

James R. & Geraldine F. Bertelsen Scholarship

In 2025, San Diego Foundation (SDF) awarded more than **\$5.6 million in scholarships to nearly 1,400 students**, making SDF the largest private non-university scholarship provider in San Diego County. Use our Common Scholarship Application to access more than 100 scholarships including the **James R. & Geraldine F. Bertelsen Scholarship**.

The Bertelsen Scholarship honors Geraldine and James Bertelsen's devotion to faith, education, and children. Established through their estate, the scholarship supports Catholic college-bound students, prioritizing academic achievement with financial need as a secondary factor. Geraldine, a devout Catholic, and James, a retired Marine, shared a deep commitment to building strong communities through education. Their legacy ensures this scholarship will continue to grow and impact future generations.

James R. & Geraldine F. Bertelsen Scholarship applicants should:

- Have resided in Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos or Encinitas, CA for a minimum of one full year
- Be practicing Roman Catholics who are (1) graduating high school seniors with a cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.3 or higher on a 4.0 scale who have applied to, been accepted by, and will attend a four-year Roman Catholic college or university in the United States, OR (2) students who are currently enrolled at a Catholic college or university in the United States with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale (students in their senior year of college, who will graduate early and not complete a full academic year, are ineligible)
- Plan to enroll in or are currently enrolled in a course of instruction that will enable them to obtain an undergraduate degree within four years

Required Materials

A letter of recommendation is required from the following: For graduating high school seniors, applicant's Parish Priest/ Deacon verifying applicant is a practicing Catholic. For current college students, either applicant's Parish Priest/Deacon or a church official within the college religious community (priest, chaplain, rector, director of ministry, etc.), verifying applicant is a practicing Catholic.

- **Average number of awards:** 3
- **Average award amount:** \$10000

Application Deadlines

- **Application Open at www.SDFoundation.org/CSA:** Wednesday, January 14, 2026
- **Application Closes:** Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. PST
- **Applicants Notified:** By June 1, 2026

To learn more, please contact the Community Scholarships team at (619) 814-1318 or scholarships@sdfoundation.org.