

Ford dealers and Ford Fund invest \$2 million to train future auto techs

Ford dealers and Ford Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company, are investing \$2 million in scholarship funding in 10 regions to help students pursue careers as automotive technicians. Spanning over 20 states and 292 eligible schools, the Ford Auto Tech Scholarship will grant 400 need-based awards to current or future students enrolled in post-secondary auto programs.

The automotive industry faces an ongoing shortage of technicians, with over 400,000 techs needed by 2027. Now in its second year, the Ford Auto Tech Scholarship creates opportunities for rewarding, well-paying careers as the industry moves toward electrification and software integration.

"As vehicles become more advanced, we need highly skilled technicians to maintain and service

them," said Elena Ford, Ford's chief dealer engagement officer. "Partnering with our dealers to invest in these students helps create job opportunities, shapes the future of our communities, and drives growth in our industry."

The Ford Auto Tech Scholarships will be administered by TechForce Foundation, a national non-profit organization committed to supporting students pursuing technical education and careers as professional technicians. Ford is proud to partner with TechForce to grant \$5,000 per student in financial assistance for education and training in auto and auto/diesel at a wide range of accredited institutions.

"Every technician plays a vital role in moving our communities forward. In order to solve the

shortage of technicians the transportation industry currently faces, and because diversity drives innovation, we need to make the field more accessible for people of all backgrounds," said Jennifer Maher, CEO of TechForce Foundation. "By partnering with Ford dealers and Ford Fund to remove barriers to entry and increase greater economic mobility, we pave the way for more communities to thrive."

The Ford Auto Tech Scholarship is open to individuals pursuing automotive technology degrees or certificates in the 10 selected regions, covering various costs associated with their education. The scholarship may be used for all attendance costs, including tuition, tools, living expenses and transportation. During students' educational journey and career transition, Ford dealers in each region will serve as a support system, offering advice, onsite training and career guidance.

For Makenna Enga, a student recipient from UTI-Phoenix, this scholarship means breaking free from traditional career paths. "I am extremely passionate about pursuing a technical education in automotive technology for many reasons," Enga said. "To start with, a pretty obvious one is the lack of women in the industry. No one in my family has studied a trade, but I believe I was made for it."

Last year's contribution directly resulted in 200 students receiving \$1 million in scholarships across four regions: Greater Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and Phoenix. Students eligible for the 2024 Ford Auto Tech Scholarship must be pursuing a degree in one of these 10 regions: the Greater Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Phoenix, Kansas City, Memphis, Miami, Seattle or Cincinnati areas. The application process is open through August 31, 2024.

Scholarships will be awarded on a rolling basis and applications reviewed as received. To learn more about the 2024 Ford Auto Tech Scholarship, or to apply, please visit the TechForce website:

techforce.org/fordfundv2. ■

