The Joe Smietanka Memorial Scholarship

This $500.00 scholarship was made in honor of Joe Smietanka's legacy of perseverance and second chances by supporting Helena College students who have overcome significant personal challenges and are committed to creating a better future through education. This scholarship is available to students pursuing a degree or vocational certification at Helena College. Preference is given to returning students who have completed at least one semester of study. Eligible applicants are those who have experienced personal adversity, such as a felony conviction**,** single parent family**,** recovery from substance abuse**,** or other challenges including housing insecurity, foster care history, or disability**.** Awards help cover the cost of tuition, books, tools, or program-related supplies**,** easing financial barriers and encouraging continued academic and personal success.

Amount & Availability:

One scholarship, not to exceed $500, will be available for the fall semester, and one scholarship, not to exceed $500.00, will be available for the spring semester. Each semester's award is offered independently and requires separate applications.

Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants must meet **all** of the following:

1. Be enrolled at Helena College seeking a degree or vocational certification.
2. Have experienced significant personal challenges or adversity, such as:
    a. A felony conviction
    b. Sole or primary caregiver of dependent children
    c. Age 18-21 raised in single-parent, one-income household
    d. Recovery from substance abuse
    e. Other challenges (e.g., housing insecurity, foster care history, disability, or systemic barriers)
3. A student who has received a scholarship in a prior semester shall not be precluded from receiving a scholarship for a subsequent semester.

Application Procedure & Criteria:

Complete the application form and other required documents listed below and return them to the Financial Aid Office on or before the deadline.

- A personal statement explaining your circumstances, what drew you to go to college to pursue the program that you are enrolled in, and how this scholarship will help you achieve your goals. Include details about the challenges or adversity you have faced and how you have worked to overcome it.
- Two letters of recommendation at least one being a professional recommendation from a counselor, probation officer, employer, teacher, etc. that can speak on your behalf about the challenges you have overcome, steps you have taken to stay accountable, and the plan you have to achieve your goals at Helena College.
- Documentation of Books, school supplies, and or tool expenses needed for the semester/ school year.

Selection Decision:

Joe's family will evaluate each application to determine a recipient for each semester. Preference will be given to returning students, e.g., those who have completed at least one semester of college or technical studies.
The scholarship recipient must write an acknowledgement letter (thank you) to the donors.

Deadline: November 27th, 2026

Applicant Name _____

Mailing Address_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

Select one:
Returning Student _____ Incoming Freshman _____

The scholarship committee/Helena College may submit a notice of the award to the local newspaper or use the award information in public relations documents. The award information may include your name, program and dollar amount awarded. By signing this form you acknowledge and agree that this information may be disclosed.

Signature _____ Date _____

Submit completed application and material to Helena College Financial Aid Office at 1115 North Roberts Street, Helena, MT 59601.