

Facts about South Carolina Scholarships

by J. Abigail Donevant, CFP®

Higher education costs may be topmost in the minds of some families with graduation season approaching and high school students applying for college. Tuition costs for higher education are rapidly increasing each year. South Carolina offers merit-based scholarships that can help with tuition costs. These merit-based scholarships, administered by the SC Commission on Higher Education, are the LIFE Scholarship, the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, and the South Carolina HOPE Scholarship. Each Scholarship has certain eligibility requirements.

To be eligible for any of the South Carolina scholarships and grants, students have to be a South Carolina resident and a citizen of the United States. The student must also be enrolled at an eligible South Carolina public or independent institution, cannot owe a refund or repayment on any State or Federal financial aid, and not be in default on a Federal Student loan. Also, the student cannot be convicted of any felonies or any alcohol or drug-related misdemeanors within the past academic year.

Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship offers up to \$6,700 to freshmen during the first year of college enrollment. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors may receive up to \$7,500 per year. Students can receive the Scholarship for all 4 years while working on their first bachelor's degree. To be eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, students must score at least 1200 on the SAT (27 on the ACT), earn a 3.5 GPA, and rank in the top six percent of their class or score at least 1400 on the SAT (32 on the ACT) and earn a minimum 4.0 cumulative GPA. The SAT score is based solely on the Math and Critical Reading scores. In order for students to receive the Scholarship, they must apply. If students meet the requirements, the high school guidance counselor can help.

LIFE Scholarship

The LIFE Scholarship offers up to \$5,000 each academic year toward the cost of attendance at an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina. Students

can receive the LIFE Scholarship for four years while working on their first bachelor's degree. To be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship, students have to meet two of three criteria: (1) earn a 3.0 GPA, (2) rank in the top 30% of their graduating class, or (3) score at least 1100 on the SAT (24 on the ACT) by combining the Math and Critical Reading scores.

The LIFE Scholarship also provides tuition costs each academic year at an eligible technical college in SC. Students have to graduate from high school with at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA to be eligible.

Students do not need to fill out an application for the LIFE scholarship. The eligible institution will notify students if they qualify for the scholarship.

The Palmetto Fellows and LIFE Scholarships also offer an Enhancement Scholarship. The Enhancement Scholarship provides up to an additional \$2,500, beginning in the student's sophomore year. The Enhancement Scholarship is offered to students majoring in science and mathematics. To receive the Enhancement Scholarship, the student has to receive either the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, earn at least 14 credit hours of instruction in approved mathematics or life and physical science (or a combination of both by the end of the first year of college), and declare an approved major in science or mathematics.

SC Hope Scholarship

The SC Hope Scholarship is a one-year merit-based scholarship for freshmen attending an eligible four-year institution in SC. The SC HOPE Scholarship provides up to \$2,800 toward the cost of attendance for one year. To be eligible, students must have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA, be a SC resident at the time of high school graduation and college enrollment, and not be a recipient of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, the LIFE Scholarship, or Lottery tuition assistance. Like the LIFE Scholarship, there is no separate application required for the SC Hope Scholarship. The eligible institution will notify students if they qualify.



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Students can be recipients of only the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship, LIFE Scholarship or SC Hope Scholarship within the same academic year.

Tuition costs for college are continuing to increase each year. South Carolina offers some scholarships that can help students with the cost of tuition. Learn more about the scholarships and grants offered by South Carolina from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education website (www.che.sc.gov).

