

# Children's Defense Fund Beat the Odds® Program



CDF President Marian Wright Edelman with 2017 *Beat the Odds* Honorees.

The Children's Defense Fund's *Beat the Odds* (BTO) Program is a scholarship and youth leadership development programs that honors and provides programming to DC-area youth. *Beat the Odds* honorees are students who have encountered significant personal challenges and have nevertheless performed well academically while displaying an interest in social justice issues and a commitment to service leadership within their communities.

## Examples of Personal Challenges

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Home or community violence
- Disability
- Involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice system
- Lack of community resources
- Presence of any of these challenges in a student's home environment
- Discrimination based on any of these or any other factors

## Ways Applicant May Be Engaged in Social Justice and Service Leadership

- Started or taken on a leadership role in a community-serving club or organization
- Taken on a job to help family members
- Mentored peers or younger students
- Cared for siblings or other family members

## Applicant Eligibility Requirements

- Be sophomores in high school
- Be on track to graduate in 2020
- Have a 3.0 GPA
- Attend a public, charter, or alternative school in Washington, D.C.; Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax or Loudon Counties or the cities of Manassas or Falls Church in Virginia; or in Montgomery or Prince George's Counties in Maryland.

## Benefits of Becoming a Beat the Odds Honoree

Scholarship materials provided to every student:

- \$10,000 scholarship toward college tuition and educational expenses
- Laptop computer
- Honors at the *Beat the Odds* Celebration
- 5-minute biographical video shown at the Celebration

Potential program elements\*:

- College application support, including
- High school course selection
- Choosing a best-fit college
- Essay writing
- Identifying additional funding sources
- Cohort-based positive youth development
- Access to CDF's leadership pipeline through referrals to positions at CDF and partner organizations
- Connections to the CDF *Beat the Odds* Program's alumni network

\*Students will receive all or some of these elements based on need and availability

To apply, visit <https://childrensdefense-dc.applicantstack.com/x/openings>.  
Please email [BTO@childrensdefense.org](mailto:BTO@childrensdefense.org) with any questions or concerns.