

# Lavelle Fund for the Blind, Inc.

## Scholarship Program for Blind Students Attending Selected Colleges and Universities in the New York City Area

**SECTION 1: The program's purpose.** The Lavelle Scholarship Program (“the program”) aims to help make quality undergraduate and graduate education affordable for financially needy Tri-State New York area residents who are legally blind. Toward this end, the Lavelle Fund for the Blind (the Fund) is awarding scholarship grants to selected colleges in the New York City area. New students will be admitted to the program between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2014.

**SECTION 2: Program eligibility.** To be eligible, students must be:

- Studying at one of eight participating colleges and universities in the New York City area. These institutions are: Dominican College, Fordham University, Manhattanville College, Marist College, Marymount Manhattan College, St. John's University, St. Thomas Aquinas College, and Seton Hall University. At two universities (Fordham and St. John's), the program is open only to graduate students. At the other institutions, the program is open to both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Either legally blind or so severely visually impaired that a Lavelle-sponsored vision assessment expert confirms that the student would need special support services to succeed in college. Examples of such supports include: adaptive technology, books in alternate formats, help from volunteer readers, and/or orientation and mobility training. After a participating college confirms that a non-legally blind Lavelle Scholarship Program applicant meets the program's residency and financial need requirements, the applicant should contact Rona Shaw, Ed.D., ([rona.shaw@gmail.com](mailto:rona.shaw@gmail.com)) to schedule a free functional vision assessment.
- Financially needy, as defined by the student's college. Colleges will use data from students' FAFSA form to make the financial need calculations outlined below.
- Is a resident of the states of New York, New Jersey, or Connecticut – with “resident” being defined as a person: (a) whose principal, permanent home address is in that state and (b) who receives any state commission for the blind/rehabilitation agency is from the same home state.
- Enrolled full-time and in good standing (not suspended or on probation).

**SECTION 3: How to apply.** Interested students must fill out the federal FASFA form and their college's own standard financial aid application form. Students should contact their colleges' financial aid offices for more information.

**SECTION 4: Determining the Lavelle Scholarship amount.** Scholarships are awarded on a last-dollar-of-need basis, at a rate of up to \$15,000/student per academic year for up to four years.

In consultation with the Lavelle Fund, the participating colleges determine the appropriate Lavelle Scholarship amount based on the following calculation:

TOTAL COLLEGE COST (tuition, fees, room and board, and books)

**MINUS two things:**

(1) NON-LAVELLE FINANCIAL AID from all public and private sources **PLUS** (2) the FAMILY'S APPROPRIATE CONTRIBUTION – that is, what the college determines the family can afford to pay without borrowing.

Non-Lavelle resources available to financially needy students may include: (a) the college's own student aid funds, (b) federal Pell Grants, (c) in the case of New York State residents, NYS Tuition Assistance Program awards (up to \$5,000/year), and (d) aid from the students' home state commissions for the blind. In the case of the New York State Commission for the Blind, for example, maximum annual award amounts have been approximately the same as the cost of a year's tuition at a SUNY college (about \$6,000 per year) – plus additional support for room and board, when applicable.

To be eligible for Lavelle scholarship support, students must first seek non-Lavelle support for which they may qualify. Since legally blind students who are registered with their home state commission for the blind usually qualify for some commission aid, the Fund does not honor scholarship vouchers that fail to indicate either: (1) how much the student's home state commission has awarded the student or (2) in cases where the commission denies such funding, the reason for the denial.

**SECTION 5: Paying the scholarships.** Each semester, the Fund will pay the needed scholarship dollars directly to the participating colleges. The colleges will then ensure that the funds are used exclusively for the agreed student support purposes. The Fund will continue to provide last-dollar-of-need scholarship support for up to four years, as long as the students continue to meet the program's eligibility requirements.

**SECTION 6: Participating colleges' roles in co-administering the program and supporting their respective Lavelle Scholars.** Participating colleges help support the program and their Lavelle Scholars in several ways:

- Publicizing the Lavelle Scholarship Program (in college catalogues, web sites, etc.), recruiting new students, and identifying incumbent (currently enrolled) students who are eligible to participate. Students may be admitted to the program anytime from now through June 30, 2014. Once admitted at any time, Lavelle Scholars who remain eligible scholarship recipients in good academic standing will of course continue to be eligible for up to four years of Lavelle support – regardless of the end date of that support.
- Counseling Lavelle Scholars about seeking non-Lavelle scholarship aid for which they are eligible – and calculating how much the students' families can afford to pay without borrowing.
- Determining the students' last-dollar of need for Lavelle Fund support.
- Helping their Lavelle Scholars obtain the campus accommodations, support services, and adaptive equipment that they need to succeed in college. In many cases, needed services will actually come from outside the college – for example, from the students' home state commissions for the blind.
- Reporting annually to the Lavelle Fund about their Lavelle Scholars' progress in college.

For its part, the Fund has committed to providing up to a certain maximum amount of scholarship support to each participating college. Should the financial need of actual and potential Lavelle Scholars ever exceed this maximum, the colleges should inform the Fund and then be prepared to determine which students receive support by rank-ordering the students based mainly on financial need.

**SECTION 7: Additional information.** Should you have questions about the program, please contact:

- Linda Mamrosh, coordinator of the Lavelle Scholarship Program ([lmamrosh@lavellefund.org](mailto:lmamrosh@lavellefund.org)). Linda is usually available in the office on Tuesdays. The office phone number is 212-668-9801.

In Linda's absence, other Lavelle staff will be happy to help.