

# Online Scholarship Application Information & FAQs

The Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley is pleased to offer a common online scholarship application for the majority of our scholarship programs. With our online scholarship application, students can complete and submit their applications electronically, upload attachments, and track the status of their submissions.

**Applications must be submitted by midnight of the stated deadline(s).**

Students interested in applying for a Community Foundations scholarship should first review our **Scholarship Directory** for detailed information about each of the available scholarships, as scholarship eligibility requirements vary according to the specific criteria of each scholarship fund.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Applying online for a Community Foundation scholarship is easy. To access an online application, you will be required to "*create a new account*" if you are a first time user of our online **Scholarship Portal**. Once you have established an account, the system will remember your contact information and will automatically tie it to any other online scholarship applications submitted through our online system.

**Step 1:** Click on the link to the Online Scholarship Application Portal.

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Common/LogOn.aspx?eqs=fiaADTHDZebZrmxNnzZAKWYNYR49Zufr2BidPRDa5tE1>

**Step 2:** Create a New Account (first time only).

**Step 3:** Once you have created a user ID and Password, log on to the Online Scholarship Application Portal (SAVE your sign-on information for future access).

**Step 4:** Select the scholarship(s) you want to apply for and begin the application(s).

### **Common Application**

With our Common Application, you can complete a single application then select the specific awards to apply to. Be sure to review the full eligibility requirements on our website, or scholarship directory to ensure you meet the requirements.

Essays, letters of recommendation, etc. are generally specific to each scholarship offered, so be sure to review and include the specific documents required for each award you wish to apply to.

## **Attachments**

You will be asked to attach documents (SAR/EFC score, essays, letters of recommendation etc.). If these documents exist in electronic format, you can attach them using the "Browse" button inside the application. If they are not in electronic format, you can use the "Fax to File" feature on the upper left side of the application page. You may only attach Microsoft Word, JPEG, XLS, or Adobe PDF files (files in other formats are not readable).

## **Instructions for Required Attachments**

The Online Scholarship Application Portal allows applicants to send a "third party" an e-mail invitation to upload required application materials (i.e. Guidance office staff to upload your official Transcripts; and individuals providing you with Letters of Recommendations). This feature may be useful if the school/ individual prefers not to provide you with the materials directly.

## **Follow these simple steps for the attachment section on the Online Scholarship Application:**

1. Enter the email address of the person who will submit either your official school transcript and/or a letter of recommendation on your behalf.
2. Ensure that you are sending the request to the appropriate person for the specific document. Click "Compose Email" to send them a personal email requesting that they provide the transcript/recommendation.
3. Each email sent will allow the recipient to upload a single attachment. Send separate emails for each attachment needed.
4. They will receive a second email from this system which will include a link for them to click on and upload a document.
5. Attachment documents are not accessible to the applicant; but you can check to confirm if the documents have been submitted in the dashboard.

**If you have already been provided with the documents, enter your own email address, and follow the upload instructions provided in the email that is sent.**

## **THE DETERMINATION PROCESS**

Scholarship recipients are selected based upon the specific criteria established for each fund. Each scholarship application is reviewed for completion of all required elements.

Every application is reviewed by a member of a volunteer scholarship selection committee.

After all applications are reviewed, the Community Foundation's Board of Trustees will review and approve all scholarship award recommendations and declinations.

## **NOTIFICATION OF AWARDS**

All complete scholarship application submissions will receive a confirmation of receipt generated by the online system. All award recipients will receive notification after the selection committees meet, by **late June** in most cases. Applicants that do not receive notification were not selected for awards.

## **PAYMENT OF AWARDS**

To finalize processing your scholarship award, you will be assigned a “follow up report” in the online Scholarship Portal so that you can submit your selected school, student ID number, and the address of the school. The Community Foundations cannot pay awards without this information.

Payments are mailed directly to the school’s financial aid office before the beginning of each school year **(in July/ August of the award year)** are made payable to the school and not to the individual recipient.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. When is the scholarship application deadline?**

**A.** The deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup>, unless a special deadline is noted.

### **Q. Why is it important for me to review scholarship criteria?**

**A.** Each scholarship has different eligibility criteria based upon the wishes of the donor who established the scholarship. Each scholarship applicant is responsible for identifying the scholarships for which they are eligible to apply. Only apply for the scholarships for which you are eligible.

### **Q. How do I upload the required documents to my application?**

**A.** If the document is already saved on your computer, you can click the “Browse” button on the application and select the document to upload. If you have access to a scanner, you can scan the document and then upload it. We may also accept cell phone photos if they clearly detail the information needed. If the file size is too large, your scanner may be set at too high a resolution; consider changing it to 150 dpi. For transcripts and letters of recommendation that may be more than one page, make sure that you upload all of the pages as one document. If you upload pages individually, the new upload will override the previous upload.

If you do not have access to a scanner, or the file size is too large, consider using the Fax to File feature in the application. This tool allows you to fax documents to your application for uploading. Once you are given a toll-free fax number, you have 20 minutes to fax the needed documents for conversion to a PDF document. Once you are finished faxing you can click the “Finished Faxing” button to see your list of files, which you can then download to your computer for uploading to the appropriate part of your application. The Fax to File feature is located on the left hand side of each application. You may only attach Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF files (files in other formats are not readable).

Be sure to save your application each time you upload documents, and always double check your uploads to make sure all of your documents uploaded correctly.

### **Q. I don't have access to a scanner or fax machine. What do I do?**

**A.** Start by talking to your guidance counselor at school to see if the school has equipment that you can access. You may also see if your local library can provide access for you. If neither is not an option please contact the Community Foundation, as we want to ensure that all eligible students have the opportunity to

complete an application and are happy to assist you. **\*Please refer to the Attachment Instructions above to ensure you/ your school/ your recommenders are able to attach all of the required documents.**

**Q. How long does the essay have to be?**

**A.** Essay page limitations are noted on the individual scholarship information links available on our website. The essay is a very important part of your application, as it helps the reviewers get to know you and can help you stand out from the other applicants. You should use the full space available, and we recommend that you copy and paste from a Word document so that you can check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. You might want to copy and paste from Word for all application questions requiring a written response, as many of the questions are the same on each application.

**Q. Do my letters of recommendation have to be signed and on letterhead?**

**A.** Letters must contain the contact information of the person writing the recommendation. For electronic/emailed or third party submissions we do not require a written signature on the letter.

**Q. What financial documentation is required for those scholarships for which financial need is a consideration?**

**A.** You must include a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or FAFSA), which is an application students and their families must complete in order to be considered for federal financial aid, and many states and schools also use the FAFSA as part of their application process for non-federal aid. The Student Aid Report (SAR) is the report received by the student that summarizes the student's financial need and provides the official EFC (Expected Family Contribution) number.

Be sure to talk with your parents about the documentation required so that there is plenty of time to gather the information needed prior to the April 1 deadline, as we cannot review incomplete applications.

**Q. How will I be notified if I am awarded a scholarship?**

**A.** All complete scholarship application submissions will receive a confirmation of receipt. All award recipients will receive notification after the selection committees meet, by late June in most cases (by the end of the calendar year for fall scholarships). Applicants that do not receive notification were not selected for awards.