



2025 Scholarship Guidelines and Application

I. General Overview

Slate Belt Rising (SBR) may at its discretion, award scholarship grants (\$1000) on behalf of individuals (paid directly to qualified educational institutions or for the purchase of tools), which grants may be used exclusively for tuition at post-secondary educational institutions that normally maintain a regular faculty and curriculum, and for fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for courses at such institutions, for room and board expenses payable to the institution, or the purchase of tools for a student entering the workforce in a trade. Scholarship grants will usually be administered through scholarship funds as allocated through the Slate Belt Rising Neighborhood Partnership Program. The Slate Belt, Rising Community Engagement Committee, will approve all scholarship programs established by such Scholarship Funds in advance of any solicitation of applications. The Steering Committee will make the ultimate decision regarding scholarship award distributions. Grants will be awarded for one year.

II. Scholarship Selection Process

A. Criteria for Selection

The Slate Belt Rising Scholarship selection process is designed to be objective, fair, and aligned with the organization's mission of supporting educational and career advancement for Slate Belt residents. The selection process and criteria are as follows:

Application Review Process

1. Initial Review

All applications are first reviewed by the Slate Belt Rising Director to ensure they are complete. Incomplete applications may be corrected by the applicant, but all corrections must be received by the application deadline. Applications that remain incomplete after the deadline will not be considered.

2. Subcommittee Review

Completed applications are provided to a subcommittee of Slate Belt Rising for evaluation. Members of the subcommittee independently score each application based on a prepared scoring rubric. This rubric evaluates key criteria, including academic performance, volunteer experience, leadership involvement, financial need, and letters of recommendation.

3. Score Calculation and Recommendation

The subcommittee calculates and averages the scores for each applicant and provides their recommendations to the Slate Belt Rising Steering Committee.

4. Final Decision

The Slate Belt Rising Steering Committee reviews the recommendations and makes the final decisions regarding scholarship awards.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following objective and nondiscriminatory criteria:

1. Academic Performance

Demonstrated through GPA, transcripts, and academic awards.

2. Volunteer Experience

Evaluated based on the extent, impact, and relevance of the applicant's community service and volunteer work, particularly within the Slate Belt region.

3. Membership and Leadership

Consideration of participation and leadership roles in clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities.

4. Financial Need

Assessed using demographic information and indicators of economic hardship.

5. Letters of Recommendation

Evaluated for insight into the applicant's character, motivation, and alignment with Slate Belt Rising's mission.

6. Essay/Personal Statement

Reviewed for clarity, originality, and alignment with Slate Belt Rising's mission.

B. Selection Committee

The Steering Committee will act as the selection committee and will have ultimate approval authority over final scholarship award recipients.

C. Nondiscriminatory Policy

Slate Belt Rising is committed to providing equal opportunities for all applicants. The scholarship selection process is conducted without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. All decisions are based solely on the applicant's qualifications and merit.

III. Solicitation of Applicants

Application forms shall be distributed by counselors and other administrators at the Bangor Area, Pen Argyl School Districts and the Career Institute of Technology. Slate Belt Rising will also work with Families First and Slater Family Network to identify eligible applicants.

IV. Notification of Scholarship Recipients

SBR scholarship recipients shall be notified after the Steering Committee has approved the scholarship award recipients. Notification can be given either by the SBR Director or by a representative of the Committee. The SBR Director will notify each scholarship recipient with a formal letter, specifying that all awarded funds must be used exclusively for tuition at post-secondary educational institutions with a regular faculty and curriculum, as well as for fees, books, supplies, equipment required for coursework, or room and board expenses payable directly to the institution. The letter shall inform the student that no funds may be disbursed until SBR receives confirmation that the student is enrolled in the educational institution in the form of their student ID number. At that time, the funds shall be disbursed to the school for the student's benefit.

V. Supervision of Grants

Slate Belt Rising shall send scholarship checks directly to the educational institution selected by the recipient and instruct the institution to deposit the check into the recipient's school account.

VI. Record Keeping

Slate Belt Rising maintains secure digital records for all scholarship applications and awards, ensuring transparency and accountability. Records include a complete copy of each submitted application, supporting materials (letters of recommendation, transcripts, and activity records), recipient-specific information such as student ID numbers, award notification letters, and demographic details. Payment-related documentation, including invoices, payment confirmations, and school payment details, is also retained. All documents submitted in paper form are scanned and uploaded to a secure digital system. Computer files are stored following best practices for data security and are accessible only to authorized personnel.

VII. Investigation and Enforcement Procedures

In the unlikely event that any individual causes the misuse of scholarship award funds, the Program will pursue the following investigation and enforcement measures.

It is the policy of SBR to require the educational institutions that have received funds on behalf of the scholarship recipients to return unused funds to SBR if the student transfers or otherwise ceases to be enrolled at the institution or if the funds cannot be used on behalf of the student for academic purposes or for room and board expenses payable to the institution. Slate Belt Rising requires that the scholarship recipient notify SBR if they transfer or otherwise cease to be enrolled at the institution or if the funds cannot be used on behalf of the student for academic purposes or for room and board expenses payable to the institution. Slate Belt Rising does not intend that scholarship awards be made available directly to students.

Qualifications

The Slate Belt Rising Scholarship Program was created to provide students the opportunity to further their education and help defray the cost of post-secondary education. To apply for this scholarship, the candidate must:

1. Be a high school senior who has been accepted at a four-year university/college, community college, or technical school or is entering the workforce in a trade; an adult who is continuing their education. **Applicants must reside within the geographical boundaries of either the Bangor or Pen Argyl Area School District.**
2. Have a grade point average of 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale).
3. Have verifiable volunteer experience within the past two years.
4. Have membership and/or leadership experience in clubs and organizations.

Slate Belt Rising Scholarship Program
APPLICATION FORM

Name of Student: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Birth Date: _____ GPA: _____

Personal E-mail: _____

Parental E-mail: _____

Which college/university/technical school will you attend? _____

Field of Study: _____

Anticipated Date of Graduation? _____

Have you secured employment in a trade? If so, provide the company name and contact information.

List any awards and/or scholarships you have received. (You may attach info on a separate sheet as necessary)

List any volunteer experiences over the past two years. (include name of organization and phone number)

Describe your membership and/or leadership experience in clubs and other organizations.

Personal Statement Section

Instructions for Applicants: On a separate sheet, please write a personal statement of 250-500 words that answers one of the following prompts. Be sure to include specific examples and experiences to illustrate your points.

Prompt Options:

Option 1: Community Impact

Slate Belt Rising is dedicated to improving the Slate Belt region by fostering comprehensive community and economic development. How have you contributed to your community through volunteer work, leadership roles, or other activities? How do you plan to use your education or career to positively impact the Slate Belt community in the future?

Option 2: Overcoming Challenges

Share a challenge you have faced and how you overcame it. How has this experience shaped your goals and aspirations? How will receiving this scholarship help you achieve them?

Option 3: Vision for the Future

Describe your future career goals and how they align with your field of study. How will receiving this scholarship support your journey, and how do you hope to give back to the community or others once you achieve your goals?

Scholarship Recipient Demographic Questionnaire

Slate Belt Rising, a program of Community Action Lehigh Valley (CALV), is funded by various grants and private sources. To comply with our funding obligations, CALV is required to provide demographic information about service recipients. Your demographic information is crucial for us to continue providing these scholarships. All personally identifiable information you provide is kept strictly confidential, stored in locked program files, and entered into a secure database hosted in the Microsoft Azure Cloud by Eccovia Solutions, ensuring the highest levels of security, privacy, and data storage compliance.

Part I: Student Information

Student Race:

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Other
- Multi-Racial

Student Ethnicity:

- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
- Non-Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin

Does the student receive Free or Reduced Lunch?

- Yes
- No

Will you be the first in your family to go to college?

- Yes
- No

PART II: Household Information

Household Size:

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 or more

Source of Household Income:

- Income from employment only
- Income from employment and other income sources
- Income from employment, other income sources and non-cash benefits
- Income from employment and non-cash benefits
- Other income source only
- Other income source and non-cash benefits
- No income
- Non-cash benefits only

Types of Household Income (select all that apply):

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)
- VA Service-Connected Disability Compensation
- VA Non-Service-Connected Disability Pension
- Private Disability Insurance
- Worker's Compensation
- Retirement Income from Social Security
- Pension
- Child Support
- Alimony or other Spousal Support
- Unemployment Insurance
- EITC
- Other

Types of Non-Cash Benefits (select all that apply):

- SNAP
- WIC
- LIHEAP
- Housing Choice Voucher
- Public Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- HUD-VASH
- Childcare Voucher
- Affordable Care Act Subsidy
- Other

Which of the following best describes the household income last year?

- \$0-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000+
- Prefer not to answer

Certification of Accuracy

I certify that the information provided in this application, including the demographic information section, is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

_____ (Initials)

PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE FORM

I hereby consent and authorize CALV, including its programs (Slate Belt Rising) and subsidiaries, permission to use my likeness in a photograph, video, and/or audio clip in any and all of its publications, including but not limited to CALV's printed and digital publications and social media channels.

I hereby authorize CALV to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute this photograph, video, and/or audio clip for purposes of publicizing CALV's programs or for any other related, lawful purpose. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears.

I acknowledge that since my participation is voluntary, I will receive no financial compensation. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising out of, or related to, the use of the photograph/video/audio.

The undersigned does hereby release CALV, its successors or assigns from any liability, responsibility, damages, claims, and suits of right-of-action resulting from the reproduction of the undersigned's photographic likeness. If I do not wish to be photographed, I will notify CALV staff immediately upon being awarded a scholarship.

I hereby represent that I am the parent/legal guardian or have authorization from the parent/legal guardian of the minor. I hereby release, discharge, waive and relinquish all claims, liabilities and damages the minor may sustain from bodily injury, personal injury, or property damage and hold harmless Community Action Lehigh Valley (CALV), its programs, its officers, directors, employees, and agents.

_____ (*please initial*)

This waiver is valid one year post signature date.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Guardian if under 18: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name of Guardian: _____

Guardian's Email Address: _____

Guardian's Telephone Number: _____

Please attach the following items to this application form:

1. 250-500 word Personal Statement
2. Two letters of reference (one from a volunteer experience).
3. An official school transcript.
4. Signed Photographic Release Form. The applicant must sign this form and a parent/guardian if under the age of 18. If awarded a scholarship, each recipient is asked to submit a headshot.

For consideration, please return the completed application by **Friday, March 28, 2025**, via email (preferred) or by mail. **Applications submitted by email must be sent as .PDF files only.**

Email to:

Brian Fenstermaker, SBR Director
bfenstermaker@caclv.org

Mail/Drop Off:

Slate Belt Rising
197 Pennsylvania Avenue
Bangor, PA 18013

Applicants Signature: _____

Date: _____

Incomplete applications or those emailed in the incorrect file format will not be considered until errors are corrected. Corrections must be completed prior to the deadline date stated above.