



**State of Wisconsin**  
*Department of Financial Institutions*

Tony Evers, **Governor**

Kathy Blumenfeld, **Secretary**

**For Immediate Release:** April 16, 2021

**Wisconsin Money Smart Essay Contest Awards \$10,000**  
*Scholarship Program Supported by Financial Industry Promotes Financial Literacy*

MADISON, Wis. – Today the [Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions \(DFI\)](#) and the [Wisconsin Coalition on Student Debt \(Coalition\)](#) awarded ten Wisconsin graduating high school seniors with \$1,000 [Edvest](#), Wisconsin's College Savings Plan, gift certificates for their winning [Wisconsin Money Smart Essay Contest](#) submissions this spring.

Graduating high school seniors from across Wisconsin were encouraged to write essays about how they plan to finance their college education for a chance to win one of ten \$1,000 Edvest gift certificates. Members of the Coalition reviewed and scored the 117 essay submissions based on criteria including research, identifying funding sources for college, and explaining how to manage student loan debt.

Contest winners were notified and received special [video recognition](#) from Gov. Tony Evers, Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, essay contest sponsors, and Coalition members. Congratulations to this year's essay contest winners:

- Addison Grant, Green Bay East High School, Green Bay
- Alberto De La O Garcia, Ronald Reagan High School, Milwaukee
- Chloe Cook, Luxemburg-Casco High School, Luxemburg
- Dagan Daniels, Port Washington High School, Port Washington
- Ella Sommerfeld, Horicon High School, Beaver Dam
- Hanna Elsner, Gillett High School, Cecil
- Katherine Zimmerman, eAchieve Academy, Boyd
- Kylie Ira, Onalaska High School, Onalaska
- Olivia Nelson, Westby Area High School, Coon Valley
- Tyler Van Deslunt, Fond du Lac High School, Fond du Lac

“These students have shown us through their winning essay submissions that they have developed plans to pay for college and manage potential student loan debt,” said DFI Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld. “We applaud these deserving students for all they have done, and we encourage them to continue building their financial literacy skills as they continue their education.”

The Wisconsin Money Smart Essay Contest was sponsored by the Coalition, DFI, Edvest, Ascendium Education Group, Royal Credit Union, Summit Credit Union, SecureFutures, and Wisconsin Education Association Council Region 6.

The Coalition is backed by more than 30 organizations that share one common agenda – helping Wisconsin residents become debt smart and financially stable. Participating organizations include: Ascendium Education Group; Fair Opportunity Project; Herzog University; Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB); Madison Metropolitan School District; Medical College of Wisconsin; Navient; Sallie Mae; Summit Credit Union; University of Wisconsin – Center for Financial Security; University of Wisconsin – Madison; Wisconsin's

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Private Colleges; Urban Economic Development Association of Wisconsin; UW Credit Union; Western Technical College; Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU); Wisconsin Bankers Foundation; Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI); Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC); and Wisconsin Manufactures and Commerce.

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