

**Helen R. Mertens Educational Scholarship Fund**  
**Sponsored by**



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The Spina Bifida Association of Northeastern New York (SBANENY) has established the Helen R. Mertens Educational Scholarship Fund. The purpose of the scholarship is to award financial assistance to persons who have Spina Bifida and are pursuing higher education, technical training, or driver's education. The amount of the grant is a maximum of \$1000 per fiscal year. It is intended to be used toward the cost of tuition, fees, and books. The exact amount to be disbursed will be at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee. The number of scholarship applicants will be a factor in this decision.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

1. Applicants must have Spina Bifida or a spinal cord disability resulting in similar challenges / needs AND must reside in the geographic area serviced by SBANENY.
2. There is no age limit.
3. Applicants must demonstrate acceptance by a school of higher education, technical training, certificate program, or driver education training.
4. No financial statement shall be required.

**Selection Process:**

1. Applicants must apply for this award.
2. Applications will be accepted at anytime during the year, but the deadline for the upcoming academic year is generally mid-spring. (The exact date will be posted on the Chapter website.) There is an expectation for award recipients to be decided upon within four weeks thereafter.
3. An application will consist of:
  - a. A completed application form.
  - b. A short essay (from three to five paragraphs) in the applicant's own words describing the reasons why he/she chose the particular course of study and what the student hopes to achieve. Both short term and long term goals should be included. The essay should be at least two paragraphs.
  - c. Two letters of recommendation: one from a teacher, school staff member, employer, or counselor; and one from a non-relative. All letters must be current (within one month of the application date). If reapplying from a previous year, the letters must be new and from current teachers, professors, etc.
  - d. A doctor's note specifying the applicant's medical condition.
  - e. An interview with one or more members of the Scholarship Committee. If geographical distance is an issue, a phone interview may be substituted for an in-person interview.
4. Selection of the recipient(s) shall be made by a majority vote of the Scholarship Committee. Recipient(s) will be notified by July 1st of the year within which they apply.
5. Additional information may be requested depending upon the nature of the applications received.

**Selection Criteria:**

1. Good citizenship, including extracurricular activities, community service, and attendance at school or work.
2. Scholastic achievement that indicates the potential for success in the program that the applicant is pursuing.

**Award**

1. In order to apply for funding toward a subsequent year, course grades must be submitted to the Scholarship Committee. The student must maintain passing grades in order to receive the scholarship for the next year. The student must submit a recommendation from a staff member of the school that they are currently attending.
2. Ability of the association to award scholarships for subsequent years to the same applicant will be dependent upon the number of applications received each year and will be at the discretion of the committee. All applicants must reapply.
3. Actual payment shall be made by check payable to the recipient(s) upon receipt of proof of registration at a college, trade school, or other specialized training.