

Mary E. Bivins Foundation Scholarship Policy

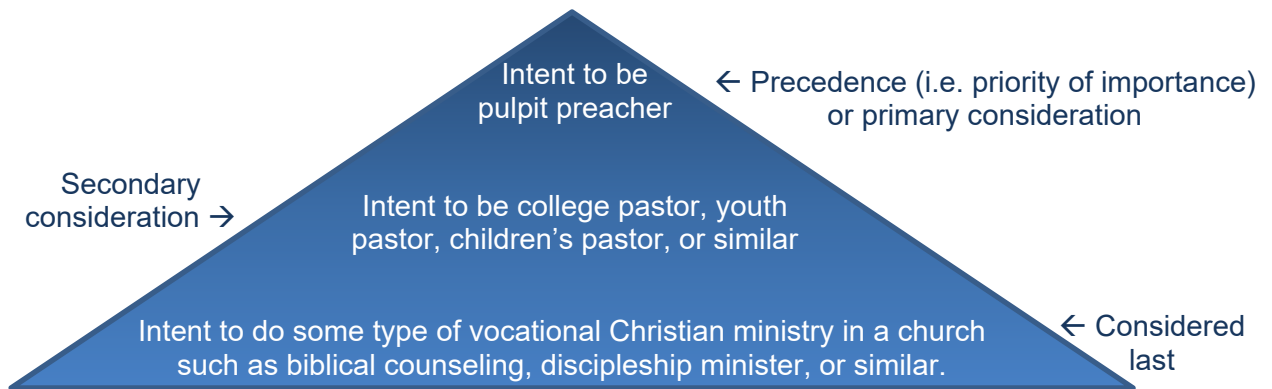
Scholarship Purpose:

As stated in the Restated Articles of Incorporation of the Mary E. Bivins Foundation, the purpose of the Religious Scholarship Program is **to educate ministers to preach the Christian religion**. Scholarships are provided for upper-level undergraduate or graduate education that will lead to a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in a field that prepares the student to preach the Christian religion.

Individuals who intend to serve as a pulpit preacher* upon graduation will be given precedence.

*one whose function is to deliver sermons publicly

Individuals must have a strong inward call or desire, the necessary gifts and abilities to be successful in that calling, and external affirmation of their call to be selected as a Scholar. Individuals in subsequent tiers, as indicated by the graphic below, will be considered if additional funding is available.



The terms pastor and minister are often used synonymously but the description varies based on denomination. Per a strict definition, all pastors can perform the duties of a minister, but not all ministers can act as pastors. The strict definition will be used for the purposes of this policy. Other titles used include Reverend, Elder, or Father. Regardless of terminology, discretion will be used to determine if the individual is serving as a minister with limited responsibility in the church or a pastor with full oversight of the church and its congregation.

	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Pastor</i>
<i>Duties</i>	Coordinates church activities, administrative duties of the church, ministers sacraments, preach, and spiritual guidance	Preach, worship services, sermons, ministering sacraments, advise, and counsel
<i>Training and qualifications</i>	Requires a sense of calling; other qualifications dependent upon denomination; skillset varies based on type of ministry; most denominations do not require formalized education such as a bachelor's degree	Requires a sense of calling; other qualifications dependent on the denomination; common requirements are speaking, attentiveness, and social perceptiveness; most denominations prefer a bachelor's or master's degree level training

The following will not be considered

- Individuals seeking a second advanced theological Degree*
*whether or not the Bivins Religious Scholarship funded the first
- Individuals seeking a PhD
- Individuals who intend to serve in music ministry
- Individuals who intend to teach at a theological school
- Individuals who intend to enter the international mission field full-time
- Individuals who intend to work in a parachurch organization

Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be a citizen of the United States of America and a permanent resident of the northernmost 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle. A permanent resident of the Texas Panhandle is defined as an individual (1) who has resided or been gainfully employed in the northernmost 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle for the 12-month period immediately preceding the date of application or (2) who has graduated from a high school located in the northernmost 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle and has been continuously enrolled in a post-secondary program.
 - Exceptions to residency criteria will be considered on an individual basis for applicants who have served in the military or Peace Corps for the 12-month period immediately preceding the date of application and who lived in the Texas Panhandle immediately preceding service.
- Must be classified as a college junior or above by the first semester for which the scholarship would be effective. Official college transcript(s) for all previous work is required.
- Must have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or above or a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or above. For new or returning scholarship applicants, all previous college level work completed within the last 5 years will be considered when applying the cumulative GPA requirement. If no college coursework has been completed in the last 5 years, the most recent cumulative GPA will be used.
- The degree program selected must prepare the student to preach the Christian religion or enter into vocational ministry. The institutional degree plan specifying the course requirements must be submitted to and approved by the Scholarship Committee as part of the application process. Scholarship funds may be applied only to those courses included in a student's approved degree plan. Funding of any dual degree is limited to only those courses that directly apply to the degree plan approved by the Committee.

Scholarship Requirements:

- Must accept the terms of the scholarship by signing the Scholarship Acceptance Agreement.
- Must enroll in a college or university that is an accredited institution. An accredited institution is defined as a school, college, or university that has been accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency listed on the U.S. Secretary of Education's published list. Theology schools must be accredited by The Association of Theological Schools (ATS).
- Must enroll and pass a minimum required hours per academic year (August-July) based on type of scholarship awarded
 - A student attending an institution that grants quarter hour credit rather than semester hour credit should understand that 18 quarter hour credits equals 12 semester hour credits (2/3 semester hour equal one quarter hour), and should plan their schedule accordingly to meet enrollment and course completion criteria.

Scholarship Awards:

Scholarship awards are to be used for tuition, books, fees, and other expenses as necessary for college/university attendance. The scholarship types and corresponding award amounts are listed below and are payable in two equal installments – typically one for Fall/Winter courses and one for Spring/Summer courses. Fall/Winter payments are typically made to the institution in August. Spring/Summer payments are typically made to the institution in January.

Scholarship Types

- Full-time undergraduate (Junior or Senior) = \$7,500 per academic year. Must complete 24 hours per academic year. Must maintain a 2.75 or higher cumulative grade point average (GPA). Can receive for a period not to exceed two years. (Maximum investment = \$15,000)
- Full-time Master's OR Full-time ministry/Full-time Master's = \$10,000 per academic year. Must complete 18 hours per academic year. Must maintain a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA. Can receive for a period not to exceed four years. (Maximum investment = \$40,000)
- Part-time Master's = \$1,500 per academic year. Must complete 6 hours per academic year. Must maintain a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA. Can receive for a period not to exceed 8 years. (Maximum investment = \$12,000)

The Ministry options are available for individuals employed in a pastoral or vocational ministry role by a church located within the top 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle.

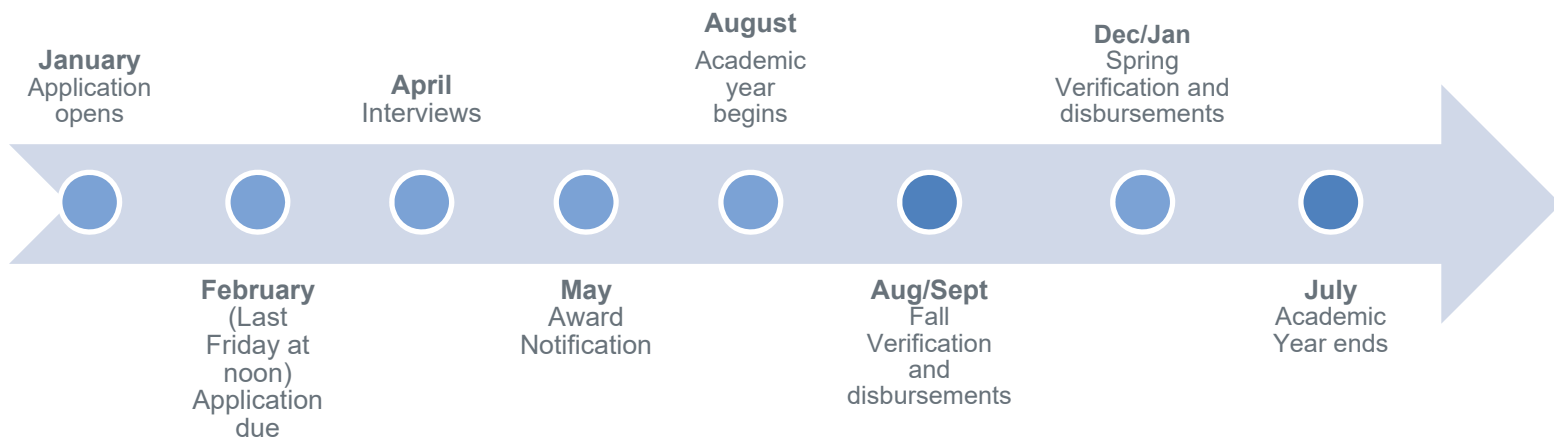
- Full-time ministry/Half-time Master's = \$5,000 per academic year. Must complete 9 hours per academic year. Must maintain a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA. Can receive for a period not to exceed 6 years. (Maximum investment = \$30,000)
- Part-time ministry/Part-time Master's = \$2,500 per academic year. Must complete 6 hours per academic year. Must maintain a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA. Can receive for a period not to exceed 8 years. (Maximum investment = \$20,000)

(Maximum possible investment with this structure is \$55,000 over 6 years.)

Any amount paid to the institution in excess of the student's financial need must be refunded to the Foundation. Any student who withdraws from school should inform the Foundation immediately and have any remaining funds returned to the Foundation.

If individuals have questions, they should contact The Mary E. Bivins Foundation scholarship staff.

Overview of Timeline:



Application Process:

The application process will begin in January of each year with award decisions being made no later than May of the same year for the upcoming academic year (August-July). Individuals who have the intent to be a pulpit preacher who become Bivins Scholars (i.e. Tier 1 Scholars) must submit grades and registration information each semester to ensure compliance with the scholarship requirements. The Scholar will continue to receive the scholarship within the timeframe indicated under the *Scholarship Types* section as long as all scholarship requirements continue to be met and there are no changes in calling, school, or degree plan. Changes to degree concentration will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If there are any changes to the Scholar's circumstance or plans they must re-apply. The scholarship is a one year award for all other recipients. Individuals who receive the scholarship whose intent is not to become a pulpit preacher are eligible to re-apply in the subsequent year as long as they continue to meet the eligibility criteria (i.e. renewing). Individuals who have received the scholarship in the past but are not currently receiving the scholarship may apply (again) as long as they meet the eligibility criteria (i.e. returning).

Interview Process - New Student, Renewal or Returning Student:

All applicants completing the new student application are required to participate in an in-person interview with the Scholarship Committee and Scholarship Advisory Committee. In-person interviews typically take place in April. Video-conferencing will be allowed for individuals whose location prohibits an in-person interview. The committees will review all new student applications that meet eligibility criteria and complete interviews with each new student applicant. Any student who has been a Bivins Scholar in the past (not a current recipient at the time the application is due for the next academic year i.e. returning) who is applying again is required to interview in person with the Scholarship Advisory Committee. The Scholarship Advisory Committee's role is to evaluate applicants' inward call, gifts and abilities to be successful in that call, and affirmation of that call. Information and subsequent recommendations from the Scholarship Advisory Committee are to be presented to the Grants and Scholarship Committee (typically at a committee meeting in late April following the in-person interviews). The Grants and Scholarships Committee will use that information and will review information for renewing Scholars for consideration in formulating final recommendations to Board of Directors which will be considered at the next board meeting (typically held in May).

The Scholarship Advisory Committee will be comprised of no more than five (5) area ministers representing different Christian denominations including an independent and/or nondenominational minister. The Scholarship Advisory Committee is to be annually appointed by the Mary E. Bivins Foundation Board of Directors from recommendations made by the Grants and Scholarship Committee. Scholarship Advisory Committee members may not serve more than five consecutive years.

Conflict of Interest:

Mary E. Bivins Foundation Board members, Board members' family, staff members, and staff members' family may not apply for or receive the Mary E. Bivins Scholarship. "Family" is defined, in the articles of incorporation, as parents, brothers and sisters (related by blood or marriage) and their spouses and descendants (i.e. nieces and nephews), and spouse and descendants. Mary E. Bivins Foundation Board members, Board members' family, staff members, and staff members' family may not sit on the Scholarship Advisory Committee.