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## **PURPOSE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP**

The purpose of the Will County Legal Opportunity Scholarship Program is to encourage diversity within the Will County legal community by giving an incoming first-year Black or Latino law student financial assistance for Law School and the opportunity to reduce outstanding legal education debt while gaining valuable networking within the community.

## **HOW THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM WORKS**

The recipient of the Will County Legal Opportunity Scholarship Program will be awarded \$5,000 per year for three years to assist in payment of law school tuition. This \$5,000 payment will be paid directly to the law school after the recipient provides proof of enrollment at the beginning of each semester, and proof that the student is meeting the minimum 2.6 GPA requirement. The recipient shall provide a copy of his or her report card to the Scholarship Committee after being posted each semester. The recipient must complete law school within three years of the Fall 2022 semester.

During law school, the recipient will have the opportunity to enroll in summer internships through the Will County Courthouse, State's Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and participating Will County Law Firms. This unique opportunity will provide an excellent opportunity for the recipient to network and display his or her professional and community leadership skills.

The recipient of the Scholarship will receive an additional \$1,000 to use towards a bar preparation course after recipient provides proof of enrollment for the Illinois Bar Examination.

Upon successfully passing the Bar Examination and obtaining employment with a governmental entity in Will County or actively practicing law in Will County, the recipient will receive up to \$10,000 per year for up to three years to pay any outstanding student loan debt. The recipient will be required to provide statements indicating the amount of law school student loans that remain outstanding for each of the three years after graduating law school. The Will County Bar Association ("WCBA") will pay any outstanding balance up to \$10,000 per year directly to the financial institution that holds the loan for a three-year period, so long as the recipient meets the following requirements:

1. Is licensed to practice law in Illinois,
2. Is in good-standing with the ARDC,
3. Is employed by a governmental entity, law firm, and/or as a sole practitioner in Will County, and
4. Is actively practicing law within Will County.

## **ELIGIBLE STUDENT LOANS**

Student loans incurred for tuition, fees, and other expenses associated with completion of the recipient's legal degree are eligible for payment under the Scholarship.

Student loan debt incurred to complete other academic degrees are not eligible for payment under the Scholarship.

Any payment up to \$10,000 to repay outstanding legal education debt will be paid directly to the financial institution that holds the loan.

Payments by the Will County Bar Association under this service agreement do not exempt the recipient from his/her responsibility and/or liability for any loan(s) for which they are obligated, as the Will County Bar Association is not obligated to the lender/note holder for its commitment to the recipient. The recipient is still responsible for the entire loan balance(s), including any amount not paid by the Will County Bar Association.

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Eligible Applicants must:

- Be Black or Latino;
- Provide confirmation that you have been accepted into a law school accredited by the American Bar Association for the Fall 2022 semester; and
- Complete the online application no later than May 31st (submitting an application does not guarantee selection) the following:
  - Personal Statement and Essay (illegible applications will not be considered);
  - Letter of recommendation by an unrelated person; and
  - An official college transcript with the registrar's seal.
- Applicant must agree to allow the WCBA to use his/her name, photo and/or story in future scholarship materials and on the WCBA website.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Completed applications must be received no later than **May 31, 2022** for consideration. Applications will not be considered complete unless **ALL** application materials are received by this date. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

The Selection Committee may request that the candidate make a personal appearance before the Selection Committee.

The decision of the Selection Committee is final.

The successful candidate will be notified by a member of the Selection Committee. The Scholarship Committee will issue a Scholarship contract. The initial \$5,000 payment will be made to the law school once the contract is fully executed.

## **PRIVACY**

Information submitted by applicants will be used only for the purpose of evaluating them as potential winners of the Will County Legal Opportunity Scholarship Program. The WCBA nor the members of the Selection Committee will not share, sell, or distribute any applicant's contact or personal information.

## **CONTRACT**

The recipient and the WCBA will enter into a contract prior to starting his or her first semester in the fall of 2022. The Scholarship will be awarded to the recipient each year during the three years of law school, and the three years following law school so long as the recipient meets all requirements of the Scholarship Program.

A recipient can be in default of the Contract for the following:

- Failing to remain enrolled and in good standing at an ABA accredited law school;
- Failing to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.6;
- Being found guilty of any crime or receiving disciplinary action from the law school or the ARDC resulting from a failure to demonstrate honesty, fairness, candor, or trustworthiness or otherwise taking any action that is unbecoming to being a member of the legal profession;
- Failing to complete law school within three years;
- Failing to be licensed within the State of Illinois within six months of completing law school;
- Failing to be employed by a governmental entity, law firm, and/or as a sole practitioner in Will County during the three-year period following law school;
- Failing to actively practice law within Will County, Illinois, during the three-year period following law school; or
- Failing to provide the Scholarship Committee with access to records and other information necessary to document compliance with contract terms.

In the event of a default, the Scholarship Committee can revoke any Scholarship, and is under no obligation to make any further payments.

