



Smoky  
Valley  
Community  
Foundation

An affiliate of the  
Greater Salina Community Foundation

# SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT CENTER

## FAQs + GLOSSARY

eligibility, applying, receiving, follow-ups, and need-to-know words

## TIPS

requesting letters of recommendation, writing essays, choosing applications, and more

## RESOURCE LIBRARY

sample thank-you letters, resumes, and emails to request letters of recommendation

## TECH SUPPORT

password recovery, software usage, accessing your account, and creating an account

**YOUR GUIDE FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION PROCESS**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**FAQs + GLOSSARY.....3**

**ELIGIBILITY**

**APPLYING**

**RECEIVING**

**GLOSSARY**

**TIPS.....6**

**RESOURCE LIBRARY.....10**

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT.....12**

# FAQs + GLOSSARY

## ELIGIBILITY

### How do I know what scholarships I qualify for?

Take our eligibility assessment [here](#). All criteria can be found under the "Scholarships" page and "Scholarship Fund & Criteria" drop down menu.

### Do I have to submit my FAFSA?

Not unless specifically requested. However, some scholarships are awarded based on financial need and will require your Student Aid Report to view your Expected Family Contribution and make a decision on your eligibility.

### Do I need to wait until I am accepted for admission to be eligible to apply for scholarships?

Not unless specifically requested. However, you must be admitted and enrolled to accredited college or university before the community foundation will disperse your award.

## APPLYING

### How do I apply for scholarships?

First time applicants should click the "Take the Assessment" button under the scholarships tab. If you are a returning user, click the "Login Here" button under the scholarship tab.

### What is the link to access the application portal?

[gscf.org/scholarshipapplication](https://gscf.org/scholarshipapplication)

## How do I know if my application went through?

You will receive a confirmation sent to the email associated with your login every time an application is submitted.

## Can I apply for more than one scholarship?

Yes. You are encouraged to apply for all scholarships you meet the eligibility requirements.

## When are applications open?

Scholarship applications open November 1 and are due the following February 15.

## Does my transcript have to be official?

No. Transcripts will be accepted in official or unofficial format. The only requirement is that they are uploaded to the online system in an acceptable file format.

**RECEIVING**

## When will I know if I received a scholarship?

Applications are reviewed between February 25 and March 15. You will be notified of the committee's decision in April or May, depending on what you have applied for.

## How do I claim my scholarship?

To claim your scholarship, login to your scholarship portal. This can be done by clicking "Login Here" on the "Scholarships" page. Follow up forms will need to be completed for each of the scholarships you have been awarded: scholarship acceptance form, thank you note, and photo. [Visit the resource library for examples.](#)

## GLOSSARY

### FAFSA

FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This can be found at [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).

### SARS

SARS is a Student Aid Report that can be found within your FAFSA account. This is the document the foundation will need you to upload to your scholarship application. It would have been emailed to your after you completed your FAFSA. It can also be found under the "You Can Also" section of your personal FAFSA account. Questions about the FAFSA/SARS should be directed towards the Federal Student Aid help center.

# TIPS



## 1. REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Scholarship applications may require a letter of recommendation. Some might ask for it to be written by a specific member of the community and others may be up to the applicant's discretion.
  - **Whom to ask?** A letter of recommendation should be written by an individual that can speak to your strengths and ability to overcome challenges- someone that knows you well.
    - Teachers, counselors, employers, church leaders, and club advisors often fall into this category.
    - Applicants are unable to request recommendations from individuals who are part of the scholarship selection committee you are applying for.
  - **How to ask?** To request a letter of recommendation within your application, you will enter the recommender's email in the designated space titled 'Third Party Email.' Then, you will compose a personal request email. Although not required by GSCF, It is courteous to make your recommender aware that you have chosen them for this role, so that they can accept and be on the lookout for an email from the Foundation.
  - **When to ask?** It is standard to give your recommenders a two-week notice, so they have ample time to write the letter. Make sure to follow-up with them periodically to assure that your letter is being worked on and submitted.
  - **Example?** Head over to our resource library to [view an example letter of recommendation request!](#)



## 2. MEET ALL APPLICATION DEADLINES

- Scholarship applications will close after the assigned deadline date. Any information or applications not submitted are unable to be considered.
- Use a calendar or planner to schedule deadlines and mark dates in which you would like to request letters of recommendation by.



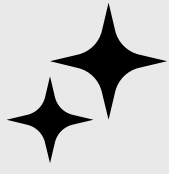
## 3. DO NOT IGNORE SMALL AWARDS

- There are tons of scholarships to apply for. After completing the eligibility quiz, you will be able to see which scholarship funds align closest with your qualifications. Do not ignore funds that tend to be given in smaller amounts- awards add up! Additionally, higher award amounts tend to increase the pool of competition.



## 4. DRAFT AND PROOF ESSAYS

- Many scholarships require short answer or essay responses.
- **Drafting:** It is helpful to draft responses as documents that are able to be saved to your computer or drive. If you are applying for multiple scholarships, prompts may be similar, and essays can be tailored to a variety of applications.
- **Proofing:** Check for clarity and grammatical errors by asking a trusted peer, family member, or teacher to review your essay. Make sure to do your own writing, but the editing process can be benefited with a fresh pair of eyes.



## 5. LET YOUR PERSONALITY SHINE

- Present what you are passionate about in a focused, thoughtful, and organized manner. Write naturally and support your ideas with specific examples. The selection committee would like to see what makes you you!



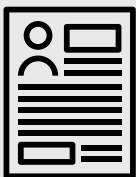
## 6. USE A PERSONAL EMAIL

- Use a personal email not provided to you through work or school for your account. If your employment or enrollment at that institution ends, it will be difficult to know whether or not you were awarded a scholarship or access your account.



## 7. DOUBLE CHECK REQUIREMENTS

- Give your application a glance before submitting to make sure you have included everything necessary and preview any uploaded documents for accuracy.



## 8. KEEP YOUR RESUME UPDATED

- To accurately communicate your experiences and involvement to review committees, update your resumes often. We recommend to keep your resume one to two pages in length to provide a concise report.



- [What should I include on my resume?](#) If you are stuck and not sure what to include on your resume, here are some potential ideas:
  - contact information
  - career goals
  - education/academic experience
  - awards and honors
  - societies and clubs
  - work/internship experience
  - school involvement
  - community involvement
  - volunteer experience
  - athletic achievements
  - languages
  - skills or special interests
  - church activities

For some additional guidance, please [view our resume examples on page 11 of the Resource Library.](#)

# RESOURCE LIBRARY

## THANK YOU

Thank you letters are required when completing your scholarship follow-ups. Below are two examples. Fill in the information to fit your needs and unique situation.

### #1

Dear Scholarship Donor,

My name is John Doe, and I am from Ellsworth, KS. I graduated from Ellsworth High School in 2019. I am sincerely honored to have been selected as the recipient of the Caryle Jean Bender Memorial Scholarship and want to thank you for your generosity. Being awarded this scholarship will allow me the time and opportunity to be involved in extracurriculars, such as the Pre-Med Club at Kansas State University. I am majoring in biology and hope to attend physician's assistant school someday. I feel so thankful to know that I have a supporter like you.

Thank you,

John Doe

### #2

Dear Scholarship Committee,

My name is Jane Doe, and I am from Salina, KS. I recently graduated from Salina South High School. Thank you for your generosity. I am sincerely honored to have been selected as the recipient of the Wally Beets John Marino Scholarship. Being awarded this scholarship will allow me to attend the University of Kansas in the fall while not having to worry about purchasing textbooks. I am majoring in business and hope to be a financial advisor someday. I feel so lucky to live in a community where my education is so highly valued and supported.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

# REQUEST LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Within some applications, you will be required to request a letter of recommendation. After entering the recommender's email address in the "Third Party Email" field, applicants should click the "Compose Email" button. Composing an email within your application will send a personal email formally requesting the individual to be your reference. Below is an example. Fill In Information to fit your needs and unique situation.

Dear Coach Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to write a letter of reference for the Orpha J. & Ernest Milbradt Scholarship. You will receive another email from "Community Foundation" which will include a long link. This link will direct you to some questions that the scholarship provider has requested you complete in order for your letter of reference to be considered. Thank you for your time and if you have any technical difficulty, please contact the Community Foundation at 785- 823-1800.

Sincerely,

John Doe

## RESUME EXAMPLES

### Sample Scholarship Resume

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your e-mail address  
Your phone number

**Education**  
Riverton High School  
• Graduation Date: May 22, 2005  
• Grade Point Average:  
(only include in 3.0 or better)  
• Class Rank:  
(This information is available from Mrs. Elgin or Mr. Irvine)

**Work Experience**  
Dates of employment    Name of Business    Address of Business  
Your job title  
Your specific duties

*Example*  
6/2003 to Present    The Bull    Riverton, WY  
*Waitress*  
• Served meals to customers  
• Bussed tables  
• Seated customers

**Volunteer Experience**  
Date of Experience    Name of organization, activity or group    Type of service provided (This can include both in school and out of school activities such as FFA, church activities, sport camps, county fair, fund raisers i.e. Relay for Life, officiating at or coaching youth activities, etc)

**Awards and Honors Received**  
This includes in and out of school items.

**Special Skills and Talents**  
Examples: ten-key proficient, filing, Excel proficient, welding, art, music, power tools, etc

**Interests and Activities**  
This tells a little more about you that may not be included in the items above.

### SUE SMITH

smiths@gmail.com

2222 Mill Plain Rd, Fairfield, CT 06614 / Cell 203-555-1111

**Profile – High School senior skilled in athletics and working with children in sports-related activities. Dependable and mature; seeking admission to a college where I can study Sports Medicine.**

#### Education

**HS Diploma:** Graduation Date - June 2011 from NC High School, Fairfield, CT  
**GPA:** 3.6    **SAT:** Critical Reasoning - 620 Math - 540 Writing – 560  
**AP Courses Completed:** English, Biology, U.S. History

#### Honors and Awards

- High School Honor Roll (2006-Present)
- High School Coaches Association Award (2008)
- Varsity Indoor Track (2008- 2009)
- Varsity Lacrosse (2007-2009)
- All Conference Lacrosse (2008)
- All Conference Academic (all sports 2006-Present)

#### Extracurricular Activities

- Varsity Swim Team (2005-2008, Captain 2009); YMCA Swim Team (2005-2007)
- Varsity Indoor Track - Sprinter (2008- Present)
- Lacrosse Varsity (2007-09); Captain (2008-Present)
- Key Club Participant (2007-Present)

#### Community Service

- Teacher's Assistant - Physics/Science teacher (2008-2009)
- Relay for Life - Organized events for three years (2007-Present)
- Big Brother/ Big Sister - Coordinated afterschool activities- JR Middle School (2008-Present)
- Brookfield Youth Lacrosse Clinic - trained techniques to 8-10 year olds (2008)

#### Employment

- Lifeguard/Instructor – Lake Town Park, Stamford, CT (2007-Present)
- Lifeguard/Swim instructor, Green View, YMCA, Fairfield, CT (2007-Present)
- Cashier, TJ Maxx, Fairfield, CT (2006-2008)
- Soccer Referee, YMCA, Fairfield CT (2004-2007)

**Additional Training:** Red Cross CPR/AED Certification, Waterfront Lifeguard, Certified Soccer Referee

# TECH SUPPORT



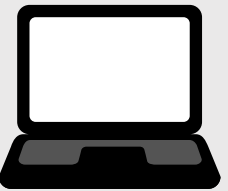
## What internet browser should I use?

Google Chrome 14 or higher or Safari 4 or higher. Other browsers, as well as Safari 5.1x, may cause technical issues. You should revert to Safari 5.0 or upgrade to Safari 6.



## What do I do if I forgot my password?

Click the "Forgot your Password?" button underneath the login fields. From there, you will be prompted to enter your email. A recovery email will be sent to that address.



## How do I create an account?

Click the "Create New Account" button underneath the login fields. You will be prompted to fill out your information and create a password.



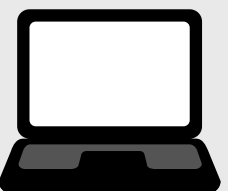
## Why did my work not save?

Save your work frequently using the "save" button at the bottom of the page. If your progress gets lost, most likely your internet connection was lost. Check your connection and log back in to see if your browser cache saved your work.



## How do I find the applications I'm working on?

After logging into the scholarship portal, you will be taken to the homepage. There, is a tab titled "Active Requests" where you will be able to see all of your live applications.



## Can I see my past applications?

After logging into the scholarship portal, you will be taken to the homepage. There, is a tab titled "Historical Requests" where you will be able to see all of your old applications.



### How do I update my contact information?

Login to the applicant portal system. To update your information, click on your name in the upper right hand corner. You can then click the "Edit My Profile" option.



### How do I reset my username?

Your username is an email address. If you have forgotten your username, please email [grants@gscf.org](mailto:grants@gscf.org) or call 785-823-1800.



### Is there a spell check feature?

Yes. The system will check for misspelled words but will not check for grammatical mistakes.



### What file formats will be accepted for attachments?

We prefer that you attach files in a PDF format (.pdf). We will also accept files in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Excel (.xls or .xlsx). Unacceptable formats include files with the "exe", "com", "vbs", and "bat" extensions.



### Why am I having problems uploading files?

Double check that there are no symbols in the file name, the file type and size are OK, then try one or more of these suggestions:

- Sometimes the problem can be a corrupt file. Try saving a new, renamed version of the document.
- Try saving your file as a different type. For instance, if you tried to upload a (.pdf) file, try uploading the original Word or Excel version of this document. If it is a Word (.doc or .docx) or Excel (.xls or .xlsx) document, try saving it as a (.pdf) file and then uploading that version. If you scanned a document to create a (.jpg) file, convert it to a (.pdf) format instead.
- Use a different computer to do the upload.