

The Donald A. Strauss Scholarship Foundation

Bulletin of Information

**Deadline for Receipt of Applications
from the Applicants directly on our website:
February 15, 2027**

www.straussfoundation.org

Important Information for Students, Faculty, Administrators, and Project Sponsors

The STRAUSS AWARD is \$15,000

- **A minimum of \$8,000** of this award should be used as a project grant to fund the student's service project expenses.
- Up to **\$7,000** of this award can be used as a scholarship to be applied to the student's educational support.
- The entire award of \$15,000 may be used towards the project.
- **Applicants apply directly on our website**

INFORMATION ON THE APPLICATION PROCESS

I. PHILOSOPHY

The creation of the Foundation pays tribute to the vision, ideals, and leadership of Donald A. Strauss, and to his life-long commitment to public service and to education. The Foundation promotes the value of public service in the education and preparation of our future leaders. In financing innovative student-generated projects which foster leadership skills, we encourage optimism and an enduring interest in public service. The Foundation annually awards \$15,000 to no fewer than 10 and no more than 15 California college sophomores and/or juniors. A central part of the application package is a proposal for a project to be carried out between the end of the sophomore or junior year and the spring of the following year; these proposals shall become a major focus of the selection process.

II. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

1. Eligible students are full time students with one or two years remaining until graduation who are enrolled at an accredited four-year California college or university located in California. Applicants will have:
 - Demonstrated interest in public service.
 - Outstanding leadership potential.
 - Developed and can demonstrate effective communication skills.
 - The desire to “make a difference” in local, regional, national or international communities.
 - A GPA in the upper 1/3 of the class.
 - Submitted an innovative, original, public service project proposal.
2. The Strauss Foundation will award no fewer than 10 and no more than 15 awards of \$15,000 each year; these will be used to pay expenses of the public service project and for some tuition, fees, books, room, and board.

III. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

If you meet the above requirements, we encourage you to apply. We also advise all applicants to consult with professors, mentors, and their scholarship office advisors for feedback and guidance on their application before submitting their final application.

Each Applicant must apply directly on our website and include the following:

From the Applicant

1. An application summary (second to last page of this document) that lists
 - the university name and applicant’s information
 - The Project title and a one-paragraph executive summary of the proposal.
2. A one-page resume

- Include current and past community service.
3. A one-page personal essay (not a restatement of the resume). We hope to learn about your background, passions, “north star”, relevant accomplishments, and why your project is meaningful to you personally.
 4. The Project Proposal
 - Each applicant will submit an original project proposal for a community or public service project which would be accomplished between the end of his or her sophomore or junior year and the spring of the following year.
 - The proposal document should be limited to 4 pages, typed and 1.5 spaced.
 5. Transcripts from all colleges attended; copies are acceptable.
 6. A signed copy of the Acceptance Agreement acknowledging the responsibilities of a Strauss Scholar (as shown on the final page of this document)

From your letter writers

1. Letters of Recommendation. Two letters of recommendation from individuals who are well acquainted with the student’s work (academic or service); these can be from the current academic institution, organizations (including community or public service organizations), former professors, employers, community representatives, etc. They may not be family members.
2. Endorsement Letter. Please see the application page on our website for details.
3. Letter of Support. Not all applications will need a Letter of Support, but those that work with a partner organization must include one. See below, “Planning for the Project” section, for details.

**Letters of recommendation/support must
be emailed directly**

**Proposals must be submitted on our website by
February 15, 2027**

**For details on applying, please see our website –
www.straussfoundation.org**

IV. WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

The Project itself

- Projects focused clearly on social change/public service/social entrepreneurship.
- A demonstrated connection between the project and the applicant's passion, life experience.
- Projects that are innovative and timely; an idea, angle or approach that has not been widely pursued and /or that addresses important current issues.
 - If the project is an expansion of an existing program, there should be a clear demonstration of new features or major additional outreach or impact.
 - It is not the intention of the Foundation to fund internship requirements, research, or creation of a publication.
- Projects which engage other students or local participants in public service. We like to see a "multiplier effect".
 - Tutoring/school-based projects need to be scalable- multiple classes or ideally, multiple schools. (see website, Applicant Information, Sample Proposal: Environmental Education for the Next Generation)
- Sustainability and Continuity
 - Projects sustained over the school year, rather than one or two- day events or projects carried out only in the summer.
 - Plans for future leadership and a timeline for implementation afterwards.

Planning for the Project

- Include (1) a budget (2) a realistic timeline (3) how success or impact will be measured and (4) strategies for actual implementation (such as how to find and mobilize volunteers, acquire necessary resources such as a permit or a space for workshops, etc.,as applicable).
- If the project is to be done with a parent/partner institution, proof of an established relationship with that organization's leadership, and their support for the project (and where the project will be housed) should be included with the proposal.
 - This is verified through a Letter of Support, from the parent/partner institution. (See Sample Letter of Support on our website under the Apply section)
- A timeline that indicates when the project starts, what occurs during the school year, and closure or evaluation by April in time for the Strauss Spring Meeting.

V. PUBLIC SERVICE

Fields of study which can lead to public service and a Strauss project include (but are not limited to) the sciences, both biological and physical, engineering, agriculture, environmental management, economics, political science, and the other social sciences, English, history, and the other liberal arts and humanities, performing or fine arts, public health, public administration, business, government and education.

While the idea and implementation of the Strauss Public Service Project must originate with the student, partnership is allowed with organizations serving the public interest. These include national, international, regional, or local health organizations, environmental organizations, and non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to help disadvantaged persons to access education, health care services, or to develop viable businesses.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Disbursement of the final \$2,000 of the \$15,000 award will be released upon completion of all 7 of the responsibilities listed below. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of the final payment.

1. Maintain satisfactory academic performance (upper 1/3 of his/her class).
2. Carry out the public service project; \$13,000 of the funds will be available in June. Projects should be completed by the following April.
3. Email a bimonthly report on the status of the project to the Foundation office
 - Updates are due September 15th, November 15th, January 15th, and March 15th.
 - Include changes, updates, numbers of volunteers and people impacted and any problems or concerns that you have experienced in the two-month period.
4. Make at least one presentation on the Strauss Scholarship experience and the application process to an appropriate group at their school. Ideally, it would be in the Fall, so that potential applicants for next year have time to create a strong project.
5. Attend a scholar Meeting in October/November, preferably in person or remotely.
6. In April, attend a mandatory meeting for all Strauss Award recipients, location TBD, to make a presentation about the project: How it went, what was learned, etc. (Expenses of travel will be paid by the Foundation.)
7. Email a written assessment of the completed project to the Foundation office, one week in advance of the mandatory spring meeting in April. This summary should be limited to 2 pages, typed and 1.2-spaced.

VII. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The Foundation may withhold or terminate a scholarship due to unsatisfactory academic performance.

In very rare cases, the Board will allow a Scholar to postpone their award due to ill health or other unforeseen circumstances. This requires unanimous Board approval.

VIII. UNIVERSITY PUBLICITY

The Foundation suggests that each year the institution publicizes the Bulletin of Information for the Donald A. Strauss Awards and information about the winner(s) of the award.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 15, 2027

Deadline for Applications to be received by the Foundation
See Apply link on website for details on how to submit the application

April 2027

Winning scholars notified

May 2027

Welcome Zoom for all scholars (mandatory)

June 2027

\$13,000 of the award is available

April 2028 (date TBD)

Scholars must attend a mandatory meeting (location TBD) to present their projects.
Remaining \$2,000 of the award is given.

ACCEPTANCE AGREEMENT

By accepting this award from the Donald A. Strauss Scholarship Foundation, I agree to the following:

1. Maintain a satisfactory academic performance (upper 1/3 of my class).
2. To successfully carry out my public service project by April 15, 2027, as outlined in my project proposal that was submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees.
3. Between October-December 2026, help build awareness and promote the Strauss on my campus, such as reaching out to student groups/clubs to encourage others to apply, spreading the word via your social media, and/or making a campus presentation to an appropriate group.
4. To Follow the Strauss timeline below, including submitting bi-monthly reports and attending the April 2027 mandatory all-day meeting (travel expenses covered).

I understand that disbursement of the final \$2,000 of my \$15,000 award will be made only **upon completion of all of the above listed responsibilities.**

Signature

Date

Strauss Scholar Timeline

Bimonthly reports (below in italics) are brief one-paragraph updates to help keep the Trustees informed about the progress of your project. Please email them to admin@straussfoundation.org

- May 2027: Online Zoom video call. 1 hour video conference for scholars to introduce themselves
- *September 15 and November 1, 2027: First two bi-monthly reports*
- *January 15, 2028, and March 1, 2028: Final two bi-monthly reports*
- March 30, 2028: Year- end survey, to be completed online. Please give honest and candid feedback.
- Early April 2028: Final summary assessment of my completed project to the Board of Trustees. Limit it to two pages, typed and double-spaced, and email it to admin@straussfoundation.org
- April 2028 (exact date TBD): **mandatory all-day** meeting in Irvine, California. Each scholar must make a presentation about their project to the Board of Trustees which includes the project's objectives, what was accomplished, and what was learned in carrying out this project.