

## **Richard Eikenberg One Voice Scholarship Washington, D.C. Trip**

### **Scholarship Guidelines**

#### **What is One Voice?**

One Voice is a non-partisan coalition created by the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDEC). It is a pro-community campaign that brings together leaders from the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, McLean County, surrounding rural communities, trades and labor, local educational institutions, and local private businesses in support of specific economic development projects and issues in McLean County. Each spring, the One Voice Task Force travels to Washington, D.C. to meet with our congressional delegation to show them our community stands united in support of Central Illinois projects, initiatives, and infrastructure improvements. For those projects needing funding, we meet with the federal agencies that may have grants or funds available. The ultimate goal of One Voice is to engage our federal representatives and to obtain federal funding for our community. One Voice does not lobby for policy or regulatory change and is not affiliated with any political party, movement, or policy organization.

During the 2019 trip, we visited the Department of Transportation where Connect Transit sought funds for a transfer center in Downtown Bloomington to provide more capacity for buses and better passenger amenities. Additionally, the Town of Normal sought funds for a pedestrian and bicycle underpass near Uptown Circle and the Uptown Station Multimodal facility. We also met with the U.S. Small Business Administration to build a relationship and learn about loan programs, capital investment networks, and SBA grants to further build the entrepreneurship ecosystem in our community.

#### **One Voice 2020: Washington, D.C. Trip Details:**

The 2020 One Voice trip will take place March 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>. The scholarship covers all expenses of the trip, from flight and hotel to all meals and events. Specific trip details will be presented at our pre-trip briefing for all participants – Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (tentative date). The scholarship recipient **MUST** attend the pre-trip briefing.

Thirty local community, business, and labor leaders attended the 2019 trip. During the trip, we meet with our U.S. senators and representatives, along with leaders of other government agencies. This trip is an amazing opportunity to meet and network with local leaders and discuss current issues in federal government with the primary decision-makers. Participants also attend receptions and meetings with speakers from various economic development-related institutions. There is also limited time for sight-seeing opportunities.

## **About the Scholarship:**

The Richard Eikenberg One Voice Scholarship was created in 2008 in honor of Richard Eikenberg, past EDC board chair. The scholarship allows one local college undergraduate student (from an EDC investor school – Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, or Heartland Community College) to participate in the One Voice Washington, D.C. trip. The scholarship covers all expenses of the trip, from the flight and hotel to all meals and events. It is truly an amazing experience for one deserving college student.

The selection process is based on applicants' responses to an essay question, volunteer/civic engagement experience and their personal interest in the trip opportunity. The top three finalists are then interviewed by a committee made up of EDC staff and EDC Board members.

## **Past Recipients**

2019 – Ashwin Siddaraju, Illinois State University; Joshua Crockett, Heartland Community College

2018 – Kadi Ilves, Illinois State University

2017 – Emma Shores, Illinois State University

2016 – Keith Rohman, Illinois State University

2015 – Javier Padilla, Illinois State University

2014 – Jessica Garber, Illinois State University

2013 – Amie Burke, Illinois State University

2012 – Jonathan Nelson, Heartland Community College

2011 – Grant Anderson, Illinois State University

2010 – Paige Maynard, Illinois Wesleyan University

2009 – Grace Leopold, Illinois State University

## 2020 Eligibility Requirements & Guidelines:

Students interested in being considered for the One Voice Scholarship must complete the following steps:

1. The attached application must be **completed and submitted by NOON on Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019** to the EDC office (or emailed to: [zach@bnbiz.org](mailto:zach@bnbiz.org)).
2. Recipient must have a 3.0 cumulative GPA. **A transcript must be included** (*transcript does not need to be an official copy*).
3. The application must include one letter of recommendation from a reference familiar with the student's scholastic ability and work.
4. The application must include a list of volunteer or extracurricular activities.
5. The application must include an essay (maximum 500 words). Essay Question: As a student how can you be a "voice" and an influence in your community?
6. Recipient must be an undergraduate student at an EDC investor school (investor schools include Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University and Heartland Community). Recipient may be from any area of study.
7. Scholarship finalists (*up to three*) will be asked to submit to an interview with EDC staff and EDC board members the week of **November 18th**.
8. Recipient must be available to attend the pre-trip briefing and the entire Washington, D.C. trip, including all scheduled activities during the trip and briefings prior to the trip.

### Important Dates to Note:

Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 – Applications must be submitted to the EDC office

Week of November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 – The top three finalists will be interviewed

Week of December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 – The scholarship recipient will be announced

Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – Pre-trip briefing meeting \*\*\* Tentatively scheduled for this date

Travel with EDC Staff Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - One Voice Trip

### Contact Information:

If you have any questions please contact the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council at (309) 452-8437 or by email at [becky@bnbiz.org](mailto:becky@bnbiz.org). For more information about One Voice, you can also visit the EDC's website at [www.bnbiz.org/programs/one-voice](http://www.bnbiz.org/programs/one-voice).



*\*The Washington D.C. trip dates are subject to change. The Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC) is under no obligation to provide a trip to Washington D.C. or any other location under this program. The EDC may cancel or*

*modify the trip as it finds necessary and is under no obligation to provide a trip to scholarship recipient due to changes and schedules modifications beyond the BNEDC's control.*

## **Reflections on One Voice by Ashwin Siddaraju, Illinois State University, 2019 Scholarship Recipient**

It was quite the honor to be named the recipient of the One Voice Scholarship and be given an experience and opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. Being able to take on this journey and endeavor with a very diverse coalition of McLean County leaders, that represent various factions and groups such as labor, agriculture, government, and education, among others within the community, made this opportunity all the more rewarding. Having those meaningful conversations, the ability to network and connect with those who have made it their lives work to constantly see the community prosper, reduce inequities within the community, and most of all to correct and fix deficiencies within our current system to ensure that quality of life never diminishes, was truly a surreal experience. It is called "One Voice" for a reason. No matter the individual political affiliation, prejudice of congressional leaders, or differences that preside amongst one another, all of that is set to the side in order see the shared goals and values of the community to fruition. This is done through advocacy of economic development projects, to seek funding, and holding meetings with various governmental agencies, think tanks, organizations, and congressional leaders from both The House and The Senate. I gained a substantial amount of professional development throughout the process. All the lessons, skills, and knowledge that I have gained throughout the experience will be transcendent, as I start on my personal, professional career path.

I would absolutely and highly recommend any student, who is interested in advocacy, potentially entering government work, increasing their understanding of the local community, those interested in civic engagement, outspoken, rising community leaders, interdisciplinary experiences, developing lasting relationship through networking, increasing their aptitude, all while experiencing Washington D.C. I cannot express how truly grateful I am to the EDC staff for allowing me to receive this scholarship. It was truly a one of a kind experience and one that I will cherish for a long time. I can honestly say that I am much better off for making the connections that I did with local leaders, congressional leaders in D.C. along with the EDC staff. Being able to ask questions to all those individuals, whom I respect and think very highly of, allowed me to garner a broader and more holistic understanding and perspective on a plethora of local, state, and federal topics. This trip challenged me to get out of my comfort zone, whether it be through public speaking, interpersonal connections, and testing my general knowledge on local issues. Aside from the business portion, there were moments of entertainment sprinkled in there as well. I was also able to experience a lot of Washington D.C. has to offer, such as touring the White House and indulging the foody inside me at fantastic dining establishments every day, with the EDC staff. Washington D.C. is an addicting environment and it reaffirmed my interest into the policy making culture. I want to make lasting and enduring change, on the legislative level, and this trip, got me one step closer to seeing that ambition to success.