

# **MARGARET M. BROWN SCHOLARSHIP FUND OF THE FLORIDA SWIMS FOUNDATION 2026-2027 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

## **PURPOSE**

The Florida Swimming Pool Association, through Florida Swims Foundation, has established a Scholarship Fund to honor and further the education of persons selected by the Scholarship Selection Committee pursuant to the following criteria. Dependents planning to attend vocational school, college, or university may apply.

The award is presented by the Florida Swims Foundation. Funding for the program comes from the Florida Swimming Pool Association, the Florida Swims Foundation, FSPA members, and programs like the Scholarship Stride in memory of Brian Kelly. Scholarship awards range from \$500 to more than \$1,500+ based on the applicant's academics, letters of recommendation, extracurricular activities, research paper and essay.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Residency**

The applicant must be a dependent of an owner or employee who, for two or more years, has been employed by a Florida Swimming Pool Association member company, the FSPA state office, or a FSPA Chapter. The member company must be in good standing with annual dues paid in full for that branch/location if multiple locations exist. The applicant must be sponsored by that member company.

### **Scholastic Standing** - *First time applicants*

Applicants applying as entering freshman must have been accepted as a full-time student, as defined by that institution, at a regionally accredited college, community college, or trade school and must have maintained a scholastic grade point average 3.0 (2.5 for trade school) or better for the two (2) years of high school study preceding their application. If a first-time applicant is currently enrolled, he/she must have carried a minimum of ten (10) hours credit or equivalent and have maintained a cumulative 3.0 grade point average or equivalent.

### **Scholastic Standing** - *Applicants who have previously received a scholarship*

Applicants who have previously received a scholarship must have carried a minimum of ten (10) credit hours (or full time equivalent in post-graduate or trade school programs) and have maintained a cumulative 2.67 grade point average.

All applicants shall provide documentation of the institution's letter grade equivalency for any grade point averages submitted.

## **APPLICATIONS**

All applications and other required materials must be received at the Florida Swimming Pool Association office by the close of business on June 30, 2026 (not just postmarked) in order to be considered for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The items on the following page must be received in addition to the application in order to complete the application process and be considered for an award.

### **Letters of Recommendation**

First-time applicants (applicants who have not previously been awarded a scholarship), must furnish three (3) letters of recommendation (2 letters for Trade School). Letters should address the student's scholastic ability, character, and worthiness to receive a merit award and be from at least two of the following: (a) a professor or teacher; (b) an employer; (c) an advisor from a volunteer or extracurricular activity; (d) a coach from a sport in which you were an athlete, or (e) your FSPA sponsoring company.

Letters of recommendation should be sent directly to the Florida Swims Foundation by the author or in a sealed envelope signed by the author over the seal or e-mailed directly from the author to [valerie@FSPA.com](mailto:valerie@FSPA.com). All letters must be received by June 30, 2026 (not just postmarked) or the application is considered incomplete and will not be reviewed by the selection committee.

### **Transcripts and Test Scores**

Entering freshmen (high school graduate as of June 30): A certified copy of the student's transcript for the preceding two (2) years of high school and copies of the SAT / ACT or other generally accepted testing service scores (SAT / ACT not required for Trade School).

Sophomore (freshman year completed as of June 30): A certified copy of the student's college / trade school spring semester grades must be included. If the applicant is not a previous recipient of this scholarship, also include a certified copy of high school transcript and copies of the student's SAT / ACT or other generally accepted testing service scores (SAT/ACT not required for Trade School).

All others: A copy of the student's college / trade school transcript(s), including spring semester grades, must be included.

Transcripts must be received or uploaded no later than June 30, 2026 (not just postmarked) or the application is considered incomplete and will not be reviewed by the selection committee.

### **Research Paper**

All college first-time applicants and college applicants who have not previously been awarded a scholarship, shall complete a research paper on "The Purpose of a Trade Association". The paper must be 700-1,500 words, word document, submitted in typed form and double spaced, with references and a bibliography.

The research paper is optional for previous scholarship award recipients. Applicants who do not submit a research paper will be limited to an award of less than \$1,000. To be considered for an award greater than \$1,000, the applicant must complete the research paper and have a minimum GPA of 2.8. Please note: Submitting a research paper does not guarantee scholarship award will exceed \$1,000. Please see the approved topic list for previous recipient research papers within the application system.

### **Brief Essay** (250-300 words)

All applicants must write a brief essay which must be uploaded in online application.

Essay Topic: Over the next five to seven years, what are your goals? Discuss personal, volunteer/community engagement, educational, and professional goals.

## **AWARDS**

The Scholarship Selection Committee shall base its awards upon scholastic achievement, character and worthiness.

Awards shall be transmitted to the academic institution for the fall semester of study. Failure to request the funds within 45 days of the announcement of the awards may be grounds for forfeiture of the award. Any excess award funds must be returned to the Florida Swims Foundation within the year received. Awards will not be transmitted until the sponsor company has renewed their membership for 2026-2027.

The Scholarship Selection Committee may require first-time award recipient to attend a designated Florida Swimming Pool Association Board of Directors meeting to receive his or her award.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>All materials must be received in the FSPA office by 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 2026.</b></p>
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# 2026 RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS

Applicants may answer any or all parts of the question in their research paper.

Papers will be reviewed based on quality, length and content.

## ALL FIRST TIME APPLICANTS and APPLICANTS WHO HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN AWARDED A FSPA SCHOLARSHIP (no matter the level of study)

1. What is the purpose of a trade association and their role in American business? If you were a new business owner and joined the FSPA, what membership benefits would most appeal to you and why? How would you integrate those benefits into your daily operations, and to what positive outcomes? Provide a strategy to communicate the benefits of membership in a trade association.

## PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS

1. Communication and information is in high demand! As a pool builder in a business where scheduling workers and subcontractors is based on many factors, including weather delays, how would you effectively and efficiently keep customers informed?
2. Maintaining a strong workforce is a cornerstone of a successful business. As companies see an increase in business and a decrease in available workforce, how can they overcome staffing challenges? What can FSPA do to be part of a solution to workforce shortages?
3. What are the current trends in homeowners creating a "backyard environment" and how are these trends affecting the pool and spa industry in Florida? Explore ways which the FSPA can assist members in fulfilling expectations and needs of their clients regarding this trend.

## ALL PAPERS

- PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED TYPED AND DOUBLE SPACED - Submit in Microsoft Word
- MINIMUM OF THREE (3) REFERENCES, INCLUDING ONE PRIMARY SOURCE (LIVE INTERVIEW).
- MUST BE BETWEEN 700 - 1,500 WORDS. PAPERS WILL BE REVIEWED FOR CONTENT AND QUALITY.
- BIBLIOGRAPHY MUST BE INCLUDED

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## Applicant Summary for Submission

### Trade School:

- Dependent of member company's employee who has worked there for at least two years
- 2.5 GPA for last two years of H.S.
- Transcripts
- 2 Letters of Recommendation
- Full time student when enter trade school
- Essay required (no research paper option)
- Awards of \$500-\$1,500

### College – Previous Recipient:

- Dependent of member company's employee who has worked there for at least two years
- 2.67 GPA or higher
- Transcripts
- Full time student
- Essay
- Awards of \$500-\$1,000
- To be eligible for more than \$1,000:
  - o Research Paper
  - o 2.8 GPA or higher

### College – First Time Applicant:

- Dependent of member company's employee who has worked there for at least two years
- 3.0 GPA for last two years of H.S.
- Transcripts
- SAT / ACT score
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Full time student when entering school
- Essay
- Research Paper
- Awards of \$500-\$1,500

Questions? (941) 952-9293 or e-mail Valerie@FSPA.com