



MADISON COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

LILLY ENDOWMENT COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP

Applicant Guide 2027

*Your future
grows here*



Welcome

The Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship (LECS) is one of Indiana's premier scholarship opportunities. Administered locally by the Madison County Community Foundation on behalf of Lilly Endowment Inc. and Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI), the program recognizes outstanding students while investing in Indiana's future leaders. Each year, two Madison County students are selected to receive this prestigious scholarship, which covers full tuition, required fees, and an annual allowance for required books and equipment at eligible Indiana colleges and universities.

SCHOLARSHIP AT A GLANCE

Two recipients	Two Madison County students are selected each year
Full Tuition	Up to eight semesters of full tuition are covered
Fee + Support	Required fees and up to \$900 each year for required books and equipment
Indiana Colleges	The scholarship applies at eligible Indiana public and private nonprofit colleges and universities.

Finalist Recognition

Every Madison County finalist not selected as a Lilly Scholar receives a \$1,000 Madison County Community Foundation scholarship.



Eligibility Requirements

- Be a resident of Madison County and have attended a Madison County school for at least 12 months prior to the application deadline.

Exception: Madison County residents attending Daleville or Madison-Grant schools are eligible.

- Rank in the Top 15% of their class based on weighted GPA after six semesters.
- Graduate from an accredited Indiana high school in 2027.
- Plan to pursue a full-time bachelor's degree at an eligible Indiana public or private nonprofit Indiana college or university.
- Submit a complete online application by September 10, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

How Applications are Evaluated

Every application is reviewed anonymously by trained evaluators from outside Madison County using a standardized scoring rubric. Student and parent identities are not shared during the initial review process. Finalists are then interviewed by a committee of local volunteers.

The Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship recognizes students who demonstrate excellence in many areas, not just academics. Evaluators consider the complete picture of who you are, what you've accomplished, and how you've made a positive impact on others.

Community Engagement & Contribution (20%)

How have you invested in others?

We look for students who actively strengthen their school, neighborhood, faith community, or Madison County through service and involvement.

Strong applications often demonstrate:

- Meaningful volunteer service
- Community involvement
- Mentoring or helping others
- Building relationships and belonging
- Civic engagement
- Long-term commitment to activities
- Positive impact on others

Leadership & Initiative (20%)

How have you made a difference?

Leadership isn't defined by holding a title. We value students who recognize needs, take initiative, and inspire others through their actions.

Strong applications often demonstrate:

- Taking initiative
- Solving problems
- Working collaboratively
- Advocating for others
- Creating positive change
- Innovation and creativity
- Encouraging and influencing others

Experiences, Responsibilities & Perspective (20%)

How has your journey shaped you?

Every student's story is unique. We value the experiences that have helped shape your character, perspective, and resilience.

Experiences may include:

- Employment
- Family responsibilities
- Caregiving
- Athletics
- Fine arts
- Faith involvement
- Cultural experiences
- Personal challenges
- Growth through adversity

Character, Integrity & Relationships (15%)

How do you treat others?

Character is demonstrated through everyday actions and relationships. We value students who consistently demonstrate integrity, respect, and responsibility.

Strong applications often reflect:

- Accountability
- Respect
- Trustworthiness
- Perseverance
- Humility
- Ethical decision-making
- Positive relationships
- Meaningful contributions to family, school, work, or community

Academic Achievement & Future Vision (15%)

How have you prepared for your future?

Academic success is important, but we also want to understand your goals and how you hope to use your education to make a difference.

Evaluators consider:

- Academic performance
- Course rigor
- Academic growth
- Intellectual curiosity
- Educational goals
- Future Vision Essay
- Ability to articulate future impact

Financial Need (10%)

What circumstances have shaped your educational journey?

Financial need is one part of the overall evaluation and is determined using information provided in the application.

Need is based on:

- Household adjusted gross income
- First-generation college student status
- Multiple family members attending college simultaneously

Financial need is considered alongside all other evaluation areas and does not determine the outcome on its own.

Application

The Madison County Community Foundation works with local high school guidance offices to invite eligible students to apply for the Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship.

- **Applications Open:** August 10, 2026
- **Application Deadline:** September 10, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.
- High school guidance departments verify each applicant's eligibility before the review process begins.

Selection Process

Applications are evaluated through a fair, multi-step review process designed to ensure confidentiality and objectivity.

- Applications are reviewed anonymously by trained evaluators from outside Madison County using a standardized scoring rubric.
- Applicants are evaluated based on:
 - Community engagement and service
 - Leadership and initiative
 - Character and integrity
 - Experiences and responsibilities
 - Academic achievement and future goals
 - Financial need
- The highest-scoring applicants advance to finalist interviews conducted by a volunteer selection committee composed of Madison County Community Foundation board and community members. Committee members adhere to a strict conflict of interest policy.
- Final nominations are submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI), which approves the scholarship recipients.

Each Madison County high school is represented in the finalist pool based on graduating class size, ensuring students from schools across the county have the opportunity to compete for the scholarship.



Interviews

- Finalists will participate in 20-minute, in-person interviews on the evening of Wednesday, October 28, 2026.
- Interview questions will be provided one week in advance.
- Finalists will be evaluated equally on verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and response content.
- Final selections will be based on:
 - Application score: 50%
 - Interview score: 50%
- Following committee discussion and scoring, two nominees and alternates will be submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana for final approval

Optional Mock Interviews

Optional mock interviews will be offered Saturday, October 24, 2026 before finalist interviews. Community volunteers who are not part of the selection committee will provide interview practice and help finalists become familiar with the interview space.

Times will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Participation and performance will have no bearing on the official interview or selection process.

Timeline at a Glance

- **August 10, 2026:** Application opens.
- **September 10, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.:** Application deadline.
- **September 2026:** High schools confirm applicant eligibility.
- **Mid-October 2026:** Finalists are selected and notified.
- **October 21, 2026:** Finalists receive interview questions.
- **Saturday, October 24, 2026:** Optional mock interviews are offered.
- **Wednesday, October 28, 2026:** Finalist interviews are held.
- **Following interviews:** Two nominees and alternates are submitted to Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI) for final approval.
- **After ICI approval:** All finalists are notified. Non-recipients receive a personal phone call, while recipients are surprised with an in-person announcement at their school.

Questions?

Madison County Community Foundation

765-644-0002

ksisk@madisonccf.org

**Application opens August
10, 2026.**

**Complete applications are
due September 10, 2026,
by 11:59 pm.**

**Apply at
madisonccf.org/lilly-scholars**

