



## The Partnership Scholarship Program Handbook

Matching your church scholarship dollar for dollar

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This Partnership Scholarship Program Handbook is designed to be used by pastors and church scholarship committees. Additional copies of this handbook can be downloaded at [bethel.edu/financial-plan/faforms.html](http://bethel.edu/financial-plan/faforms.html). Questions about the Partnership Scholarship Program should be addressed to the Bethel University financial aid office. Call 651.638.6241 (800.255.8706, ext. 6241), email [finplan@bethel.edu](mailto:finplan@bethel.edu), or write to the address below.

Office of Financial Aid  
3900 Bethel Drive  
St. Paul, MN 55112-6999

## What is the Partnership Scholarship Program?

The Partnership Scholarship Program is a student aid program at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn. By participating in the program, your church enters into a “partnership” with Bethel to provide financial assistance to your students who attend Bethel. **Bethel will match qualifying church scholarships with an equal Partnership Scholarship, to a maximum match of \$2,000 per year (\$1,000 per semester) for each full-time student enrolled in the College of Arts & Sciences.**

The Partnership Scholarship Program, which began at Bethel in 1974, has three objectives:

- To encourage Christian young men and women to consider the possibility of a quality Christian college education at Bethel
- To create new sources of financial support for Bethel students
- To involve local churches in the exciting ministry of encouraging their youth to pursue an education at Bethel

## How Does the Partnership Scholarship Program Work?

It all begins at your church. Perhaps a student in your congregation asks your youth pastor about scholarships for college. Or perhaps a parent who has concerns about paying private college tuition costs is searching for some additional help. Whatever the source of interest, developing a church scholarship program should include the following steps:

- The church establishes a scholarship program approved by appropriate governance (see page 4).
- A scholarship committee is formed or an existing committee (e.g., the Christian Education Committee) is assigned the task of selecting scholarship recipients.
- A method of funding your church scholarships is established (see page 4).

The scholarship committee will collect applications and award scholarships within the guidelines established by the church. A Partnership Scholarship Agreement Form is sent to the Bethel University Office of Financial Aid, along with the scholarship check with funds for the entire year from the church.

After verifying each student's eligibility, Bethel will apply the church scholarship and the Partnership Scholarship to the student's account.

## Program Deadlines

Students begin the college planning process a year or more in advance of their actual enrollment. The critical decision time, however, comes in the spring of the year of enrollment when students make commitments to the colleges they will attend. Ideally, churches will notify scholarship recipients during the spring so these students can include the scholarship in their financial planning.

The Partnership Scholarship Agreement Form and a check for the annual scholarship are due **August 1**. Checks should be sent directly to the Office of Financial Aid with the Partnership Scholarship Agreement Form to ensure that funds are applied to the appropriate students. Bethel will not match church scholarships that are paid directly to the student, submitted without the signed Partnership Scholarship Agreement Form, or postmarked after August 1.

## Eligibility for Matching Funds

Church scholarships and matching funds are generally awarded in addition to any other financial aid for which a student may qualify. In certain cases, the addition of these awards may reduce a student's eligibility for government loans and/or work-study funds. In very rare cases, when a student already has very substantial grants, including government grants, the addition of the church scholarship and matching funds will cause the reduction of other grant aid. In these cases, Bethel will notify the student and the church before proceeding.

If a student leaves school before the end of the year, a portion of the church scholarship will be refunded to the church if called for by the Bethel refund policy.

Full-time, degree-seeking students enrolled in the College of Arts & Sciences are eligible for Partnership Scholarships unless they have already earned their first baccalaureate degree; they are receiving Bethel employee tuition benefits; or their tuition is being paid by an employer, ROTC, Postsecondary Enrollment Option, or any other full-tuition remission program.

## Which Church Scholarship Programs Qualify for Partnership Scholarship Program Matching Funds?

### Selection Criteria

Your church has great flexibility in establishing a scholarship program that will qualify for matching funds under the Partnership Scholarship Program. Criteria for student selection may be as general or as specific as the church desires. You may restrict your awards to students who obtain a certain grade point average or students who plan to enter church vocations. Or you may divide your church scholarships among all qualifying students. Some churches only make scholarships available to students who will attend Bethel, while others may open the program to students attending any Christian college or Bible college, or any college that offers to match the church scholarship. Church scholarship amounts may be the same for each student, or a church may award higher amounts to certain students reflecting either need or merit. Bethel requires that the church scholarship is a true scholarship, meaning the student recipient need not work for or repay the church scholarship.

### Formal Church Approval

To qualify for matching funds from Bethel, a church scholarship program must be approved by either the church governing board or by the membership in a business session. This prohibits an individual from simply giving a gift that passes through the church books. Your church's approval of a scholarship program will enhance the visibility of the program and lead to increased awareness, support, and prayer commitment for your students at Bethel.

### Funding Sources

Ideally, funding for scholarships should be provided by a line item in the church budget. Another excellent funding source is earnings from endowed funds. Some churches have decided that all memorial money received by the church that is not otherwise designated will go into the scholarship endowment. Each year, earnings from the fund provide the money for scholarships.

A special scholarship fund may be established outside the church budget as long as care is taken to ensure that such a fund is handled properly. To keep the program within government (IRS) regulations and to maintain its integrity, we ask that churches observe three restrictions:

- If a special fund is used, **gifts from individuals must be made to the fund and not to specific individual students.** This protects the deductibility of the donor's gift for tax purposes. It should be the responsibility of the scholarship committee to select the recipients and determine the amount of the awards within church-approved guidelines.
- **Students and their parents should not benefit from their own giving.** Thus, if a special scholarship fund is established, a student may not receive a scholarship from the fund in a year when that student or his/her parents have given to the fund.

- **A church scholarship may not be a redirection of other funds already in the church budget.** Specifically, a portion of the pastor's salary may not be designated a scholarship for his/her children in order to gain matching funds. Nor may payment to a student for work on a summer ministry project be redirected as a scholarship to obtain matching grants.

Questions about the appropriateness of a particular church scholarship program should be addressed to the Office of Financial Aid at Bethel University.

## **How Can Our Church Establish an Ongoing Scholarship Program?**

The church should establish a scholarship program by official action of the governing board or by the membership in a business meeting. The motion should be somewhat general, but should specify the source of funds (budget, memorial funds, or special scholarship fund), the group that is to administer the program, and the general intent of the program. At a small church, scholarship administration responsibilities could be added to the tasks of the Christian

Education Board or Committee. At a larger church, a separate scholarship committee should be appointed.

The scholarship committee should develop two documents: a description of the requirements of the scholarship program and an application form. The following samples are offered as a starting point for your church. You, of course, may select other criteria for your church's program.

## Church Scholarship Fund Description

1. Applicants must have been a member in good standing of \_\_\_\_\_ Church for at least two years.
2. This scholarship program receives funds from the annual budget of the church and also accepts special gifts. Direct gifts must be made to the fund and not to individual students. Students and/or their parents may not contribute to the fund in the same year they receive a scholarship from the fund.
3. The financial situation of the parents is not a criterion when awarding scholarships from this fund.
4. Year or grade in college is not considered, but this scholarship is only available to full-time undergraduate students.
5. First priority is given to applicants attending Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn. Second priority is given to students attending other Christian colleges or Bible colleges, especially those that will match our church scholarship.
6. Applicants should meet the following requirements:
  - maintain at least a 2.00 (“C”) grade point average
  - be involved in youth service activities
  - write a statement of faith, describing what Christ is doing in their lives and why they are going to college
  - complete and submit the application by March 1
7. The committee will meet in late March or early April to award scholarships for the upcoming school year. Scholarships will be announced by May 1.
8. Scholarships are not to be repaid.

# Church Scholarship Application

Application to the \_\_\_\_\_ Church Scholarship Fund

Applicant's name (first, middle initial, last) \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's home address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Bethel I.D. # (needed for the Agreement Form) \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names: Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Grade point average in: High school \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the college where this scholarship will be used \_\_\_\_\_

Student's year in college (*circle one*) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Student's major \_\_\_\_\_

What youth service activities are you involved in? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your career goal? \_\_\_\_\_

On an attached sheet, provide a statement of your faith, your relationship with the church, and your views on God's will for your life.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Bethel University Partnership Scholarship Agreement Form

(Copy and submit by August 1.) Return to: Office of Financial Aid, 3900 Bethel Drive, St. Paul, MN 55112

An agreement between the Bethel University College of Arts & Sciences, St. Paul, Minn., and

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your church scholarship recipient(s) for the 20\_\_\_\_ - 20\_\_\_\_ academic year.

Name	Bethel ID#	Fall Award	Spring Award	Annual Award

Bethel University agrees to provide a Partnership Scholarship of up to \$2,000 (up to \$1,000 per semester) for the above named student(s) provided:

The student ...

- is enrolled full time and in good standing in the College of Arts & Sciences
- does not have an enrollment status of credential, special, or post-baccalaureate
- is not receiving Bethel employee tuition benefits
- is not benefitting from a full-tuition remission program (e.g., ROTC, Postsecondary Enrollment Option)

The church...

- submits the Partnership Agreement Form to the Office of Financial Aid by **August 1**
- submits the scholarship funds for the entire year by **August 1**

By signing this agreement, the church representatives attest to the following:

- The church scholarship program has been established and approved by the church governing board or the congregation.
- Funds from this scholarship come from either the annual church budget, endowed sources, or a special scholarship fund. If a special fund is created, contributions are given to the fund and not to individual students. **Students and/or students' parents will not contribute to the special fund** (and thus benefit from their personal giving).
- This award has been made by a scholarship committee (or equivalent) within the guidelines established and approved by the church.

**Pastor or Financial Secretary**

**Scholarship Committee Chair (or equivalent)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_