Education Justice Project

Education Justice Project Scholarship Packet
Due November 15, 2026

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in applying for an EJP scholarship. Because the application process is competitive, we ask that you carefully review the instructions, deadlines, and eligibility requirements so that we may give your application full consideration. **We appreciate receiving your application and look forward to reading your essay.** This scholarship application packet is also available at: www.educationjustice.net

About the EJP Scholarship Program

The Education Justice Project (EJP) of the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign has offered courses to incarcerated students at Danville Correctional Center since 2008. In keeping with our commitment to promote higher education, we have a scholarship program. In Fall 2026, we will host the following six scholarships competitions:

- One $1,000 scholarship to a family member of an EJP student.
- One $1,000 scholarship to a family member of an IDOC or IDJJ staff person.
- One $1,000 scholarship to a family member of an incarcerated individual.
- Two $1,000 scholarships to individuals who have been released from an IDOC adult facility.
- One $1,000 scholarship to an individual who has been released from an IDJJ juvenile facility.
- Two $1,000 scholarships to a currently incarcerated individual in IDOC custody.

Scholarship funds must be applied towards attendance at an accredited program of higher education ***or*** a program that provides certification for further enrichment (e.g., applied to registration costs, books and supplies, fees, or other costs directly associated with participating in a higher education program). **This scholarship cannot be used for free educational programs offered at IDOC facilities.**

Your final application will consist of the following materials:

1. The application form completed and signed.
2. A 500-word essay that addresses how incarceration has affected your academic or career goals (does not need to be typed).
3. Verification of enrollment in a higher education program at an accredited academic institution ***or*** a program that provides certification for further enrichment.

Please submit all materials by November 15, 2026, to:

Attn: Scholarships
Education Justice Project
1001 S. Wright St.
Champaign, IL 61820

For questions about EJP scholarships, please contact scholarships@educationjustice.net

For general inquiries, please contact EJP at info@educationjustice.net or 217-300-5150.

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INSTRUCTION SHEET

Eligibility Requirements

Each of our scholarship competitions has its own criteria. Please read carefully.

- **Formerly Incarcerated Individual released from an adult IDOC facility**. To be eligible, you must have been incarcerated in an adult IDOC facility. Please provide IDOC#, and dates of incarceration.
- **Formerly Incarcerated Individual released from a juvenile IDOC facility**. To be eligible, you must have been incarcerated in a juvenile IDJJ facility. Please provide IDJJ#, and dates of incarceration.
- **Family member of EJP student**. To qualify, you must be a family member of a current or former EJP student. "Family member" is defined as spouse, grandparent, step grandparent, grandchild, step grandchild, parent or guardian, stepparent, child, stepchild, niece, nephew, or the parent of an incarcerated individual's child(ren).
- **Family member of IDOC or IDJJ staff**. To be eligible, you must be a family member of a current employee in an IDOC or IDJJ facility. "Family member" is defined as spouse, grandparent, step grandparent, grandchild, step grandchild, parent or guardian, stepparent, child, stepchild, niece, nephew, or the parent of an incarcerated individual's child(ren).
- **Family member of an incarcerated individual**. To be eligible, you must be the family member of someone who is currently incarcerated in an adult IDOC facility. "Family member" is defined as spouse, grandparent, step grandparent, grandchild, step grandchild, parent or guardian, stepparent, child, stepchild, niece, nephew, or the parent of an incarcerated individual's child(ren).
- **Currently incarcerated individual**. To be eligible, you must be currently locked up in an IL state facility and able to provide your IDOC #.

Instructions for Applying

- Complete and sign the application form.
- Submit a 500-word essay that addresses how incarceration has affected your academic or career goals.

- Include a verification of enrollment at an accredited academic institution ***or*** a program that provides certification for further enrichment.
- **This scholarship cannot be used for free educational programs offered at IDOC facilities.**

Selection Process

Each application will be reviewed by the EJP Scholarship Committee. The committee members will review applications blind. In other words, they will not know whose applications they are reviewing. This is to ensure a fair selection process. The criteria for awarding the scholarship are financial need and the strength of the essay. **EJP alumni will receive preference for one of the two scholarships awarded to formerly incarcerated individuals.**

Notification

After your application packet has been received, EJP will send an email to confirm its receipt. EJP anticipates making decisions in late December 2026 and will notify all applicants of their status. Always, feel free to contact the scholarship program at scholarships@educationjustice.net.

What You Are Agreeing to By Signing the Application Form

- The information provided in the application is accurate and truthful.
- If awarded a scholarship you will complete a one-page essay describing how the funds were used before December 31, 2026.
- You are willing to consider participating in a scholarship award ceremony and are willing to consider EJP using your photograph or excerpts from your essay within its publications, website, or social media account.
- Acknowledgment that EJP would like to stay connected to its scholarship applicants and appreciates the ability to contact participants annually.
- If awarded a scholarship, you will contact EJP immediately if you withdraw from your educational program and reimburse EJP an appropriate portion of the award.

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APPLICATION FORM

Applicant's Name

_____

Applicant's Address

_____

Applicant's Email

_____

Applicant's Phone

_____

Year in School (e.g.: freshman, high school senior, graduate student)

_____

Academic Major or Area of Study

_____

Select the category for which you would like to be considered and complete the required information for that choice:

___ Formerly Incarcerated Individual (adult IDOC)
IDOC # _____ Years incarcerated _____ to _____

___ Formerly Incarcerated Individual (juvenile IDJJ)
IDJJ # _____ Years incarcerated _____ to _____

___ Family member of an EJP student
Name of EJP student _____
Relationship to you _____

____ Family member of an incarcerated individual
Name of incarcerated person _____
IDOC# of incarcerated person _____
Relationship to you _____

____ Family member of IDOC or IDJJ staff
Name of staff member _____
Facility of employment _____

____ Currently incarcerated individual
IDOC # _____
Facility _____

Name of academic program to which funds would be applied. Please name the university, college, or trade school and the specific program, if applicable.

You must provide verification of enrollment in the program. Acceptable forms of verification include a copy of your letter of acceptance, course registration confirmation, recent transcript, or correspondence sent to all enrolled students. If you have not yet been accepted to the program, we will require confirmation of acceptance before dispersing any funds. EJP reserves the right to rescind the award if such confirmation is not forthcoming in a timely manner.

By signing this application form, you agree that any funds received will be applied towards attendance at an accredited program of higher education ***or*** a program that provides certification for further enrichment in 2026 and to write a 1-page letter explaining how you used the funds. Currently incarcerated individuals can use the funds to pay off student debt. This letter is due before December 31, 2026. You also agree to notify EJP immediately in the event of disenrollment.

Please note, scholarship funds are considered taxable income.

Applicant Signature

_____

Date

_____

Please be sure your application is complete. The application should include the completed and signed application form, a 500-word essay, and verification of enrollment in an accredited academic program or a program that provides certification for further enrichment.

Please submit materials by November 15, 2026, to:

Attn: SCHOLARSHIPS
Education Justice Project
1001 S. Wright St.
Champaign, IL 61820

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