

## Why is Build Dakota supporting full ride scholarships?

Several workforce categories in South Dakota have been identified as high need. This means there is a shortage of skilled employees available to fill the workforce. The Build Dakota Scholarship was created to be a catalyst to solve this problem. By providing full-ride scholarships and creating industry partnerships, Build Dakota can get more skilled employees into the state's workforce. Build Dakota Scholars receive a free education, businesses gain employees, and South Dakota grows. We all win!

## What are the requirements for Build Dakota Scholarship eligibility?

-  Be accepted into a Build Dakota eligible program.
-  Be a US Citizen or US National.
-  Complete a FREE Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Please note that individuals do *not* need to received Federal Aid to be eligible. They must only apply.

## Is there an initial GPA that I must have to apply for Build Dakota Scholarship?

There is not a minimum GPA that applicants must have, but GPA is considered in the selection process. Work experience, career preparation courses, internships, volunteer experience, awards, and certifications are also important. Use the scholarship application to demonstrate your experience, skill, and interest in the program area for which you apply.

## When does the application open and close?

The application is open from January 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> every year.

## Can I still apply after the application cycle has ended?

No. However, Western Dakota Technical College's Scholarship Office keeps a listing of 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Scholarships that may have difference application deadlines.

The excel document can be found at <https://my.wdt.edu/ICS/Scholarship>.

## How do I apply for a Build Dakota Scholarship?

During the application window (January 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>), the application can be found at [https://my.wdt.edu/ICS/Scholarship/Build\\_Dakota\\_Scholarship\\_Application.jnz](https://my.wdt.edu/ICS/Scholarship/Build_Dakota_Scholarship_Application.jnz).

Because Build Dakota Scholarships are highly competitive, please make sure to include as much of the optional material, such as resume or recommendation letter, as possible.

## Can I apply for a Build Dakota Scholarship before I apply for admission to Western Dakota Technical College?

You can complete both applications at the same time. You must have completed the *free* college application for admission and be accepted into a Build Dakota eligible program before you can be awarded a Build Dakota Scholarship.

The *free* college application for admission can be found at <https://wdt-applynow.force.com/apply/>. Our Admissions Office can be reached at [Admissions@wdt.edu](mailto:Admissions@wdt.edu) or 605-718-2565 if you have questions about applying for your Build Dakota eligible program.

## What is the commitment if I accept a Build Dakota Scholarship?

Award recipients agree to:

-  Maintain Full-Time enrollment in their program.
-  Maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA.
-  Complete the program on time.
  - Diploma programs typically require 1 to 1.5 years.
  - AAS Degree programs typically require 2 years.
-  Fulfill Western Dakota Technical College's expectations for Build Dakota recipients.
-  *Work full-time in South Dakota, in your field of study, for a minimum of 3 years, following graduation.*
-  Industry partner awardees must also meet any additional commitments to their Industry Sponsor.

## How are Build Dakota recipients selected?

There are two ways recipients are selected. One is with an Industry Sponsorship. Those applications without Industry Sponsorship are each reviewed by members of a Build Dakota Scholarship Scoring Team. Applications with at least a 50% score advance to an interview round. A Build Dakota Interview Team will interview the applicants and submit their interview scores. The highest-scored applicants will be awarded until there are no longer enough funds to award a full-ride scholarship to the next highest score. Considerations for scoring are given, but not limited to:

-  Industry Sponsorship.
-  Work Experience.
-  Internship.
-  Volunteer Experience.
-  High School CTE Coursework.
-  Awards and Certifications.

## What is an Industry Sponsorship?

Because the Build Dakota Scholarship was created in response to workforce needs in South Dakota, businesses are working closely with the scholarship program at Western Dakota Technical College through our Have Your Pick, workforce development sponsorship program. This allows Western Dakota Technical College to offer as many Build Dakota Scholarships as possible to train skilled professionals for high demand careers.

Employers sponsor recipients by paying a portion of the Build Dakota Scholarship and the Build Dakota Scholarship Program pays the balance. In return, the sponsored recipients agree to work for their sponsor, following graduation, for the 3-year in South Dakota work requirement. Securing an industry sponsorship is not a requirement for applying for the scholarship. However, an Industry Sponsorship is required for Environmental Engineering Technician (EET) – Controlled Environment Agriculture Program Build Dakota Scholarship Recipients. Build Dakota Scholarship applicants accepting an Industry Sponsorship from an employer are guaranteed a Build Dakota Scholarship for the upcoming award cohort upon confirmation of Build Dakota Scholarship eligibility requirements being met.

## How do I obtain an Industry Sponsor?

There are two ways an applicant can obtain a sponsor:

Applicants that are working for or know of an employer willing to sponsor them can provide the employer's contact information on their Build Dakota Scholarship Application. The Assistant Director of Scholarships will then reach out to the employer to provide information about the Have Your Pick program.

Applicants without an Industry Sponsor can indicate on their Build Dakota Scholarship Application that they are interested their application being viewed by industry employers. Industry employers that have indicated interest in sponsoring Build Dakota Scholarship recipients will then receive access to your application and contact you for an interview for potential sponsorship if they are interested.

Only EET – Controlled Environment Agriculture recipients are required to have an Industry Sponsor to be awarded a Build Dakota Scholarship. However, accepting an Industry Sponsorship does guarantee a Build Dakota Scholarship at Western Dakota Technical College if Build Dakota Scholarship eligibility is met. Sponsored recipients are committing to both their Build Dakota Scholarship requirements and additional commitments to their Industry Sponsor.

### **When will I be notified if I have received a Build Dakota Scholarship?**

If you are selected for a Build Dakota Scholarship, an email will be sent by the Assistant Director of Scholarships with further instructions about the acceptance process. Notifications will be sent by June 2<sup>nd</sup> at the latest, with most notifications occurring in May. It is an applicant's responsibility to check their email.

### **What expenses does the Build Dakota Scholarship cover?**

The Build Dakota Scholarship covers any expenses directly related to program requirements. This includes tuition, fees, textbooks, laptop, uniforms, equipment, and tools. It does not include office supplies, e.g., paper, notebooks, pencils, etc. If a recipient wishes to purchase additional or optional equipment, books, or tools, it is at their own expense. The Build Dakota Scholarship does not pay for any housing or living expenses.

LPN and RN recipients pursuing their pre-requisites as Allied Health are considered to not yet be in the LPN or RN program since they have not been accepted into the Nursing Program. As such, their Build Dakota Scholarship will not pay tuition, fees, textbooks, laptop, and other program requirement supplies (Ex. Scrubs) related to the Pre-Requisite courses (pre-nursing courses.)

### **How do I get the required tools or computer for my program?**

Each year the Build Dakota qualified programs submit a tool list to the Western Dakota Technical College Campus Store. The Campus Store will order or arrange the process for ordering the necessary tools, uniforms, and computer prior to the start of the recipients first semester. The Campus Store will communicate pick-up and/or ordering processes with Build Dakota recipients through their Western Dakota Technical College student email.

### **What is considered full-time?**

Students are considered full-time if they are taking enough classes to graduate in the allotted timeframe for their program.

Entering a program with credits that apply toward graduation and/or testing out of a required course will not prevent you from receiving and maintaining a Build Dakota Scholarship. Build Dakota recipients are required to be 'as full-time as possible'. Contact the Assistant Director of Scholarships if you have any questions.

### **If I fail a class and need to retake it, will Build Dakota pay for the repeated class?**

No. Any cost for failed and repeated classes must be paid by the student.

### **I understand I must keep a minimum GPA of 2.5 as a Build Dakota Scholarship recipient, but can I regain eligibility falls below 2.5?**

Yes. A recipient can be placed on self-pay status for the term after GPA falls below 2.5. Upon raising the GPA back to or above 2.5, the self-pay status will be removed. Contact the Assistant Director of Scholarships to discuss this question further if needed.

### **Will Build Dakota pay for test-out fees?**

Build Dakota will pay for successfully passed WDTC Course Challenges and MATH CEs.

## **Does the scholarship cover remedial, preparatory coursework, or other classes that are not part of my program?**

If remedial or preparatory courses are required as part of a Build Dakota eligible program, they are covered by the scholarship, but the need for these courses must be determined and recommended by Western Dakota Technical College.

## **If I'm not planning to start my classes until the spring, can I still qualify for the scholarship?**

Yes, however because so many technical programs are cohort-based, spring term starts may not be available. Applicants still need to apply for Build Dakota Scholarship in January of the year before they start technical classes.

## **I've already graduated from a technical college. Do I still qualify for this scholarship?**

This depends on your individual circumstances. If you currently have a degree in a field that has not been designated as high-need and you wish to get a degree in a high-need area, you may qualify for this scholarship. If you currently have a degree in a high need field and wish to move to a different high need field, contact the Assistant Director of Scholarships. **Note: LPN Graduates applying for the LPN-RN Bridge Program CAN receive a Build Dakota Scholarship if they have an Industry Sponsor.**

## **Why do I have to apply for Financial Aid?**

Completing the FAFSA is a requirement for the scholarship application. Please note that individuals do *not* need to accept Federal Aid to be eligible. They must only apply. It is beneficial to complete the FAFSA to determine eligibility for grants that can be used for living expenses. The FAFSA should be completed every year you are in school. Please feel free to contact our Financial Aid Office for FAFSA assistance at [FinAid@wdt.edu](mailto:FinAid@wdt.edu) or 605-718-2988.

## **If I receive a Pell Grant, how does that affect my Build Dakota Scholarship?**

Pell Grants do not affect the amount awarded for Build Dakota Scholarships and can be used for living expenses while attending school.

## **Can I qualify for the scholarship if I am in default on a federal student loan or owe a financial aid overpayment?**

This is considered a disqualifying event; feel free to apply once the default has been resolved.

## **How do my Veteran or Military Benefits affect the Build Dakota Scholarship?**

Please contact the Assistant Director of Scholarships ([WDTScholarship@wdt.edu](mailto:WDTScholarship@wdt.edu) or 605-718-3061) with questions regarding your individual situation.

## **Can I use other financial aid and scholarships I received if I receive this scholarship?**

Yes, **however**, there can be regulations tied to certain types of funds. It is recommended you contact the Assistant Director of Scholarships ([WDTScholarship@wdt.edu](mailto:WDTScholarship@wdt.edu) or 605-718-3061) with questions regarding your individual situation.

## **Why doesn't every program at Western Dakota Technical College qualify for the Build Dakota Scholarship?**

Each year, the Build Dakota Scholarship Board, South Dakota Technical Colleges, and Department of Education work closely with the Department of Labor and Regulation to determine which industries have the *highest* need for skilled professionals in South Dakota.

## **Can I transfer my Build Dakota Scholarship to another technical college or university?**

No. If a student is awarded a Build Dakota Scholarship from Western Dakota Technical College, the scholarship is only available at Western Dakota Technical College.

## **How will I know what to do after I graduate?**

The Build Dakota administrative staff will visit Western Dakota Technical College to meet with Build Dakota recipients prior to graduation to make sure graduates understand how to comply with the employment requirements. It is the responsibility of the recipients to make sure they attend this meeting.

## **What type of job is required after graduation?**

Recipients must work in the field the Build Dakota Scholarship paid for.

## **How long do I have to secure a job after graduation?**

Recipients who haven't secured an Industry Sponsorship have 6 months after graduation to being employment. Recipients with Industry Sponsorships will work with their sponsor to determine when they begin employment after graduation.

## **How is the three-year employment commitment tracked?**

The Build Dakota administrative staff will conduct yearly employment verification with Build Dakota recipients, the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, and the employers of Build Dakota recipients. Contact the Build Dakota administrative staff for more information at 605-224-1025 ext. 113.

## **Can I be self-employed?**

Self-employment will be approved in some circumstances; however, the recipient must be prepared to submit legal documentation of self-employment on a full-time basis.

## **What if I can't find a job after graduation?**

Build Dakota Scholarship programs have been specifically chosen to fill high-need areas in South Dakota and open positions usually exceed the number of applicants. Western Dakota Technical College has a very high placement rate, and most recipients will be employed prior to graduation. Students can work with Western Dakota Technical College's Career Services. ([career.services@wdt.edu](mailto:career.services@wdt.edu) or 605-718-2410.) The Build Dakota website has a list of industry partners looking to employ skilled recipients and the Department of Labor offices have remarkable resources for helping job seekers secure employment. A list of local Department of Labor Offices can be found here: <https://dlr.sd.gov/localoffices/location.aspx>.

### **What if I don't fulfill the three-year work commitment?**

The requirements of the work commitment are outlined in the Build Dakota Scholarship Agreement. If the recipient does not complete the terms of the agreement, the scholarship will be converted to a loan. If the recipient completes a portion of the work commitment, the loan amount will be pro-rated based on the amount of time worked.

### **Under what circumstances would the scholarship convert to a loan?**

If a recipient does not complete the terms of their Build Dakota Student Agreement, Western Dakota Technical College's expectations for Build Dakota Scholarship recipient, or Industry Sponsorship Agreement, it will be converted to a loan and the funds allocated for that recipient will be used to provide a scholarship to a new recipient.

### **What if I quit school during the first month of enrollment?**

Any items paid for by the scholarship will be converted to a loan. This includes any tuition, fees, tools, uniforms, computer, and any other expenses paid for on behalf of the Build Dakota Scholarship. Because all the tools are required to complete the program are purchased prior to the recipients first semester, the recipient will be responsible for the re-payment of those items. Items *cannot* be returned in lieu of re-payment.

### **What is the interest rate if my scholarship converts to a loan?**

Scholarships converted to loans through June 30, 2025, will have the annual interest rate of 4%.

### **Can I appeal the decision to convert the scholarship to a loan?**

All recipients have the right to request an appeal by Western Dakota Technical College. Requests must be submitted within 10 days following the date the scholar was notified of the decision to convert the scholarship to a debt. Contact Western Dakota Technical College's Assistant Director of Scholarships or the Build Dakota Program Manager for more information regarding an appeal.

For additional information, visit:

<https://www.wdt.edu/paying-for-school/scholarships/build-dakota-scholarship-fund/> or  
<https://my.wdt.edu/ICS/Scholarship>

or

Contact the WDT Scholarships Office at

[WDTScholarship@wdt.edu](mailto:WDTScholarship@wdt.edu)

Scholarships Outreach Specialist: (605)-718-3064

Asst. Director of Scholarships: (605) 718-3061