



# **PILLARS OF STRENGTH**

## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Supporting volunteer  
caregivers of injured  
service members

The Yellow Ribbon Fund  
and The Blewitt Foundation

in association with  
University of Maryland  
University College

# The Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program Application 2017 Academic Year

## Supporting Volunteer Caregivers of Recovering Service Members

The Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF), the Blewitt Foundation (BF), and the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) are offering up to five (5) full scholarships starting in the 2017 academic year, including full tuition and fees for volunteer caregivers of recovering service members. In order to qualify for funding, recipients must meet the below eligibility criteria, submit a completed application by deadline and, if selected, enroll in a degree or certificate program in UMUC's undergraduate or graduate school.

### Eligibility Criteria

YRF, BF, and UMUC welcome applications from all qualified candidates. Applicants must:

- Be serving, or have served as, a volunteer caregiver (e.g. DoD non-medical attendant, spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling, step-sibling, fiancé, etc.) of a military service member or veteran with a disabling wound, injury, or illness which occurred while on active duty. YRF (in its sole discretion) will verify the volunteer caregiver status based on information submitted in the application.
- Have received a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) diploma.
- Demonstrate financial need as determined by the UMUC Financial Aid Office, based upon information supplied on the completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. For assistance with FAFSA completion, please go to: <http://www.umuc.edu/costs-and-financial-aid/ways-to-finance-your-education/federal-financial-aid/how-to-apply-for-aid.cfm>
- Either be currently enrolled or will enroll if selected in a degree or certificate program at UMUC, with a minimum of 6 credit hours for undergraduate students and 3 credit hours for graduate students during the Fall, Spring, and Summer (optional) terms.
- Agree to participate in activities to help promote the Pillars of Strength scholarship program. Such activities may include a photo shoot, attendance at an event, and/or the creation of video documenting selected scholarship recipients.

### Application Details and Process

A review committee comprised of participants from YRF and UMUC will evaluate all Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program applications. Assessments will be based on the totality of the individual circumstances and the strength of the application. To be considered for funding the applicant must submit the scholarship application, essay questions and all supporting documentation to: [pillarsofstrength@umuc.edu](mailto:pillarsofstrength@umuc.edu) before the application deadline date.

The application deadline is **February 28, 2017**, for the Fall 2017 – Spring 2018 academic year.

## How to Apply

Applicants must submit completed scholarship application, essay questions and all supporting documentation to [pillarsofstrength@umuc.edu](mailto:pillarsofstrength@umuc.edu) by midnight February 28, 2017.

- A completed Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program Application, including short essay questions.

*Note:* Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please make sure all information is submitted together.

- A signed letter of reference from an individual familiar with the applicant's circumstances and qualifications. The letter should **not** be from a family member.
- Completion of the 2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by February 28, 2017. To complete this form please visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

*Note:* When completing the FAFSA online, please make sure that you enter UMUC's school code (**011644**) on the form so that an electronic copy will be sent to the school. Please note that you may be able to initially estimate financial aid data entered on the FAFSA form if you have not completed your 2016 tax return. Once the tax return is completed, you will be required to submit it. For more information please visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). (**Additional information can be found at: <http://www.umuc.edu/costs-and-financial-aid/ways-to-finance-your-education/federal-financial-aid/how-to-apply-for-aid.cfm>**)

- Volunteer Caregiver Status Documentation. YRF will determine volunteer caregiver status based on information in the application and supporting documents. Please submit any relevant supporting documentation of volunteer caregiver status, such as: Non-Medical Attendant Orders, Letter from Nurse Case Manager, Letter from Military Commander verifying Service Member's Need for Caregiver, Proof of Enrollment in VA Caregiver Program (either pay stub from the past 60 days or enrollment letter), or Letter from Case Manager from VA Caregiver Program.

## Scholarship Award Information

Scholarship recipients will be notified by April 21, 2017 and eligible to begin **in the Fall 2017 term** if they meet and complete enrollment requirements.

### A. Enrollment Requirement

The scholarship will cover the full tuition and fees for selected recipients each term during the academic year (Fall, Spring, and Summer–optional). Any shipping and handling costs for the delivery of books is the responsibility of the student.

Recipients enrolled in the Graduate School will be required to register for a minimum of 3 credit hours/academic term. Recipients enrolled in the Undergraduate School will be required to enroll in at least 6 credit hours/academic term to receive scholarship funding.

## **B. Scholarship Renewal**

Scholarship recipients enrolled in the Undergraduate School may continue to receive scholarship funding for up to five (5) additional years if they remain in good academic standing. Students enrolled in the Graduate School may receive scholarship funding for up to three (3) additional years provided they remain in good academic standing. Students must complete the FAFSA each year they are enrolled.

*Note:* UMUC reserves the right to make reductions or cancellations to a scholarship award for the following reasons: 1) if it is determined that the recipient is receiving more than one institutional scholarship that exceeds institutional awarding maximums as determined by the UMUC Financial Aid Office, 2) the Pillars of Strength scholarship recipient is receiving another tuition restricted scholarship, 3) additional financial aid that, when coupled with this scholarship, exceeds the student's financial aid eligibility, 4) the scholarship recipient withdraws or fails to complete the required enrollment for the term, and/or 5) if it has been determined that the recipient is deemed ineligible for funding based on unsatisfactory academic or financial aid standing. Students in "Default" status will not be eligible.

## **Contact Information**

Contact Information: [scholarships@yellowribbonfund.org](mailto:scholarships@yellowribbonfund.org).

Please submit completed scholarship application, essay questions and all supporting documentation to [pillarsofstrength@umuc.edu](mailto:pillarsofstrength@umuc.edu).

# The Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program

## STUDENT APPLICATION

### Biographical Information

Applicant Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First Last

Permanent Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

*(If different from permanent address)*

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you previously enrolled at the University of Maryland University College? Yes or No**

If you circled "yes" please briefly list your semesters of attendance. All prior UMUC academic performance will be included in consideration of receiving the scholarship;

\_\_\_\_\_

UMUC Student ID Number (current or former students only):

\_\_\_\_\_

**Military Affiliation of Recovering Warrior/Veteran (please circle one):**

Air Force\_\_\_ Army\_\_\_ Marine Corps\_\_\_ Navy\_\_\_

National Guard\_\_\_ Coast Guard\_\_\_ Other (Explain)\_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship of Caregiver to recovering service member/veteran (ex. spouse, child, parent):**

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### Education History for Applicant

Highest Degree Earned:  High School Diploma/GED  Associate's  Bachelor's  Master's

Name of Institution/Degree Awarded/GPA for highest degree:

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**Cumulative High School or Transfer GPA** (GPA must match official transcripts-No Rounding):

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**If you are a new transfer student from another institution, list the institution and number of transfer credits that you expect to be accepted by UMUC:**

*Institution:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Degree Program:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Total credits

**Proposed Degree Program/Major/Specialization at UMUC:** (*Please note:* Some degree programs require additional departmental approval and may not be available as your first choice. **For more information, go to: <http://www.umuc.edu/academic-programs/index.cfm>**)

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**Please provide your expected date of Graduation:** \_\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Year

**Campus of Study** (please select one):

Stateside \_\_\_\_

Europe \_\_\_\_

Asia \_\_\_\_

### **The Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program Essay questions**

1. Describe the circumstances and challenges of your volunteer caregiver role and your recovering service member/veteran's condition. (200 words max)
2. Describe your personal, academic, and career achievements to date. (200 words max)
3. Describe your extra-curricular interests and pursuits and any volunteer or community activities. (200 words max)
4. Describe what you hope to achieve with the UMUC scholarship and specifically how it will help you achieve goals and overcome challenges for you and your family. (300 words max)
5. Describe how you would represent UMUC and Yellow Ribbon Fund as an alumnus of the Pillars of Strength Scholarship Program. (100 words max)

**Letter of Reference:**

Please submit a signed Letter of Reference from an individual familiar with your circumstances and qualifications. The Letter should **not** be from a family member.

**FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) Release of Personal Information:**

I hereby authorize the University of Maryland University College, as required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to release any information to aid in the determination of my scholarship eligibility. I give UMUC permission to provide any official or unofficial documents related to my scholarship eligibility and award(s) or academic status, including renewal eligibility.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing this supplemental statement, I acknowledge that the information given above is true and correct. In addition, I agree that if I am selected for the Pillars of Strength scholarship I will comply with the terms and conditions of the scholarship. Additionally, scholarship recipients will be expected to participate in activities to help promote the Pillars of Strength Scholarship. By signing this application, I agree to all the eligibility terms of this scholarship. Failure to comply with any of these terms may revoke my eligibility for this scholarship.**

I have read and understand the above statement:

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Incomplete applications will not be considered for scholarship funding\***