



Designing a Scholarship Program
Items for Consideration

Name of the Scholarship _____

STEP 1: Setting Guidelines

Eligibility Requirements

These are the general criteria used to determine whether or not a person is qualified to apply for a scholarship. The Community Foundation encourages you to provide for as much flexibility as possible by recommending eligibility requirements that are not so narrow that it becomes difficult to award a scholarship each and every year. You may wish to consider a combination of the following:

- Resident of a specific geographic area _____
- Graduate of a specific high school or program _____
- Plans to attend a certain type of institution _____
- Plans to attend a school on a pre-selected list _____
- Plans to pursue a specific course of study _____
- A minimum grade point average _____
- Employee / child of employee of a particular
business or industry* _____
- Proficiency in a specific field (art, history, etc.) _____
- Participation in a particular activity or sport _____
- Specific age, race, gender, or culture* _____
- Other* _____

**Within legal boundaries*

Selection Criteria

These are the specific standards used to identify the most qualified applicants who will ultimately be recommended to the Board of Directors of The Community Foundation as scholarship recipients. You may wish to consider a combination of the following:

- Financial Need
- Academic Achievement
- Participation in Activities
- Achievements
- Awards / Recognition
- Work History

Eventually you will need to decide how much weight will be given to each of the selection criteria. Which of the criteria is most important? Should all criteria be considered equally? These issues will be further addressed when you create the rating sheet to be used to evaluate applications, but it is good to start thinking about them now.

STEP 2: Creating the Application

General Information

The first page of the application form will ask for general information on the applicant, such as name, contact information, etc. This is also where the applicant will establish that he or she meets the eligibility requirements. For example, if one of the eligibility requirements is that applicants must have attended a particular high school, the first page of the application will provide space for that information.

Additional Application Requirements

An application must provide enough information for a selection committee to evaluate how an applicant meets the selection criteria. Here are some options for how to collect more detailed information about an applicant:

Financial Need

- FAFSA (the government form students must submit in order to receive financial aid)
- Parents' occupations
- Household Adjusted Gross Income from previous year's tax return
- Other siblings in college

Academic Achievement

- High school transcripts
- Recent report cards
- Test scores (SAT, ACT, Regents Exams, AP Exams, etc.)

Class Rank

Other

In addition, it is usually helpful to require applicants to submit at least one of the following items:

RESUMÉ– lists current and previous participation in activities and sports, as well as leadership positions held, awards received, special recognition, etc.

ESSAY(S) – essay questions can be tailored to certain criteria or be general. In addition to learning the applicant’s answer to the question, an essay also provides a writing sample.

LETTER(S) OF RECOMMENDATION – from teachers, coaches, employers, etc. This is an excellent way to learn about applicants.

Step 3: Application Collection and Review

Generally, completed applications are submitted to a guidance office (if the scholarship is for a particular high school) or The Community Foundation. Staff checks each application to ensure it is complete, and all required attachments are included. After the selected due date has passed, applications are processed for review.

There are several options for setting up a committee whose function will be to review applications and select a recipient, but there are some basic restrictions that must be followed:

1. A “donor-advisor” is any donor, or person appointed by the donor, who is providing advice with respect to the fund’s award procedures. Donor-advisors and persons related to donor-advisors cannot control any selection committee, directly or indirectly – which means they cannot make up the majority of any selection committee.
2. While donor-advisors can recommend members of a selection committee, all committee members must be approved and appointed by The Community Foundation’s Board of Directors.
3. All selection committee members must disclose any personal knowledge of any applicant.

Guidance Office Review

If a scholarship is for one particular high school, you may wish to have the Guidance Office collect and review applications. Many Guidance Offices already have scholarship committees that choose winners of other awards given out by the school. We provide the selection criteria to the Guidance Office, and they are responsible for determining a winner and providing the winner’s application and/or contact information to The Community Foundation.

Donor-suggested Committee Review

The donor-advisor and related parties may sit on a selection committee, but they may not make up a majority of the committee. This means you must recommend non-related parties to sit on the committee as well. The non-related parties should be people who can devote the necessary time and energy to the application review, who can review applications objectively, and who have some pertinent expertise or position. Some examples of people who could sit on your review committee are:

- Teachers or other school personnel – guidance counselors, principals, coaches, etc.
- Community leaders or representatives
- College professors
- Members of The Community Foundation’s Scholarship Committee

The Community Foundation's Scholarship Committee

The Board of Directors of The Community Foundation has a standing Scholarship Committee which oversees the scholarship program. This committee also serves as the selection committee for several of our scholarships. You can choose to give them full control of the selection process or give them a particular number of "votes" to balance out a committee made of other people you've suggested.

Community Foundation staff collect the completed applications and copy and distribute them to committee members. Along with copies of the applications, committee members will receive rating sheets that specifically reflect the criteria you have chosen. Use of these rating sheets helps to ensure that applicants are ranked in an objective, non-discriminatory manner according to the donors' intent.

Committee members can submit their completed rating sheets to The Community Foundation for staff to tally and determine a winner, or committees may choose to meet as a group to discuss the applications. After a winner is chosen he/she is notified by Community Foundation staff; denial letters are also sent to all students who applied. The Community Foundation keeps copies of all applications for three years.