

Western
National Parks
Association

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wnpa.org



2025 APPLICATION PACKET

QUINTANA-STERKEL

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

CULTIVATING A DIVERSE FUTURE FOR OUR NATIONAL TREASURES

Paving the Way:

A Guide to the Ernest Quintana— Marty Sterkel Education Scholarship

The *Ernest Quintana—Marty Sterkel Education Scholarship* supports young adults pursuing careers that increase diversity in the National Park Service (NPS), similar government agencies, and nonprofit heritage conservation organizations. This scholarship honors the legacies of two distinguished NPS veterans who devoted their careers to fostering diversity in national parks and safeguarding America's cultural and natural treasures.



Ernest "Ernie" Quintana



Marty Sterkel

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) invites you to explore this opportunity, which carries forward the commitment of Ernest Quintana and Marty Sterkel to connect diverse communities with national parks across the country.

Detailed information and eligibility criteria are provided to assist with your application and support our effort to recognize and empower emerging leaders.

To learn more, visit [WNPA | Awards, Grants, and Scholarships](#), or meet our [Past Honorees](#).

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General Information

Overview	<p>The <i>Ernest Quintana—Marty Sterkel Education Scholarship</i> supports young adults pursuing careers that increase diversity in the workforce. Scholarships are awarded to those working with the National Park Service (NPS), similar government agencies, and nonprofit heritage conservation organizations. Ernest “Ernie” Quintana held an illustrious 41-year career with the NPS, including a wide array of positions from ranger to associate regional director of partnerships. Quintana created the scholarship with the late Marty Sterkel, whose equally distinguished 33-year career included his role as associate director of national resources, science, and partnerships in the NPS’ Midwest region. This scholarship continues Quintana and Sterkel’s dedicated work bringing diverse communities to the national parks across the country.</p>
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To properly prepare your scholarship application, refer to page 3 to review a copy of the form.• A letter of recommendation from a professional reference is a required upload.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ File must be a PDF.◦ Before uploading, name the file as follows: applicant firstname.lastname.qs. Example: john.smith.qs
Award	<p>Two (2) scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded.</p>
Eligibility	<p>The award is open to applicants whose intended use of the scholarship and their own career goals will increase diversity in the workforce of the National Park Service, similar government agencies, or nonprofit heritage (cultural or natural) conservation organizations.</p>
Qualified Use of Funds	<p>This scholarship assists with college tuition, internships, or other special study opportunities relevant to park management or conservation.</p>

Recipient Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship recipients are required to submit a final report to WNPA within 60 days of the completion date stated in the application. Review the recipient final report sample on page 4. Recipients will receive 95 percent of the scholarship award in advance, with the remaining 5 percent paid upon fulfillment of the final report requirement. Failure to meet the final report requirement within the allocated time frame will result in a forfeiture of all unpaid funds.
Selection and Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for this program has been established by WNPA. Submissions will be reviewed and scored by a committee comprising WNPA board members and/or the WNPA executive leadership team. Recipients will be notified the week of February 10, 2025. <p>WNPA fully supports diversity, equality, and inclusion. The selection process respects all individuals and ensures equal opportunity for all applications.</p>
Submission Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All submissions must be completed through the WNPA web portal. WNPA Scholarships Applications received in any other format will not be accepted. <p>If you do not have access to a computer and would like to submit an application, contact the Program Administrator.</p>
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submissions open on October 1, 2024. Deadline for submissions is December 31, 2024, end of day.
Program Administrator	<p>Please address questions regarding this scholarship to Julie Tainter, business support manager, via email at julie.tainter@wnpa.org.</p>

Sample Application

The application sample outlined below is a guide. All applications must be submitted electronically—[WNPA | Scholarships](#). The information supplied is limited to the space provided and submitted on the electronic form. Applications received in any other format will not be accepted. If you do not have access to a computer and would like to submit an application, contact the Program Administrator.

PART ONE: Tell Us about Yourself, Applicant Information

1. Name, address, city, state, zip, phone, email
2. University or college name, major or area of study
3. Park affiliation or park adjacent affiliation, job title, or role (e.g., intern, seasonal employee, etc.)
4. Internship or program name, start date, completion date (Note: Completion date **must be after** the application submission date.)
5. Supervisor name, phone, email

PART TWO: Complete the Application

1. If selected for this scholarship, specify how you would use the funds. [Response up to 150 words.](#)
2. Describe your prior experience as a volunteer, intern, or seasonal employee for the National Park Service or a similar organization. [Response up to 150 words.](#)
3. Explain how this scholarship would help you create positive experiences for diverse audiences to appreciate and support natural and cultural resources in the park, your local neighborhood, and beyond. [Response up to 250 words.](#)
4. Outline how natural and cultural heritage relates to you personally. [Response up to 250 words.](#)
5. Summarize how the work to be accomplished with this scholarship is relevant to your future goals. [Response up to 200 words.](#)
6. If you are a member of an underrepresented group, explain how your work might impact your home community. For example, Black, African American, Asian American, Mexican American, Chicanx, Latinx, Hispanic, American Indian, Puerto Rican, or other. [Response up to 250 words.](#)
7. If selected for this scholarship, share what that would mean to you. [Response up to 150 words.](#)

PART THREE: Required Upload

1. Letter of recommendation
 - a. One-page letter of recommendation from a professional reference.
 - i. File must be a PDF.
 - ii. Before uploading, name the file as follows: applicant firstname.lastname.qs.
Example: john.smith.qs

Sample Application

PART FOUR: Terms and Conditions—Submit Your Application

1. By submitting your application, you give WNPA consent to use the name and information you provided for public relations and fundraising in any media now or hereafter known, including, but not limited to, digital and print. If you provide photos and/or videos, all applicants grant an irrevocable perpetual, worldwide, nonexclusive license to WNPA, to reproduce, distribute, display, and create derivative works of the image in connection with WNPA, in any media now or hereafter known, including but not limited to digital and print.
2. If selected to receive this scholarship
 - a. Recipients are required to submit a final report to WNPA within 60 days of the completion date stated in this application.
 - b. WNPA will release 95 percent of the scholarship award to the recipient in advance, with the remaining 5 percent paid upon fulfillment of the final report requirement. Failure to meet the final report requirement within the allocated time frame will result in a forfeiture of all unpaid funds.

Check to confirm the statement: ____I, the applicant, have read and accept the stated terms and conditions.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS AWARD?

Select all that apply: WNPA website, National Park Service, WNPA staff, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, WNPA email, Coworker, State/National print or digital article, Other.

Sample Recipient Final Report

This final report form is a guideline. All final reports must be submitted through the WNPA web portal—recipients will be given directions to access the online form. The information supplied is limited to the space provided and submitted on the electronic form. Final Reports received in any other format will not be accepted.

PART ONE: Reporting Scholarship Recipient

1. Name, address, city, state, zip, phone, email
2. Internship or program name
3. Internship or program completion date
4. Amount of scholarship award

PART TWO: Tell Us about Your Internship or Program Experience

1. Summarize your experience. [Response up to 250 words.](#)
2. Share a story that was a highlight of your experience. [Response up to 300 words.](#)
3. Describe the outcomes, benefits, or results you gained from your involvement. [Response up to 300 words.](#)
4. Report anything else you feel is significant and important for us to know. [Response up to 250 words.](#)

PART THREE: Required Upload

1. Three-to-five minute video describing your experience, career goals, use of scholarship funds, and what it meant to you to have received the Ernest Quintana—Marty Sterkel Education Scholarship.
 - a. Be creative. A professional video is not necessary—a cell phone video will suffice if the picture and audio are clear.
 - b. Who participated in creating your video, and what roles did they play?
 - i. Name of narrator
 - ii. Name of videographer
 - iii. Others and their role(s)
 - c. Before uploading, name the video in the following format: Recipient firstname.lastname.finalvideo. Example: john.smith.finalvideo

PART FOUR: Confirm and Approve

I declare the

1. Information provided herein is accurate.
2. Submitter of this final report is the scholarship recipient named in Part One.
3. Terms and conditions of the scholarship have been met.
4. Final payment from WNPA is requested.

I approve this final report for submission to Western National Parks Association.

Signature and date

Learn More About

Western
National Parks
Association

OUR MISSION

In partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) since 1938, Western National Parks Association (WNPA) advances education, interpretation, research, and community engagement to ensure national parks are increasingly valued by all.

OUR COMMITMENT

National parks tell the story of America, and WNPA helps share that story. By uncovering the diversity of the landscapes' natural beauty, culture, and heritage, WNPA remains committed to discovery—new knowledge, new understanding, and new ways to engage with humanity.

OUR ROLE

As a nonprofit education partner of the NPS, WNPA supports more than 70 parks across the West, developing products, services, and programs that enrich the visitor experience, understanding, and appreciation of national parks.

The most visible expression of this mission is the operation of park stores in national park visitor centers, with many of the offerings developed and published by WNPA. Each store is unique, presenting products that give guests a tangible and enduring connection to the park's unique themes and diverse purposes—its majestic scenery, biodiversity, fascinating natural and cultural history, and stories of struggle, triumph, and justice. Visitors find a variety of educational materials, from trail and field guides to in-depth academic studies, along with authentic arts and crafts, collectible park logo items, and even food products that connect with the park's diverse cultures, communities, and ecosystems. Young guests can discover children's books, educational toys, and popular Junior Ranger merchandise. Award-winning books and products extend visitors' experiences far beyond their time in the park.



Visitors at The National Parks Store enjoy the White Sands National Park book launch with author Susan Lamb.

The National Parks Store in Tucson, Arizona, offers a variety of educational programs. Past topics include Native basketry, flute making, pottery techniques, and Navajo rug weaving, with attendance exceeding five thousand people annually. The premiere community event of the year is the sponsorship of The National Park Experience Pavilion at the Tucson Festival of Books. The Pavilion provides the opportunity for 20 national parks from the western United States to connect with more than 140,000 festival attendees, bringing national parks to the people and the diverse communities they serve.



Two children interacting with a park ranger at The National Park Experience Pavilion at the Tucson Festival of Books in Tucson, Arizona.

Along with educational programming, WNPA provides direct financial aid to the national parks, supporting cultural, historical, and educational activities developed by park rangers. These activities enhance visitor experiences, create opportunities to inclusively connect with youth, and engage diverse local communities. Thousands of events have been funded, including an international youth Indigenous cultural exchange, living history demonstrations and encampments, several cultural festivals, Junior Ranger camps, art exhibitions, and archaeological and geographical surveys.

Historically, WNPA has funded a broad range of research projects, all of which help advance the management, preservation, and interpretation of our national parks. Supporting research is more than just a way to amplify the efforts of National Park Service partners; it is a means to help reveal and share the important stories parks hold to advance equity, diversity, inclusivity, and justice for all park visitors and their communities.

To learn more about Western National Parks Association, visit www.wnpa.org.

Partner Parks

Western National Parks Association

ARIZONA

Canyon de Chelly National Monument
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument
Chiricahua National Monument
Coronado National Memorial
Fort Bowie National Historic Site
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site
Montezuma Castle National Monument
Navajo National Monument
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
Saguaro National Park
Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument
The National Parks Store
Tonto National Monument
Tumacácori National Historical Park
Tuzigoot National Monument
Walnut Canyon National Monument
Wupatki National Monument

CALIFORNIA

Channel Islands National Park
Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site
John Muir National Historic Site
Mojave National Preserve
Pinnacles National Park
Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
Whiskeytown National Recreation Area

COLORADO

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
Curecanti National Recreation Area
Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve
Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

KANSAS

Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park
Fort Larned National Historic Site
Fort Scott National Historic Site
Nicodemus National Historic Site

MONTANA & WYOMING

Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

NEVADA

Great Basin National Park
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument

NEW MEXICO

Aztec Ruins National Monument
Bandelier National Monument
Capulin Volcano National Monument
Carlsbad Caverns National Park
Chaco Culture National Historical Park
El Malpais National Monument
El Morro National Monument
Fort Union National Monument
Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
Pecos National Historical Park
Petroglyph National Monument
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument
White Sands National Park

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Chickasaw National Recreation Area
Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

TEXAS

Texas Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
Big Thicket National Preserve
Chamizal National Memorial
Fort Davis National Historic Site
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park
Park Padre Island National Seashore
Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

UTAH

Golden Spike National Historical Park
Timpanogos Cave National Monument

TRAILS

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail
Santa Fe National Historic Trail
Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

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