

The Voyager Scholarship, The Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service

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About the Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service:

An increasingly globalized world needs young leaders who can bridge divides and help solve our biggest challenges. The Voyager Scholarship [was created by the Obamas and Brian Chesky, Co-Founder and CEO of Airbnb](#), to help shape such leaders. Even though they come from different backgrounds, President Obama and Brian both believe that exposure to new places and experiences generates understanding, empathy, and cooperation, which equips the next generation to create meaningful change.

We are looking for young people from every corner of this country who share a curiosity about the world and the conviction to want to make positive change within it—just like the scholarship's founders. Students should have a passion for helping others, experience serving in or building community, and an expansive view of what's possible through public service.


The [Voyager Scholarship Program](#) is a two-year leadership development and scholarship program. Through a transformational combination of barrier-reducing financial aid, an immersive work-travel experience, and a robust network of leaders and mentors, the Voyager Scholarship is designed to inspire, empower, and connect the next generation of leaders and equip them with the tools and resources they need to launch their careers in public service.


The program identifies students entering their third year of undergraduate studies who have a passion for public service. Over the course of two years, programming will facilitate opportunities for students to refine their values-based leadership approach, build bridges across communities, and nurture their sense of curiosity as they deepen their commitment to pursuing public service careers.

Programming Overview & Commitment:

This scholarship gives college students financial aid to alleviate the burden of college debt, meaningful travel experiences to expand their connections to new communities, and a network of mentors and leaders to support them, including:

- **Up to \$50,000 in financial aid:** Students will receive up to \$25,000 per year in "last dollar" financial aid for their junior and senior years of college. This financial aid should alleviate the burden of college debt so that students can afford to pursue a career in public service.
- **Summer Voyage:** Students will receive a \$10,000 stipend and free housing in Airbnb listings to pursue a summer work-travel experience between their junior and senior year of college. The students will design their own Summer Voyage to gain exposure to new communities and experience in a chosen field.
- **10-year travel stipend:** After graduation, Airbnb will provide the students with a \$2,000 Airbnb travel credit every year for 10 years, totaling \$20,000. This will allow students to continue to broaden their horizons and forge new connections throughout their public service careers.
- **Fall Summit:** During their Junior Year, Voyagers may have the option to attend an in-person convening where they will engage in community-building activities with fellow Voyagers, build their leadership skills, and learn from experienced leaders in public service.
- **Network of leaders:** Throughout the program, students will be invited to an ongoing speaker series, giving them access to a [network of leaders](#). This network of leaders will expose them to new areas of service and innovations happening in their fields. After graduation, they will join The Obama Foundation's global community, providing them with Foundation resources and programming.

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In addition to receiving up to \$50,000 in scholarship funding, the Voyager Scholarship program will require participation in **monthly** virtual programming sessions that include:

- **Speaker Series and Mentorship Roundtables** - During these sessions, Voyagers will have the opportunity to engage with experienced leaders in public service and gain insight into their values-based leadership approach and career journeys.
- **Summer Voyage Design Workshops** - These virtual workshops walk Junior Year Voyagers through the process of developing and implementing a meaningful Summer Voyage travel plan with clearly defined learning goals that exposes them to new communities and is connected to their desired interest areas.
- **Summer Voyage Coaching Sessions** - Voyagers participate in individualized coaching sessions to develop their Summer Voyage plans.
- **Network Connections** - Voyagers are connected to a robust network of leaders and mentors affiliated with The Obama Foundation who can provide insight and guidance as they develop their Summer Voyage travel plans and plan for their future careers in public service.
- **Pre-Departure Know Before You Go Session** - This session focuses on preparing Voyagers for their Summer Voyage including skills for building bridges across communities.

Voyagers will meet virtually over Zoom once each month for approximately 90 minutes. They will also participate in individual coaching and network connection sessions as they develop their Summer Voyage plans. Some months will require additional hours of work outside of the required program sessions to ensure a timely submission of an actionable Summer Voyage plan.

2025-2027 Voyager Application Process:

We are looking for our next cohort of 100 Voyagers! We're excited to have you apply! **Before you get started, please review the eligibility guidelines below. Should you have additional questions, you can refer to our [FAQ page](#).**

We anticipate that this application will take a **minimum of three hours** to complete, depending on your pace. Please plan accordingly and leave yourself plenty of time.

Timely Submissions: We strongly recommend that you submit your application as early as possible. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. The Obama Foundation is not responsible for applications that are not properly submitted by the deadline (**Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 11:59 PM United States Central Time (UTC-6)**).

Commitment to Diversity: At The Obama Foundation, we value one another's contributions and hold the conviction that diverse backgrounds and divergent points of view will lead us to the best solutions. We welcome Voyagers across lines of race, ethnicity, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, political affiliation, and ability.

We are committed to recruiting an inclusive and diverse cohort with Voyagers with different issues of focus, sectors of work, personal backgrounds, and life experiences.

We especially hope to identify students who are not currently participating in other robust leadership development programs.

We are also committed to making this program accessible to students with disabilities, from the application process to the program experience. We are able to accommodate certain technical accessibility needs throughout the length of the program. Please contact us at Voyagers@obama.org with any questions about accommodations that may help you determine whether or not to apply.

Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria: Please be sure that you meet **ALL** of the following eligibility criteria. Applicants must meet these eligibility requirements both at the time of application and enrollment for the Fall 2025 term:

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- Eligible students are completing their sophomore year in Spring 2025 or transferring from a 2-year to a 4-year college or university for their junior academic year. "Junior" is defined as having earned the needed number of credits at your institution to be considered a "Junior" or having two years of full time enrollment remaining before earning your Bachelor's degree.
- Demonstrate financial need - this is calculated using a similar formula to the FAFSA
- Have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent. Students are required to upload unofficial transcripts as part of the application process.
- Have demonstrated a commitment to public service
- Plan to pursue a career in public service* upon graduation
- Be a United States (U.S.) citizen, U.S. national, U.S. permanent resident (holder of a Permanent Resident Card), or an individual granted deferred action status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA)
- Program Commitment - You are able to commit to fully participating in once-per-month programming, including individual meetings with coaches and network connections, as well as developing an actionable Summer Voyage plan.

Selection Criteria:

In addition to meeting the above eligibility criteria, our ideal candidates have demonstrated these characteristics:

- An interest in building bridges across communities
- Experience working within public service initiatives and causes
- Curiosity and dedication to being a lifelong learner
- Values-based and collaborative approach to leadership
- Willingness to learn from and share with other Voyagers in a group setting

*A broad range of paths that advance greater societal good. This work most frequently occurs through the nonprofit and government sectors but can also include the arts, social entrepreneurship, and advancing corporate social responsibility for instance.

The following individuals are not eligible to apply: Employees, officers or directors of the Foundation; consultants of the Foundation; members of the Program selection committee; or any family member or child of any of the foregoing.

How to Apply

To complete this application:

- Complete all the required fields on this form.
- Upload all required documents.
- Click the **Submit** button on the Save/Submit page.

It is **your responsibility**, as the applicant, to monitor your Home page and ensure a **Complete** application status.

Application Deadline

DEADLINE: APRIL 2025 - 11:59 PM Central Time Zone

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