



JIM RUTHERFORD CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIP 2026

McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District Foundation
402 N. Kays Drive Normal, IL 61761
(309)452-3848 ext. 3
www.mcleancountyswcd.com/jimrutherford/

PURPOSE:

The Jim Rutherford Scholarship has been established by the McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation to assist outstanding agricultural students at any college. The student awarded the scholarship should demonstrate superior agricultural academic achievement, commitment to soil and water conservation and potential for innovation and/or leadership ability. The Jim Rutherford Scholarship is awarded in the fall semester of the academic year. The fall 2026 scholarship award will be \$1,000.

HISTORY:

The McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District was organized in March 1942. On May 8, 1942, an election for five directors was held. Frank Hubert of Saybrook was elected chairman; Charles Richardson of Ellsworth, vice-chairman; Byron Kline of LeRoy, secretary; E.D. Hess of Arrowsmith and Harry Miller of Saybrook, directors.

Currently, the District's governing body consists of five directors, who must be owners or occupiers of land within the district boundaries. Each director is elected for a two-year term at the district's annual meeting, which is held in January or February.

Our current Board Members are:

Mike Kelley, Chairman
Jeff Mathews, Vice-Chairman
Garrett Conaty, Secretary, Treasurer
Irvin Bane, Director
Collin Loeffler, Director

ELIGIBILITY:

Any student who is currently a high school senior and will be enrolled in an Agricultural program for the 2026-2027 academic year at any college (junior college or four year university) is eligible.

CRITERIA

1. Demonstrates academic ability and achievement
2. Commitment to soil and water conservation
3. Potential for innovation and leadership ability
4. McLean County Resident

SELECTION PROCESS:

Please submit applications to McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District Foundation 402 N. Kays Drive Normal, IL 61761. Applications will be accepted from students until **March 17, 2026**. Applications must be complete and accompanied by the Application Form, Transcript, and Letters of Recommendation. The McLean County Soil & Water Conservation Foundation Board shall review all applications and select the student to be awarded the Jim Rutherford Scholarship. Winner will be notified early May.



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APPLICATION FORM

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

Any student who is currently a high school senior and will be enrolled in an Agricultural program for the 2026-2027 academic year at any college (junior college or four year university) is eligible. Winning applicants consent to their biography and photograph to be shared in McLean County SWCD news releases and website.

To be eligible a student must:

1. Be a high school senior soon to be enrolled at any College in agriculture.
2. Be a resident of McLean County.
3. Have a grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale OR a 4.0 on a 5.0 scale.
4. Submit a copy of their latest transcript.

Please fill in the following information:

FULL LEGAL NAME: _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE NUMBER : _____

DEGREE OF INTEREST: _____

HIGH SCHOOL FROM WHICH YOU WILL GRADUATE: _____

CURRENT GRADE POINT AVERAGE: _____ **SCALE USED:** _____

NAME OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____



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APPLICATION FORM CONTINUED

PLEASE TYPE YOUR ANSWERS ON A SEPARATE SHEET

1. List all high school extracurricular or community activities, including offices held:
2. Briefly state your educational plans and career objectives for the next 5 years:
3. Briefly describe your interest and experience in soil and water conservation activities:
4. How does agriculture and conservation work together on a farm? List and explain conservation practices farmers use on their farming operations. (250 words or less)
5. If you could promote conservation practices how would you promote it to farmers and landowners? (250 words or less)
6. What is the Illinois state soil?

Character References: Please provide two(2) Letters of Recommendation from those who are well acquainted with your education and abilities.