

# THE HCA 2025 **DREAM BIG** SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

**LET'S MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE!**

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***Please read all parts carefully, even if you've applied to the HCA Scholarship in the past, as we've made some changes to our rules and requirements that you'll need to know about.***

# ***SCHOLARSHIP DESCRIPTION & RULES***

## **About this scholarship**

The HCA Dream Big Scholarship is designed to provide funding to senior residents in the HCA apartment community portfolio.

Would you like to pursue a hobby, accelerate personal growth, strengthen your professional skills, improve your physical health, or study an academic subject?

We'd love to help!

Successful applicants will receive funding in support of instruction for in-person or online classes, lessons, workshops, memberships, or programs.

**Do be aware that we can no longer fund in-person gym memberships.**

## **Eligibility**

You may only apply if BOTH of the below describes you:

1. **A Resident on the Lease**

You must be on the lease of an apartment community that is partnered with the nonprofit Housing Corporation of America (HCA). **CAREGIVERS TO RESIDENTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY.**

2. **55+ Years Old**

To qualify for this scholarship, you must be 55 years of age or older. If you're 54 or younger, you may be eligible to apply for our Academic Scholarship! Learn more at [www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org).

## **Application deadline**

The 2025 HCA Dream Big Scholarship application is due Wednesday, May 21, 2025!

## **Award amounts**

Dream Big Scholarships are between \$100 - \$1,000. How much you win will depend on the strength of your application, the cost of your Educational Plan, and the amount of funding available.

**\* If you're pursuing a degree or vocational certification, you may be eligible to win up to \$2,500 in funding!** *Please do not proceed with this 2025 HCA Dream Big Scholarship Application. Visit [www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org) to apply for the 2025 HCA Academic Scholarship. Be prepared to provide proof of admission or enrollment to the program for which you seek funding.*

**Scholarship Awards are paid directly to the instructor, business, or school offering classes, lessons, workshops, or membership.** Awards will never be paid to Scholarship Award Winners.

## Award Uses

**Scholarship Awards can be used for nearly any learning opportunity! For example...**

- **Animals:** Horseback Riding, and Service Dog Training
- **Career & Personal Development:** Coding, Personal Finance, and Languages
- **Crafts:** Jewelry-Making, Quilting, and Woodworking
- **Fine Arts:** Ceramics, Oil Painting, and Sculpture
- **Fitness\*:** Aquatic Aerobics, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and Pilates  
*\*Please be aware that we cannot fund in-person gym memberships*
- **Performing Arts:** Acting, Ballroom Dance, and Flute
- **Wellness:** Nutrition, Meditation, and Yoga

**You can use your Scholarship Award with any instructor, business, or school verifiably providing educational services in-person or online.**

We'll fund educational opportunities offered by freelance or independent instructors, like music teachers and dog trainers; businesses, like dance schools and ceramics studios; online educational platforms, like Masterclass and Rosetta Stone; and traditional schools, like community colleges and adult schools. Visit [www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org) to check out our Dream Big Class Guides for ideas about where you can take classes in person or online.

## Award Limitations:

1. Effective in 2024, Scholarship Awards may no longer be used for in-person gym memberships. However, we're happy to provide Scholarship Awards for classes offered by gyms so long as the cost is separate from membership dues.
2. Awards may not be used for supplies or transportation. If you are concerned about the cost of supplies, we encourage you to find a learning opportunity that requires none or few, or where supplies are included in the overall cost of instruction.
3. The instructor, business, or school providing educational services must agree to accept a single payment before or at the start of services. We cannot split payment for any reason.
4. Payments by credit card may be made over the phone or on the school's/business's website, as long as payment does not require us to log into your online account. We are unable to make in-person payments; payment in cash; or payments by digital app, like Venmo and Zelle.
5. The business, school, or instructor providing educational services must agree in advance to email HCA with proof of payment.
6. The credit card used to disburse your scholarship award may not be used to pay for additional costs or kept on file for any reason.

Whew, that was a lot of information! We're so glad you're still with us. Take a break if you need to, then read on to learn the steps to applying.

# HOW TO APPLY

## Make your Educational Plans.

### 1. **Decide on a First-Choice Educational Plan**

Your First-Choice Educational Plan represents your preferred option for funding. It should cost between \$100 and \$1,000.

### 2. **Decide on an Alternative Educational Plan**

Your Alternative Educational Plan represents your second-choice option for funding. The cost of your Alternative Educational Plan must be lower than the cost of your First-Choice Educational Plan and between \$100 and \$499. If we are unable to fund your First Choice Educational Plan, we may still be able to offer you funding for your Alternative Educational Plan!

### 3. **Make sure the timing of your Educational Plans works with the timing of the Scholarship**

The HCA Scholarship is designed to fund courses that begin between August and October of 2025. Please be sure payment is due no earlier than mid-July of 2025. We do not recommend enrolling in an educational opportunity until you've received your Scholarship Award decision.

## To apply online, you'll need...

### 1. **An internet-connected device—like a desktop or laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone—that allows you save your work.**

iPhone users can save text using the Notes or Google Drive app.

Android users can save text using the Google Keep, Samsung Notes, or OneNote app.

### 2. **A web browser**

A web browser is a software application that lets you search the internet. Popular browsers include Google Chrome, Safari, Firefox, and Microsoft Edge.

## To submit a paper application, you'll need...

### 1. **A printed copy of this application.** No internet or no printer? No problem. Your apartment community manager will have printed copies in the community room or their office.

### 2. **A pen with black or blue ink.**

### 3. **A hard, flat surface to write on.**

### 4. **Additional sheets of blank or lined 8.5"x11" white paper.**

## When you're done with your application...

### 1. Check to see that you responded to all portions of the application, and that your writing meets the length requirements.

### 2. If possible, have a friend or family member read your application to make sure it's clear and complete.

### 3. Submit your application no later than Wednesday, May 21, 2025. You can submit...

- Online at [www.hcascholarship.org/apply](http://www.hcascholarship.org/apply)
- OR
- To your apartment community manager

# ***IMPORTANT DATES***



**WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025**

## **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

All applications must be submitted by this day, no exceptions. You can submit online through our scholarship website **[www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org)** OR in paper form to the manager of your apartment community.



**TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2025**

## **DECISIONS WILL BE MAILED**

We'll be mailing announcements to all applicants. Please remember that payment can take approximately 5-15 business days to reach the instructor, business, or school offering services after you have claimed your award, so please plan accordingly!



**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025**

## **LAST DAY TO CLAIM SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS!**

Details about how to claim your Scholarship Award will be included in the Scholarship Award letter we'll send you by mail.



**Have questions or need help? We're here for you!**

Reach out to Nena at HCA.

✉ **[nena@hcahousing.org](mailto:nena@hcahousing.org)**

📞 **626-708-4461**  
(Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm)

**We get lots of requests for help with applications, so be sure to request an appointment as early as possible.**

# THE APPLICATION

## Contact Info

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment Community \_\_\_\_\_

Only tenants named on the lease of a qualifying HCA-partnered property may apply to this scholarship. Caregivers are not eligible.

Are you a tenant on the lease of this apartment?      Yes      No

Street Name & Number \_\_\_\_\_

Apt. Number \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

## Educational Plans

### Which of the following statements is true for you?

I am an adult aged 18-54

*We're sorry, you must be 55+ to apply for the 2025 HCA Dream Big Scholarship. If you are 54 or under, you may be eligible to apply for the 2025 HCA Academic Scholarship, which you can find at [www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org).*

I am an adult aged 55+

### First Choice Educational Plan

Which of the below best describes the educational opportunity you're interested in?

Class

Lessons

Workshop

Membership

Degree- or Vocational Certification-Track Program

*Great news: If you're pursuing a degree or vocational certification, you may be eligible to win up to \$2,500 in funding! Please do not proceed with this application. Visit [www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org) to apply for the 2025 HCA Academic Scholarship. Be prepared to provide proof of admission or enrollment to the program for which you seek funding.*

Title of the above listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of the above listed (\$100 - \$1,000): \_\_\_\_\_

Name and website of instructor, business, or school offering the above listed:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Alternative Educational Plan\*

*\*The cost of your Alternative Educational Plan must be lower than that of your First-Choice Educational Plan, no greater than \$499, and no less than \$100.*

Class

Lessons

Workshop

Membership

Title of the above listed: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of the above listed (\$100 - \$499): \_\_\_\_\_

Name and website of instructor, business, or school offering the above listed:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Writing

We'd love to know more about why you chose the class, lessons, workshop, or membership listed in your Educational Plans.

**Directions:** Please respond to both questions below so we can get a sense of why these plans are important or meaningful to you. Each response must be 250 – 300 words, for a total of 500 - 600 words, or the equivalent of about one, single-spaced typed page in 12-point font. If you are not applying online, responses may be typed or handwritten and stapled to your completed application.

**Question 1.** What specific past experience(s) contribute to your interest in the Educational Plans you named above? In answering this question, you may consider your experiences in your personal life, the workplace, and/or school. Please be as specific as possible in your response. (250 – 300 words)

**Question 2.** In what way(s) do you hope to benefit from the educational opportunity described above in your Educational Plans? In answering this question, you may consider your personal, professional, and/or academic goals. Please be as specific as possible in your response. (250 – 300 words)

### Have you applied for the HCA Dream Big Scholarship before?

We understand that your application may contain language or ideas that overlap with written responses submitted in previous HCA Scholarship Application cycles.

However, we ask that you consider why you'd like to *continue* taking classes.

Please tell us what you've gained from previous HCA Scholarship Awards and/or how you may benefit from a Scholarship Award again this year!

## Before you submit, please be aware that...

1. Applications must be submitted by Wednesday, May 21, 2025.
2. Decisions will be mailed to all applicants on Tuesday, July 1, 2025.
3. We will not automatically pay the instructor, business, or school listed on the applications of Scholarship Award Winners. To claim their Scholarship Awards, Award Winners must follow the directions provided in the award letters we will mail out on July 1, 2025.
4. If you are a Scholarship Award Winner, you will have until Tuesday, September 30, 2025 to claim your Scholarship Award. After that, awards may not be claimed.
5. Scholarship Award payment will be made directly to the instructor, business, or school providing educational services, and never to the Scholarship Award Winner or to a third party.
6. Each Scholarship Award must be paid in a single upfront payment to the instructor, business, or school providing educational services. We cannot split payment for any reason.
7. Scholarship Award payment may take 5-15 business days to be issued from the date it is claimed.
8. Payments by credit card may be made over the phone or on the school's/business's website, as long as payment does not require us to log into your online account.
9. The Dream Big Scholarship is designed to support the cost of classes, lessons, workshops, or membership (excluding gym memberships) and not that of transportation or supplies.
10. The Scholarship Committee will not consider applications that are incomplete, contain false or misleading information, or contain writing that has been submitted in previous HCA Scholarship Application cycles.

By signing below, I certify that I have read, understood, and agree to the terms above. Furthermore, I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information I provided in this application is true and accurate, and that if I discover that it is untrue or inaccurate, it is my duty to inform the Scholarship Committee with details of the incorrect or inaccurate information.

Please print your full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

## **Dates & Timeline**

### **When do I have to submit my application?**

Your application must be submitted by Wednesday, May 21, 2025. Late applications will not be considered, no exceptions.

### **When will I know if I've won a Scholarship Award?**

Decisions will be mailed to all applicants on Tuesday, July 1, 2025.

### **How can I get my Scholarship Award?**

If you are a Scholarship Award Winner, please follow the directions in your award letter. Scholarship Award Winners will have from Tuesday, July 1, 2025 to Tuesday, September 30, 2025 to claim their awards.

### **Can payment be sent out ASAP if my classes start early in July of 2025?**

Unfortunately, we cannot speed up the payment process. Award payment may take 5-15 days to be issued from the date it is claimed.

### **What if my program starts or requires me to enroll before I hear back about whether I got an award?**

The HCA Scholarship is designed to fund courses that begin between August and October of 2025. We do not recommend enrolling in an educational opportunity until you've received your Scholarship Award decision.

## **How To Apply**

### **I've applied to the HCA Dream Big Scholarship in previous years. Can I submit the same application or written responses if my answers haven't changed?**

The Scholarship Committee will not consider re-submitted applications or written responses, even if your Educational Plans have not changed since you last applied. Please tell us what you learned from that previously funded opportunity and/or what you think you can gain from additional classes, lessons, workshops, or continued membership.

### **My written responses are less than 250 words each and I don't know what else to say. Is that going to be a problem?**

The Scholarship Committee will only consider written responses that fall within the 250-300-word requirement. You may expand your work by offering specific details about the program you're interested in and/or examples of what you've done in the past or plan to do in the future. For example, if you're hoping to enroll in guitar lessons, tell us about your history playing or appreciating the guitar. Do you hope to play a particular song or become skilled in a particular genre? Are there specific skills, like sight reading or aural skills, you hope to refine? You may also think about answering "why?" to these or similar questions.

### **My written responses are more than 300 words each. Is that going to be a problem?**

The Scholarship Committee will only consider written responses that fall within the 250-300-word limit. Please trim your written responses down to no more than 300. You can shorten your written responses by eliminating repeated information, as well as any information that isn't strictly needed to express your ideas or describe your plans.

### **How can I get help with my application?**

We'd be happy to help you with your application! Please contact Nena by email ([nena@hcahousing.org](mailto:nena@hcahousing.org)) or phone: 626-708-4461 (Monday - Friday, 9am-5pm).

## Choosing Educational Opportunities

### **I don't know what I want to learn. Is that going to be a problem?**

We ask that you carefully consider and research your Educational Plans before submitting your application. Please be sure that you are eligible for the educational opportunity you've chosen, and that you have investigated the class, lessons, workshop, or membership to ensure your choice is a good fit for you.

### **What if I change my mind about what I want to study?**

We do not allow applicants to change their Educational Plans after the application deadline of Wednesday, May 21, 2025. We ask that you carefully consider and research your Educational Plans before submitting your application. Please be sure that you are eligible to enroll in the class, lessons, workshop, or membership you've chosen, and that you have researched the educational opportunity to ensure it is a good fit for you.

### **What if I know what I want to study but don't know where?**

Visit [www.hcascholarship.org](http://www.hcascholarship.org) to check out our Dream Big Class Guides for ideas about where you can take classes in person or online. If you need further help, reach out to us and we'll do our best to help you identify options.

### **How can I be sure the business, school, or program I select is a good fit?**

Great question! There's a lot you can do to ensure that an educational opportunity is right for you. Here's a handy list of steps you can take:

1. Call the instructor, business, or school offering services to ask about the program and any special requirements for enrolling. For example, are there prerequisites you need to take before you can enroll in the class you hope to take? Will you need any special supplies or equipment? Are there additional costs for supplies or parking?
2. Ask if you may sit in on or briefly observe a class in session. (Please be aware that some schools and businesses will not allow such visits for reasons of safety, confidentiality, and/or in the interest of protecting intellectual property.)
3. Visit the business or school to ensure it's in a location that's easily accessible to you.
4. Read Yelp and/or Google Reviews of the business or school to see what other people have said about their experiences.

## Scholarship Award Payment

### **Can the Scholarship Award be paid to me?**

No, scholarship award payments are made directly to the relevant school or business, and never to the Scholarship Award Winner or to a third party.

### **How can my Scholarship Award be paid?**

Payments by credit card may be made over the phone or on the school's/business's website, as long as payment does not require us to log into the Award Winner's online account. Award payments will only be paid by check or with credit card, and not with payment app, cash, or any other means of payment.

### **How long will it take for my educational opportunity provider to receive payment?**

Award payment may take 5-15 business days to be issued from the date it is claimed.

### **Can payment be made in separate installments?**

No, each award will be paid out in a single installment and may not be split up into separate payments for any reason.