



CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR 2023-2024



THINK YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO ATTEND CULINARY SCHOOL?

Think Again.

When we asked prospective culinary school students in a quiz, “What could stop you from pursuing your culinary dreams?” the top answer we received was, “Paying for school.”¹

The good news is that there are plenty of [culinary school scholarships](#) and other funding options available to those who apply and qualify—and who know where to look for them.

Perhaps you're at the beginning of your career journey and you're realizing that the traditional college path isn't for you. Or maybe you're looking to start a second act with a new career. Maybe you're an empty-nester, and you're ready to pursue a fresh challenge.

Regardless of what stage you're in, there are opportunities out there that can help with funding.



CONTENTS

01: TYPES OF CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS	4
02: MERIT-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS	6
03: NEED-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS	13
04: COMPETITION-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS	16
05: PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE AND LOCATION-SPECIFIC CULINARY SCHOLARSHIPS	19
06: OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL AID	24

Most of the scholarships listed in this guide are third-party offerings and not offered by Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts. Open dates, deadlines, and application criteria may change. Always check the provider's website for updated information.

TYPES OF

CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Different types of culinary school scholarships assess applicants in distinct ways.

Merit-based scholarships evaluate candidates' academic achievement and/or culinary skill. Need-based scholarships are awarded to lower-income students, to help bridge their financing gap. Some scholarships are awarded to participants or winners in culinary competitions. And some are only available to people who meet certain personal criteria, like active-duty military or veterans, single parents, certain ethnic groups or races, place of residence, or members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Make sure to read each scholarship's eligibility requirements very carefully to assess your eligibility before applying. And always complete the application process in full.

- **MERIT-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS**
- **NEED-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS**
- **COMPETITION-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS**
- **PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE AND LOCATION-SPECIFIC CULINARY SCHOLARSHIPS**

A smiling female chef in a white uniform and black hat stands in a kitchen. She is wearing a white chef's jacket with a small logo on the left chest that reads "The Culinary Institute of America" and "Escott". She is also wearing a white apron with a black tie. In the background, there is a metal rack filled with various kitchen items, including plates and bowls. The chef is looking directly at the camera with a friendly expression.

WHAT IS A SCHOLARSHIP?

A scholarship is a financial award provided to college, university, or trade school students to support their education costs. They may be awarded directly to the student to spend as they wish, or they may be paid directly to the school for tuition costs. These funds are considered a financial gift and do not have to be repaid.

MERIT-BASED

CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Merit-based scholarships ask the question: how have you proven your passion for the culinary or baking arts?

Maybe you worked part-time at a restaurant all through high school and were active in your school's cooking classes. Or maybe you're an adult learner who shares your passion for cakes through a baking hobby and your own blog. Some scholarship applications may also have a GPA requirement, especially for students who have recently graduated from high school.

You might want to start your search for merit-based culinary scholarships with these pro-

- JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS
- NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS (NRAEF)
- STATE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIPS
- AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION
- THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP
- THE TROTTER PROJECT HOMARO CANTU SCHOLARSHIP



JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

If you've followed food culture even casually over the years, you'll be familiar with James Beard and the legacy he left in the culinary arts. Since its founding in 1991, the foundation has awarded over [\\$9 million](#) in culinary school scholarships and other financial aid to 2,000 students and counting.

They do this through three avenues:

- **FRIENDS OF JAMES BEARD:**

Cash grants applied directly to tuition and related school expenses.

- **JAMES BEARD SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS:**

Tuition waivers granted by culinary schools.

- **GRANTS FOR WORKING CULINARY PROFESSIONALS:**

Financial assistance for people working in the culinary industry to further their education through experiential learning from and working with master growers, producers, and food artisans.

Please check the [James Beard Foundation](#) website for scholarship application open dates and deadlines.

NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS (NRAEF)

Founded in 1987, the National Restaurant Association is a champion for people from all walks of life wanting to build career-ready skills in the restaurant and food services industry.

It's given \$26 million in financial aid to youth and adults at all stages of their career while helping to build a robust hospitality industry in America.

The association offers several programs and scholarship opportunities for culinary school students.

- PROSTART® FOR STUDENTS
- DIRECT NRAEF SCHOLARSHIPS
- NAMED NRAEF SCHOLARSHIPS

NRAEF SCHOLARSHIPS

PROSTART® FOR STUDENTS

ProStart® is a two-year high school program for students who want to get a jumpstart on their culinary careers. It provides real-life experience opportunities and builds practical skills. Students who earn their ProStart Certificate of Achievement may be eligible for scholarships and college credit at select culinary schools. Participants are also eligible to compete in the National ProStart Invitational® for additional scholarships (see Competition-Based Scholarships below for more information.)

DIRECT NRAEF SCHOLARSHIPS

The NRAEF awards general scholarships of \$2,500 to select students. To be eligible, students must be enrolled full-time or part-time at an accredited culinary school, college, or university for the next academic year. They must major in an associate degree or bachelor's degree program in the restaurant, foodservice, or hospitality fields.

Please check the [NRAEF website](#) for scholarship application open dates and deadlines.

NAMED NRAEF SCHOLARSHIPS

NRAEF also partners with private companies to give out additional scholarships. These are called Named Scholarships because they're usually awarded in the name of an individual or a business. For example, Distinguished Restaurants of North America (DiRoNA) offers a scholarship for students interested in fine dining. And the SPB Foundation, the charitable non-profit branch of SPB Hospitality, has an award for students who want to pursue careers in craft breweries or brewery restaurants.

The application process for these named scholarships is the same as the process for the Direct NRAEF Scholarships. Please check the [NRAEF website](#) for scholarship application open dates and deadlines.



STATE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Each state has its own restaurant group, affiliated with the National Restaurant Association. Many of these state groups offer culinary school scholarships to in-state residents. Check with [your state's chapter](#) to see what scholarships you may be eligible for.

AMERICAN CULINARY FEDERATION EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The American Culinary Federation (ACF) is a major force in the hospitality industry. It is credited with elevating the status of chefs in the United States from that of a lower-level service position to a well-regarded profession. ACF's high standards of training have earned the organization a prestigious reputation in the culinary arts world.

ACF's culinary school scholarships can help thousands of up-and-coming professionals in the hospitality industry get the best education possible. Scholarships of up to \$1,500 for students in certificate programs, and up to \$2,500 for students in post-secondary degree programs, are offered annually. Please check the [American Culinary Federation](#) website for scholarship application open dates and deadlines.



THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The Vegetarian Resource Group is a nonprofit organization that promotes the vegetarian and vegan lifestyle through education and activism. Each year, this group offers one scholarship of \$10,000 and two scholarships of \$5,000 to high school seniors who have shown a commitment to a vegetarian or vegan diet. Note: In 2024, The Vegetarian Resource Group will be awarding \$30,000 in college scholarships, thanks to generous donors.

This merit-based scholarship is a must-apply for students studying [plant-based culinary arts](#)! While the award is not exclusively for culinary students, multiple past winners have been vegan foodies with goals of opening their own plant-based restaurants.

Please check the [Vegetarian Resource Group](#) website for scholarship application open dates and deadlines.

THE TROTTER PROJECT HOMARO CANTU SCHOLARSHIP

The Trotter Project is dedicated to advancing sustainable agriculture, promoting culinary education, and easing food insecurity in underserved neighborhoods.

The Homaro Cantu Scholarship is an award up to \$10,000 that recognizes outstanding students in culinary arts or hospitality management. Students must submit their GPA, letters of recommendation, and a video highlighting their passion for the culinary arts and long term goals. Please check the [Trotter Project website](#) for scholarship application open dates and deadlines.

“It’s your job to work with [Escoffier Financial Aid] to find your opening into your future career. Hit the ground running and do your work. Apply for the scholarships and the grants, and do the paperwork on time.”*



AMBER GARDINER

ESCOFFIER CULINARY ARTS GRADUATE

NEED-BASED**CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS**

Need-based scholarships take a student's financial situation into account. They aim to help lower-income students gain access to education that may otherwise have been unavailable to them.

- SCHOOL-SPECIFIC CULINARY SCHOLARSHIPS
- FOOD DREAMS SCHOLARSHIP
- THE TROTTER PROJECT PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP

SCHOOL-SPECIFIC CULINARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Many culinary schools offer scholarships to enrolled students who can demonstrate financial need. In fact, some of the need-based scholarships that are awarded to culinary students come directly from their schools, whether it's a dedicated culinary school or a community college program.

As of January 1, 2023, the [Escoffier Scholarship Foundation](#) (ESF) has transitioned from merit-based to need-based eligibility.

The (ESF) has a limited number of individual student awards up to \$500 that will vary in number based off each respective term start date and funds available. For residential students, (ESF) has a limited number of \$1000 awards. The institution will review student eligibility during the financial aid process and notify the students that were selected. Students must remain in good standing based on the conditions below to receive disbursements.

Applicants must have completed one (1) quarter at Auguste Escoffier school of Culinary Arts, passed all classes attempted, completed a FAFSA® application, be current on institutional payment plan, and have an unmet need after applying all grants, federal financial aid, and institutional scholarships.

“ I didn't know when to look for scholarships or where to look for them. Escoffier had a lot of scholarships just within their program. That's exactly what I needed to make sure I felt comfortable with getting this degree.”*



COLTON RAGLAND

ESCOFFIER CULINARY ARTS GRADUATE



FOOD DREAMS SCHOLARSHIP

[Food Dreams](#) is a New York-based nonprofit committed to helping under-resourced students access culinary education and mentorship.

The organization's scholarship is available for high school or international school graduates with financial need. Award amounts vary based on the school and program. After completing their education, recipients complete at least one year apprenticeship at one of Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's restaurants. Applications are accepted year-round.

THE TROTTER PROJECT PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP

In addition to the Homaro Cantu Scholarship, The Trotter Project offers the need-based [Pursuit of Excellence Scholarship](#). This award of up to \$10,000 is available to a nontraditional or current culinary arts student with financial need. While The Trotter Project does not define "nontraditional student," the National Center for Education Statistics refers to students over the age of 24 as nontraditional.³

COMPETITION-BASED CULINARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Competition-based culinary scholarships are awarded to those who compete in and/or win food-based competitions.

These may be awarded directly from the competition hosts, or students' participation can earn them scholarships directly from their school.

- **NATIONAL PROSTART INVITATIONAL®**
- **FAMILY CAREER COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OF AMERICA**
- **SKILLSUSA**
- **CAREERS THROUGH CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM (C-CAP)**

NATIONAL PROSTART INVITATIONAL®

The [National ProStart Invitational](#)® is hosted by the National Restaurant Association ProStart® program. It includes both culinary arts and restaurant management competitions for high school students. The culinary arts competition requires teams to prepare a three-course meal in under an hour without running water or electricity. The restaurant management competition asks students to present their unique restaurant concept to the judges.

Participants in the ProStart Invitational® receive a \$500 scholarship from Escoffier. Winners are also eligible for \$1,500 to \$7,000 in Escoffier scholarships. (These don't apply to online programs.)

FAMILY CAREER COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OF AMERICA

Family Career Community Leadership of America (formerly Future Homemakers of America) helps young people to build career- and family-focused leadership skills. This high school-based program holds [Students Taking Action with Recognition](#) (STAR) competitions which let students showcase their skills in culinary arts and baking. Local winners can go on to regional and then national events.

All FCCLA competition participants are eligible for a \$500 Escoffier scholarship. And winners on the state, regional, and national levels may be eligible to receive \$1,500 to \$7,000 in scholarships from Escoffier, depending on the level of competition and their placement level. (These don't apply to online programs.)

**SkillsUSA**

SkillsUSA works with high school and college students, teachers, and industry leaders to ensure that the country maintains a skilled workforce. By partnering with over 650 businesses and trade associations, they bring skilled education out of the classroom and into the real world.

The [SkillsUSA Championships](#) are held in dozens of categories, including culinary arts and commercial baking. The culinary competition requires students to produce a four-course meal over the course of a full day. Baking competitors bake breads, rolls, cookies, and pies, as well as decorate cakes.

All participants are eligible for a \$500 scholarship from Escoffier. First, second, and third place winners may also receive \$1,500 to \$7,000 in awards from Escoffier, depending on the level of competition and their placement level. (These don't apply to online programs.)

CAREERS THROUGH CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM (C-CAP)

[C-CAP](#) is a regional culinary nonprofit that partners with high schools in Los Angeles, Arizona, Chicago, Newark/Camden, Washington, D.C./Maryland/Northern Virginia, New York, and Philadelphia. Its cooking competitions challenge students to make classic French dishes in a timed competition. Winners can receive scholarships to their college or culinary school of choice.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCE AND LOCATION-SPECIFIC CULINARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Beyond the large-scale scholarships that are often open to anyone, there is a vast network of scholarships for more specific groups of students.

These scholarships are available to a smaller pool of applicants, so they often involve less competition.

- VETERAN & MILITARY SCHOLARSHIPS
- LOCATION-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIPS
- DEMOGRAPHIC-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS
- EMPLOYER-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS



VETERAN & MILITARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Escoffier also offers a Student Veteran Scholarship.

All students who apply and qualify for Veterans Benefits from a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible for the Veterans Scholarship without completing the [Federal Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). This scholarship can only be used for direct institutional expenses, like tuition and fees, that aren't already covered by any Veterans Benefits a student receives. An institutional scholarship encompasses multiple categories and has one scholarship application award. The scholarships in this category are eligible to be awarded together, but students cannot exceed the overall scholarship maximum of \$7,500 in a diploma program or \$15,000 in an associate degree program at one of our physical campuses.

Scholarship awards for online programs include up to \$1,000 for active military and veterans; children/spouses of veterans can be awarded up to \$500.

[Veterans and active duty military](#) can qualify for multiple types of scholarship and financial assistance. Through the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, active duty military or honorably discharged veterans are eligible for up to 100% of their tuition and fees, housing, and textbooks and supplies for up to 36 months.²

Escoffier is a proud participant in the Yellow Ribbon Program. Learn more about the [Yellow Ribbon Program](#).

“ I worked with Jordan in the Financial Aid Department, who helped me get some of the scholarships I qualify for because my dad is a disabled veteran. Jordan does a ton of paperwork and extra work for me to get things submitted for this application, which needs to be updated every four months.”*

**KADIE SARDO**

BOULDER CULINARY ARTS GRADUATE



LOCATION-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Some scholarships are open only to students who live and attend school in a specific state, county, or city. The [Frans Hagen Scholarship](#), for example, is open to Washington, DC high school students, college students and current industry employees who are pursuing a culinary education.

Research scholarships for residents of your city, county, or state to see what's available. Your state restaurant association and local chamber of commerce may be good places to start.

DEMOGRAPHIC-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

Other scholarships are open to people who meet certain demographic criteria. These are often designed to close a gap for historically underrepresented groups, like scholarships for Black or Latinx students through the [United Negro College Fund](#) or the [Hispanic Scholarship Fund](#).

There are also some scholarships just for women, and others for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Scholarships may also exist for people in certain life circumstances, like [The Soroptomist Live Your Dream Awards](#) for single mothers. Escoffier also offers a [Single Parent Grant](#).



EMPLOYER-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

Some employers have their own internal scholarship programs. If you work in a restaurant or other food-service business, ask your managers if there's a scholarship program that you can apply for.

WORK & LEARN: EDUCATION PARTNER SCHOLARSHIP

The Work & Learn Education Partner Scholarship is designed to assist student-employees of an approved Work & Learn employer with a passion for culinary arts who are attending Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts online or in-person. This scholarship is worth up to \$2,000 applied over the length of the full program. It is contingent on certain requirements being met such as valid proof of qualified employment and an approved tuition funding plan with Financial Aid. For more information and to check your employer's Work & Learn partner status, contact Admissions at Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts at 877-452-5489 or admissionsonlineboulder@escoffier.edu.

[View full scholarship requirements.](#)



Fafsa Pell Grant

OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL AID

GRANTS

Grants are need based aid that can come from Federal or State agencies. The [Federal Pell Grant](#) is the most well-known and widely-used grant program. Students apply for the Pell Grant by filling out the FAFSA. Amounts vary based on factors like the school's cost of attendance and the student's Expected Family Contribution towards their education. The maximum award for the 2023-2024 school year is \$7,395.

STUDENT LOANS

Student loans can provide the up-front funding that students need to finance their education. After completing their programs, students [repay the loans](#) over several years.

The federal government is the largest provider of student loans. They are available to the majority of postsecondary school students, and often have modest interest rates.

Students can work on securing student loans and scholarships at the same time. The more scholarship money you receive, the less you'll have to borrow!



NOW IT'S UP TO YOU!

According to a [Bureau of Labor Statistics study](#), adults in their mid-50s report changing jobs 12.7 times.

There's no reason to assume that the same won't hold true for you! Some of those changes will be by choice, to explore new avenues and stay engaged in your work. Others will be by necessity, due to changes in the job market.

Whatever your dreams are for the future, don't let finances get in the way.

There are so many financial support options for those who apply and qualify, and so many opportunities for people willing to take that leap and get the education they need to be successful.

Escoffier's financial aid advisors are here to [answer your financing questions](#) and assist you in crafting a financial plan that makes sense for your specific situation. We're here to work with you to help find the right path to your career in the culinary arts. Reach out to us to discuss your options!

JOIN THE NEWEST GENERATION OF CULINARY TALENT

In November 2022, Escoffier celebrated a record number of culinary graduates with more than 3,800 students completing the online or campus-based culinary diploma and degree programs.

Join this unstoppable group of culinarians who are following their calling...and it all starts with getting a financial plan in place for your future.

Contact us today to take the next step.

ONLINE PROGRAMS

ADMISSIONS:

1-877-452-5489

admissionsonlineboulder@escoffier.edu

FINANCIAL AID:

1-877-452-5489 Option 1

financialaidonlineboulder@escoffier.edu

CAREER SERVICES:

1-855-224-0453

careerservices@escoffier.edu

BOULDER, CO CAMPUS

ADMISSIONS:

1-877-249-0305

303-494-7988

admissionsboulder@escoffier.edu

FINANCIAL AID:

Jordan Hagen

jhagen@staff.escoffier.edu

CAREER SERVICES:

Kate Sweasy

720-457-4214

ksweasy@escoffier.edu

637 South Broadway, Suite H

Boulder, CO 80305

AUSTIN, TX CAMPUS

ADMISSIONS:

1-833-443-0618

admissionsaustin@escoffier.edu

FINANCIAL AID:

Jordan Hagen

jhagen@staff.escoffier.edu

CAREER SERVICES:

Marc Doherty

512-381-7252

mdoherty@staff.escoffier.edu

6020-B Dillard Circle

Austin, TX 78752

For additional resources, visit www.escoffier.edu.



¹Escoffier Quiz, November 2020

²GI Bill® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

³Definitions and Data, National Center for Education Statistics

*This information may not reflect every student's experience. Results and outcomes may be based on several factors such as geographical region or previous experience.

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