



# DELAWARE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

200 South 12th Street  
Manchester, Iowa 52057  
Phone: (563)927-4590 Ext. 3

November 19, 2025

Dear High School Guidance Counselors and Ag Teachers,

Attached is an application for high school seniors interested in a **SCHOLARSHIP** being offered by the Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Delaware Soil & Water Conservation District. Please photocopy as needed.

This scholarship may be used by Iowa high school seniors for their first year of college education. While this is a wide field and many studies qualify, preference will be given to students pursuing programs of study in conservation. Students should be sure to submit their application to the Conservation District in which they live.

The Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners will review the scholarship applications and select the leading applicant to receive a **\$500** scholarship from the Delaware Soil & Water Conservation District. This application will then be submitted to the CDI Regional Director who will choose a regional application to submit for consideration at the state level. After final selections, the top **three scholarships** will be awarded at the state level in the amounts of **\$3000, \$2000 and \$1000**. Winners from the **remaining six regions** will each receive **\$500**. First, second, and third place awards will be paid directly to the applicant's school of choice in two equal installments, one upon enrollment at the beginning of the year and the second at midterm. The six other scholarships will be paid directly to the applicant's school of choice in one installment.

Scholarship applications are judged based on the following criteria:

- **20 points** for Involvement, Leadership and Character
- **20 points** for Career
- **30 points** for Scholastic Achievement
- **30 points** for Conservation Message

Applications need to be submitted to the Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District by Friday, February 6, 2026, also available online at: <https://cdiowa.org/get-involved/scholarships/>. If the student attends school in Delaware County but lives in another county the application will need to be submitted to the Soil & Water Conservation District in which they live. CDI will inform the local SWCD by May 1, 2026 if they have an application that has been awarded a scholarship. The SWCD will in turn notify the student & school.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [sarah.kelchen@ia.nacdnet.net](mailto:sarah.kelchen@ia.nacdnet.net) or call 563-927-4590 ext. 3.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Kelchen*

Conservation Assistant



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Des Moines, IA 50312  
Phone: (515) 289-8300  
Website: [www.cdiowa.org](http://www.cdiowa.org)

*Informing, educating & guiding Iowans to conserve natural resources through our local Soil & Water Conservation Districts*

## Conservation Scholarship Application — Class of 2026

### A. Instructions

1. **Complete this form** by typing or neatly handwriting your responses in the spaces provided below.
2. **Answer the nine (9) application questions** on separate pages.
  - Your responses must not exceed **four (4) single-sided, single-spaced pages**, using a **minimum 12-point Times New Roman font** and **1-inch margins**.
3. **Attach an official school transcript** that includes your attendance record, GPA, and current class rank.
  - If your school does not provide this information, please have a school official include a note on school letterhead stating that the information is unavailable.
4. **Attach your ACT, SAT, or other standardized test scores.**
5. **Include one (1) letter of recommendation** from a teacher, school official, or employer.
  - Please do not submit more than one letter.
6. **Submit your completed application** and all required attachments to the **Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** office in the county where you reside **no later than Friday, February 6, 2026.**
  - To find your county SWCD office, visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) and select your county on the map.

### B. Applicant Information

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Planned Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

GPA\* \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Class Rank\* \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance Record\* \_\_\_\_\_

ACT, SAT, or Other Test Score\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please include documentation supporting GPA, class rank, attendance record, and standardized test scores. If your school does not provide this information, a signed note on school letterhead from a school official is required.

### C. Application Questions

Please answer the following questions on separate pages, adhering to the formatting requirements listed above.

1. List the **name, location, and dates of attendance** for all high schools you have attended.
2. List your **school extracurricular activities** and indicate any **leadership roles** you held.
3. List your **community and volunteer activities** during high school and note any **leadership roles**.
4. Describe your **career goals**. Have you identified more than one? Are they compatible? How long have you been considering this career?
  - *Only students pursuing careers in conservation or agriculture are eligible. Preference will be given to those pursuing conservation careers.*
5. What has influenced you most in choosing your potential career?
6. List your **part-time and/or summer jobs**, including the position held, employer, and location. Explain how these experiences have helped shape your career goals.
7. What are your **personal and professional goals** after completing your formal education? Please elaborate.
8. Why should you be considered for this scholarship?
9. **Essay:** What does soil and water conservation mean to you? (400–600 words) – note: **Essays determined to have been written using artificial intelligence software will be disqualified.**

### D. Questions?

For assistance, please contact: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI)

Email: [admin@cdiowa.org](mailto:admin@cdiowa.org) Phone: (515) 289-8300

# 2026 Conservation Scholarships

## RULES

### Introduction

The Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI), in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), is proud to support the higher education goals of Iowa students who are passionate about conservation and agriculture.

High school seniors graduating in Iowa's Class of 2026 who plan to pursue a program of study in any field related to conservation or agriculture are eligible to apply for the CDI Conservation Scholarship.

While a wide range of studies qualify, preference will be given to students pursuing degrees directly related to conservation and/or agriculture. Scholarship funds must be used toward the recipient's first year of college education.

### 2026 Application & Instructions

Please note: **The 2026 scholarship application form has been updated.**

Previous versions will **not** be accepted.

Applicants should read and follow all instructions carefully, as incomplete or incorrectly filled-out applications will be disqualified. Pay close attention to submission deadlines—late applications will not be considered.

The official application form is available at: <http://www.cdiowa.org/>

### Application Process & Deadlines

- **November 2025:** Participating SWCDs begin promoting the 2026 Conservation Scholarship.
- **Friday, February 6, 2026:** Applicants must submit completed applications to their county SWCD office (based on county of residence). To find your local office, visit the [USDA Service Center Locator](#) and select your county on the map.
- **Friday, March 13, 2026:** Each SWCD selects one county winner to forward to their CDI Regional Director.
- **Friday, March 27, 2026:** The Regional Director selects one regional winner to advance to the state-level competition.
- **Friday, April 3, 2026:** A panel of CDI Officers and members of the CDI Scholarship Committee reviews regional finalists and selects state winners.
- **Friday, May 1, 2026:** CDI notifies local SWCD offices of the winning applicants. Local offices will then contact the student, their school, and local media with results.

**No applications will be considered if submitted after these deadlines.**

## **Awards**

Following the final selection process, the top three state-level scholarships will be awarded as follows:

- **1st Place:** \$3,000
- **2nd Place:** \$2,000
- **3rd Place:** \$1,000

Winners from the remaining six CDI regions will each receive a **\$500 regional scholarship**.

### **Payment Details:**

- The top three state awards will be paid directly to the recipient's college or university in two equal installments: one at enrollment and one at midterm.
- Regional awards (\$500) will be paid in one installment directly to the recipient's school.

## **Selection Criteria**

Scholarship applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- **Involvement, Leadership & Character** – 20 points
- **Career Choice** – 20 points
- **Scholastic Achievement** – 30 points
- **Conservation Message** – 30 points