice notifications. **Ultimately, it is your responsibility as the applicant to verify your application status on your Home page is Completed.**

What notifications will be sent to me?
- Deadline Reminders: Deadline reminder emails typically begin 30-45 days prior to the application deadline.
- Selection Results: Selection results notifications are sent to all **Complete** applicants.
- Funds Disbursed: Once your funds have been issued, you will be notified.
- Other Scholarships: Occasionally, if you meet the requirements for another scholarship administered by ISTS, you will be notified. These notifications are not guaranteed.

Your information is never sold to any third party for marketing purposes.

Who will notifications be sent from?

You will receive notifications from two possible ISTS email addresses: donotreply@applyISTS.com and ContactUs@applyISTS.com. You should add both of these email addresses to your "safe senders list" to ensure important emails are not sent to your spam or junk folder.

When will I receive notifications?

Notifications vary by program based on the Program timeline. Refer to the Program timeline listed above for more specific information. Typically, deadline reminder emails begin 30-45 days prior to the application deadline.

Can I opt out of notifications?

While you can opt out of notifications, this is <u>not advised</u>. It is your responsibility as the applicant to ensure your application is **Completed**. If you opt out of notifications, you will not receive deadline reminders or selection results. **Your information is never sold to any third party.** The only emails you will receive from ISTS are directly related to your application and, *possibly,* other scholarship opportunities.

Document Upload

What should be visible on my documents?
All uploaded documents **must** show your name. If you are using an online portal to access your required documentation and all that is visible is the salutation and your first name (Example: Welcome Joe!), this will meet the name requirement.

What are the acceptable file types?
The only acceptable file types are **.pdf, .tif, .png, .jpeg, .jpg, .bmp and .xps.** Any other formats will not be reviewed, and your application will remain incomplete. You may upload multiple files within a .zip file. All files within a .zip file must be in one of the acceptable file types listed above.

Why can't I upload a Word document?
ISTS does not accept any editable file format.

One of the documents I uploaded has a status of Rejected. What do I do now?
Review the reason your document was rejected. Once you have corrected that issue, upload a new copy of your document.

How do I upload more than one file at a time?
You may create a .zip file containing more than one file as long as everything included is in an acceptable file type of **.pdf, .tif, .png, .jpeg, .jpg, .bmp and .xps.** Do not upload additional documentation that is not requested. It will not be reviewed.

How do I create a .zip file?
To use this format, follow the steps outlined below:
1. Create a new folder on your Desktop, name it the document type you will be uploading. For example, Test Scores, Transcript, or Financial Documentation.
2. Move all the files you wish to upload into the new folder.
3. Right-click on the folder from your Desktop:
    a. PC Users: select "Send to," followed by "Compressed (zipped) folder."
    b. Mac Users: select "Compress [folder name]."
4. Your new **.zip** file will be located on your Desktop, ready to upload.

How long does it take to process my uploaded documents?
Documents are processed daily. Your document will be processed within 1 business day. If your document was uploaded prior to the deadline, it will be considered. However, it is your responsibility to monitor your **Home page** to ensure your document is **Accepted**.

The deadline has passed and my documents are still Processing- what does that mean?
All documents must be reviewed for the required information and for accuracy. All documents uploaded prior to the application deadline will be reviewed and considered. It is your responsibility to monitor your **Home page** to ensure your document is **Accepted** and that your application status reads **Completed**.

What are the DOs and DON'Ts of uploading documents to my application?

DO:

- Upload one of the accepted file types.
- Only upload the requested and required documents.
- Black out any Social Security Numbers. *This is not required, but highly advised.*
- Return to your **Home page** to verify your documents have been **Accepted**.

DON'T:

- Upload a Microsoft$^{®}$ Word document (.doc, .docx) or any other format we don't accept.
- Upload more than the requested documentation.
- Assume your documents are correct and accepted once you have uploaded them.
- Upload a document stating you are mailing your documents.
- Assume the required document does not pertain to you. If the application states the document is required, your application **will** remain incomplete if you do not provide that document. Contact us if you are having trouble providing a required document.
- Password protect your uploaded documents. Password-protected documents will be rejected.
- Upload any file that has a viewing expiration date.

Other Important Information

Are scholarships taxable?
Tax laws vary by country. In the United States, scholarship funds used exclusively for the payment of tuition and textbooks are normally not taxable. The scholarship recipient is responsible for taxes, if any, that may be assessed against his or her scholarship award. We recommend consulting your tax adviser for more guidance. You may also consult IRS Publication 970 for additional information.

ISTS Self-Help Portal
For more helpful information about scholarships plus answers to common inquiries related to ISTS' technology and processes, visit our Student Support Hub at ISTSprogramsupport.com.

Contact Information
ISTS office hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM Central Time, and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Central Time. Program Support Representatives are available via live chat and email during these hours. Use the green **Help** button (as shown below) at the bottom right corner of your screen to contact us.

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