



**LET FREEDOM RING FOUNDATION  
2025 Undergraduate Student Scholarships  
(\$3000 and \$1500)**

**Important Dates to Remember  
Opening Date: December 01, 2025  
Closing Date: April 03, 2026  
Winners announced in May**

**Introduction:** A group of courageous enslaved people and free blacks who wanted to worship God in their way organized the First Baptist Church in 1776. The African Baptist Church conducted services as early as 1818 on Nassau Street. A new brick church near the original site on Nassau Street was dedicated in 1856 and became the congregation's church home for 100 years. In 1863, the Church was renamed the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg. The Church relocated to Scotland Street in 1956.

The Let Freedom Ring Foundation was created to collect, protect, and preserve the historic building, objects, and landscapes of First Baptist Church. We work with our community partners to understand and educate everyone about our past. We endeavor to spark a continuing conversation that looks at our history differently, asking ourselves questions about what is important in our history. This is a meaningful way to transmit our understanding of the past to future generations. Historic preservation helps us to tell the stories of our past, celebrating events, people, places, and ideas that we are proud of; other times, it involves recognizing moments in our history that can be painful or uncomfortable to remember. Sharing and understanding our place in Williamsburg's history is crucial.

High school students graduating in 2026 are invited to apply for a Let Freedom Ring (LFR) Scholarship. The scholarship finances African American recent high school graduates seeking full-time enrollment at any accredited college or university, community college, or vocational school. This Scholarship will be awarded in May 2026 to cover costs beginning in August 2026.

### **Eligible applicants must**

- have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- be a high school or homeschooled senior in the WJCC, York County School Division and the greater Williamsburg area.
- be accepted by an accredited 4-year college or university, community college, or vocational school before the funds can be distributed.
- be a U. S. citizen.

### **Application Process**

Applicants must submit ***complete*** packets including the following required materials by April 03, 2026. Mailed packets must be posted marked no later than April 03, 2026. Online submissions must be received no later than 12 midnight on April 03, 2026. (***no exceptions***)

- a most recent official transcript
- 2 letters of recommendation should be obtained from the recommenders by the applicant to be included in the completed packets \* ***recommenders cannot be a relative***
- A 500 – 700 word written essay doubled-spaced on a self-designed prompt

### **Your Prompt**

This application allows you to develop your own prompt, which gives you the opportunity to express yourself creatively. Don't be afraid to share an interesting story, life event, goal, dream, organization, etc. that will tell the judges about you.

### **Tips for writing a strong essay**

Your essay will enable you to showcase your way of thinking and personality; your essay should be as unique as you are. Instead of writing a dull, generic essay, write one that is true to who you are, one that will captivate the reader. Here are some tips to help make you stand out.

### **Your First Paragraph Should Grab the Reader's Attention**

The introduction is the most important part of your essay because it sets the tone. Remember, first impressions and a well-crafted introduction matter. The following suggestions may be used for your introductions to grab the reader's attention:

Ask a thought-provoking question.

Begin with a bold statement

Use a famous/interesting quote.

Challenge the reader as if speaking directly to them

Begin with a one-word sentence; if executed correctly, it could spark the reader's curiosity.

### **Be Authentic, Not Generic**

Your essay should make you stand out in the minds of the judges. You do not want to be one of the many applicants who fail to make an impression.

Instead, you want the judge to say: "this is an actual person who wrote this; someone with feeling and depth." Being vulnerable and putting your personality into your essay is a great way to achieve this; be honest, personable, and stay true to your own authentic voice.

### **Be Exciting – Don't Be Boring**

Trying to act like an intellectual know-it-all is not only exhausting but a huge turn-off. You need to be unique to get noticed. Write like you are a strong-minded individual. Use beautiful, yet casual language. Put emotion into your words. Make your essay come alive.

### **Make Your Essay Beautiful**

You should make your essay beautiful in terms of style and content. Use a reasonable font, one that is easy to read and professional-looking. Instead of cramming your main ideas in the first paragraph, balance your essay points throughout. Be concise and not adding unnecessary words just to fill the page; to make sure every word has meaning and a place in the story you are trying to tell. Proofread the draft and don't shy away from revising the draft to make sure each part of the essay is relevant to the overall topic/story/theme and that the entire essay flows well.