OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

A PROGRAM OF THEDREAM.US

Opportunity Scholarship Program Guide

2024-2025

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TheDream.US is more than a scholarship; it is a community of people committed to supporting your college and career success.

You are a part of a community of over 10,000 Scholars and Alumni across the country. This handbook serves as a reference manual for Opportunity Award recipients. We expect you to review the contents, as the materials provide information you need to be a successful and full participant in our scholarship program.

This guide will help you understand how to receive and manage your award. Please note, this guide is subject to change. Check the Scholar Hub for the most recent version.

To quickly find answers to your questions:

- Use the Table of Contents on the next page to navigate the Guide - just click on the topic to go to that page.
- If you do not see what you need in the Table of Contents – do a word search.
- If the answer to your question is not found in the Guide - reach out and ask about TheDream.US Opportunity Scholarship Program:

  askus@thedream.us

Pay attention to marked **tips** and **important information** sprinkled throughout the guide.

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As a Scholar of TheDream.US,

I pledge to:

Believe in my future and myself.

Commit to enroll and persevere in college.

Commit to support other undocumented students who want to go to college.

Commit to graduate, find a meaningful career, and contribute to the social and economic prosperity of this country.

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Your Scholar Commitments

As a Scholar of TheDream.US, I commit to:

Believe in my future and myself.

- [ ] I will thank the donors who have made it possible for me to go to college by sending a thank you letter to:

  TheDream.US
  P.O. Box 6348
  Wilmington, DE 19804

Enroll in college.

- [ ] I will enroll in my Partner College and maintain full-time status, regular attendance, and a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better.
- [ ] I will renew or decline my Scholarship each summer before the deadline.
- [ ] I understand that if my cumulative GPA falls below a 2.0, my renewal will be denied and I will lose my scholarship.
- [ ] I will join the Scholar Facebook Community and ensure that I receive and read emails and text messages from TheDream.US. I will not unsubscribe or opt out of any communications from TheDream.US.

Stay in college and prepare for my career.

- [ ] I will build and maintain a relationship with my Scholar Advisor by checking-in at least once per term to review my progress towards graduation.
- [ ] If my GPA falls below a 2.5 or I am not able to maintain full-time status, I will meet with my Scholar Advisor to help me develop a plan to stay on track to complete my degree.
- [ ] If I am struggling, I will work with my Scholar Advisor to get the resources I need.
- [ ] I will participate in at least one career development opportunity each year to prepare for my career.

Graduate, find a meaningful career, and contribute to the social and economic prosperity of this country.

- [ ] I will take advantage of career resources and stay connected through the Alumni Survey every year.
- [ ] I will keep TheDream.US Scholarship Program informed as to how I have used my education to help others and myself.

"Pay it forward" by supporting other undocumented students who want to go to college.

- [ ] I will complete 10 hours of community service per term by supporting and mentoring Undocumented students at my college or in the community.
- [ ] I will support and help improve TheDream.US Program by providing feedback through surveys and helping promote the Scholarship program.

Meet Your Support System

Introduction to Your Scholar Advisor

Your college has designated a Scholar Advisor to work with you and your fellow Scholars. You will not be alone!
We require that you meet with your Scholar Advisor at least once per term.

See our Scholar PC Directory to find your Advisor's contact information.

Introduction to Your Financial Aid Advisor

Your college has also designated a Financial Aid Advisor to assist you in applying to all aid available to you and answer questions related to paying for your education.

See our Scholar PC Directory to find your Financial Advisor's contact information.

Introduction to ISTS

We contract with International Scholarship and Tuition Services, Inc. (ISTS) to manage our scholarshp award payment and renewal processes. The ISTS Program Support team is there to answer your questions about your ISTS Scholar Portal and the renewal form.

TheDream.US@applyISTS.com
1-(855) 376-7076

> "We may not see a clear path to the future yet, but we know we have great strength inside us, and great friends at our back."
>
> INDIRA, GRADUATE, DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Where To Go For What

Your ISTS Scholar Portal

- Update your email address and cell phone number
- Scholar status and application ID
- Maximum Award
- Total amount used so far and amount remaining
- Date and amount of last payments
- Determine your renewal status

Login

Your Website Scholar Hub

- Your Scholarship Program Guide
- Your Partner College Directory
- Latest News/Emails
- Scholar Resources (adacemic success, Career Connections, immigration, etc.)
- Graduate Loan Scholarship

Scholar Hub

ISTS Program Support

- To manage your Award
- Get help if you have trouble accessing your ISTS Scholar Portal
- Get help with your Renewal form (returning Scholars)

TheDream.US@applyISTS.com

1-(855) 376-7076

Your Facebook Community

- Private, closed
- Connect with Scholars and Alumni around the country
- Ask questions and get answers
- Share important events/announcements
- Get together on campus
- Help and support each other

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Managing Your Award

How do I track my award?

You can track your award in your ISTS Scholar Portal. Your Scholar Portal will give you the important information you need about your scholarship including:

- The **maximum award** *(the total amount you can receive)*
- The amount you have used
- Your most recent payment
- The amount you have remaining

When will I receive my award?

We calculate and pay your award each term. We will send your award to your college no later than the middle of each term you are enrolled.

Log in to your ISTS Scholar Portal at the beginning and end of each term to get up to date information on your award. Bookmark this link: Dream.applyISTS.net/

How much is my award?

The amount of your annual award will be **up to $20,000 per year** for tuition, fees, and on-campus housing **(required)** and meals at your Partner College. We expect you to apply for other available financial aid and actively seek other scholarships and grants to help cover the other costs of attendance (e.g., books, supplies, transportation and personal expenses). You must be living on-campus to receive scholarships funds.

We expect you to apply for other available financial aid.

Maximum Award for Opportunity Scholarship Recipients:

You are eligible to receive **up to $80,000** for tuition, fees, and on-campus housing **(required)** and meals which can be used over a four-year period for a bachelor's degree.

What do I need to do to receive my award each term?

You do not need to take any action! At the beginning of each term your Partner College and ISTS will take these steps:

- ☐ Your Partner College will confirm your enrollment and will put a note on your account, so your classes are not dropped;
- ☐ ISTS will calculate your award amount and send the funds to your Partner College; and
- ☐ Your Partner College will deposit the money into your student account.

Check your ISTS Scholar Portal to see if you have received your award. If your Portal shows that the award has been sent but it is not yet applied to your account, reach out to your Scholar or Financial Aid Advisor.

Managing Your Award *(continued)*

What types of expenses will my award cover?

You can use your award for:

- **Your tuition** for the academic year;
- **Mandatory fees** for the academic year (such as Athletic Fee, Technology Fee, Student Activity Fee, etc. This does not include lab fees or fees for health insurance plans); and
- **On-campus housing and meals for the academic year (required).**

What is not covered?

You cannot use your award for:

- **Off-campus housing (not allowed);**
- **Books, transportation, supplies, or personal costs;**
- **Costs incurred before you received your award;**
- **Any additional costs like "lab fees" for majors like aviation, etc.;**
- **Courses that do not count toward your degree (including remedial or developmental courses).**
- **Summer courses; or**
- **Additional courses required for a minor or a double major**

What do I do if my cumulative GPA falls below a 2.5?

If your cumulative GPA falls below a 2.5, you will not lose your scholarship. We do require that you work with your Scholar Advisor to develop a plan with strategies and resources that will help you improve your GPA. This plan might include an increase in the frequency of meetings and communications with your Scholar Advisor; tutoring; study groups; or other support services. You do not need to notify or reach out to TheDream.US or ISTS.

If your cumulative GPA is below a 2.5 at the time you renew your scholarship, you will be asked to explain what actions you are taking to raise your GPA.

If your cumulative GPA is below a 2.0 when you renew your scholarship, you will lose your scholarship.

What happens if I fail or drop a class?

If you fail or drop a class and need to retake it, you do not have to reimburse us for the costs of those classes. The amount paid for those classes will be deducted from your maximum award amount which means you will have less funds available to complete your degree. You do not need to notify or reach out to TheDream.US or ISTS.

If you drop a course before the add/drop deadline, your college may issue a tuition refund.

What happens if I do not use the maximum award?

We use these funds to help other undocumented students achieve their dream of a college education. Once you graduate or are no longer enrolled in a Partner College, you are no longer able to receive the scholarship – even if you have not used the maximum award.

What happens if I get permanent residency?

You are still eligible to receive our Scholarship once you receive permanent residency. After you obtain permanent residency status, you will be eligible to apply for federal financial aid that includes the Pell Grant, federal loans, and federal work study. You should submit a FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid - as soon as you receive legal status. When you receive your legal status, send an email to askus@thedream.us and your Scholar Advisor and Financial Aid Advisor to notify them of your change in status.

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How do I renew my award?

You must renew your Scholarship in June of each year. We require this so that we can verify your continuing eligibility and approve your funding for the upcoming academic year. ISTS will send you an email in early-June with instructions on how to open and complete your renewal form in your ISTS Scholar Portal. **You must complete the form by the due date.**

You will need to:

- ✓ Confirm your Partner College for the next academic year;
- ✓ Upload a copy of your most recent unofficial transcript that includes your name, your Partner College name, your cumulative grade point average, and your cumulative credits;
- ✓ Confirm your immigration status.

You will not be able to renew if:

- ✗ You exhausted your maximum award amount; or
- ✗ You have been enrolled beyond the maximum allowed time.

★ **If you do not renew your scholarship by the deadline, you will lose your scholarship.**

Tips for success

We encourage you to maintain full-time, continuous enrollment (15 or more credits) in order to complete your degree on time and to maintain a GPA of 2.5 or better.

We recognize, however, that there are life circumstances beyond your control that may impact your ability to meet these criteria.

If this happens, meet with your Scholar Advisor to develop a plan to get back on track.

Click here to get the Scholar Partner College Directory

> "I didn't quite get it right the first semester... By speaking with my TheDream.US advisors and letting them know I was struggling, they supported me and helped me come up with a plan to fulfill my graduation requirements."
>
> JOSIE, GRADUATE, BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (AA) & HUNTER COLLEGE (BA)

- Use the Cornell Method to take notes
- Review your course notes every day
- Form a study group with your classmates
- Prepare for tests by studying small chunks over several days
- Take care of yourself: Exercise, get enough sleep, take breaks
- Use Modern States to earn college credits faster and at a low-cost

Transferring My Scholarship to another Partner College

We do not allow transfers to another Partner College. If you are struggling, please reach out to your Scholar Advisor.

Modification or Termination of the Scholarship

TheDream.US may terminate your scholarship if, in its sole discretion, you do not fulfill eligibility requirements or your Scholar Commitments or upon the request of the Partner College.

TheDream.US may modify the terms and conditions for this scholarship program at any time, including termination of the program.