

# The Orion Fund Opens Grant Applications to Help California College Students in Health Crisis Stay in School

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Orion Fund](#), a volunteer-run nonprofit dedicated to helping California college [students](#) stay in school while facing serious illness or injury, has opened applications for its Annual Grant Program, the organization's largest award program of the year.

Each year, The Orion Fund provides direct financial assistance to California college students age 32 and under who are experiencing a serious medical condition that threatens their ability to remain enrolled. The Annual Grant Program runs from December through April and supports students attending community colleges, CSU, UC, and private colleges throughout California.

The application deadline is Tuesday, February 24, 2026.

[Grants](#) are awarded to help cover expenses related to a medical crisis, including medical expenses incurred during a medical event; limited short-term medical costs to support recovery; educational costs associated with recovery; and essential living expenses related to recovery. Grant awards typically range from \$500 to \$5,000, depending on individual circumstances.



The banner features the text "THE ORION FUND" in large, white, sans-serif letters against a dark blue background with a starry texture. Below the banner, the website layout includes the "THE ORION FUND" logo and tagline "Education. Health. Hope.", a blue button for "Grants for California college students in health crisis.", and a text box describing the organization's mission. To the right, there are four small images of students and staff.

TheOrionFund.org

THE ORION FUND

Education. Health. Hope.

**Grants for California college students in health crisis.**

From serious car crashes to life-changing cancer diagnoses, we provide a vital safety net for students facing medical challenges, ensuring they have the support needed to continue their education without interruption.

The Orion Fund Website - Students in medical crisis can apply for grants so they can stay in school

"For students navigating a serious health crisis, the financial burden can be just as devastating as

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For college students facing a health crisis, the financial burden can be just as devastating. Orion Fund grants remove urgent financial barriers so students can focus on healing and staying in school.”

*Pam Hirtzer, Founder of The Orion Fund*

the diagnosis itself,” said Pam Hirtzer, Founder of The Orion Fund. “Our grants help remove immediate financial barriers so students can focus on healing and staying enrolled in school.”

The impact of this support is often life-changing for students at all levels of higher education.

“There are angels out there, and one of them is The Orion Fund,” said Leo, a Master’s student and Orion Fund grantee. “This year, they did not just help me, they helped me survive and overcome what I was going through.”

Another grantee, Marial, a PhD student, shared the lasting impact of receiving support during recovery.

“I would like to share the exciting news that I am in good health,” Marial said. “I remain incredibly, unspeakably grateful to The Orion Fund. It was absolutely life-changing.”

Students can begin an application through The Orion Fund’s website at [TheOrionFund.org](http://TheOrionFund.org).

Founded in 2004, The Orion Fund has awarded more than \$750,000 in direct grants to over 450 students at more than 70 colleges across California. The organization remains entirely volunteer-run and focused on providing timely, compassionate support to students when they need it most.

Students who believe they may qualify are encouraged to apply early.

To apply or make a contribution, visit [TheOrionFund.org](http://TheOrionFund.org).

#### About The Orion Fund

Founded in 2004 as a legacy to Orion Trott, a UC San Diego student who died of cancer at the age of 21, The Orion Fund provides direct financial aid to California college students age 32 and younger who are facing a serious health crisis. Entirely volunteer-run, the organization has awarded more than \$750,000 in grants to over 450 students at 70+ colleges statewide, ensuring that health challenges do not derail educational goals.

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The Orion Fund

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