

DWSOC 2026 Ruth Clark Honorary Scholarship Award Application



The Democratic Women of South Orange County is a chartered club under the Democratic Party of Orange County. We work to get local Democrats elected to office and are committed to social and economic equality, environmental protection, affordable healthcare, a high-quality public education, and the promotion of a diverse culture.

One of the ways DWSOC seeks to promote lasting change in our community is by supporting, fostering, and mentoring young Democrats. As Benjamin Disraeli wisely said, “The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity”. We believe by encouraging and recognizing our local, young Democrats we are promoting and protecting Democratic ideals in our country and in the world – now and into the future.

Eligibility Requirements

- Graduating high school senior or transfer student for the current 2025-2026 academic year from Dana Hills High School, San Clemente High School, San Juan Hills High School, or Saddleback College
- Demonstrated community involvement consistent with promoting democracy and Democratic ideals.
- Registered or Pre-Registered to vote as a Democrat.
- Completed and signed Application Form and one completed Essay.
- Completed [Recommendation Survey](#) (only one recommendation please) from a teacher, counselor, academic advisor, coach, or work supervisor/manager of the student
 - *The Recommendation Survey must be received by 11:59pm on Friday April 10, 2026. Please reach out to your recommender as soon as possible.*

Award Details

- DWSOC will award a minimum of four scholarships up to \$1,000. Graduating seniors or transfer students from any of the following schools are eligible: Dana Hills High School, San Clemente High School, San Juan Hills High School, and Saddleback College. High school award recipients will be announced during the schools’ Senior Awards Night Event, and DWSOC will reach out to Saddleback College award recipient(s) directly.
- Scholarship awards will be based on how well the student demonstrates leadership, community involvement, and commitment to advancing Democratic ideals.

Terms and Timing

- Students must submit all required application materials (Application Form, Essay, proof of Voter Registration) **no later than 11:59pm on Friday, April 10, 2026** to scholarships@dwsoc.org. The Recommendation Survey must also be received by the same deadline.
- Use of AI (ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Quillbot, etc.) tools in your application materials is strongly prohibited. Evidence of AI use will disqualify your application.
- High school award recipients will be announced during the schools’ Senior Awards Night Event, and DWSOC will reach out to Saddleback College award recipient(s) directly.
- Award checks will be presented to Award Winners at the DWSOC June 2026 General Meeting where all students awarded our Scholarship will be introduced to the club membership. Recipients will be recognized by DWSOC on its website, social media, and in local media press releases.
- Decisions on awardees/amounts will be made by the DWSOC Scholarship Committee & Executive Board. DWSOC reserves the right to award multiple scholarships to students at the same school if it so chooses.

Essay

Please select only one of the following essay prompts to answer. Your essay should be 2-3 pages double spaced, and should include your name typed on the first page. Please submit your essay to us in PDF format along with your completed application.

1. This year the United States will celebrate its 250th birthday. What can we as citizens, both individually and collectively, do to champion and defend democracy, and promote our founding American ideals?
2. Civil rights leader and Democratic Member of Congress John Lewis said, "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something." Describe an experience when you took action because of an injustice in your community or country. What motivated you to act, what obstacles did you face, and how did this experience shape your sense of responsibility to others or your community?

Recommendation

Please select a teacher, counselor, academic advisor, coach, or work supervisor/manager or other non-family member to complete your Recommendation Survey, [linked here](#) or at tinyurl.com/dwsoc2026. Only one recommendation survey per student is permitted.

The Recommendation Survey must be received by 11:59pm on Friday, April 10, 2026, so please send the form to your recommender as soon as possible.

Application Submission

Please submit your application materials (Application Form, Essay, proof of Voter Registration) to scholarships@dwsoc.org, and ask your recommender to complete the Recommendation Survey, by 11:59pm on Friday, April 10, 2026. All materials must be received by the due date to be considered complete and eligible.

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete, and that I did not use AI tools to complete my application materials. I also agree to release to the DWSOC scholarship program data which includes, but is not limited to, the use of my name and picture in promotions, press releases, publications and fundraising activities. I acknowledge with my signature below that DWSOC reserves the right to verify my voter registration status as part of this application process.

Student Name (printed)	
Student Signature <i>(digital or wet signature accepted)</i>	
Date	

Questions? Contact DWSOC Scholarships Committee Chair Lisa Samerdyke at scholarships@dwsoc.org or 949.422.2941.