

## Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship -Funding Partner Agreement

**History:** The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry launched a debt-avoidance scholarship collaboration in 2017 as one component of the UMC Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. Inspired by a \$1,000,000 grant awarded to Wespath (UMC General Board of Pension and Health Benefits) in 2016 by the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Wespath, GBHEM and the National Association of United Methodist Foundations collaborated to launch this scholarship and other financial literacy efforts in partnership with United Methodist foundations, annual conferences and seminaries and schools of theology.

For 2025/2026, meritorious United Methodist seminarians will be eligible for a **\$3,500** scholarship from GBHEM, as well as additional support from foundations, annual conferences, and seminaries. The seminarians will also receive intentional opportunities to enhance their personal financial literacy. The purpose of this scholarship program is to create a collaboration across United Methodist organizations in support of future clergy reducing or eliminating educational debt and building upon financial acumen.

**This agreement is for the 2025-2026 academic year (2025 calendar year) partnership.** Additional donors or church support will also be encouraged.

### Criteria for Scholarship Candidates:

- United Methodist pursuing or certified candidate for ministry (elder or deacon)
- Demonstrate merit, progress, and commitment in the candidacy process
- Full-time MDIV student enrolled at one of the 13 United Methodist seminaries/schools of theology
- Demonstrate financial need and how this scholarship will help avoid additional student loans
- Approval/recommendation through funding partner's scholarship committee review

### Funding Partner Expectations:

- Commit to fund a specified number and amount of scholarship awards through this scholarship
- Promote the scholarship opportunity to potential students
- Review, judge and make award decisions based on merit of screened qualified applicants within their area
- Submit final award decisions to the GBHEM Scholarships by date required
- Transfer matching funds to GBHEM by date required

### GBHEM Scholarships will:

- Administer the application, process award notifications and check disbursements for applicants
- Screen applicants for general eligibility for the program.
- Coordinate the judge access and reviews for each Funding Partner.
- Recognize all partners in award letters and reporting.
- Monitor recipients EY Financial Services or Saving Grace curriculum completion
- Provide reports to Funding Partners on final awards.
- Disburse the scholarship check to the school. Individual award amounts will vary dependent on award matches from GBHEM, annual conference, or UM foundation.

Insert name of Annual Conference or Foundation here

(Funding Partner) agrees to participate in the Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship program for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, over award period 2025/2026 with the following parameters:

**AMOUNTS TO BE AWARDED:**

A. How many students a year (awarded in the Fall term) will be awarded from your scholarship funding?

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B. How much will each student's individual award be from you scholarship funding? (The minimum is \$2,500, your individual award may be more) **GBHEM will provide individual awards of \$3,500 in 2025.**

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How should your match be recognized on the recipients' award letters? (ie: ABC Annual Conference; ABC Annual Conference MEF Scholarship; ABC Foundation Smith Scholarship; ABC Foundation)

Where will your matching funds come from? An existing scholarship? MEF? Newly raised funds?

Who is the main person GBHEM Scholarships will be in contact with for this program?

Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone:

**JUDGING/ SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW**

Each Funding Partner may name persons to review and select recipients of their scholarship match from their area. Judging/ Scholarship review will be completed online. The judge site is open from mid-April through the end of May. List the persons (minimum 1 and up to 5) you wish to be judges of scholarship matches from your area.

Please inform all listed below about their participation expectations in this program.

	<i>Name and Title</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

**APPLICATION PROMOTION**

Please direct students to apply for this scholarship online **December 15, 2024 - March 31, 2025** at [www.gbhem.org/scholarshipapplication](http://www.gbhem.org/scholarshipapplication) . On the first page of the application students will choose to apply for the "EXCELLENCE IN CLERGY LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP." Applicants must reapply each year.

**FUNDS**

Scholarship recipients are identified and awarded by July 1. GBHEM will send a final report of recipients and funds due to the Funding Partner by August 1.

**Funding Partner will send funds to the GBHEM lockbox by September 1 to this address:**

GBHEM, Excellence in Clergy Leadership Scholarship, PO Box 440102, Nashville, TN 37244-0102

<b>Printed Name:</b>		<b>Title:</b>	
		<b>Date:</b>	

Please return this completed form to GBHEM Scholarships contacts:

Allyson Potts apotts@gbhem.org 615-340-7343; Marcie Bigord mbigord@gbhem.org 615-340-7338