



## Law School Scholarships

A scholarship is probably the first kind of financial aid that comes to a student's mind when he or she contemplates trying to get free money for school. Competition for these privately funded, merit-based awards is fierce; still, most law schools report around half of all first-year law students receive some kind of scholarship.

If you want to be in that lucky fifty percent of 1Ls, you have to know how to find the money. One great way to search for scholarships is by using online databases such as EdFed's Scholarship Search. You should also check in with your college or university's financial aid office for school-specific awards and call your state's bar association.

As most scholarship recipients know, finding free money for school, like almost every other endeavor in life, is more the result of persistent, hard work than of blind luck. If you want to increase your chances of getting a scholarship, apply to as many scholarship programs as you're eligible for; and apply early.

Below is a small compendium of scholarships for law students. You can use this list as a map to guide you to great sources of free financial aid. Thousands of law students have gotten sponsorship from their schools, state bars, and professional organizations in their practice areas. With diligence and some effort, so can you!

### Scholarships by Practice Area

The American Intellectual Property Law Education Foundation (AIPLEF) offers two scholarships for students of IP law through its Sidney B. Williams, Jr. Intellectual Property Law Scholarships. This year, the Foundation is awarding a number of \$10,000 scholarships to racial or ethnic minority IP law students. The Foundation also finds internships and mentoring programs to assist these students.

The Jan Jancin Award is another IP-law scholarship. This \$5,000 award is given to a 3L with "demonstrated excellence in the area of intellectual property" and is funded by the American Intellectual Property Law Association and the ABA-Intellectual Property Law Section.

The William H. Gates Public Service Law Scholarship is a new award given to five University of Washington School of Law first-year students. The award covers the total cost of attendance and "incidental expenses." These scholars all commit to working in public service law for five years after graduation.

UCLA law students who are declared "outstanding...in taxation" by the tax faculty are eligible to apply for the Hochman Scholarship, a \$15,000 annual award. For those Northwestern University J.D.'s who chose to focus on tax law, the university awards three \$25,000 scholarships to highly qualified applicants for its LL.M. in Taxation.

## **Scholarships by Location**

Harry A. Blackmun Scholarship, named after the SCOTUS justice who penned the majority opinion on *Roe v. Wade*, is a variable award given to any law student at an accredited U.S law school. Although the scholarship website notes that “preference will be given to applicants with a significant tie to Justice Blackmun’s home state of Minnesota,” all students are eligible to apply.

The Women’s Section of the Contra Costa County Bar Association awards at least two scholarships annually to local 2L students who have shown “active community involvement” and a concern for women’s issues. Awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Alabama State Bar and the Alabama Law Foundation award the Cabaniss-Johnston Scholarship to Alabama residents who are 2Ls, and the William A. McClain Scholarship from the Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati provides \$5,000 to African-American 2Ls from Cincinnati.

## **Scholarships for Diversity**

Thousands of scholarships exist to support diversity in the law. Law students of color are eligible for myriad awards. For example, the American Bar Association Fund for Justice and Education gives several \$5,000 Legal Opportunity Scholarships each year to racial and ethnic minority law students. A great source for information on similar scholarships is the ABA’s Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, and the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) also has a great list of awards for minority law students.

Definitions of diversity in law schools are also beginning to include those of varying sexual orientations. The University of Chicago’s Stonewall Scholarship, named for the 1969 Stonewall Riot, is awarded to a UC law student “who is likely to use his or her legal education toward the advancement of gay and lesbian rights.” The Stonewall Community Foundation and Eastern Michigan University also offer scholarships of the same name for those who work for GLBT civil rights. The National Lesbian and Gay Law Association also has its \$1,000 Michael Greenberg Student Writing Competition award for law students who demonstrate outstanding scholarship in GLBT law issues.

## **Scholarships by Law School**

The University of California, Berkeley’s Boalt Hall offers 12 scholarships annually to its law students, but perhaps no law school outdoes Notre Dame in this department. Its law school grants 44 separate scholarships and fellowships each year!

Because each school’s programs are different, and award amounts may change from year to year, students are strongly urged to contact the law school’s financial aid office to determine eligibility for school-specific scholarships.

## **Scholarships by Law Firm**

Many scholarships offered by law firms tend to favor a geographical area, practice area, or diverse applicants. Still, it's a good idea to check around and see which firms might be looking for what you have to offer.

Dykema Gossett, PLLC, awards its \$7,500 Diversity Scholarship to 2Ls and 3Ls at University of Michigan Law School. Scholars also have an invitation to work at the firm as summer associates. The Kirkland & Ellis, LLP, Minority Scholarship Program provides 16 scholarships annually to students at Northwestern University School of Law and the University of Chicago Law School.

Jackson, MS, law firm Butler Snow O'Mara Stevens & Cannada has supported students and programs at the University of Mississippi's School of Law for more than 30 years. In 2000, the firm gave \$150,000 to establish the Butler Snow Scholarship in Law Endowment to grant \$3,000 per year to several qualified Ole Miss law students.

## **Summary**

No matter what law school you attend, what organization you end up working for, or what practice area you focus on, you will be able to find scholarships that fit you. Many scholarships are solely based on merit and academic aptitude; other awards consider financial need. Some programs will award you for your non-law specializations or interests.

It's important for law students to remember that although the market for free money is competitive, it's not impossible to find a scholarship if you apply yourself with diligence and tenacity. Search long and hard, remember to apply early, and good luck!