



The Dinah K. Somerville Annual Scholarship Award

**The 2026 Black History Month
“Theme: A Century of Black History Commemorations”**

The St. Mary’s County Black History Coalition (SMCBHC) will award its 14th Annual Dinah K. Somerville Scholarships to deserving students who are accepted to or currently attending an accredited college, university, trade, or technical school for the 2026-2027 school year. The SMCBHC will award \$1,000 to four students, payable directly to the institution of their choice.

Interested applicants must apply by the January 23, 2026, due date. Eligibility requirements and application instructions are available on Page 2.

Applications must be submitted to:

The Dinah K. Somerville Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 829
Mechanicsville, MD 20659

or

smcbhc@gmail.com

The Dinah K. Somerville Scholarship is for students deserving of tuition, fees, and other educational expenses assistance. As it is a merit-based scholarship, the Award will be based on several factors, including the student’s academic achievement, honors and awards received, commitment to extracurricular activities, and engagement in community services.

It will also be based on the effectiveness of your writing skills per the criteria set forth for submission of your essay. If there is a reason for not responding in any of the fields, you must explain. When using abbreviations, please spell out the term in full, followed by the abbreviation. Please be clear and precise in each response. If additional space is needed, an additional page may be added.

For additional information and/or inquiries, please contact the SMCBHC at smcbhc@gmail.com.

Awards, Eligibility Requirements, and Scholarship Application Instructions

Scholarship Awards

- Four (4), one thousand dollars (**\$1,000/student**) scholarships will be awarded to four deserving students who are accepted to or currently attending an accredited College, University, Trade or Technical school.
- Application deadline is January 23, 2026.
- Candidates will be notified of their application status by February 13, 2026.
- Scholarship funds will be payable to the college or other institutions of higher learning. These funds will be available by the first semester of the 2026-2027 academic year.
- Scholarships will be awarded on an objective and non-discriminatory basis. Applicants will not be assessed based on race, creed, color, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

Eligibility Requirements

- U.S. Citizen.
- Attended High School in St. Mary's County or currently attending an accredited College, University, Trade or Technical school.
- Minimum Grade Point Average (**GPA**) of **3.0**
- Current involvement in one or more of the following activities:
 - Community Service Project
 - Volunteer Work
 - Athletics, performing arts, or another group/team participation
 - Employment
- Award recipients must attend the SMCBHC Annual Award Ceremony and Black History Celebration on Sunday, February 22, 2026, to receive the scholarship.

Application Process and Supporting Documents

- Complete scholarship application (pages 3, 4, and 5).
- Provide an essay (800 – 1000 words) from the topics listed on Page 6 of the Essay Questions.
- Prospective students must include a copy of their acceptance letter to an accredited institution of higher learning.
- Include a current high school, college, university, trade, or technical school transcript, showing GPA.

Mail completed application with supporting documents to:

The Dinah K. Somerville Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 829
Mechanicsville, MD 20659

Mailed applications must be postmarked no later than **January 23, 2026**.

Electronic application and supporting documents (essay, acceptance letter, and transcript) must be received via SMCBHC email (smcbhc@gmail.com) not later than **January 23, 2026**.

NOTE: *Application and essay must be typed.*

The Dinah K. Somerville Scholarship Award

APPLICATION

Postmark Deadline: January 23, 2026

Please review the Application Process Instructions before proceeding.

Personal Information

Name: Last _____ First: _____ Middle Initial _____

Preferred mailing address for notification (i.e., parent, school, home address)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: () _____ Primary email address _____

High School Attended _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

School Phone No. _____ **Name of Your Guidance Counsellor** _____

List your accepted institution of learning for the 2026-2027 academic year:

Course of study/ Major: _____

Desired career or profession _____

Work Experience - List of workplace skills you gained while working as a volunteer, paid jobs, internships, unpaid roles, etc.

Place of Employment	Dates of Employment	Key Responsibilities

Community Services - List of volunteer activities/experiences and the number of hours you volunteered for each. Briefly describe how volunteering in these positions impacted you and the community.

Community Services	Hours Volunteered	Impact/You and Community

Honors and Awards - List of academic awards and/or honors received in high school or during your studies at a university/trade school (academic and non-academic).

Extracurricular Activities - List of extracurricular activities that you performed beyond the school's standard curriculum. Articulate clearly how each activity provided you with relevant skills, such as leadership skills and experiences, towards your personal growth.

Extracurricular Activity	Skills/Experience Toward Growth

Application Certification

- I hereby certify that the information provided in my application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.
- I hereby certify all eligibility requirements, as specified in my application and accompanying instructions.
- I understand that I must notify the SMCBHC of any changes in my enrollment status.

Applicant's Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Essay Topics

Submit an original typed essay on a separate page(s). The essay shall be double-spaced with 800 -1000 words. Use a 12-point font, Times New Roman, one-inch margins on top, bottom, and sides, and ensure the essay is left-justified. Insert page numbers at the bottom, centered (no page number on title page). The essay should fit on standard 8 ½ x 11 white paper. Include a Title Page that includes the essay topic statement and the student's full name (centered on the page).

Note: No colored text (**black text only**), pictures, or computer links.

Select and respond to **ONE** of the following statements:

- (1) Do you believe that it's important to commemorate Black History? Why?
- (2) Why does Black History matter?
- (3) Provide the name of an African American and how their leadership helped you in your personal growth?

Please read the article from the Association for the Study of African American Life and History entitled "**A CENTURY OF BLACK HISTORY COMMEMORATIONS**" as a guide in assisting you in writing your essay.