



Disenfranchised Writers' Voices

Scholarship Program Guidelines & Policy (2026)

1. Mission Alignment

The DWV Scholarship exists to support low-income and/or disabled writers by providing financial assistance for creative and professional development.

Recipients must demonstrate alignment with DWV's core values:

- Equity and access in publishing
- Respectful, ethical engagement within literary spaces
- Commitment to creative integrity and human-centered artistic work

2. Behavior & Conduct Clause

Recipients must maintain conduct aligned with DWV values across all public and private spaces, including online platforms.

Prohibited behaviors include:

- Online bullying, harassment, or targeted cruelty
- Inciting harassment through "call-outs," dogpiling, or mob behavior
- Making public accusations (including AI use allegations) without verifiable evidence ("AI witch hunting")
- Hate speech or discriminatory conduct, including but not limited to:
 - Racism
 - Ableism
 - Sexism

- Misogyny
- Transphobia
- Homophobia
- Xenophobia
- Doxxing or sharing private information
- Sustained bad-faith engagement, including trolling or harassment campaigns
- Plagiarism or intellectual dishonesty

Enforcement:

DWV reserves the right to:

- Revoke scholarships
- Ban individuals from future funding
- Publicly distance from recipients in severe cases

3. Income Eligibility (2026 Living Wage Standard)

DWV uses household-adjusted living wage model, not the federal poverty line, as eligibility criteria. Living wage reflects the actual cost of basic needs (housing, food, healthcare, transportation, etc.)

DWV will publish and update an annual income chart based on credible living wage data sources (e.g., MIT Living Wage Calculator or equivalent)

Definition of Household

A household includes:

- The applicant
- A spouse or domestic partner (if financially linked)
- Any dependents (children or others financially supported)

Important:

Spousal/partner income must be included in total household income.

3A. Base Living Wage (Per State)

The base living wage includes:

1 Adult, No Children = 100% baseline eligibility threshold

3A. 2026 Living Wage Table by State (Baseline: 1 Adult, No Children)

STATE	ANNUAL LIVING WAGE
ALABAMA	\$45,000
ALASKA	\$50,146
ARIZONA	\$50,804
ARKANSAS	\$44,500
CALIFORNIA	\$59,740
COLORADO	\$52,981

CONNECTICUT	\$52,581
DELAWARE	\$48,743
FLORIDA	\$48,683
GEORGIA	\$49,790
HAWAII	\$62,233
IDAHO	\$48,216
ILLINOIS	\$49,011
INDIANA	\$46,000
IOWA	\$45,500
KANSAS	\$45,200
KENTUCKY	\$44,800
LOUISIANA	\$44,500
MAINE	\$48,292
MARYLAND	\$54,247
MASSACHUSETTS	\$60,080
MICHIGAN	\$46,800
MINNESOTA	\$48,900
MISSISSIPPI	\$43,500
MISSOURI	\$45,300
MONTANA	\$46,431
NEBRASKA	\$45,700
NEVADA	\$49,599
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$51,552
NEW JERSEY	\$54,503
NEW MEXICO	\$45,000

NEW YORK	\$57,337
NORTH CAROLINA	\$46,875
NORTH DAKOTA	\$45,200
OHIO	\$46,200
OKLAHOMA	\$44,700
OREGON	\$52,328
PENNSYLVANIA	\$47,657
RHODE ISLAND	\$50,669
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$46,081
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$44,900
TENNESSEE	\$45,000
TEXAS	\$47,000
UTAH	\$49,737
VERMONT	\$49,826
VIRGINIA	\$53,353
WASHINGTON	\$54,828
WEST VIRGINIA	\$44,500
WISCONSIN	\$46,300
WYOMING	\$45,200
WASHINGTON, D.C.	\$54,034

Source adapted from state-level living wage estimates (2025–2026 adjusted)

3B. Household Adjustment Formula

DWV applies the following multipliers:

Household Size Adjustments

<i>Household Composition</i>	<i>Multiplier</i>
<i>1 Adult</i>	1.00
<i>2 Adults (no children)</i>	1.55
<i>1 Adult + 1 Child</i>	1.40
<i>1 Adult + 2 Children</i>	1.75
<i>2 Adults + 1 Child</i>	1.85
<i>2 Adults + 2 Children</i>	2.15
<i>Each additional child</i>	+0.30
<i>Each additional adult</i>	+0.55

3C. How Eligibility Is Calculated

Step 1: Find your state's base living wage

Step 2: Apply household multiplier

Step 3: Compare against total household income

Formula:

State Living Wage × Household Multiplier = Income Limit

Example 1:

- State: Indiana (\$46,000 baseline)
- Household: 1 adult + 1 child (1.40 multiplier)

$\$46,000 \times 1.40 = \$64,400$ eligibility limit

Example 2:

- State: California (\$59,740 baseline)
- Household: 2 adults + 2 children (2.15 multiplier)

$\$59,740 \times 2.15 = \$128,441$ eligibility limit

3D. What Counts as Income

Household income includes:

- Wages (all adults)
- Freelance/self-employment income
- Disability income (SSDI/SSI)
- Unemployment benefits
- Alimony or child support received
- Any consistent financial support

3E. Special Considerations

DWV may allow case-by-case adjustments for:

- High medical expenses (especially for disabled applicants)
- Caregiving responsibilities
- Cost-of-living disparities within a state
- Recently lost income (job loss, crisis situations)

Applicants may submit a short explanation if their situation is not accurately reflected by raw income numbers.

4. Proof of Financial Need

Applicants must submit **at least one**:

- SSI / SSDI documentation
- SNAP / Medicaid / other benefits
- Most recent tax return
- Unemployment benefits documentation
- Proof of participation in income-qualified programs
- Letter from a social worker, case manager, or nonprofit verifying financial hardship (optional but accepted)

Privacy Requirements:

- Only **name and DOB visible**
- Black out:
 - SSN
 - Address
 - Account numbers
 - Employer details (if sensitive)

5. Proof of Identity

Applicants must submit a government-issued ID.

Must show only:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Photograph

All other information must be redacted.

6. Submitted Materials (Creative Work)

- Manuscripts may be submitted at any stage
- AI-generated or AI-assisted writing is strictly prohibited

If AI usage is discovered:

- Immediate disqualification
- Permanent ban from future DWV scholarships

Funds may NOT be used for:

- AI writing tools
- AI editing tools
- AI-generated art or covers

Encouraged uses:

- Human editors
- Cover artists
- Book coaches
- Sensitivity readers
- Formatting professionals

7. Business Plan Requirement

Applicants must submit a brief, practical plan outlining use of funds.

Include:

- Intended services (editing, design, etc.)
- Estimated costs
- Timeline

Preferred (but not required):

- Quotes or invoices from providers

Applicants who provide quotes and invoices will be strongly considered.

8. Selection Criteria & Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated based on:

CRITERIA	WEIGHT
FINANCIAL NEED	40%
WRITING QUALITY / POTENTIAL	30%
BUSINESS PLAN CLARITY	20%
MISSION ALIGNMENT	10%

- Applications may be reviewed blind where possible
- A panel of reviewers will score independently

9. Award Structure

- Scholarship amounts: Variable (set per funding cycle)
- Number of recipients: Determined per cycle
- Funds may be:
 - Paid directly to recipients **or**
 - Paid to verified service providers
- Timeline for disbursement

10. Accountability & Follow-Up

Recipients must:

- Submit receipts or proof of spending
- Provide a brief progress update within 3–6 months

Failure to comply may result in:

- Ineligibility for future funding
- Possible repayment request (case-dependent)

11. Appeals & Dispute Process

Applicants may:

- Request reconsideration within 14 days of denial
- Submit additional documentation if applicable

Recipients facing revocation:

- Will be notified
- May submit a written appeal for review

12. Confidentiality & Data Protection

DWV will:

- Use documents only for eligibility verification
- Store data securely
- Delete sensitive data after review
- Never sell or share applicant information

13. Conflict of Interest Policy

- Reviewers must disclose relationships with applicants
- Reviewers will recuse themselves where conflicts exist
- Applicants with direct ties to DWV leadership may be subject to additional review safeguards

14. Accessibility Statement

DWV is committed to accessibility.

Applicants may request:

- Alternative submission formats (audio, dictation, etc.)
- Extended deadlines
- Assistance with application completion

15. Legal Disclaimer

DWV reserves the right to:

- Modify guidelines at any time
- Decline any application
- Revoke funding if terms are violated

16. Publicity & Credit

- Recipients may be publicly announced (optional opt-out available)
- Credit to DWV in published work is encouraged but not required

17. Ethics of Representation Clause

Applicants must provide truthful and accurate information.

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Misrepresentation of income
- Misrepresentation of household size or dependents
- False claims of disability or benefit status
- Submission of altered or falsified documentation

Consequences:

- Immediate disqualification
- Permanent ban from future DWV opportunities
- Revocation of awarded funds if already distributed

DWV reserves the right to request additional verification if inconsistencies arise.