Midwest Association of Rail Shippers

4044 N. Lincoln Ave #253
Chicago, IL 60618
mwrailshippers.com

Bernard J. Thomas Scholarship Award & MARS Scholarship Fund

The Midwest Association of Rail Shippers Scholarship Fund reflects the MARS membership and the future students that plan to make contributions to professional positions and industries across the nation. Scholarships are awarded at the sole discretion of MARS Scholarship committee and are granted on a competitive basis. Awards will be made on an annual basis in the spring semester, requiring application and review for each calendar year.

The Bernard J. Thomas Scholarship Award, presented to the top-rated scholarship applicant. The honorary scholarship award is in the amount of $5,000. Bernard J. Thomas was an integral part in the foundation of the MARS Scholarship Fund in 2008 and strong contributor to the MARS organization.

Who is Eligible?

Scholarships are offered to applicants who are children or grandchildren of MARS members, enrolled as full-time undergraduate students at accredited four-year colleges or universities. All applicants must show a demonstrated commitment in the program in which they are enrolled.

What are the application requirements?

1. The completed application form and all required documentation, including official transcripts (If transcripts can only be mailed in hard copy, please send email to this effect and a mailing address will be provided.) must be submitted electronically no later than **JANUARY 31, 2026** to **MARSScholarships@mwrailshippers.com**. Applications with postmark date after this date will not be accepted.

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2. Personal Statement addressing the following:
    a. Why have you chosen this field of study?
    b. Why have you chosen this particular college or university?
    c. What are your professional short- and long-term objectives?
3. If available, additional listing of extracurricular activities and/or work history

How are recipients selected?

Scholarship recipients will be chosen from qualified students who meet the eligibility requirements, complete the application meeting all requirements, and submit before the application deadline on January 31st. Scholarship applicants will be selected according to merit on a competitive basis. The scholarship committee will select the recipients by evaluating each eligible student's academic performance, personal statement, commitment to the program in which they are enrolled, and community involvement in the way of extracurricular activities and employment history.

What is the amount of the scholarship(s)?

The MARS Scholarship Committee has allocated $50,000 in the general scholarship fund for the awarding of scholarships in 2026. The top applicant, as determined by the committee, will be awarded the $5,000 Bernard J. Thomas Scholarship Award. After the Bernard J. Thomas Award, the committee is allowed discretionary authority to allocate awards and amounts based upon merit and quality of qualified applicants.

Please note:
It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the scholarship committee receives all required application materials. It also the responsibility of the applicant to make sure that ALL application requirements are met. If not, applications will be ineligible.

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Applications must be completed online at:
https://www.mwrailshippers.com/scholarships/scholarship-application/
and any required supporting material that cannot be submitted electronically should be returned to:
Midwest Association of Rail Shippers
Scholarship Committee
4044 North Lincoln Avenue, #253
Chicago, Illinois 60618

Questions regarding this application can be addressed by emailing the association at **MARSScholarships@mwrailshippers.com**