



FOUNDATION

ODA MEMBER BENEFIT

DENTAL STUDENT 2026 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDANCE

Scholarship Amount

Awarded scholarships will be in the amount of at least \$1,500. Past scholarship winners can apply multiple years in a row for the Dental Student Scholarship, as long as they meet all eligibility requirements.

Eligibility

1. Applicant must be a resident of Ohio.
2. Applicant must be entering at least the second year of dental school at an ADA accredited university during Fall 2026.
3. Applicant must be a member of ASDA.

Requirements

Students applying for an ODAF Dental Student Scholarship must:

1. Provide a completed application with all requested information included. Incomplete, illegible or late applications will not be reviewed.
2. Show their current financial status, verified by the school's financial aid office.
3. Include two letters of recommendation as described below.
4. Complete essay portions.
5. Include Curriculum Vitae.

Online Submission

The ODA Foundation utilizes an online form to collect your submission. You can save an incomplete submission and continue at later date, but this will require creating a login. If you create a login, you will receive an email from JotForm to verify your email address. Once verified, you will receive a second email with a link to continue your submission. **Should you choose not to create a login, you must have all required documents ready to upload at the time of completing the online submission.** All documents must be uploaded as PDFs. You can find the link to submit the application at: <https://www.oda.org/get-involved/with-the-oda-foundation/scholarships-grants/>.

Named Scholarships

The ODA Foundation also awards several named scholarships including the Darryl Dever & David Owsiany Advocacy Scholarship, Forward Ever Scholarship, and Dr. E. Karl Schneider II Humanitarian Scholarship. The decisions for these awards will be based on the dental student scholarship application and answers in your Biographical Sketch Essays. The Dr. Kevin Laing Fund Scholarship will be awarded to one student who comes from or intends to practice dentistry in a rural/underserved community. The Dr. James F. Mercer Leadership Scholarship will also be awarded to one student who qualifies and completes the supplemental essay questions in the Mercer Leadership Scholarship section as noted below.

Deadline

The completed application and required documentation must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. on June 8, 2026. Applicants will be notified if they will receive an ODAF scholarship by mid-September.

Questions

For questions about the scholarship application, eligibility or requirements, contact the ODA Foundation at 614-486-2700 or cassy@oda.org.

About the ODA Foundation

The Ohio Dental Association Foundation is a 501(c)(3) Ohio charity and is the philanthropic arm of the Ohio Dental Association. It is governed by a Board of Trustees elected by the Executive Committee of the Ohio Dental Association.

ODA Foundation Mission

The Ohio Dental Association Foundation mission is to improve the oral health of the citizens of Ohio and to enhance the dental profession in Ohio.

ODA Foundation Focus

The ODA Foundation supports a strong dental education environment in Ohio. The scholarship program furthers the profession of dentistry by attracting the highest caliber of potential dental professionals. Visit www.oda.org to learn more.

Instructions

Students who submit complete applications will be contacted by phone, email or letter by mid-September 2026 informing them if the scholarship request has been funded or denied. In order to evaluate your application, you must submit a complete application online. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Before doing the online application, first read the rest of this Application Guidance, as you must prepare several documents with essays, get two letters of recommendation and ask university representatives to complete two forms. **If you do not wish to create a login, the submission must be completed in one sitting.**

The checklist below will help you determine what you need to complete your submission. When you are ready to start, go to: <https://www.oda.org/get-involved/with-the-oda-foundation/scholarships-grants>.

Your online application must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on June 8, 2026.

You will need to prepare the following documents in PDF format to submit with your online application:

- ☐ Curriculum Vitae
- ☐ IRS 1040 forms (student applicant and spouse, if applicable). Please redact/black out social security number. If you did not file taxes in 2025, you do not need to include a 1040.
- ☐ Financial Sketch Essays
- ☐ Biographical Sketch Essays
- ☐ OPTIONAL: Mercer Leadership Scholarship Essays (only complete this portion if you will be a D4 at Ohio State in Fall 2026, have been an Ohio resident for 5 or more years and completed your D3 year with a 3.5GPA or higher)
- ☐ Letter of recommendation from one ODA member dentist on their business/professional letterhead
- ☐ Letter of recommendation from a second ODA member dentist or a member of the applicant's community who can speak to applicant's community involvement, leadership or advocacy experiences
- ☐ Financial Needs Assessment (completed by school financial aid officer)
- ☐ Academic Achievement Record (completed by school official)

The Financial Needs Assessment and Academic Achievement Record forms are included in this Application Guidance and are also available for download as individual forms at <https://www.oda.org/get-involved/with-the-oda-foundation/scholarships-grants>. These individual forms may be easier to send to your school's officials for completion.

Student Applicant Financial Sketch Essays

Please answer the questions on a page marked as "Financial Sketch Essays" with the questions typed above your answer. Please limit yourself to no more than two pages of singled spaced 10pt font. Save this document as a PDF to upload in your online application.

FINANCIAL SKETCH ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *Will you be employed while in school or on break? If so, what type of job, how many hours and do you expect this to defray the cost of education and/or living expenses? If you are not employed, please explain why not.*
2. *How much student debt (**dental school debt only**) do you expect to incur and what are your plans for paying it down?*
3. *Do you have other financial obligations not reflected in this application and how do they impact your financial need?*

Biographical Sketch Essays

Please answer the questions on a page marked "Biographical Sketch Essays" with the questions typed above your answer. Please limit yourself to no more than two pages of singled spaced Arial 10pt font. Save this document as a PDF to upload in your online application.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ESSAY QUESTIONS:

1. *What student organizations are you involved with (including ASDA)? Please list organizations and describe your involvement with each.*
2. *Have you had any involvement with the ODA or ADA, such as attending ODA Annual Session, Street of Dreams, or ODA council meetings? Please list your experiences and explain any involvement beyond general attendance.*

3. *What is your volunteer or community experience over the past four years both inside and outside of dentistry? Please include any community, school-related or other such experience, and describe your level of involvement in each. (Answers to this question will help the review committee determine the recipient of the annual Dr. E. Karl Schneider II Humanitarian Scholarship.)*
4. *What involvement have you had in advocacy efforts such as Day at the Statehouse or Student Lobby Day? (Answers to this question will help the review committee determine the recipient of the annual Darryl Dever & David Owsiany Advocacy Scholarship.)*
5. *Have you taken on any leadership roles in organized dentistry, dental school, volunteer activities or in your community? (Answers to this question will help the review committee determine the recipient of the annual Forward Ever Scholarship.)*
6. *Why did you decide to pursue a career in dentistry and how have the experiences you described in Biographical Sketch Questions 1 – 5 influenced your life and your career decision?*
7. *How do you see yourself fulfilling the ODA Foundation's mission when you are a practicing dentist?*
8. *What are your post graduate personal and professional goals for your first 5 years out of school?*
9. *Do you plan to practice dentistry in Ohio? Please explain why or why not.*
10. *Do you plan to practice in an underserved area of Ohio such as a rural area or serve a population that struggles to access care? If yes, please explain. (Answers to this question help the review committee determine the recipient of the Dr. Kevin Laing Fund Scholarship.)*

Dr. James F. Mercer Leadership Scholarship

The Dr. James F. Mercer Leadership Scholarship will be awarded on merit to one student entering the fourth year of dental school at The Ohio State University College of Dentistry in Fall 2026. This scholarship will be given in recognition of his or her leadership and accomplishments during the first three years of dental school and in the community. The award is given to honor the legacy of Dr. Mercer, who passed away in 2002, and left a legacy of commitment and service to others, after serving patients, organized dentistry and his community for decades. As part of the Akron Dental Society and ODA, he received numerous awards and recognition for his service. He also served as the 7th District Trustee to the ADA as well as its treasurer. Awards for this special leadership-based scholarship have ranged from \$4,000 to \$7,500 in prior years.

Students who will be a D4 dental student at The Ohio State University in Fall 2026, have a minimum 3.5 GPA at the end of their D3 year, and have been an Ohio resident for 5 or more years qualify for this special scholarship. If you would like to be considered for the Dr. James F. Mercer Leadership Scholarship, please complete the following Dr. James F. Mercer Leadership Scholarship Essays. Please answer the questions on a page marked "Mercer Leadership Essays" with the questions typed above your answer. Please limit yourself to no more than two pages of singled spaced Arial 10pt font. Save this document as a PDF to upload in your online ODA Foundation Dental Student Scholarship application.

MERCER LEADERSHIP ESSAYS QUESTIONS:

1. *Define yourself as a leader, both inside dental school and in your personal life/community.*
2. *What are your personal and professional goals and how will you make sure they are achieved? Include challenges you may expect and how you will overcome them.*
3. *How do you plan to be a leader and advocate in dentistry and your community in the future?*

Letters of Recommendation

The ODA Foundation requires two letters of recommendation. Only one letter of recommendation can be from a dental school faculty member. Family members cannot provide letters of recommendation. Each letter of recommendation should be on the reference's professional or business letterhead and be signed (electronic signature is fine) and sent to the applicant as a PDF to upload with your application. If the reference would prefer their letter to remain confidential, they may email it directly to cassy@oda.org.

ODA member reference:

One letter must be from an ODA member dentist (such as a mentor, childhood/family dentist, dentist from shadowing experiences or volunteer activities, or faculty member). **If you're unsure whether a potential reference is a current ODA member, please email cassy@oda.org to confirm their membership status.**

Second reference:

The second letter should either be from a second ODA member dentist or a non-dentist member of the applicant's community who can speak toward the applicant's community involvement, leadership or advocacy experiences (such as a community leader, current or former employer, mentors, etc.).

Financial Needs Assessment

To the Applicant:

The ODA Foundation requests its Financial Needs Assessment be signed and submitted to your school's financial aid office. The financial aid office will be responsible for completing this form. The completed form must be uploaded as a PDF with your online application.

I hereby authorize the release of my Financial Needs Assessment to the ODA Foundation only for the purpose of determining my financial need. I understand the information will be kept strictly confidential **and that the ODAF may request additional information from the Financial Aid Office related to this application.**

Applicant Signature _____

Applicant Printed Name _____ Date _____

To the Financial Aid Officer:

The student named above is applying for the ODA Foundation Dental Student Scholarship. In order to consider this student's application, it is necessary to have this Financial Needs Assessment Form completed. You can send/give the completed form directly to the student.

Name of Applicant: _____

Is the applicant an Ohio resident? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is student eligible for student loan assistance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

A. School Expenses for 2026/27 school year B. Financial Resources

(Do not include housing)

Tuition: \$ _____

Fees: \$ _____

Books: \$ _____

Supplies: \$ _____

Scholarships/Grants: _____ Source Amount \$ _____

Family Contribution: _____ \$ _____

Employment Earnings: _____ \$ _____

Other Income (incl. spouse:) _____ \$ _____

Subtotal of \$ _____

2026/27 School Expenses

Subtotal of Financial Resources \$ _____

C. Financial Loans: Source

Loan Received: _____

Loan Received: _____

Loan Received: _____

Loan Received: _____

Subtotal of Financial Loans

Eligible Amount

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

Summary Total

1. Indicate: Subtotal of School Expenses (A) \$ _____

2. Subtract: Subtotal of Financial Resources (B) \$ _____

3. Equals:

Unmet Financial Need \$ _____

List other scholarships/grants and amounts awarded for the 2026/27 school year:

Signature

Financial Aid Officer's Signature _____ Date _____

Financial Aid Officer's Printed Name _____ Title _____

School Name _____ Phone Number _____

Academic Achievement Record

To the Applicant:

To consider and evaluate this application, the Academic Achievement Record must be signed by the applicant and completed by a school official and stamped with the school's official seal. The completed form must be included as a PDF in your online application submission. The financial aid office or registrar may complete this form.

I hereby authorize the release of my academic records to the ODA Foundation, only for the purpose of evaluating my application for the Dental Student Scholarship.

Applicant's Signature _____

Applicant's Printed Name _____ Date _____

To the Dental School/University Official:

The student named above is applying for the ODA Foundation Dental Student Scholarship. In order to consider this student's application, it is necessary to have this Academic Achievement Record Form completed by a school official in its entirety and stamped with the school's official seal.

Dental Program (school enrolled): _____

Year of Graduation: _____

Student is enrolled in Fall 2026 courses: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Enrollment Status: ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time

*Most Recent Cumulative GPA: _____

*Class Ranking: _____

School Official Seal

***Note: Please calculate GPA on a 4.0 scale.**

Signature

School Officer's Signature _____ Date _____

School Officer's Printed Name _____ Title _____

School Name _____ Phone Number _____