

Tips and Suggestions for Completing Your Scholarship Application


Introduction

The Parkersburg Area Community Foundation & Regional Affiliates (PACF) administers about 150 different scholarship funds. To make the application process as accessible as possible, you can apply for most of the Foundation's scholarships through one online application form – General Scholarship Application Form – available at the PACF website: www.pacfwv.com/Scholarships/Apply. **Applications must be submitted by March 1, 2021.**

The selection process for all Foundation scholarships is very competitive. Last year, the PACF awarded about 249 scholarships. Prepare your application carefully and make the best possible case for why you need scholarship support to help you achieve your education goals.

Steps to Complete your PACF General Scholarship Application Form

1. Go to the Foundation's web site: www.pacfwv.com/Scholarships.
2. Review the Scholarship FAQs page to ensure you are eligible for a scholarship.
3. Visit the Scholarships Forms & Resources page to access the online application.
4. Click on "Apply for Scholarships" to access the PACF's online application form. Follow instructions to create an account. You must remember your username/password to access your account at a later date. Applications do not need to be completed in one sitting, you can save your work and return to complete later. When you submit your application, you will receive an e-mail confirmation. If you do not receive an e-mail confirmation, contact the PACF to ensure that your application has been received.
5. Submit your application online by **March 1, 2021**.



Application
opens early
December!

Scholarship Application Preparation Tips

- **Apply only for scholarships for which you are eligible.** The PACF's new online application platform will match you to scholarships for which you are eligible based on a brief qualifying questionnaire. Carefully review your answers to be sure they are accurate, so the system may best match you to ALL scholarships that you are eligible for!
- **Give your application the time, attention, and preparation that it deserves.** Read and follow the instructions carefully. Complete all required fields and provide all required attachments. Attachments can be uploaded onto the online application form.
- **Proofread your essays.** The PACF's new application platform allows you to enter your essays onto the online form with ease. The form includes a spellcheck feature and word count for assistance! Ask a parent, friend, or teacher to proofread your essay before you add it to your application.
- **Meet the deadline.** Your application must be submitted by March 1, 2020 or it will not be considered. Hit the "Submit" button on the last page of the application for your application to be submitted. You will receive an e-mail confirmation when your application has been received by the PACF.
- **Ask for help if you need it.** Call 304.428.4438 / toll-free 866.428.4438 or e-mail info@pacfwv.com or Rachel.brezler@pacfwv.com if you have any questions about the application process.

Essay Writing 101

The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include details about yourself so the reader can get to know who "you" are and what you stand for. The scholarship selection committee has hundreds of essays to review. It is YOUR job to get their attention. Here are a few tips:

- **Think before you write.** Brainstorm to generate some good ideas, and then create an outline to help you get going. Make sure to address specific questions clearly.
- **Be original and be creative in your answers.** Show, don't tell. Use examples to individualize your responses. Demonstrate the point you want to make. Avoid vagueness to make a strong impression.
- **Create a portrait of a winner.** Create a vivid portrait that will depict the person behind the grades, activities and awards. If a reviewer feels like he or she knows you, you have done your job and created a powerful emotional connection that elevates your application, helping it stand out from others.

How are Scholarship Applications Reviewed?

Each scholarship has its own selection criteria. Generally, the selection committees consider the following:

- **Academics.** It may be important to have a competitive GPA; however, selection committees also will consider how challenging your course load is. They will also check to see if you are taking the right courses to reach your goals and how well you did in those courses.
- **Activities/Leadership.** If this is part of the criteria, committee members will examine your school and community activities and they will also look at the range of leadership roles you have played.
- **Service** - Committee members will be interested in what service you have provided to your school or community. They may look at activities that go above and beyond the required service job.
- **Financial Need.** Information required to complete the financial information page of the PACF's General Scholarship Application Form can be found on your Student Aid Report of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and your Income Tax Return. File your FAFSA early to have this information by the scholarship application deadline of March 1, 2020.
- **Special Circumstances.** If you have overcome an obstacle to achieve your goals, or are facing a special circumstance, the selection committee wants to know about it.

Questions about Scholarships

For additional question regarding the Foundation's Scholarships Program please contact:

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