



**COCA-COLA
SCHOLARS
FOUNDATION**

Fact Sheet

Updated August 3, 2026

About the Foundation

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering visionary leaders who are refreshing the world. For 40 years, it has invested in exceptional students and cultivated a powerful, lifelong community of mission-driven changemakers.

Mission & Vision

- Exists to bring better to the world through investment in exceptional high school students dedicated to leadership, service, and action that positively affects others.
- Amplifies the impact of exceptional leaders through scholarships, lifelong learning, and a powerful community of mission-driven changemakers.
- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization – all corporate sponsorships are tax-deductible.

History & Scale

- Founded in 1986, celebrating 40 years of impact in 2026.
- A joint effort of Coca-Cola bottlers across the country and The Coca-Cola Company.
- The largest corporate-sponsored, achievement-based scholarship program in the United States.

40

YEARS OF IMPACT

7,200+

TOTAL SCHOLARS

\$90M+

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Coca-Cola Scholars Program

The flagship scholarship is a highly competitive, achievement-based award for graduating high school seniors, recognizing students for their capacity to lead and serve and their commitment to making a significant impact on their schools and communities.

Scholarship Details

- **Award Amount:** \$20,000 scholarship
- **Class Size:** 150 Scholars selected annually from across the United States
- **Selection Criteria:** Achievement-based – evaluated on leadership, academics, and service (not financial need)
- **Eligibility:** Open to U.S. citizens, nationals, permanent residents, and other qualifying statuses planning to attend an accredited U.S. post-secondary institution
- **Academic Requirement:** Minimum 3.0 GPA at the end of junior year of high school required
- **Application Window:** Applications open August through September 30 each year

Rigorous Selection Process

- More than 107,000 applications were received from across the country for the 2026 class.
- Fewer than 1/7th of 1% of applicants were selected.
- CCSF divides the country into 10 Selection Districts based on population. Applicants are evaluated within their Selection District pool.
- Multi-stage process: open applications → ~1,300 Semifinalists → 250 Regional Finalists → 150 Scholars.
- Regional Finalists complete a 20-minute interview with previous scholarship recipients and Foundation staff before final selections are made.

Scholars Weekend in Atlanta

- Each new class is welcomed at Scholars Weekend, held in Atlanta each spring.
- Scholars are guests of honor at the annual Scholars Banquet, attended by Coca-Cola system leadership, [sponsors](#), educators, local dignitaries, and program alumni.
- Participants take part in the Coca-Cola Scholars Leadership Development Institute, a unique leadership curriculum facilitated by 30 scholarship program alumni.

Beyond the Scholarship: A Lifelong Community

What makes the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation truly unique is its commitment to Scholars not just for four years, but for life. The Coke Scholars Program continues to develop leaders long after graduation.

Alumni Programs & Benefits

- **Coaching Program** – pairs seasoned alumni with first-year Scholars as they transition to college life.
- **Professional & Personal Development** – ongoing programming including skill-building sessions (e.g., LinkedIn strategy, financial management, entrepreneurship)
- **Service Summits** – multi-day gatherings where Scholars and alumni unite for service projects, learning, and leadership development. The 2026 Summit focused on hurricane recovery efforts in Western North Carolina with Coca-Cola Consolidated.
- **Coke Scholars Connect** – a dedicated platform for networking and collaboration across classes.

Alumni Community by the Numbers

- 7,200+ Scholars in the alumni network since 1989.

- Alumni can be found in every sector – business, education, nonprofits, the arts, government, technology, medicine, and more.
- Coke Scholars are active globally, creating and inspiring positive change in their communities and around the world.

Impact of the Organization

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation's impact extends far beyond the scholarship check. By investing in the most driven and service-oriented young leaders in America, the Foundation creates a multiplier effect – each Scholar goes on to lead, innovate, and serve in ways that reach thousands more.

Scholar Achievements

- Coke Scholars have become scientists, politicians, educators, actors, technologists, entrepreneurs, and nonprofit leaders.
- Alumni have founded companies, led policy initiatives, created programs addressing food allergies, mental health, coding access, foster care, and more.
- Notable alumni include elected officials, venture capital founders, award-winning researchers, and social entrepreneurs with global reach.
- Forbes 30 Under 30 honorees, humanitarian award recipients, and published authors number among recent alumni cohorts.

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation at a Glance

- Founded: 1986
- Total Scholars: 7,200+ (with the 2026 class)
- Total Scholarships Awarded: \$90 million+
- Annual Class Size: 150 Scholars
- Annual Scholarship Amount per Scholar: \$20,000
- Annual Scholarships Awarded Across All Programs: \$3.55 million
- Applicants for 2026 Class: 107,000+
- 2027 Application Open: August 3 – September 30, 2026
- Selection Rate: Less than 1/7th of 1%
- Tax Status: 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- Learn More: www.coca-colascholarsfoundation.org

Boilerplate

The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation empowers visionary leaders refreshing the world. Celebrating 40 years of impact since 1986, the Foundation has provided more than \$90 million in scholarships to over 7,200 Coke Scholars who together have become a powerful force for positive change.

Learn more at www.coca-colascholarsfoundation.org.