

## Aaron and Rita Slom Scholarship Fund for Freedom and Diversity

The Aaron and Rita Slom Scholarship Fund for Freedom and Diversity was created in March of 2003 by friends and family to honor the 50th wedding anniversary of Aaron and Rita Slom. The Sloms were and continue to be vital participants in the ongoing life of Touro Synagogue. Aaron was the congregation president in the 1960s, and Rita became the first woman president in 1999. The scholarship honors the memory of Aaron and Rita's continued vision for educating future generations.

A minimum of two college scholarships will be awarded. High school seniors interested in applying must submit an interpretive written work focusing on the George Washington Letter "To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport" in context with the present time. Washington wrote this letter in 1790 after his first trip to Rhode Island as President. In his eloquent reply to a letter written by Moses Seixas, warden of the local Jewish congregation, Washington attested to the new government's commitment to freedom of religion, an entitlement he regarded as an "inherent natural right." He restated from the Seixas letter that the federal government "gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." These words have made Touro Synagogue an international symbol of religious freedom.

The awards presentation will take place during the annual George Washington Letter reading event on Sunday, August 16, 2026. Although not mandatory, scholarship recipients are encouraged to attend.

### Guidelines:

1. The scholarships are for high school seniors who plan to enroll in an institute of higher learning for a minimum of 6 credits. The institution can be public and has no geographic limitations. (You do not need to be a Rhode Island resident to apply.)
2. Entries must consist of an interpretive work focusing on the George Washington Letter in context with the present time. Written submissions such as essays, stories, or poems should be no less than 500 words and no more than 1000 words.
3. Entries will be judged on both style and content. Judges will look for a presentation of ideas that is clear, articulate, and logically organized.
4. Entries must be the sole work of the entrant. This is a one-time scholarship and is non-renewable.
5. Scholarship awards will be provided directly to the award recipients upon evidence of enrollment.
6. No entrant can be a relative of a Slom Scholarship Committee member.
7. Only complete applications will be considered.
8. **TSF Newport must receive application materials and submitted works no later than April 24, 2026.**  
Return completed applications and submitted work to:  
TSF Newport  
Attention: Slom Scholarship  
85 Touro Street  
Newport, RI 02840
9. Demonstration of financial need is not a factor in selecting this award. Applicants are free to apply for other financial aid. Receiving aid from other sources does not influence the award process. Awards will be made without regard to the applicant's race, color, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, marital status, or physical disability.
10. All entries become the property of the TSF Newport and may be used wholly or in part as promotional material, in public relations material, or in any other manner and will not be returned.
11. Questions regarding the scholarship program can be directed online to [tsfn@tsfnewport.org](mailto:tsfn@tsfnewport.org).