



2025 Thomas Zand Refugee Health Scholarship

The Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at UMass Chan Medical School invites applications for the annual **Thomas Zand Refugee Health Scholarships**. These scholarships support medical students passionate about refugee health by funding their attendance at the North American Refugee Health Conference (NARHC). This year's conference will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, from June 27–29, 2025. More details about the conference can be found at refugeesociety.org/narhc-conference.

Types of Scholarships and Eligibility

Two competitive scholarships are available for UMass Chan medical students in 2025:

1. “Excellence in Service” Scholarship

- Open to 1st- or 2nd-year medical students.
- Awarded to a student who demonstrates passion, commitment, and service in refugee health.

2. “Excellence in Research” Scholarship

- Open to 2nd- or 3rd-year medical students.
- Awarded to a student who demonstrates scholarship in refugee health and **has submitted a presentation or poster to the NARHC**. Abstract submissions are due by February 1, 2025 ([guidelines available here](#)).
- Priority will be given to applicants whose abstracts are accepted for presentation at the conference.

General Requirements for Both Scholarships

Applicants should:

- Exhibit exemplary community engaged service and interest in refugee health through volunteer work with local Worcester organizations (e.g., ACE, Ansaar, Ascentria, ORIS, UHAI, RIAC, Worcester RISE for Health, WARM, WRAP, Worcester Islamic Center, or others) or leadership in the UMass Chan Asylum Program.
- Demonstrate a long-term commitment to refugee health.

Additional for **Excellence in Research** applicants:

- Students are encouraged to collaborate with a community partner for their presentations.
- If selected, the scholarship will cover up to \$2,250 in conference costs for one member of the partner organization.

Scholarship Amount

Each scholarship is worth up to \$2,250 and is provided on a reimbursement basis. Eligible expenses include:

- Conference registration fees
- Round-trip economy airfare
- Ground transportation between the airport and the conference hotel
- Lodging at or near the conference venue

Application Process

To apply, submit your application to maria.barluenga@umassmed.edu by **February 15, 2025**. Your application should include:

1. **CV**
2. **Two letters of recommendation**, including one from a partner organization supporting refugees, asylum seekers, or immigrant populations.
3. **A one-page personal statement** that addresses:
 - a. Your year in medical school
 - b. Your experience in refugee health
 - c. Your career plans in refugee health
 - d. Your leadership experience with community and/or student groups
 - e. Why do you want to attend the NARHC conference?
4. **For the Excellence in Research Scholarship:**
 - a. Include a copy of your abstract submission for the NARHC.
 - b. Notify maria.barluenga@umassmed.edu once your abstract acceptance status is confirmed by NARHC.

Important Dates

- **Application Deadline:** February 15, 2025
- **Award Announcement:** End of April 2025
- **North American Refugee Health Conference:** June 27–29, 2025

Additional Notes

- Funding will be provided by the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health.

- Recipients must review their calendars and ensure they are available during the conference. Those with clinical training conflicts will be responsible for contacting rotation supervisors to request formal permission to attend the conference.

About Thomas Zand

Dr. Thomas Zand was a local pediatrician born to Holocaust survivors in what used to be Czechoslovakia. He devoted his entire life to the health and well-being of children, was an advocate of refugees and displaced peoples and a strong proponent of education. These awards are meant to honor him and his passions. After his passing the estate of Dr. Zand was established and some of the funds were awarded to the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at UMass to promote Refugee health training at UMass Chan Medical School. More information can be found at: [Thomas Zand Refugee Health Initiatives](#).