

Henrietta Lacks Scholarship in Biology

Terms and Eligibility

Awarded annually on the recommendation of the Chair of the Department of Biology to an outstanding full-time student enrolled in a degree program in Biology or Biochemistry who is a Black woman. Application is required. Established in 2021 in memory of Henrietta Lacks whose cancer cells are the source of the HeLa cell line, the first immortalized human cell line and one of the most important cell lines in medical research.

The history and scientific contribution of Black, Indigenous, and racialized people has been conspicuously absent from Science curriculum and members of these racialized groups are under-represented in biological fields. This scholarship was initiated and made possible through the remarkable fundraising efforts of the Carleton HeLa Team.

Bio On Henrietta Lacks:

Henrietta Lacks was a Black woman born on August 1, 1920, in Roanoke, Virginia. She moved to Baltimore with her husband, David Lacks. She was a mother of five children: Elsie, David, Deborah, Lawrence, Elsie, and Joseph (Zakariyya). In 1951, she went to John Hopkins hospital complaining about extensive vaginal bleeding [1]. Henrietta's cervical cancer was diagnosed through a biopsy, where the biopsy was also used to culture her cells which continue to multiply today [1]. Despite her cells living forever, Henrietta passed away on October 4, 1951 [2].

[1] Well and Good 4th Edition, Page 254

[2] <https://hela100.org/herstory>

Bio on Family Foundation:

"We provide financial assistance to individuals and families — particularly within minority communities — who were involved in historic research cases without their knowledge, consent, or benefit. This includes the cases of Henrietta Lacks and HeLa cells, the Tuskegee Syphilis Studies, and The Human Radiation Experiments, among others. The Foundation offers those who have benefited from those contributions — including scientists, universities, corporations, and the general public — a way to show their appreciation to such research subjects and their families."

<http://henrietalacksfoundation.org/about/>

This award is valued at \$1,000 for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Application Deadline: October 1, 2025

Successful candidate will be notified by November 15, 2025

General Eligibility Criteria

- Black students who are women
- Enrolled full-time in a degree program in Biology or Biochemistry
- Demonstrated interest in increased representation for Black women in science
- Demonstrated financial need

Instructions

1. This is a fillable form. Please complete and submit this application to the Department of Biology (If the deadline date lands on a weekend, application must be submitted the first working day after the deadline date).
2. Student should not include any additional attachments (e.g. resumes, portfolios, photos, certificates, etc.). However, students may re-type the questions with their answers (this will not be considered an attachment).
3. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

4. Submit by October 1, 2025 to:

**Department of Biology
Carleton University**

**drop off: 209 Nesbitt Building
email: biology@carleton.ca**

Section 1: Personal Information

_____ Last Name	_____ First Name(s)	
_____ Student Number	_____ Home Address: Unit, # and Street	
_____ City (____)	_____ Prov/Territory	_____ Postal Code
_____ Telephone	_____ Carleton Program & Year	
Canadian Citizen: <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Resident: <input type="checkbox"/> Protected Person: <input type="checkbox"/> Visa/International Student: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Identity: Voluntary Declaration

Do you identify as Black?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What gender(s) do you identify with? Check all that apply.

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Transgender

☐ Gender Non-Binary and/or Gender Diverse

☐ Another: _____

☐ Prefer not to respond

Section 2: Personal Statements (you may use space provided or separate attachment)

1.) Drawing on your lived experience as a black woman, what does representation in science mean to you?

- 2.) Based on your previous response, please describe how you would like to see the representation for Black women in science improve at Carleton University.

3.) What area(s) of Biology/Biochemistry would you like to pursue in the future?

Section 3: Financial Need

Please provide an explanation of your financial need.

Section 3: Financial Need cont'd

Where will you live when you attend University?

Home ☐ Away from home ☐ On Campus Residence: ☐

Your Status:

Option 1

I am a single student with no dependents ☐ Year I graduated High School: _____

Note: If you have been out of high school for 4 years or more, do not include financial information for your parent(s). If you have been out of high school for less than 4 years, please provide financial information for your parent(s) if available.

Father's Occupation _____ Gross Annual Income _____
Mother's Occupation _____ Gross Annual Income _____

Age of your brothers and sisters still in school _____

Option 2

I am married/Common Law or a Sole-Support Parent ☐

Number of dependent children _____

Spouse's Gross Annual Income _____

Do you plan to apply for OSAP student assistance (or government student aid from your home province) for the 2025/2026 academic year?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐ if no, please explain _____

Will you be receiving tuition sponsorship or partial band funding for the 2025/2026 academic year?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐

Section 4: Student Declaration

I authorize Carleton University and the Department of Biology to release a copy of this application to the appropriate awards selection committee(s) including my academic record and financial need information in order to adjudicate my application for an award. If requested, I agree to provide the Awards Office with any documentation necessary to verify the information on this application. I declare that the above information is true and accurate. If any information is inaccurate, I understand that an award may be reassessed and/or withdrawn.

Signature of Applicant/Student

Date

At Carleton University, we recognize and respect the importance of privacy. Personal information that we collect is kept confidential. In accordance with section 41 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Carleton University will only use the information in its custody or control in the following circumstances: where the individual identifies the particular information and consents to its use; for the purpose for which it was collected or a consistent purpose (i.e. a purpose which the individual might have reasonably expected).

Faculty Leads:

Dr. Jeff Dawson
Professor, Chair
Department of Biology
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
Jeffery.Dawson@carleton.ca

Dr. Véronic Bézaire
Professor, Director
Institute of Biochemistry
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6
Veronic.bezaire@carleton.ca