

2025 WTS-DC Scholarship Awards



Presentation of the Scholarship Awards

Paul Comfort

SVP & Chief Customer Officer for Modaxo Americas

Host and Producer of Transit Unplugged and Transit Unplugged TV

Paul Comfort is the host and producer of Transit Unplugged and Transit

Unplugged TV. He serves as SVP & Chief Customer Officer for Modaxo Americas, one of the world's largest transit technology companies.

Paul has authored six best-selling books including his latest "The New Future of Public Transportation" which reached #1 on Amazon. He also serves as Executive Director of the North American Transit Alliance.

Paul is an attorney, popular keynote speaker, and the former CEO of one of America's largest transit systems, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) in Baltimore. He has also served as an elected County Commissioner and County Administrator for two Maryland counties.

Paul is the recipient of the USA's top individual transportation honor – The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) "President's Award".



Undergraduate Recipients 2025



Boeing Corporation (\$2,500) & WTS-DC Scholarship (\$500)

Nour Alashwal

Nour Alashwal is pursuing a Bachelors in Civil Engineering from George Mason University. She is actively involved in the Engineering and Computing Student Council, where she helps foster collaboration between students and faculty. Her leadership, academic dedication, and commitment

to sustainable infrastructure reflect her goal of designing transportation systems that serve communities in need and create lasting impact

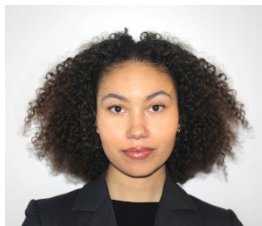


WTS-DC Scholarship (\$3,000)

Kelly Lige

Kelly Lige is pursuing a Bachelors in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Howard University. Through her ongoing internship at WSP USA, she has contributed to major infrastructure projects in Los Angeles and San Diego, applying her skills in drainage design and sustainable transit planning. As President of the Engineering Ambassadors, she leads K-12 outreach to inspire the next generation of equity-driven engineers.





North American Transit Alliance (NATA) Scholarship (\$2,500)

Sophia Baumann

Sophia Baumann is pursuing a BSE in Civil and Environmental Engineering with a concentration in Transportation Engineering from Howard University. Sophia is also active in service and leadership, having volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and participated in student

organizations. She has completed multiple internships, including with CO Architects and Clark Construction in Los Angeles, where she gained hands-on experience in construction management, submittals, and interdisciplinary coordination. With plans to pursue a Ph.D. in sustainable transportation engineering, she is passionate about addressing traffic and equity challenges in her hometown of Los Angeles and beyond.



Nicole Nason Scholarship (\$2,500)

Loor Elbedour

Loor Elbedour is pursuing a Bachelors in Civil Engineering from Howard University. She is an outreach intern with the Society of Women Engineers, where she leads STEM workshops for K-12 girls, and is actively involved in team-based design projects and campus leadership. With plans to pursue a master's in project management, she aims to lead complex transportation projects that improve mobility both in the U.S. and in under-resourced regions like Syria.

WTS-DC Scholarship (\$2,500)

Eden Lee



Eden Lee is pursuing a Bachelors in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Maryland. She is Vice President of the UMD International Student Council and has led orientation for international students, and is also a volunteer engineering instructor. She has worked as a research assistant in the university's concrete laboratory as well and is pursuing additional transportation courses above and beyond the requirements for her degree.



Graduate Recipients 2025

Transdev (\$2,500) & WTS-DC Scholarship (\$500)

Keunmin Cho



Keunmin Cho is pursuing a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Maryland. A committed leader and mentor, she has held multiple student leadership roles and organized outreach programs to introduce high school students

and female graduate students to transportation engineering. She has presented research at national conferences, including the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting. Her long-term goal is to remain in academia as a professor and researcher, advancing both equitable transportation systems and women's leadership in engineering.





WSP (\$2,500) & WTS-DC Scholarship (\$500) Lidya Woldeyesus

Lidya Woldeyesus is pursuing a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Georgetown University. As a first-generation Eritrean-American and graduate student, her work is rooted in a deep personal understanding of how mobility systems impact access to opportunity. Through her roles at WSP and Georgetown's Global Cities Initiative, she has contributed to projects addressing micromobility, pedestrian safety, and equitable campus development in Washington, D.C. She aspires to lead a planning practice centered on social and spatial justice, working across both U.S. and Sub-Saharan African contexts to build more resilient, inclusive transportation systems.



Advancing women
Advancing transportation
> Washington DC



Anja Graves Memorial Scholarship (\$2,500) Sophie Boumsidia

Sophie Boumsidia is pursuing a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Georgetown University. With a background in political science and experience as a transportation and housing policy advisor to U.S. Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester, she brings a unique blend of policy expertise and planning insight to her work. Her research and leadership at Georgetown include organizing student-led initiatives, mentoring peers, and exploring the intersection of institutional development and transportation investment. She is passionate about advancing gender equity in the field and envisions a career in municipal planning that bridges global best practices with local impact.



Dewberry Scholarship (\$2,500)

Niping Duan

Niping Duan is pursuing a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Maryland. Originally from Yunnan Province, China, her early experiences witnessing how roads shaped regional opportunity inspired her commitment to equitable and community-centered planning. As a Research Assistant at the Build America Center, she supports federally funded projects with local and

tribal governments, translating technical research into actionable strategies. Her work bridges data science and public value, with a particular emphasis on elevating women's experiences in transportation systems and leadership.



HDR Scholarship (\$2,500)

Homa Haghighi

Homa Haghighi is pursuing a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering and Structural Engineering from George Mason University. Through two internships with the FHWA Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center, she contributed to large-scale testing of construction materials and techniques, and co-authored the Structural Design with Ultra-High-Performance Concrete report

that was later incorporated into AASHTO LRFD Bridge Design specifications. She also teaches multiple undergraduate courses (Statics, Mechanics of Materials, Structural Steel and Reinforced Concrete Design), and mentors junior researchers.





Burns Engineering Scholarship (\$2,500)

Fatemeh Janatabadi

Fatemeh Janatabadi is pursuing a Ph.D. in Earth System and Geoinformation Sciences from George Mason University. She is the author of 17 research publications and her work focuses on accessibility, resiliency, and equity Ms.

Janatabadi has advanced transportation accessibility analysis by introducing a four-step analytical framework that allows urban planners to determine the most appropriate interventions that promote equality and social justice. She also served as a mentor for six high school students through the Aspiring Scientists Summer Internship Program, helping them learn how to use spatial data, transportation models, and GIS tools.

Burns



Jacobs Scholarship (\$2,500)

Faeze Momeni Rad

Faeze Momeni Rad is pursuing a Ph.D. in Transportation Engineering from the University of Maryland. Her work evaluates AI-enabled crosswalk technologies to improve mid-block safety and inform data-driven infrastructure decisions. She has also taught transportation engineering courses, mentored students through outreach programs, and served as a reviewer for leading transportation journals.

Committed to bridging research and practice, she aims to lead efforts that prioritize vulnerable road users and promote equity in intelligent transportation systems.

Jacobs



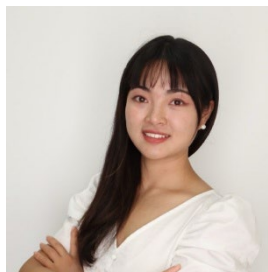
Boeing Corporation Scholarship

(\$2,500)

Xiaorong Shan

Xiaorong Shan is pursuing a Ph.D. in Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering from George Mason University. Her NIH-funded research develops high-resolution exposure models to assess how automobile emissions contribute to diseases such as dementia and, in future work, breast cancer. She has published

multiple peer-reviewed articles, presented at major international conferences, and served in leadership roles supporting women in STEM. Her long-term goal is to lead a research program that integrates transportation, environmental justice, and health equity to inform policy and protect vulnerable communities.



Kimley-Horn Scholarship (\$2,500)

Huan Zhou

Huan Zhou is pursuing a Ph.D. concentrating in AI in Urban Infrastructure/Project Management from the University of Maryland. Her work includes developing AI models to assess pedestrian safety and pavement conditions using street-view imagery, with findings presented at the TRB Annual Meeting and City+ at the University of Oxford. She has contributed to

federally funded transportation projects through the Build America Center, supporting local governments in securing over \$6 million in grant funding. With a strong publication record and a commitment to mentorship and inclusive leadership, she aims to develop data-driven tools that support safer, more sustainable, and more equitable transportation systems.

