

Golden Leaf Scholarships to Help 215 Rural N.C. Students Attend College

Golden LEAF awards are currently open for high school seniors and community college transfers

The Golden LEAF Colleges and Universities Scholarship application for the 2026–2027 academic year is now open, offering financial support to 215 students from qualifying rural North Carolina counties. Applications are available through CFNC.org and must be submitted by March 1, 2026.

The scholarship provides significant assistance for students pursuing higher education in North Carolina. High school seniors attending a participating North Carolina college or university may receive awards totaling up to \$14,000, paid at \$3,500 per year for as many as four years. North Carolina community college transfer students may receive up to \$10,500, or \$3,500 per year for up to three years.

“For more than 25 years, the Golden LEAF Scholarship Program has been an important component of the Foundation’s workforce preparedness strategy,” said Golden LEAF President and Chief Executive Officer Scott T. Hamilton. “The program was established to ensure scholars gain the talent, knowledge, and skills needed to help North Carolina’s rural communities thrive by returning home to live, work, and lead future generations.”

Eligible applicants must be graduating North Carolina high school seniors or currently enrolled North Carolina community college transfer students planning to enroll full-time in the fall at a participating North Carolina public or private college or university. Selection is based on multiple factors, including academic performance, financial need, and a demonstrated intent to return to a rural North Carolina county after graduation.

Applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5, demonstrate financial need with a Student Aid Index not exceeding 15,000, and be residents with strong ties to rural North Carolina. A list of eligible counties and participating campuses is at CFNC.org.

Students who receive a Golden LEAF Scholarship may also be eligible to participate in the Golden LEAF Rural Internship Initiative, which offers paid internships in scholars’ chosen career fields while strengthening professional connections in rural North Carolina communities.

The Golden LEAF Scholarship Program is administered by the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority and funded by the Golden LEAF Foundation. For additional information, applicants may call 1-800-700-1775 and select Option 2, or email information@ncseaa.edu.

More details about the scholarship are available at Scholars.GoldenLEAF.org.

About Golden LEAF The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to receive a portion of North Carolina’s funding from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. The Foundation works to increase economic opportunity in rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

For more than 25 years, Golden LEAF has provided lasting impact to economically distressed and rural areas across the state. In fiscal year 2025, the Foundation helped create 1,665 jobs, generated more than \$116 million in new payrolls, and supported training or retraining for more than 4,722 workers seeking higher wages.

Additional information about Golden LEAF and its programs at GoldenLEAF.org.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee Thanks the Anson County Community

Community support made the 2026 celebration a success

Dear Anson County Community:

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee would like to thank each of you for your engagement and participation in this year’s Martin Luther King, Jr. 2026 Celebration. The celebration was truly wonderful, and the involvement of our local churches and community members allowed us to honor this important day in a meaningful way. Our goal of engaging the community was achieved because of the commitment and participation of county residents and leaders.

Local churches hosted Community Table Talks, the Community Breakfast was well attended, more than 50 people participated in the Community March from the Department of Social Services to the Lockhart Taylor Center, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration itself drew an audience of more than 200 people. In addition, a Jazzy Night event was held at the HOLLA Center in Morven, North Carolina.

We extend sincere thanks to the speakers, presenters, dancers, and the members of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee for their many contributions. As an Anson County community, let us continue to bring one another together so that we can support and uplift each other.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a civil rights leader for the entire nation. He worked to strengthen our country by ensuring that all people could achieve the rights and care needed to live successful and meaningful lives. When all Americans are strong, our country is strong.

This year’s event theme, “Unity in the Beloved Community,” reflected the spirit of togetherness and shared purpose that was evident throughout the celebration.

Again, we thank each of you for your involvement and engagement. Let us continue to push forward with the dream of unity in the Beloved Community of Anson County.

Sincerely, MLK, Jr. 2026 Ceremony Committee: Marlene Richardson, Winnie Bennett, Rev. Bernice Bennett, Sylvia Pratt, Cornelia Liles, Amethra Melton, Brian Ellerby, Angela Powe Phillip, Betty Huntley, Elizabeth Kersey, Leon Gatewood, Angela Tina Caraway, Samuel Cole

Uwharrie Capital Corp Reports Strong Growth in 2025

Uwharrie Capital Corp and its subsidiary, Uwharrie Bank, reported consolidated total assets of \$1.20 billion at December 31, 2025, compared to \$1.13 billion at December 31, 2024, representing an increase of \$68 million, or 6 percent, for the year. The increase was driven primarily by growth in customer deposits across multiple deposit product sectors.

Net income for the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2025, totaled \$11.4 million, up from \$9.9 million for the same period in 2024. Net income available to common shareholders for the twelve months ended December 31, 2025, was \$10.8 million, or \$1.49 per share, compared to \$9.3 million, or \$1.26 per share, for the twelve months ended December 31, 2024. Net income available to common shareholders reflects the payment of dividends on preferred stock issued by the company.

The year-over-year improvement in net income of \$1.5 million, or 15 percent, was attributed to growth in margin resulting from an increase in loans held by the company, while continuing to maintain appropriate credit quality levels.

For additional information, contact Roger Dick, Chief Executive Officer, at 704-983-6181.

Uwharrie Capital Corp offers a full range of financial solutions through its subsidiaries, including Uwharrie Bank and Uwharrie Investment Advisors. More information is available at www.Uwharrie.com or by calling 704-982-4415.

Powerball Winner Claims \$209.3 Million And Immediately Becomes Everyone’s Long-Lost Friend

**Lucky ticket sold in Roanoke Rapids turned
a Wednesday night into a life-changing Thursday**

Somebody in North Carolina woke up Thursday with a very different to-do list after claiming January 21’s Powerball jackpot worth a cool \$209.3 million. The winning ticket holder strolled into lottery headquarters in Raleigh and officially became the second-largest jackpot winner in state lottery history, proving once again that lightning does strike - usually when you least expect it and definitely when you’re not at work.

The winner chose to remain anonymous for up to 90 days, a perk allowed under state law for lottery prizes of \$50 million or more. Translation: the winner gets three full months to dodge phone calls, ignore distant cousins, and practice saying, “No, I can’t co-sign anything,” in the mirror.

The jackpot was won with a single ticket that matched all six numbers in Wednesday’s drawing: 11, 26, 27, 53, 55 and Powerball 12. Those numbers will now live forever in lottery legend, framed screenshots, and maybe a celebratory tattoo.

The lucky ticket was sold at West 10th Mart on West 10th Street in Roanoke Rapids, where the cash register deserves just as much credit as the ticket buyer. The retailer will receive a \$50,000 bonus for selling the winning ticket, likely prompting every employee to suddenly “remember” who sold that exact ticket.

When it came time to choose how to collect the winnings, the winner faced the classic lottery dilemma: an annuity of \$209.3 million paid out over 30 payments across 29 years, or a lump sum of \$95.3 million right now. The winner chose the lump sum, because patience is overrated when you’ve already beaten the odds. After required federal and state tax withholdings, the take-home total came to \$68.6 million, still enough to make most people forget what day of the week it is.

For those wondering how lottery money helps communities across the state, details on how funds benefit all 100 North Carolina counties can be found under the “Impact” section of the lottery’s website at nclottery.com.

As for the rest of us, we’ll be back in line buying tickets and promising ourselves that next time, we’re definitely picking better numbers.

Friends of the Anson County Animal Shelter Business Partnership Drive

Community Support Sought to Begin 2026 Strong

Friends of the Anson County Animal Shelter is inviting local businesses to help launch 2026 on a strong note by becoming business partners in support of the shelter and its programs. The organization is currently seeking businesses willing to make a once-a-year donation or recurring sponsorship to help meet ongoing needs at the shelter.

Organizers note that anyone who owns even one pet understands the time, care, and resources required to properly look after animals. In addition to caring for shelter animals, the Anson County Animal Shelter provides valuable community services, including a pet food pantry and low-cost spay and neuter clinics that benefit families across the county.

A recurring sponsorship allows Friends of the Anson County Animal Shelter to better budget, plan, and expand services that directly impact animal welfare in the community. Business partners play a key role in ensuring these programs remain available throughout the year.

Businesses interested in becoming partners through a once-a-year donation can learn more and sign up by visiting www.friendsofansonanimal.org. Additional information about the organization and its mission is also available on the website.

In a message to the community, Friends of the Anson County Animal Shelter expressed appreciation for past and future support and extended best wishes for a prosperous New Year, emphasizing that every contribution helps improve the lives of animals and strengthens services for Anson County residents.



ANSON COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COALITION, INC.

CRISIS INTERVENTION ADVOCATE

PART-TIME: After hours Monday through Friday & weekends.

On call position requires you to stay in Anson County while on call.

Requirements: Must be at least 18 years old; High school diploma and N.C. driver’s license; Be able to pass drug test; Pass criminal background check. Would need own transportation. Need to live in Anson County, be available after hours and weekends.

We are seeking an applicant who is compassionate and non-judgemental.

If interested you may bring your resume to the office:

Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition

204 East Wade Street in Wadesboro

Office hours: Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Or you can mail your resume: P.O. Box 694, Wadesboro, NC 28170

Please do not submit resume by social media. It will not be accepted.

Resumes accepted until March 2

For any questions please call 704-694-4499 and ask for Karen. EOE

Loving Biblical Response to Worldly Error

Ephesians 1:4

“According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

God chose us 1st!

The 1st time I ever saw my wife, I knew that I was going to marry her! (I chose her 1st)She said no the 1st time I asked her out for a date! Later she said yes to a date. Then when I asked her to marry me she said yes, too. I gave her an engagement ring as a promise that I would marry her. Five months later we were married.

In the marriage covenant the Husband(man) is the aggressor, and the Wife(woman) is the responder.

Ephesians 5

My wife had to accept my proposal by responding to me with a yes before I knew that she would marry me!

It is the same way for us in God’s plan of Salvation.

Everything about God’s Salvation is a Gift from Him, which can’t be earned or deserved.

God asked me several times during my life before I said yes by faith (at age 30)to His proposal . Before saying yes by faith I was convicted of my sin, I confessed my sin, made a correction(repentance) and God cleansed me from all my sin. At that moment He placed the Holy Spirit inside of me, to lead me, guide me, comfort me, teach me, empower me, and never leave me. He was like the engagement(signet)ring I gave my wife when we were engaged. God made a promise to me as a born-again believer, as a member of His body and of the glorious “Church” the “Bride of Christ”, that I would one day soon be called unto His “marriage supper”! Revelation 19:9

Jesus told his 1st disciples,

“Come and Follow Me”

The disciples had to make a decisive choice in their will to follow Jesus!

They were invited first!

John 6:44

“No man can come to me(Jesus), except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

“Before a man or woman can seek God, God must first have sought the man or woman!” A.W. Tozer

Our soul is emotional, mental, and volitional(will).

The disciples could have received the invitation emotionally, got all excited, but the change in their life would not last and they would still be lost.

The disciples could have received the invitation mentally(lead knowledge, ike Judas), but the change in their life would not last and they would still be lost.

“A person’s mind can approve and their emotions enjoy, while their will drags its feet and refuses to go along! Christ makes His appeal directly to the will of a man or woman.” A.W. Tozer

Eleven disciples received the invitation volitionally(they willed it), trusted in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life! They were saved and their lives changed!

“...Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God!” Psalm 55:19

When you got saved did your life change?

Nobody can wake up one day and say they are going to love, live for, and serve Jesus Christ as their Lord, unless God has first invited them to do so!

You can’t be baptized, confirmed, work or become a member of a local church and expect Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life.

Matthew 11:28

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”

We have to decide in our will to receive God’s rest or stay in unrest!, when He calls.

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (behavior) received by tradition from your fathers; But with the **precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18-19

True saving faith means resting upon Christ alone and what He has done rather than in what you have done to get to Heaven!

Some will say that God predestines some to hell and some to heaven! In God’s divine foreknowledge He knows all that will receive or reject Him from before the foundation of the world.

Some will say that Jesus died for some, but the Bible says that Jesus died for All!

2 Corinthians 5:15

And that **He died for all**, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** in(into) Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

It is God’s will that all would be saved but **sadly**, all will not be saved!

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.”

Some people say that God’s will cannot be resisted but just reading this verse shows us that it can. Not all will be saved because they reject(or do nothing with) the invitation of salvation from the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 3:20

“Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man **hear** my voice, and **open** the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

There is action required of man to hear God’s voice and to open the door for God’s Holy Spirit to enter into his life.

Romans 10:10

“For with the heart man **believeth** unto(into) righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation.”

Romans 10:13

“For whosoever shall **call** upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”

“Faith cometh by **hearing** and hearing by the word of God”(Faith awakes to the voice of truth only.

God’s word is Truth!)

Some say that since God predestines some to heaven and some to hell there is no reason to witness to anyone?

But God commands us in the 4 Gospels and the book of Acts to be a witness!

Acts 1:8

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

“Good and upright is the Lord;therefore will He teach sinners in the way.” Psalm 25:8

Jesus saith unto him(Thomas the doubter) “I Am the Way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”! John 14:6 Jesus is not a way but the only way a person can ever be saved!

Dear readers, if God were to ask you, “Why should I let you into my Heaven?, what would you say?

Rocky Carpenter

Pastor

Harmony Community Church

704-272-7410