

MICHIGAN BAPTIST SCHOLARSHIP SOCIETY (MBSS) APPLICATION FOR FIRST-TIME SEMINARY SUPPORT

Introduction. MBSS seeks to raise money to award seminary scholarships to men and women who are active members of churches affiliated with American Baptist Churches of Michigan and are studying to become professional church leaders. Usually that means a pastor, missionary, or chaplain.

Because of significantly declining gifts to MBSS in recent years and a desire to put more emphasis on seminary students, we will not be supporting new undergraduates starting in the fall 2019. Likewise, the amount of individual scholarships will probably be decreased.

These seminary scholarships may be for full-time or part-time study. However, it is expected that part-time students will take at least half of what their school considers as a full-time program to be eligible. The amount of scholarship help is proportional.

MBSS recipients must be in a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Students at ABC-USA seminaries might get more support than those at other seminaries.

Decisions about scholarships are made by the MBSS governing board (which is chosen by ABC-MI). The amount of assistance per applicant depends on several factors. It may range between \$500 to \$1,000 per year – contingent on the number of applicants and available funds.

The finances are handled by the ABC-MI bookkeeper. Scholarship money goes to schools of MBSS recipients to be deposited in their accounts.

Most seminary students have undergraduate debts and usually are not eligible for as much financial assistance from sources outside of the faith community as compared with undergraduates. Likewise, the farther along a person goes in his or her education, the more likely is the commitment towards professional church leadership.

Another factor is the range of seminary costs. It is more expensive to go away to school than to attend one within commuting distance, and online learning is often cheaper than being on campus. MBSS tries to take these matters into consideration when considering applications and to be as fair as possible in determining financial need. As you might expect, the amount of scholarship assistance that one recipient gets may not be the same as for another person.

You can apply for support at various stages in seminary studies. Unfortunately, MBSS does not have funds to help with doctoral programs.

Finally, please remember our first point: the need to raise money to award scholarships. The amount MBSS can give in a specific year depends on what we have available and the number of applicants. We ask our recipients to be our “ambassadors” by helping to spread the word about what MBSS is doing. A simple goal is to encourage each ABC-MI church to contribute one dollar per member per year to MBSS.

All applicants must complete and sign this application and provide the following:

1. Letter from your pastor or the governing body of your church indicating your Christian faith, good character, and active membership in an ABC-MI church, together with a recommendation stating the reasons you merit MBSS Scholarship support.
2. Copy of an official transcript from the most recent school you attended.
3. Letter of reference from a teacher, professor, or other official from a current or recent school. If it has been over five years, MBSS realizes that might not be feasible.
4. Typed or computer-printed autobiographical essay (two-three pages long) describing your Christian experiences, call to professional church leadership, and career goals as best you understand them now.
5. A recent photograph of yourself for MBSS publicity purposes. A five to ten-minute video presentation about yourself or personal interview with the MBSS Board or a Board member is encouraged but not mandatory.
6. A letter of your acceptance to an ATS-accredited school. If it is not affiliated with ABC-USA, please include a copy of its theological values and mission statement (usually found in its catalogue or on its website. MBSS will review them to

assure compatibility with ABC-USA core beliefs and practices. If you have any questions about this, contact the chair of the Commission on Ordination and Standing - Rev. James Leonard at jmleonardfamily@msn.com or 810.866.4665.

- 7. A letter of recommendation from Rev. Dr. Michael A. Williams, ABC-MI Executive Minister, indicating that you contacted him in person, by letter, e-mail, or by phone about your circumstances and goals. He can be reached at mawilliams@abc-mi.org or 800-632-2953.

Type or print clearly. Feel free to add attachments if you wish.

Name (circle Mr. or Ms.): _____ D.O.B.: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Home or cell phone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Home church: _____ City/State: _____

Year you joined there: _____ Church involvement: _____

Name of school you plan to attend:

School: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____ Website: _____

Major (or degree program): _____ Expected date of completion: _____

I am a full-time/part-time (circle one) student and seeking a full year/half year (circle one) of support starting (month)_____(year)_____. For the segment of the school year for which I am applying, I expect to be a seminary freshman, middler, senior (circle one). Explain below if these terms do not apply to you.

How many credits do you expect to earn in the next academic term, quarter, or semester? _____

How many credits does your school require to meet its definition of a full-time student in that time frame? _____

Every applicant for any of the programs supported by MBSS must provide the following financial information (which will be kept in confidence and used to help make decisions about scholarships). This applies to the time during which you are seeking MBSS support.

The total amount of money you declared on your federal income taxes as your adjusted gross income for the past year _____ Does that amount include your spouse's income (if married filing jointly)? _____

Please explain any special circumstances: _____

Number of people you claim as dependents on income tax forms (not including yourself) _____

Your assets and anticipated income

Employment _____

Savings account _____
(do not include IRA or other retirement programs)

From parents/spouse/others _____

List scholarships/grants & amounts:

Total income _____

Your estimated expenses

Tuition and fees _____

Room and board
(if you are going away to school) _____

Books _____

Travel to and from school _____

Other expenses related to your education?

Insurance/medical _____

Tithe/contributions _____

Total expenses _____

Current amount of indebtedness related to your education and reason(s) for it

Are there any other concerns about your personal finances that you want MBSS to consider?

(If you need more space, attach a separate sheet.)

Agreement: After prayer and consultation with others, I believe that I qualify for a MBSS Scholarship because I meet all MBSS criteria. If chosen for support, I realize that I must maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average based on a 4.0 scale and earn the amount of credit that I explained above. If I receive an MBSS Scholarship but do not complete my education as planned, I promise to contact MBSS as soon as possible to describe my situation. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond my control that keep me from completing my academic program, I accept moral responsibility to repay my MBSS Scholarship to help others going into professional church vocations.

I also agree to help publicize MBSS insofar as possible. Unless I submit a written statement requesting otherwise, I authorize MBSS to use my picture and brief autobiographical highlights (along with those from other recipients) as part of a display and other fund-raising efforts.

Your signature _____ Date _____

Deadlines for complete application and all supporting documents:

July 15 for MBSS support beginning in the fall semester/quarter/term.

November 15 for MBSS support beginning in the second semester/quarter/term.

Mail this application and supporting documents to:

H. Bruce Carr, Michigan Baptist Scholarship Society Chair
23436 North Stockton Drive
Farmington Hills, MI 48336

As an alternative, you can handle most of this by e-mail (except for academic transcripts). If you have any questions, please contact Bruce at 248-474-8916 (day or evening) or at hbrucecarr@aol.com

The MBSS governing board meets as soon as possible after application deadlines to review applications and make funding decisions. Once completed, we will let applicants know the results (by phone and/or e-mail) within approximately one week.