



# 2026 IMPACT REPORT

18 years of sustained impact on Cook County youth.  
We don't just fund education, **we build futures.**

CALAHANFOUNDATION.ORG



# Foundation & Philosophy

## Who We Are

The Calahan Foundation invests in highly unique seniors across Cook County who face systemic barriers to success. Through four years of scholarships, mentorship and career cultivation, we do more than fund education. We lend a hand to build futures. Calahan Scholars rise with distinction, equipped with a network that champions their growth from promising students to thriving professionals.



## Vision



## Giving a hand out... to give a hand up

Too many brilliant students are held back by systemic barriers and not their potential. In the communities we serve, only 38% of Chicago Public School students finish college within four years. The Calahan Foundation has had outstanding success at closing this gap. Over 87% of our scholars finish college within four years. We support highly unique and often overlooked students. Those whose promise may go unseen but whose drive runs deep. By removing financial burdens, surrounding them with consistent mentorship, and opening career pathways, we do more than help students get into college. We help them thrive through it and beyond. We believe every student has the potential to be a scholar. Our role is to meet them with care, invest in their journey, and walk beside them as they rise.

## Calahan Scholars are Highly Unique Students:

Calahan Scholars rise because someone finally sees what they're capable of and chooses to invest in that promise



### Integrity

Exceptional young people with untapped potential doing it right



### Persistence

Remarkably gifted students often overlooked by traditional systems



### Grit

Brilliant minds shaped by resilience more than privilege

# Our Impact Across Cook County

The proof is in our scholars' success. With strong mentorship, financial access, and a broad, consistent network of support, Calahan Scholars perform at a higher pace compared to their peers. They graduate at higher rates, serve their communities, and embody the values we champion. What starts as a hand up becomes a lifetime of impact for our scholars and for Cook County.

87%

## College Graduation Rate

compared to just 38% of CPS students in our service areas

112+

## Scholarships

Awarded with plans to double our community investment by 2030

900+

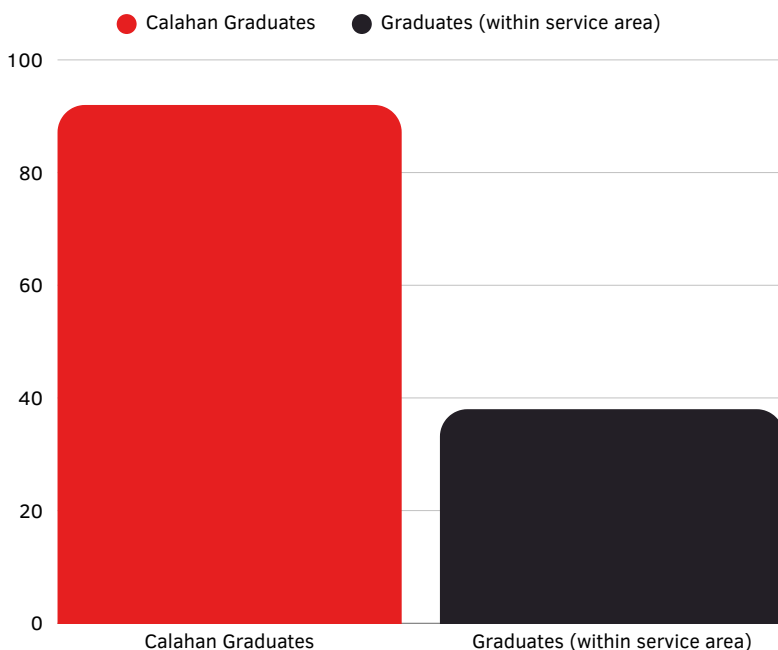
## Mentorship Hours

logged over the course of a year with our scholars

18M

## Return On Investment

estimated long-term economic return to Cook County and beyond, based on increased earnings and community reinvestment



On average, a college graduate in Chicago earns \$1 million more in lifetime earnings than a non-graduate (per College Board/National data).

# \$460,000+

Awarded since 2011

Projected to double over the next five years



# Our Programs + Events



The Calahan Foundation runs a robust yearly calendar of high-impact programs designed to uplift young people across Chicago through scholarships, mentorship, and community celebration. At the heart of our work is a belief in long-term investment: we don't just give, we walk alongside our scholars and families for four years and beyond. Our programming includes an annual scholarship cycle, a formal announcement and reception ceremony, an immersive mentorship program, and our flagship fundraising event, the Celebration of Giving Scholarship Benefit Gala.



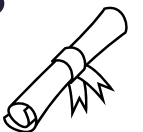
## Calahan Foundation League of College Scholars Fund

We have three types of scholarships. They are the lifeline of our work. Each year we award \$5,000 to 10-12 new scholars distributed over 4 years, along with deep mentorship, personal guidance, and a beyond college network that stays with them beyond college. **The Edward and Shirley Calahan Scholarship** honors students who have excelled academically and are challenged to meet the financial demands of college. **The Hadiya Pendleton Scholarship** honors a young life lost to violence. It is awarded to a scholar who has been personally affected by gun violence or is actively working to end it. **The Missionary Patricia Harris Scholarship** honors a student rooted in local community service initiatives. The number of scholarships we're able to give each year depends entirely on fundraising and the support of individuals like you. Every dollar is an investment in a future leader.



## Calahan League of College Scholars (CLOCS) Mentor Program

The CLOCS Mentor Program gathers esteemed professionals, community leaders, and notable individuals to lead monthly 1.5-hour mentorship sessions with our scholars.



## Calahan Foundation League of College Scholars Graduation and Induction Ceremony

Held each July, this free event gathers over 100 attendees, scholars, families, alumni, community leaders, and partners to celebrate the current year's graduating scholars and the incoming scholarship cohort. The reception showcases scholar stories, honors community champions, and gives supporters a firsthand look at the impact of their contributions.



## Calahan Celebration of Giving Scholarship Benefit Gala

Every December, for nearly two decades, over 900 guests have gathered for one of Chicago's most joyful fundraising galas, The Celebration of Giving. This signature event fuels the Calahan Foundation's programming through philanthropic giving and a room full of people united in their commitment to young people. The evening features our most recent impact in the See Your Dollars at Work video presentation, heartfelt testimonials from our scholars. We honor community change-makers who share our mission, live auction and live entertainment.



# A Word From Our Founders



**Edward and Shirley Calahan**  
Founders

In 2009, our son Edric asked a question that changed everything: “Can we do more than just funerals?” Having just earned his marketing degree and joined our family’s funeral service business, he was deeply impacted by the loss of young lives to violence. He imagined offering not just comfort, but opportunity and hope.

As parents, we said yes without hesitation. We knew the need having come from humble beginnings ourselves. With our family and board, we launched the Calahan Family Foundation, rooted in a shared belief: every young person deserves a hand up, a voice of encouragement, and a path forward.



of scholars enrolled in mentorship and career development support

That first year, we received our 501(c)(3) status and hosted our first Celebration of Giving Gala, asking guests to bring coats or toys for families in need. We honored local heroes and set the tone for the values that still guide us: community, compassion, and action.

In 2011, we added scholarships for high school seniors. What began with three awards has grown to 12 annually, with amounts increasing from \$1,000 to \$5,000. We also launched the Calahan League of College Scholars (CLoCS), a mentorship program that supports students through college and beyond with guidance, leadership, and care.

Now in our 18th year, we remain fueled by faith, family, and a deep belief in the potential of young people. We invite you to support the Calahan Foundation because we don’t just give—we walk alongside our scholars. Your support opens doors, changes lives, and provides not just aid, but direction, mentorship, and hope. No one can do everything. But together, we can help the next generation rise.

With gratitude,

The Calahan Family  
Founders, The Calahan Foundation



# Support Our Scholars

No matter how you enter: whether as an applicant, donor, board member, or community partner, your support creates a ripple effect that transforms lives for years to come. When you invest in our scholars, you invest in the future of Chicago and Cook County



## MAKE A GIFT

Your donation powers our programs give monthly (\$25), make a one-time gift (\$100), or send support via Zelle [giving@calahanfoundation.org](mailto:giving@calahanfoundation.org) or PayPal (search Calahan Foundation, NFP)



## ATTEND

One of Chicago's most anticipated events: Ticket: \$150 | Enjoy an evening of music, food, and purpose



## SPONSOR

Corporate and individual sponsorships make our work possible. An average sponsorship of \$5,000 can fund a full year of scholarship for a freshman or provide graduation support for five seniors



Jourdan Howard  
Truman State University  
Class of 2015



Bernice Perez  
St. Mary's College  
Class of 2015



Torrence Sorrell  
University of Illinois  
Class of 2015



Dixon Romero  
Grinnell College  
Class of 2016



Paris Olawale  
Elmhurst College  
Class of 2016



Tasanee Durett  
University of Arizona  
Class of 2016



Isis Sims  
Eastern Illinois University  
Class of 2017



Janee Thompson  
University of Missouri  
Class of 2017



Jabari Dunn  
Grambling State University  
Class of 2017



Khari Simpson  
Howard University  
Class of 2017



Anthony Greer  
University of Missouri  
Class of 2018



Sharidan Rickmon  
Loyola University  
Class of 2018



Tiana Martin  
Spelman College  
Class of 2018



Danyelle Monson  
Columbia College  
Class of 2018



Joshua Jones  
Southern Illinois University  
Class of 2019



Dezaray Leslie  
Illinois State University  
Class of 2019



Joseph Owusu-Bempah  
Harold Washington Class of 2019



Alexandria Brock  
Jackson State  
Class of 2019



Miya Darden  
Northern Illinois University  
Class of 2020



Jessica Pope  
Fisk University  
Class of 2020



Jayla Howard  
Southern Illinois University  
Class of 2020



Demarius Dixon  
Western Illinois University  
Class of 2020



Akilah Smith  
Ohio State University  
Class of 2021



Matthew Palmer  
Western Illinois University  
Class of 2021



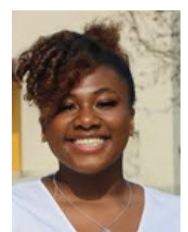
Deon Stephens  
Clark Atlanta University  
Class of 2021



Kenneth Hughes Jr  
Central State University  
Class of 2021



Ayanna Forte  
Spelman College  
Class of 2022



Chakayla Coulter  
Xavier University  
Class of 2022



Ezekiel Stevens  
Morehouse College  
Class of 2022



Joanna Adeji  
Fisk University  
Class of 2022



Jada Smith  
John C. Smith  
College  
Class of 2023



Jelani Edmond-Hill  
Kentucky State  
University  
Class of 2023



Justice Clark  
Southern  
University A&M  
Class of 2023



Sarai Funches  
Eastern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2023



Kayla Kyles  
Xavier University  
Class of 2023



D'Angelo Robinson  
Eastern Michigan  
University  
Class of 2023



Lauren Denton  
University of  
Kentucky  
Class of 2023



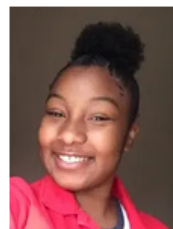
Alaysia Fulllilove  
Beloit College  
Class of 2023



Jaylen Greene  
Morehouse College  
Class of 2024



Sage Butler  
Howard University  
Class of 2024



Makiah Charles  
Florida A&M  
Class of 2024



Elise Jackson  
Central State  
University  
Class of 2024



Asya Bray  
Rhodes College  
Class of 2024



Imani Muse  
University of  
Alabama  
Class of 2025



Alexander Pratt  
North Central  
College  
Class of 2025



Taylor Phillips  
University of  
Wisconsin-Madison  
Class of 2025



Kalyx Parker  
Governors State  
University  
Class of 2025



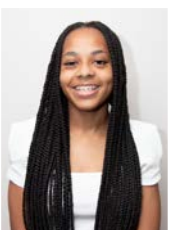
Audriana Gant  
Howard University  
Class of 2026



Timothy James  
Alabama A&M  
University  
Class of 2026



Allegra Coleman  
Loyola Marymount  
Class of 2026



Kourtney Cole  
Southern Illinois  
Class of 2026



Randell Watkins  
Voorhees University  
Class of 2026



Kayla Cyrus  
Xavier University  
Class of 2026



Tomi Dugbo  
University of  
Illinois  
Class of 2026



Brandi Green  
Northern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2026



Cameron Ashley  
Central State  
University  
Class of 2027



Miles Macklin  
Northern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2027



Ryan Southworth  
Louisiana State  
University  
Class of 2027



David Allen  
North Carolina A&T  
Class of 2027



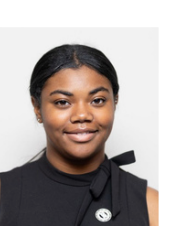
Kai Avilez  
Howard University  
Class of 2027



Winter Moore  
St. Xavier  
University  
Class of 2027



Jhanaye Marshall  
Hampton  
University  
Class of 2027



Amiyah Chism  
Clark Atlanta  
Class of 2027



Mahogani Anderson  
Southern Baton Rouge  
Class of 2027



Brandon Taylor  
Northern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2027



Mitchell Smith  
North Carolina A&T  
Class of 2028



Emmanuel Betson  
North Carolina A&T  
Class of 2028



Kayode Osunmakinde  
North Carolina A&T  
Class of 2028



Nathan DeLoach  
Howard University  
Class of 2028



Skylar Matlock  
Howard University  
Class of 2028



Nayeli Carroll  
Clark Atlanta  
University  
Class of 2028



Isis Clark  
Morgan State  
Class of 2028



Maya Jackson  
Northern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2028



Valacyia Muhammad  
Howard University  
Class of 2028



Trinity Deer  
Valparaiso  
University  
Class of 2028



James Wells IV  
Central State  
University  
Class of 2029



Brandon Stewart  
Morgan State  
University  
Class of 2029



Jeremiah Matthews  
Northern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2029



Blaire Brown  
Northwestern  
University  
Class of 2029



Daniyah McGhee  
Howard University  
Class of 2029



Timothy Purnell  
Michigan State  
Class of 2029



Patricia Washington  
Xavier University  
Class of 2029



Ethan Collins  
Morehouse  
College  
Class of 2029



Brittany Kelly  
Fisk University  
Class of 2029



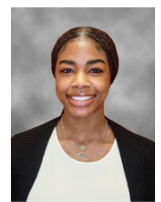
Kiera Wilson  
University of  
Louisville  
Class of 2029



Morgan Ellis  
Howard  
University  
Class of 2029



Jada Williams  
Grambling State  
University  
Class of 2029



Autumn Ward  
Hampton  
University  
Class of 2030



Blake Yucan  
University of  
Illinois Urbana-  
Champaign  
Class of 2030



Charleston Rice  
Quincy University  
Class of 2030



Jasmin Brooks  
Bryn Mawr  
College  
Class of 2030



Imilya Gray  
Depaul University  
Class of 2030



Ellis Sylvester  
Winston-Salem  
State University  
Class of 2030



Christian Shuggs  
Howard  
University  
Class of 2030



Jishelle Berry  
Hampton  
University  
Class of 2030



Noah Gordon  
Morehouse  
College  
Class of 2030



Shanel Brown  
Malcom X College  
Class of 2030



Zoe Goodwin  
Xavier University  
of Louisiana  
Class of 2030



Caleb Daniels  
Northern Illinois  
University  
Class of 2030

***And many more scholars  
to come!***