



**Request for Applications (RFA) No. UNLP-001-24 for  
Nuclear Energy Undergraduate Scholarship Opportunities**

**Subject:** University Nuclear Leadership Program - Undergraduate Scholarship Opportunities – RFA

**Issue Date:** August 28, 2024

**Application Due Date:** January 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. ET

**Selections Announced:** April 2025

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Request for Applications (RFA) is for the University Nuclear Leadership Program (UNLP), as administered by the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Nuclear Energy (NE), for the 2025 – 2026 academic year. Under this RFA, NE is seeking applications for two undergraduate scholarship programs:

1. **Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program** – provides \$10,000 awards to students attending four-year colleges/universities who are pursuing study in science and engineering disciplines related to nuclear energy such as nuclear engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, chemistry, health physics, nuclear materials science, radiochemistry, applied nuclear physics, nuclear policy, radiation protection technology, nuclear power technology, nuclear maintenance technology, nuclear engineering technology, computer science, cybersecurity, and nuclear safety.
2. **Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program** – provides \$5,000 awards in support of students receiving training as nuclear energy-related technicians in areas including, but not limited to, nuclear operations, mechanical and electrical maintenance, and radiation protection at United States (U.S.) trade schools and community colleges.

**Applications are due by January 16, 2025, at 5:00 pm ET.** Students must apply electronically at [NEUP.gov](https://neup.gov) and questions should be sent to [NEUP@inl.gov](mailto:NEUP@inl.gov).

As part of their application package, students must submit an essay outlining long-term career goals, letters of recommendation, and academic transcripts. Students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA to apply.

NE anticipates making award announcements in Spring 2025. The number of awards is dependent upon application quality and total funding available. Eligibility is restricted to U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This Request for Applications (RFA) is for the University Nuclear Leadership Program (UNLP), as administered by the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Nuclear Energy (NE), for the 2025 – 2026 academic year. Questions regarding this RFA should be submitted to [neup@inl.gov](mailto:neup@inl.gov) or applicants can review the Q&A forum found on the [NEUP website](#).

UNLP works to attract qualified nuclear science and engineering (NS&E) students to nuclear energy professions by providing undergraduate scholarships, which are awarded for undergraduate study at two and four-year institutions leading to a major or minor degree or certificate in the fields or disciplines of NS&E relevant to the NE mission.

The NE mission is to advance nuclear energy science and technology to meet United States (U.S.) energy, environmental, and economic needs. NE has identified the following goals to address challenges in the nuclear energy sector, help realize the potential of advanced technology, and leverage the unique role of the government in spurring innovation:

- Keep existing U.S. nuclear reactors operating.
- Deploy new nuclear reactors.
- Secure and sustain our nuclear fuel cycle.
- Expand international nuclear energy cooperation.

Collectively, all NE-sponsored activities support the Department's priorities to combat the climate crisis, create clean energy jobs with the free and fair chance to join a union and bargain collectively, and promote equity and environmental justice by delivering innovative clean energy technologies for nuclear energy systems.

All applications submitted under this RFA must demonstrate a strong tie to this mission. Applications focused specifically in areas not of interest to the NE mission, such as fusion energy, medical physics, nuclear forensics, or environmental management, will not be reviewed or considered. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) administer related programs; therefore, applicants interested in regulatory (NRC) or international nonproliferation (NNSA) careers are encouraged to apply to those opportunities as well.

Ensuring an adequate number of high-quality NS&E students will (1) support the need for qualified personnel to develop and maintain the nation's nuclear energy technology, (2) enhance educational institutions' capabilities to perform nuclear energy related RD&D, and (3) meet DOE's and the national laboratories' need for highly trained scientists and engineers in support of NE programs.

Prospective students are advised that submission of an application implies a commitment, if selected, to the pursuit of study in a program in the NS&E disciplines relevant to nuclear energy. Acceptance of a scholarship is an explicit acceptance of this commitment and assurance that the student will be duly enrolled, full time, in an acceptable program beginning in the fall of 2025.

NE is seeking applications under this RFA for the following opportunities:

1. Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program
2. Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program

All information and instructions required to respond to this RFA are accessible at [neup.gov](https://neup.gov). Students must submit their applications electronically through [neup.gov](https://neup.gov). No hard copy applications will be accepted (letters of recommendation, transcripts, and other supporting documents listed in Table 3 will be accepted as described in Section 4.5).

## 2 ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

It is critical to our nation's economic leadership and global competitiveness that the U.S. educate, train, and retain more scientists and engineers from varying backgrounds. Applications will be accepted from all U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents attending a UNLP-approved college or university while pursuing NS&E disciplines, including those from underrepresented groups, those with disabilities, and people from all geographic and economic backgrounds.

To support the goal of building a clean and equitable energy economy, NE strives to contribute to the President's goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) (the Justice40 Initiative)<sup>1</sup>. The goal is to spur economic development and job creation in DACs throughout the U.S., through effective teams and/or partnerships with institutions, located in a disadvantaged community that may receive funding support from the project.

In addition, NE strives to ensure energy justice and is fully committed to broadening the inclusion and contribution of those communities that have been historically underserved within its programs. Students attending minority-serving institutions (MSIs), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), or institutions located in a disadvantaged community, are highly encouraged to apply to this RFA.

Information on Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) can be found at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idades/eligibility.html#tips>. This information predominately covers institutions that have been awarded grants through the Department of Education and does not include all institutions that may meet the definition of an MSI. **This resource is not an exhaustive list of minority-serving institutions.**

For purposes of identifying MSIs in NE's application system, NE is using a directory based off of 2024 U.S. Department of Education data compiled by Rutgers University's Center for MSIs,

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<sup>1</sup> The Justice40 initiative, established by E.O. 14008, sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities. The Justice40 Interim Guidance provides a broad definition of disadvantaged communities (Page 2): <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf>.

which can be found here:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/ides/2024eligibilitymatrix.xlsx>. This list is also not an exhaustive list of MSIs but will be used as a starting point for auto identifying MSIs.

If applicants believe that their institution qualifies as an MSI and is not listed, please contact [neup@inl.gov](mailto:neup@inl.gov) with an explanation for how the university meets the conditions of being considered an MSI.

Applicants' colleges/universities need to be approved to participate in UNLP. NE will work with new schools and guide them through the approval process prior to the distribution of any award funds. More information on the approval process can be found at [neup.gov](http://neup.gov).

## **2.1 Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program**

### **Eligibility Restrictions:**

1. Students must have completed at least one semester of full-time undergraduate study at an Institution of Higher Education (IHE)<sup>2</sup> by the application deadline in order to apply. Full-time undergraduate study is defined as college credits obtained after receiving a high school diploma or equivalent. For clarification, Advanced Placement or dual credits received during high school would not be considered as meeting this requirement.
2. Students must be enrolled as an undergraduate at the time of award.
3. Students must have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA (based on a 4.0 scale). GPAs are not rounded.
4. Students holding an F1 student visa are not eligible.

## **2.2 Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program**

### **Eligibility Restrictions:**

1. Students must be entering their first or second year of undergraduate study at an IHE at the time of award (Fall 2025).
2. Students must have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA (based on a 4.0 scale). GPAs are not rounded.
3. Students holding an F1 student visa are not eligible.

## **3 AWARD DESCRIPTION**

Undergraduate scholarships for both four-year institutions and trade schools/community

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<sup>2</sup> Accredited U.S. two- and four-year colleges and universities.

colleges are for **one year only**. A student who is awarded a scholarship one year may apply in subsequent years, provided they still meet the eligibility criteria.

### 3.1 Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program

NE expects to award \$10,000 undergraduate scholarships under this program. The number of awards is dependent upon application quality and total funding available. Appendix A includes allowable and unallowable expenses for this award.

### 3.2 Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program

NE expects to award \$5,000 undergraduate scholarships under this program. The number of awards is dependent upon application quality and total funding available. Appendix A includes allowable and unallowable expenses for this award.

## 4 APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

### 4.1 Application Due Date

Applications for both scholarship programs, as well as all supporting documents, are due by January 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET).

### 4.2 Application Schedule

**Table 1. Tentative UNLP Scholarship Schedule.**

Issue Request for Applications	August 28, 2024
Scholarship Application Deadline	January 16, 2025
Award Announcement	Spring 2025

### 4.3 Late Applications

Applications and any supporting materials (transcripts, test scores, etc.) received after the designated date and time will not be accepted. Extension of the application due date shall be at the sole discretion of NE.

**Note:** It is the applicant’s responsibility to confirm—prior to the application deadline—that all requirements have been met and materials received. If a requirement has not been met, the application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

### 4.4 Application Preparation Instructions

Complete scholarship applications must be submitted electronically through [neup.gov](https://neup.gov) before the deadline established above. To apply, students will need to create an account at [neup.gov](https://neup.gov).

Students re-applying should use their existing account. Once logged in, applicants will need to click on the “Applications” tab located at the top, left hand corner of the page. To begin an application, click on the “Create New Application” link for either the FY 2024 Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program or the FY 2024 Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program.

In addition to the information required on the scholarship RFA submittal form, the supporting documents listed in Table 3 must also be provided:

**Table 2. Supporting Document Requirements for the Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program.**

Submittal Documents	Page Limit
Essay: Personal Career Goals	3
Letters of Reference (3)	2 per reference
Unofficial or Official Academic Transcripts	None

**Table 4. Supporting Document Requirements for the Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program.**

Submittal Documents	Page Limit
Essay: Personal Career Goals	2
Letters of Reference (2)	2 per reference
Unofficial or Official Academic Transcripts	None

#### 4.5 Document Descriptions

For each document uploaded, the applicant should include their last name in the file name (for example: Smith Personal Career Goals.pdf). The applicant’s name, as well as the document name, should be included in the header. Additional submittal guidance can be found in the online application form. A description of each required document is listed below.

**Essay: Personal Career Goals** – This essay should identify the applicant’s long-term career goals and explain how the UNLP scholarship will help the student achieve those goals. Students should ensure that their career goals are relevant to nuclear energy and the NE mission as stated in Section 1. This essay can also call out any nuclear-related outreach or advocacy efforts on the part of the applicant, as well as other leadership roles held. Applicants are encouraged to review the NE [website](#) for more information.

**Letters of Reference** – Scholarship applicants are required to submit **three (3)** letters of reference for the Four-year College/University Undergraduate Scholarship Program, and **two (2)** letters of reference for the Trade School and Community College Scholarship Program. The following information should be included in each letter:



- Name and title of the reference writer
- Department
- Institution/Organization
- Explanation of the nature of the relationship to the student
- Detail of the applicant’s prior research experiences outside of the classroom, if any
- Statements about the student’s academic potential
- Statements about the student’s proposed research or ability to work in industry
- Signature
- Any other information to enable the review panel to evaluate the application according to the guidelines described in Section 7

Applicants should notify reference writers directly through the online application form by providing the references’ email addresses and clicking the “Notify” link. This will send the writer an email with information on how to upload the recommendation electronically to the system. Students are encouraged to contact reference writers early in the application process to allow sufficient time for the reference writer to submit the letter. **Letters must be received by the application deadline.**

When selecting reference writers, applicants should choose individuals who can appropriately speak to their academic abilities and experiences (such as an advisor or core professor, preferably one who has known the applicant for a year or longer). **Students should not have family members provide recommendations regardless of their position within the industry.**

It is the applicant’s responsibility to confirm all letters have been received prior to the application deadline. Any application with fewer than the number of required letters of reference will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed. Letters submitted by the applicant on behalf of the writer will not be accepted. If more letters are received than are required, the first letters received will be sent forward for review.

**Unofficial or Official Academic Transcripts** – Academic transcripts are required and must include Fall 2024 semester grades. Academic transcripts from all institutions where a degree was received by the applicant, as well as any current degrees the applicant is working toward, are required. **If selected for award, official transcripts may be requested.**

Applicants can upload their transcripts to their application at [www.neup.gov](http://www.neup.gov). Transcripts will also be accepted by fax, electronically or via postal mail, express service, or courier to the Innovative Nuclear Research Integration Office (INR-IO):

**INR Integration Office**

Attn: Tyler Newitt  
 PO Box 1625 MS 3730  
 Idaho Falls, Idaho 83415-3730

Unofficial/official copies of transcripts must be sent for an application to be considered complete. All transcripts must be received by the application deadline.

## 4.6 Document Format Requirements

Please adhere strictly to the document formatting requirements in Table 5 for all submitted documents:

**Table 5. Formatting Requirements.**

<b>Document Format</b>	.pdf
<b>Font Size</b>	12 pt
<b>Font</b>	Times New Roman
<b>Margins</b>	1-inch all around
<b>Line Spacing</b>	Single-spaced

**Note:** Do not send extraneous information or materials such as CDs, manuscripts, resumes, medical reports, or news clippings. These items will not be reviewed with your application. Images may be included but will be produced only in black and white to the review panel. DO NOT submit a personal photo.

## 5 APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 5.1 Interpretations and Exceptions

Students shall submit applications in compliance with the RFA requirements. Any interpretation of the requirements by the student may be considered an exception and treated accordingly (i.e., deem the application non-responsive). The student may obtain NE concurrence/clarification regarding its interpretation to classify the student's application as compliant with, or an exception to, the RFA requirements by contacting [neup@inl.gov](mailto:neup@inl.gov). Any exception must be approved by NE and documented as part of the application.

### 5.2 Rights Reserved by NE

NE reserves the right to accept or reject any application with or without prior discussion with the student and to disregard minor irregularities in applications received. NE reserves the right to conduct any necessary pre-award survey and analysis to evaluate a student's capabilities to comply with the requirements of this RFA.

### 5.3 Application Validity Period

An application shall remain firm for 180 days after the application due date, unless otherwise specified by the student.

## 5.4 Discrepancies in the RFA

Should a student find discrepancies in, or omissions from, the RFA, its attachments or related documents, or should the student be in doubt as to the meaning of any requirements, the student shall notify NE by contacting [neup@inl.gov](mailto:neup@inl.gov) and obtain correction or clarification prior to submitting an application.

## 6 DELIVERABLES AND OBLIGATIONS

No reporting criteria are required for undergraduate scholarships; however, NE may contact a scholar in the future to request information on scholar's current career path.

Additionally, NE is always interested in receiving relevant information throughout the year including captioned photographs or other material providing notification and details of any noteworthy scholarship-related accomplishments that may merit public attention.

## 7 APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by interdisciplinary scientists, engineers, and other professional experts in education. Each application will be reviewed independently on the basis of merit using all available information in the completed application. Reviewers will be instructed to evaluate applications against the following Merit Review criteria; therefore, applicants must address the criteria in their written statements to provide reviewers with the information necessary to fully evaluate the application.

1. How well do the student's career goals and chosen course of study align to the NE mission?
2. How well qualified is the student to complete the proposed course of study?

Reviewers will consider the following when evaluating applications against the above Merit Review criteria:

1. **Academic Strength:** Reviewers will consider the applicant's academic record and cumulative undergraduate GPA.
2. **References:** Reviewers will consider the writer's general impression of the student's potential for success, future contribution to the field of nuclear energy, and suitability for award.
3. **Personal Career Goals:** Reviewers will consider how well the applicant describes their long-term career goals; how the UNLP scholarship will help them achieve those goals; how well the applicant explains how their program of study and career goals align to the NE mission; and if the applicant wrote their essay and in a clear and concise manner.

Review results will be presented to the Selection Official and considered along with additional relevant objective and subjective information related to the application process. These may

include program policy, management factors, and the amount of funds available. This information will be factored into the final award selection and approval.

## **8 AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **8.1 Notification of Award**

Notification of the scholarship award will first be made with issuance of a press release on the NE [website](#). All selected and non-selected applicants will then be notified via email. Once all students from a university or college have accepted their awards, the institution will be provided with a list of awardees.

### **8.2 Award Conditions**

UNLP scholarship students will be notified, via email, as soon as possible of their selection or non-selection. If selected, the student must accept or decline the scholarship within **14** days of notification. Failure to comply with the deadline may result in revocation of the scholarship offer.

## **APPENDIX A: ALLOWABLE COSTS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS**

### *Undergraduate Scholarships Cost of Education Allowance*

Tuition, Books, Fees, and Room and Board: All applicable tuition, room and board, books required for classes, and fees normally charged to students of similar academic standing represent allowable costs for scholarships, unless such charges are optional or are refundable. Only board expenses (including food) for on-campus facilities are allowed; however, off campus room expenses may be reimbursed upon presentation of a valid paid rent receipt. These expenses must be submitted to the college or university for payment.

The scholarship award does not provide allowances for special student needs such as travel to employment sites, computers, and books and publications beyond those required for classes, fieldwork expenses, and special study.