



What type of professional recommendation do I need to apply for the Merritt Scholars Program?

We require a recommendation made by an affordable housing industry professional, a professor currently teaching a course on affordable housing, or a concurrent application to the Bay Area Housing Internship or the California Coalition for Rural Housing's Internship Program with a recommendation from a professional at the internship.

What is expected of the recommenders?

Applicants will be requested to provide their recommender's contact information. Upon providing this, the SmarterSelect platform will automatically send a form to the recommender's email, which includes a brief questionnaire inquiring about their relationship with the applicant, their abilities and interest in housing, and their overall fit for the program. There is an option for recommenders to attach a letter of recommendation.

The program requires enrollment in a degree granting institution by Fall 2025. Would someone who is currently applying or awaiting acceptance to begin a program in Fall 2025 be eligible?

Yes, for as long as applicants state this clearly on the application and notify the Merritt team immediately upon acceptance and commitment to the program. Selected Merritt Scholars should be able to provide proof of enrollment as soon as it is made available to them, as scholarships are disbursed directly to the school at the beginning of the program.

The program requires scholars to attend at least two industry conferences. Where are the conferences and how long are they?

All scholars are required to attend two conferences: first is the 3-day Housing California conference in Sacramento, which happens annually in March; second is a local industry conference depending on the scholar's location and stated interests. These include the following one-day conferences: NPH Conference in October in San Francisco, the SCANPH Conference in Los Angeles in September, and the SDHF Conference in October in San Diego. The CCRH Rural Housing Summit is held in November in Monterey and is also a 3-day conference. All expenses for the conferences will be paid by Merritt.

Can Merritt Scholars attend more than two conferences, and will they be reimbursed?

Merritt Scholars may attend conferences they believe will be beneficial to their growth as a housing practitioner. Merritt will cover the cost of registration, hotels, travel, and provide a



stipend for incidental expenses for two conferences; additional conferences must be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Can someone with limited experience or coursework in affordable housing apply for the program?

Yes. While demonstrated interest in affordable housing is a critical factor in one's selection, stated interest in housing relayed effectively through the applicant's essays and recommendation may be considered.

Would an early career professional, not currently enrolled in school, but with a demonstrated interest in affordable housing be eligible for the program?

No. The Merritt Scholars program is a scholarship program that requires students to be currently enrolled in school.