

NRF FOUNDATION®

NRF Foundation Student Ambassador Program

Spring 2026

The NRF Foundation Student Ambassador Program provides the opportunity for each NRF University Member to select one student to serve as their campus representative throughout a calendar year. NRF Foundation Student Ambassadors will serve as the liaison between the NRF Foundation and their school. This is an enormous leadership opportunity for students to grow the NRF Foundation community on each university campus.

NRF Student Ambassadors should be ambitious, resourceful, and highly motivated students capable of leading the NRF Student Association on campus.

Universities must submit their selected student ambassador [via this form by Sunday, February 8, 2026](#).

Purpose:

- Foster the development of a group of dedicated retail advocates across college campuses
- Build the presence of and participation in the NRF Student Association (NRFSA) on campus
- Connect the NRF Foundation and its retail partners with top talent
- Boost student participation in NRF Foundation programs, scholarships and events

Ambassador meetings:

The NRF Foundation will host three meetings throughout the Spring semester. These meetings are a chance for ambassadors to learn more about the requirements, hear about the latest NRF Foundation programs and updates, meet and network with other ambassadors, and ask questions.

Meeting dates:

- **Monday, Feb. 9, 4:00 p.m. ET** – Student Ambassador Kick-Off Meeting (most important to attend).
Zoom Meeting: <https://nrf.zoom.us/j/3095257259?omn=96081882500>
- **Tuesday, March 3, 4:00 p.m. ET** – Student Ambassador mid-semester meeting.
Zoom Meeting: <https://nrf.zoom.us/j/3095257259?omn=99995735976>
- **Friday, April 10, 12:00 p.m. ET** – Student Ambassador end of semester meeting.
Zoom Meeting: <https://nrf.zoom.us/j/3095257259?omn=96030824550>

Awards:

Student Ambassadors must select **at least seven out of the ten requirements listed below to successfully complete the program**. Ambassadors who complete these requirements will receive a \$1,000 travel stipend award to attend the 2026 NRF Foundation Student Program in NYC, Jan. 8 – 11, 2026, as recognition for their achievement. Ambassadors will also receive a \$250 e-gift card in December 2026. These awards (travel stipend and gift card) will be sent out by early December 2026 upon the completion of spring and fall 2026 requirements.

Successful ambassador submissions should include the following elements:

- Excellent dedication and effort towards the program, with **at least 7 out of 10 requirements completed on time and to a high standard. Note: requirement #6 is mandatory for all Student Ambassadors to complete and counts as 1 of the 10 requirements (not 3 requirements out of the 10). Requirement #7, our Soles4Souls community service project, is also mandatory for all ambassadors.**

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- Creativity in creating events (in-person or virtual), materials, messages and social media posts that appeal to their student body and describe NRF Foundation programs accurately.
 - In the sign-up process, students can select that they heard about this program via their campus Student Ambassador
- Clear effort in planning topics shared via social media with particular thought given to the balance of different topics and timing of messages each month

Uploading requirements:

All requirements will be uploaded and submitted on [Kaleidoscope](#). For the promotion of scholarships and programs, screenshots of social media posts and/or emails will be required.

Spring Deadline:

2026 Spring semester requirements are listed below and must be uploaded by **Friday, May 1, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET.**

2026 Fall semester requirements will be released by September 2026 and will be due early November 2026.

Spring 2026 Student Ambassador application to upload your requirements:

<https://apply.mykaleidoscope.com/program/Spring2026NRFStudentAmbassadorProgram>

Deadlines for promotional work to be uploaded in Kaleidoscope:

For your promotional work (**requirement #6**), take a **screenshot including the context as to where the social post was posted**. If you are sending a larger group email, be sure that **you are the one sending this email and that we are able to see how many students this email was sent out to** in the screenshot.

February Promotional Work: Saturday, Feb. 28, 11:59 p.m. ET

March Promotional Work: Tuesday, March 31, 11:59 p.m. ET

April Promotional Work: Friday, May 1, 11:59 p.m. ET

All requirements must be uploaded on time to be eligible to receive awards. Students will only be eligible once they complete both their Spring and Fall requirements in 2026.

Materials provided:

- [Ambassador toolkit](#) including official NRF Foundation logos, graphics and images
- Slide deck about the NRF Foundation and myth-busting retail careers
- Slide deck about the Student Program and related scholarships
- NRF Foundation videos and content pieces

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- *Note: please only refer to us as the **NRF Foundation** and use the **NRF Foundation logo**, not NRF or the NRF logo. We are separate entities, and our student initiatives are run entirely by the Foundation, not NRF. You may design your own NRFSAs logos, but **please do not create your own logos using our branding**.*
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Spring 2026 Requirements:

1. **Grow your NRFSAs chapter by at least 15 new members**

Connect students with learning and career opportunities within the retail industry. Tap into your network, share the opportunities and benefits of engaging with the NRF Foundation, and encourage them to join.

- Of the 15 new members, 5 students must be from outside your major or school/department
- To join, students must [sign up for NRF Foundation updates here](#) using their university email address
- Please keep track of your list of students who sign up to submit a PDF including this list in your Kaleidoscope application.

2. **Subscribe to [NRF SmartBrief](#) and encourage NRFSAs members to sign up.** This free email newsletter is a twice-weekly snapshot of career paths, building professional skills and the latest news and trends of the retail industry. Stay up to date and share interesting news, job postings, advice and more with your campus.

3. **Host a virtual or in-person workshop for students to learn about the NRF Foundation [Next Generation Scholarship](#) and/or [University Challenge team case competition](#)**

Invite your NRFSAs club members or any other students to attend a workshop where you walk through one or both scholarship competitions, explain the timeline and process, share our scholarship videos and encourage students to take the first steps in the application processes.

If your school has had past participants, semifinalists or finalists for either competition, invite them to attend and their experience and advice with students. Reach out to us via email if you would like a list of students from your school who applied in the past couple of years. Connect with your NRFSAs advisor as well to have them speak with students and help them through the initial phases of the application or of forming a team for the University Challenge.

Document your event through pictures or videos (if your event is virtual, take a screenshot of your meeting) and upload it to [Kaleidoscope](#).

4. **Help your university secure an applicant for the [NRF Foundation Next Generation Scholarship](#)**

The NRF Foundation Next Generation Scholarship is the pinnacle achievement for students interested in pursuing careers in retail. This opportunity was created for students of various academic backgrounds who have demonstrated leadership skills, previous retail experience and a passion for making an impact.

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The NRF Foundation and retail executive judges are searching for high-performing students who demonstrate a passion for retail and a unique, innovative perspective on our industry to apply for the NRF Foundation Next Generation Scholarship. Recipients will be ambitious, adaptable and have the potential to impact the future of retail.

Help your NRFSA advisor recruit applicants for the first round of this scholarship.

Application deadline: May 26, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

[Please click here for our application portal, Kaleidoscope to view this Next Generation Scholarship application.](#)

Requirements:

- Juniors or seniors enrolled full time at a university member school at the time when the scholarship is presented in January 2027 (Note: current sophomores can apply if they will be of junior standing in January 2027)
- Must not have previously received an award of \$10,000 or more from the NRF Foundation
- Must be U.S. citizens or legal U.S. residents eligible to work in the United States
- Must have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or above on a 4.0 scale
- Must have prior or current experience working in a retail job or internship. This could be anything from working as a bagger at a grocery store or a server/host at a restaurant to having a summer internship with a retailer.
- Students in any major are eligible. Possible majors include business, merchandising, supply chain, analytics, entrepreneurship, finance, accounting, retail studies, computer science, marketing, communications, etc.

Record the name and email address of the applicant/s that will be submitting their application for the Next Generation Scholarship and upload it to Kaleidoscope.

5. Help your advisor recruit at least one team of 3-4 students to take part in the [NRF Foundation University Challenge](#)

The **NRF Foundation University Challenge 2026-27** is now live with the deadline of September 22, 2026. The case partner for this year's competition is **Wayfair**.

Interested applicants must check with their school's NRF Advisor to see how they are selecting teams to enter. Participating students must be sophomores or above at the time the scholarship is awarded in January 2027.

Record their names and email addresses and upload your list to Kaleidoscope.

6. Promote NRF Foundation scholarships and programs (mandatory for all ambassadors)

Promote NRF Foundation opportunities around your campus, on social media channels and/or via email and LinkedIn. Scholarship participation exposes NRFSA members to retail recruiters and executives. Make sure your school/university is represented in the applicant pools.

Posts and/or emails should be uploaded to Kaleidoscope monthly with the appropriate time stamps for each month.

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- A. Feel free to utilize and customize these **NRFSA Canva templates** to assist with your promotional work:
https://www.canva.com/design/DAFKDWYguVA/Z9yLkCmFe6SIDar26luekA/view?utm_content=DAFKDWYguVA&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink&mode=preview
- B. Follow **nrrffoundation** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and/or LinkedIn.
- C. Post on social media (Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn) **and/or send larger group emails at least three times per month (February - April)** for the following as well as anything else relating to the [NRF Foundation](#):
- University Challenge Competition
 - Case study partner: Wayfair
 - **Share about these upcoming info sessions:**
 - Info Session 1 - Friday, March 6, 12:00 PM — 1:00 PM ET [Register here](#)
 - Info Session 2 - Monday, April 27, 12:00 PM — 1:00 PM ET [Register here](#)
 - Promotion of 2026-27 scholarship
 - Find all necessary details [here](#)
 - The competition offers a unique opportunity to get real-world case study experience, engage with recruiters and retail leaders, and be recognized as top emerging talent in the industry
 - Promotion of any previous finalist teams at your school and/or videos of past teams
 - [2025-2026 top teams – top 3 teams' video](#)
 - [2024-25 top teams](#)
 - [2023-24 top teams](#)
 - [2020 top teams](#)
 - [2019 top teams](#)
 - [2018 top teams](#)
 - Next Generation Scholarship
 - Share about the upcoming information sessions:
 - **Info Session 1:** [Register Here](#)
Date: Wednesday, March 11, 4:00pm ET
 - **Info Session 2:** [Register Here](#)
Date: Friday, April 24, 12:00pm ET
 - Round 1 application materials include a personal brand video, 2-3 page essay on a relevant retail industry topic, resume and transcript.
 - Round 2 Case Partner: Under Armour (the top 25 students will participate in the case over the Summer in the second round of the scholarship)
 - Find all necessary details [here](#)
 - Benefits of applying: get real-world case study experience, interaction with recruiters and retail leaders, and recognition as top emerging talent in the industry

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- Promotion of any recipients at your school and/or videos, photos and stories of past recipients (found in your [Ambassador toolkit](#))
 - [2025-2026 finalists](#)
 - [2024-2025 finalists](#)
 - [2023-2024 top 5 finalists](#)
 - [Class of 2022](#)
 - [Class of 2021](#)
 - [Class of 2020](#)
 - [Class of 2019](#)
 - Content released from the 2026 NRF Foundation Student Program
 - The NRF Foundation will release sessions and video/photo content from the 2026 NRF Foundation Student Program throughout the Spring. Help us bring attention to this content and share it with your school via social media, email, and other platforms
 - Promote your school's attendance (if any students attended) and share photos/videos/testimonials from their experience at the conference
- D. Tag the appropriate NRF Foundation account (@nrffoundation). If you send out emails, encourage students to follow and check the NRF Foundation accounts for additional updates and to sign up for an account

7. Participate in or host **one** community service project (mandatory for all ambassadors)

Option 1: Community Service Project: [Soles4Souls](#)

The NRF Foundation Student Ambassador Program and **Soles4Souls** are teaming up to make a big impact in 2026! Our goal as a collective Student Ambassador program is to collect 15,000 pairs of new or gently worn shoes, combining all of our efforts to expand this program onto your campuses.

Here is what that impact looks like:

- We divert 18,750 pounds from going to local landfills, reducing the environmental impact of these unwanted shoes and clothing by extending their lifespan.
- Your donations can create \$13,5750 of economic opportunity for families and communities around the world through our 4Opportunity and 4Relief programs.
- In countries like Haiti and Honduras, your donations can provide a full year of consistent, quality food, housing and education for 15 families.

In order to successfully complete this requirement, you should aim to collect **at least 50 pairs of shoes** this semester (with 100-150 pairs of shoes being a goal to reach for) this spring on your campus.

Learn more about Soles4Souls here on their website: [Soles4Souls | Turning shoes and clothing into opportunity.](#)

Soles4Souls contact: Sydni Moore at Sydnim@soles4souls.org

Option 2: Select your own community service project to participate in

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Community service and involvement is at the core of any successful retailer's business. Retailers dedicate time and resources year-round to giving back and creating positive change in their communities, whether it be through sustainability efforts, engagement in local surroundings, or global service programs that connect employees and customers through a passion for making a difference. In the face of incredibly challenging circumstances this year, retailers continue to dedicate extra efforts to supporting communities and participating in relief and aid initiatives, demonstrating that giving back is and remains a core principle.

We want you to participate in or host a service project in your community, either virtually or in-person. Examples include:

- Organizing a canned-food drive, clothing drive, mask-making/donation drive
- Fundraising for retail-related initiatives such as Dress for Success, Soles4Souls, Goodwill, The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, etc.
- Participating in a virtual volunteering opportunity – find opportunities on [AllForGood](#), [VolunteerMatch](#) or other similar platforms
- Participating in any school-hosted service days, registered as an NRFSA group (Earth Day, World Serve Day, Alternative Spring Break, MLK Day, etc.)
 - A. Gather at least **5 members** of your NRFSA group to participate in a project, or conduct the project on your own
 - B. Take pictures/screenshots and share your service project experience on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn and tag the appropriate **nrffoundation** account
 - C. Submit a written description of your experience as part of your requirements on Kaleidoscope

8. Host at least one virtual or in-person meeting NRFSA meeting:

Discuss NRF Foundation programs, the University Challenge competition, the Next Generation Scholarship, and any other relevant topics for your group. A slide deck will be provided to guide the content of your meeting.

Document your event through pictures or videos (if your event is virtual, take a screenshot of your meeting) and upload it to Kaleidoscope.

**This is a separate requirement from requirement #3 (which is a scholarship workshop / working session) and should be 2 separate meetings.*

9. Share success stories about students on your campus that have experienced NRF Foundation programs

- We want to hear what you and your classmates are accomplishing and past, present, or future experiences that resulted from participating in your campus NRFSA, receiving a scholarship or attending past Student Programs or NRF Foundation virtual events. This is great exposure for your classmates to the hundreds of retail leaders who follow our social channels and hire talent!

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- If students held a retail job or internship, find out how they got the position, what they did in their role and how their experience has impacted their career path.
- Celebrate their experiences by sharing **at least one story** on your social channels and/or email and tag the appropriate **nrffoundation** account
 - Be sure to **create a social media post to share this success story!** Note: This social post will be **in addition to your 3 promotions per month requirement (ex: if you post this in March, you should have at least 4 social posts for this month, including this one, since this is a separate requirement)**
 - *Bonus: identify a student that is in a non-retail, non-marketing major (i.e. technology, supply chain, finance, analytics, entrepreneurship, etc.)*

You will be able to upload screenshots or a file of your stories to Kaleidoscope

(note: this is a separate requirement from #6 (3 monthly promotions) and does not count for both requirements)

10. Create and submit a calendar of events for your Student Ambassador activities

Upload a calendar of events detailing your NRFSa meetings, activities, and anything else you have planned during the semester related to your Student Ambassador role. Please also include the dates of your social media posts and/or emails.

There are no formatting rules for the calendar, except that the calendar should include the full semester (February through April). Upload your format of choice into Kaleidoscope at the end of the semester.