



## **SOCU MEMBER SCHOLARSHIP**

***Streator Onized Credit Union (SOCU) is offering educational scholarships for the 2026/2027 school year in amounts up to \$1,000.***

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Student must be a member in good standing of SOCU. This means candidates must not have any delinquent loans, charge off accounts or negative balances. Note: The applicant must be or become a primary member of SOCU by April 1, 2026 to apply for the scholarship.
2. Student must be enrolled, or will be enrolled as a full-time student, in an accredited college, university, or trade school.
3. Student must have a current minimum GPA of 2.0.
4. Student must attend college during the school year listed on the scholarship application.
5. Students who have previously received a SOCU Scholarship may NOT reapply.

### **APPLICATION**

1. Must be postmarked by April 1, 2026.
2. Must be filled out completely.
3. Must be typed or printed neatly in blue or black ink.

### **SELECTION**

The SOCU Scholarship Committee will review applications. A random drawing of eligible applicants will be held in April 2026 at the Scholarship Committee meeting.

### **PAYMENT**

Each award will be paid directly to the student. Awards will be given after the April 2026 random drawing. The student must present their school enrollment before payment can be made. Each scholarship will be payable no later than December 31, 2026. Each scholarship recipient will receive a remembrance certificate. The recipient's name and picture may be used for public relations purposes.

### **CANCELLATION**

Failure to maintain your full-time status at school (including termination from school or dropping out of school) will result in the cancellation of the award and any remaining funds will be returned to the credit union.

SOCU Employees, Board of Directors, Supervisory Committee and Credit Committee, and their immediate family are not eligible for this scholarship.



## **SOCU LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP**

***Streator Onized Credit Union (SOCU) is offering the SOCU Leaders Scholarship to one recipient for the 2026/2027 school year in the amount of \$2,500.***

### **HONORING SOCU'S PAST LEADERS**

Since it's founding in 1939 to serve employees of the Owens Illinois Glass Company, SOCU has grown into a trusted financial institution serving communities in 16 counties across north central Illinois. This growth and impact have been shaped by a legacy of strong leadership.

**Jerry O'Kraski**, a former President, was instrumental in building SOCU's foundation for long-term growth. His leadership helped establish a strong organizational culture and positioned SOCU for future success.

**Tim Marshall**, a former President, was known for his deep commitment to member service and community development. His leadership helped guide SOCU through periods of growth and innovation, always with a focus on people over profits. During his tenure, SOCU expanded beyond its original Streator and Dwight locations with the opening of the Pontiac branch, broadening access to financial services in the area.

**Kathy Lucas** served as CEO for 15 years, retiring in 2021 after a remarkable 35-year career at SOCU. Under her leadership, SOCU expanded its reach, modernized its facilities, and deepened it's community involvement. Her vision emphasized community engagement and financial education, earning SOCU the prestigious Community Credit Union of the Year award. Kathy was also personally recognized with the Maxine Wargo Award, honoring her outstanding contributions to the credit union movement and her unwavering commitment to service.

SOCU's leadership has consistently embodied the credit union philosophy of "people helping people" - a belief that financial institutions should serve their members with compassion, integrity, and a commitment to community well-being.

This scholarship honors the impact of SOCU's executive leadership and invites applicants to reflect on the values these leaders embodied.

**ELIGIBILITY** Applicants must meet ALL of the following criteria:

1. Student must be a member in good standing of SOCU. This means candidates must not have any delinquent loans, charge off accounts or negative balances. Note: The applicant must be or become a primary member of SOCU by April 1, 2026 to apply for the scholarship.
2. Student must be enrolled, or will be enrolled as a full-time student, in an accredited college, university, or trade school.
3. Field of Study: Preference will be given to students pursuing degrees in Business, Finance, Education, Public Service, or Technology, reflecting SOCU's commitment to developing future leaders who embody the credit union philosophy of *people helping people*.
4. Student must have a current minimum GPA of 3.5 or higher.
5. Student must attend college during the school year listed on the scholarship application.
6. Students who have previously received a SOCU Scholarship may NOT reapply.

## **APPLICATION**

1. Must be postmarked by April 1, 2026.
2. Must be filled out completely.
3. Must be typed or printed neatly in blue or black ink.
4. Essay required (see below).

## **ESSAY REQUIREMENT**

As part of the SOCU Leadership Scholarship application, students must submit a 500–750 word essay that demonstrates their commitment to leadership and community development.

Your essay should address the following:

**Community Engagement:** Describe how you have contributed to your community's development through volunteerism, service projects, or other meaningful involvement.

**Leadership Roles:** Share examples of leadership positions you've held at school, work, or in extracurricular activities, and what you learned from those experiences.

**Peer Impact:** Explain how you've positively influenced or supported your peers, whether in your school, on teams, in clubs, or within your community.

**Values Alignment:** Reflect on how your actions align with the credit union philosophy of people helping people and the leadership values demonstrated by SOCU's past CEOs.

Essays will be evaluated based on clarity, depth of reflection, relevance to the prompt, and demonstration of leadership and service.

## **SELECTION**

The SOCU Scholarship Committee will review applications and essays. One eligible applicant will be selected in April 2026 at the Scholarship Committee meeting.

## **PAYMENT**

One award will be paid directly to the student. The award will be given after the April 2026 selection meeting. The student must present their school enrollment before payment can be made. This scholarship will be payable no later than December 31, 2026. The scholarship recipient will receive a remembrance certificate. The recipient's name and picture may be used for public relations purposes.

## **CANCELLATION**

Failure to maintain your full-time status at school (including termination from school or dropping out of school) will result in the cancellation of the award and any remaining funds will be returned to the credit union.

SOCU Employees, Board of Directors, Supervisory Committee and Credit Committee, and their immediate family are not eligible for this scholarship.

# **SOCU MEMBER & LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**

## **PERSONAL DATA**

Please circle the scholarship(s) you are applying for:

SOCU Member Scholarship

SOCU Leaders Scholarship

Both

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First MI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or legal guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Name of current High School, College or Tech School you are currently attending:

\_\_\_\_\_

Cumulative GPA (4.0 Scale) \_\_\_\_\_

College/Tech School you will be attending in Fall 2026:

\_\_\_\_\_

What will your class status be as of the Fall 2026 semester? (circle one)

Freshman    Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Grad/Ph.    Voc./Trade

Focus of Study \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that the confidential information provided in the application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

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

All applications become the property of Streator Onized Credit Union upon receipt and will be destroyed following the applicant review and selection process.

## **APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

Before submitting, be sure to review the Application Checklist. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.

### **1. Completed Application**

Note: If your scholarship application is incomplete and/or not received by the deadline, it will be disqualified.

Do not leave questions blank. If your answer to a question is "no", "none", or "not applicable", please state as such.

Please type your entry, if possible, or print legibly in blue or black ink.

### **2. Academic Transcript**

Transcripts should cover your MOST CURRENT cumulative GPA. If submitting unofficial transcripts, they must be clear and unaltered. Records should be complete through the last grading period.

### **3. Essay (Required for SOCU Leaders Scholarship only)**

Essay must be 500-750 words describing your commitment to community development through volunteerism or service, leadership roles you've held at school, work, or in extracurricular activities, and how you've positively influenced your peers. Your essay should also reflect how your values align with the credit union philosophy of "people helping people."

### **4. Additional Copy**

Make an additional copy of all items in your scholarship application for your own records.

***All items must be received or postmarked by April 1, 2026.***

Send to:

**SOCU  
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE  
912 NORTH SHABBONA STREET  
STREATOR, IL 61364**

SOCU is not responsible for lost or misdirected items sent by mail.

## **ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT REQUIREMENT**

Transcripts will be required from the scholarship recipient before funds will be disbursed. Required transcripts should include your MOST CURRENT cumulative GPA. If submitting unofficial transcripts, they must be clear and unaltered. Records should be complete through the last grading period.