



WILDERNESS RISK MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



Portland, Oregon | October 20 - 22nd, 2026



student
conservation
association



2026 WRMC Scholarship Program Information & FAQ

Scholarship Program Impact!

In 2025, over \$5,000 was contributed by seven generous donors! Scholarships were awarded to ten recipients. Since its inception in 2009, more than 90 scholarships have been awarded! And each year the WRMC strives to provide more scholarships and increase our donation funds.

"My best moment at the WRMC was when I left a session in creating support networks for stress injury mitigation, with a list of action items and a brain buzzing with plans to create new programs in my own company and community." - 2022 N.F.

"It is clear to me that this community is one that supports each other, collaborates with one another, and is always pushing to grow and be better, together. I am so grateful to be part of the WRMC community. The lessons I learned from this conference will help me grow my knowledge and skills, and will help me to make more informed decisions down the road." 2018 E.G.

Donor Information - Give Today.

Would you like to help support someone who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend WRMC? Donate today and share a priceless opportunity to be part of the WRMC Community. Help emerging leaders and those new to wilderness risk to gain the skills and knowledge they need to improve safety in their programs and advance the profession. WRMC operates under a nonprofit, tax-exempt status. Your donation may be tax deductible. You will receive a contribution receipt letter.

[Donate online.](#)

Scholarship Program Information

Each year, a limited number of scholarships to help cover the cost of registration fees are awarded through a competitive application process. More applications are received each year than available scholarships. Not all eligible applicants will receive an award. The number of scholarships awarded varies based on donations received. The WRMC Scholarship Program includes the Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship.

Scholarship Timeline

Applications Open	6/1/2026
Applications Close/Deadline	8/1/2026

Award Notifications	8/8/2026
Recipient Acceptance Deadline	8/22/2026

Scholarship Types - Individual or Exhibitor

Individuals may apply for a scholarship to cover all or part of the attendee registration fee. Both presenters and attendees are eligible for an individual scholarship.

Organizations, educational institutions, or businesses may apply for a scholarship for an Exhibitor Table.

Scholarships apply to registration or exhibitor table registration fee only. No travel or other expenses are eligible. If awarded, you will make and pay for your own travel arrangements. Pre-Conference Workshop fees are not eligible. If you hope to attend the conference and have an exhibitor table, please apply separately for both. If you apply for both, it is possible you might be awarded only one, none, or both.

Individual Conference Registration Fee Scholarship Eligibility

Scholarships toward attendee registration are awarded to instructors, practitioners, managers, administrators, directors, researchers, and similar roles in the wilderness, adventure education, outdoor, and like programs. Legacy Partner employees (NOLS, SCA, Outward Bound USA) are not eligible to apply. Students may apply. Individuals working in nonprofit organizations, who might not otherwise be able to attend, are encouraged to apply.

Exhibitor Table ONLY Scholarship Eligibility

Exhibitors are encouraged to apply who:

- Have a diversity, equity, and inclusion focus or impact
- Provide effective solutions to emerging wilderness risk management challenges or are advancing research or innovative practices in the profession
- Provide a product or service that is of particular support to WRMC community members in *Facing Challenges Together*
- For-profit businesses may apply, but preference is given to nonprofit, education, and other public benefit organizations

Application Process

Fill out the [WRMC Scholarship Application Form](#) (this will be available during application acceptance timeline)

Individual: Each question allows for 100 words or less.

- 1) Briefly describe your experience in outdoor education and any contributions you have made.
- 2) Share a story of a time in which wilderness risk management played a critical role in your job.
- 3) What do you hope to gain by attending, and how will it enhance your role in outdoor education?

Exhibitor: If your organization is a nonprofit or not, and what the mission, vision, goals, etc., include.

Why are you applying for a scholarship, and what would your organization gain by exhibiting at the WRMC?

Reasonable Accommodation

If you would like to request reasonable accommodation, please use the method that is most comfortable to share your request. Conference contact information: wrmc@nols.edu or 307-335-2222.

Stay Updated & Informed

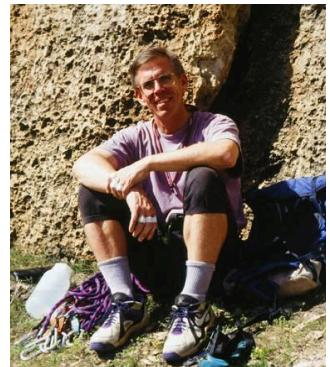
Sign Up for email updates. Make wrmc@nols.edu a trusted email sender, and be careful not to “opt-out” of emails. Make wrmc@nols.edu a safe sender - [Microsoft Instructions](#), [Gmail Instructions](#).

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The WRMC provides a forum to learn and share common practices in wilderness risk management and contributes to a culture of open dialogue among outdoor industry professionals. The WRMC is committed to the evolution of content and culture in a way that centers on diversity, equity, and inclusion principles. Commitment to these values helps ensure the best ideas continue to improve risk management practices for the industry.

Jim Ratz Memorial Scholarship

Jim Ratz (1952-2005) was a passionate mountaineer, father, and husband dedicated to outdoor education and the preservation of wilderness. As NOLS Executive Director (1984-1995), Jim was instrumental in the creation and vision of the inaugural Wilderness Risk Management Conference. The WRMC has since gone on to educate thousands and raise standards of practice across outdoor and wilderness education. One or more Jim Ratz scholarships are awarded annually.



WRMC Legacy Partners (NOLS, Outward Bound, and SCA) sponsor an annual scholarship in Jim's name, and are always looking for other generous organizations and individuals to support this program. There are many inspiring organizations and passionate people in our industry who need financial support to attend a conference like the WRMC. Consider donating to the scholarship fund today.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: I'd prefer to keep it private that I'm attending with support from the scholarship. Will others know?

A: Scholarship awards are not publicized, so unless you choose to identify that you have received a scholarship, it will not be apparent. However, it is beneficial if you share a thank you and quote after the conference to help promote the program and encourage donors to support the scholarship program.

Q: Is the Scholarship for Students only?

A: No, the Scholarship is focused on current practitioners, instructors, or emerging wilderness risk professionals. Full-time students are eligible for a registration fee discount. Therefore, the scholarship is not targeted specifically to students.

Q: Who contributes to the Scholarship Fund?

A: Individuals, organizations, and private businesses all contribute. Generous donors who have made significant contributions include Fred C. Church Insurance, Experiential Consulting, Outdoor Gear Exchange, Pachner & Associates, and several anonymous individual donors.

Q: If I received a scholarship in the past, can I apply again?

A: Yes, you may reapply. Depending on the number of applications and volume of donations, your application may be less competitive as a previous award recipient.

Q: What if I'm awarded a scholarship, but something changes, and I can't pay my travel expenses or attend for other unforeseen reasons?

A: If you are unable to accept the scholarship or have to cancel after registering, please contact WRMC as soon as possible so that the scholarship can be offered to another candidate. You can apply in future years. However, scholarships may not be rolled forward to future years.

Q: I was accepted as a speaker. Can I apply for a scholarship to help with registration?

A: Yes.

Q: I found another way to cover registration. Can I use the scholarship for something else, like travel expenses?

A: No, scholarship awards can be applied to registration fees or exhibitor table fees only. Unused scholarship funds will be returned to the program to be awarded to another eligible recipient in the future.

Q: I was awarded an individual scholarship and can no longer attend and use the scholarship. Can I transfer it to someone else in my organization?

A: No, individual scholarships may not be transferred.

More great stories and comments from past award recipients.

"Attending the WRMC was an incredibly purposeful and informative experience. I learned countless new strategies and procedures that I have taken home to implement in our program. The session I gained the most from had to be the Exclusion Risk Management session run by the amazing women at City Kids. The resources and strategies I learned from them were something I could take home and use immediately in my program to create a safer, more equitable environment for our students. I am so grateful for this scholarship to attend the WRMC. It will benefit our program and students for years to come."
- 2022 M.F.

"It was such a wonderful experience to learn from industry leaders from all over the county! While the conference was filled with wonderful lectures, I was fortunate to have participated in the various affinity groups! Thank you for providing a space for BIPOC individuals to connect, and I look forward to participating in the next conference in person!" - 2021 A.A.