



Maryland Standardbred Industry Thomas Cooke Scholarship Overview for School Year 2026/2027

Sponsored by: Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Association, Maryland Standardbred Horsemen's Assistance Fund, Rosecroft Raceway and Ocean Downs Racetrack and other industry partners

In general, scholarships are based on overall engagement with horses, but in particular involvement with the Standardbred breed and its related industries. Other criteria for consideration include financial need, academic achievement, and community involvement. Scholarships are awarded at the sole discretion of the Maryland Standardbred Industry Scholarship Committee.

Neither the Maryland Standardbred Horsemen's Assistance Fund nor the sponsors, or Scholarship Committee discriminates based on sex, race, religion, national origin, or handicap.

Purpose: The Maryland Standardbred Industry Scholarship Program aims to support and encourage students who have demonstrated a meaningful relationship with Standardbred Horses. Through the award of Thomas Cooke scholarships, the Maryland Standardbred Industry Scholarship Program recognizes the unique contributions of individuals involved in the Standardbred Industry and encourages continued academic and professional development in both direct and indirect related fields. (Vet, Farrier, and marketing and publicity specifically as related to the horse industry.) The scholarships available for the residents of Prince George's or Worcester County (Maryland) do not require applicants to have an industry connection eligibility requirement but encourages participation in events at Standardbred facilities across the state.

Eligibility Criteria

Scholarships are available for the following:

- **Residents of Prince George's or Worcester County (Maryland)**

Applicants must:

- Be a high school senior, high school graduate, or currently enrolled in an accredited college, university, or trade school
- Proof of residency of Prince George's or Worcester County (Maryland)
- Are encouraged to visit or attend an event at a standardbred facility of your choice.
- Submit a completed application and all required materials by the deadline.

- **Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Association Member or family member**
Applicants must:
 - Be a high school senior, high school graduate, or currently enrolled in an accredited college, university, or trade school
 - Be a member of Cloverleaf Standardbred Owners Association or immediate family member (spouse/child/dependent)
 - Submit a completed application and all required materials by the deadline.
- **Rosecroft Raceway or Ocean Downs Racetrack Employee or family member**
Applicants must:
 - Be a high school senior, high school graduate, or currently enrolled in an accredited college, university, or trade school
 - Employees/contract workers of Maryland Harness Racing tracks or immediate family (spouse/child/dependent).
 - Submit a completed application and all required materials by the deadline.

Programs that qualify:

- Accredited degree programs (associate, bachelor's, graduate), community colleges.
- Accredited/certified trade or vocational programs (e.g., veterinary tech, welding, equine dentistry, farrier)

Ineligible Recipients:

- Directors, officers, key employees of the Maryland Standardbred Horsemen's Assistance Fund; selection committee members; substantial contributors; and their family members/households.
- Anyone where an award would operate as compensation or an inducement for employment with a donor, track, or stable.
- Applicants not meeting eligibility requirements or whose documentation can't be verified.

Allowable uses & payment method: Qualified educational expenses: tuition, room/board, food plans, mandatory fees, required books/supplies, and required tools/equipment for approved programs.

Payment: Will be made directly to the school, requires proof of expenses and proof of enrollment before payment.

Award Amount: Scholarship awards typically are a minimum of \$1,000 depending on available funding and number of qualified applicants. The scholarship is a one-time award, but previous recipients may reapply in subsequent years.

Application Requirements:

- All applications must include:
- Completed Scholarship Application Form
- Official Transcript (most recent academic institution attended)
- Proof of Involvement with Standardbred or other horse breeds (if required)
- (e.g., letter of reference from a trainer, owner, or organization leader; event participation records; photographs or social media)

- Personal Essay (500–750 words) or Video (2 – 3 minutes) addressing:
 - Your experience with Standardbred or other horse breeds and how this experience has influenced your life goals. (if required)
 - Your academic and/or career aspirations
 - Why this scholarship is important to you
- Two Letters of Recommendation (each not to exceed 500 words) from non-family members (e.g., teacher, employer, mentor, co-worker)

Application Process:

Download the application form from <https://marylandstandardbreds.com/scholarships> or request a copy by email at scholarships@marylandstandardbreds.com.

Submit your complete application packet via:

Email: scholarships@marylandstandardbreds.com

Mail: Maryland Standardbred Horsemen's Assistance Fund, Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 1732 Temple Hills MD 20757

Deadline for submission: March 31, 2026 - *Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.*

Scholarships Award Notification: Will be on or before May 15, 2026

Selection Process:

- The Scholarship Committee will evaluate applications based on:
 - Strength and clarity of engagement with horses and in particular with Standardbred Horses
 - Academic achievement and potential
 - Quality and originality of the personal essay or video
 - Letters of recommendation (2)
 - *Applicants may be contacted for a brief virtual interview.*

Notification and Disbursement: Recipients agree that the Scholarship Program may publicize the award of scholarships to the recipients. Funds will be disbursed directly to the educational institution for tuition or fees. Upon request, the Scholarship Committee may distribute a portion of any award directly to the recipient for books, supplies or other expenses to further the education of the recipient.

Contact:

For questions or further information, please contact:
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