

LICKING COUNTY FOUNDATION

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM Guidelines for Applicants and Recipients

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is the Licking County Foundation scholarship program?

Scholarship funds are charitable accounts established at the Foundation by generous individuals, businesses, or organizations for the purpose of assisting students in paying for their education. The Foundation administers over 100 scholarship funds for people attending traditional, technical, and other institutions for post-secondary education.

Is there a cost to apply for a scholarship?

There is no charge to apply. (There should never be a fee to apply to any reputable scholarship program.)

What is the dollar amount of Licking County Foundation scholarships?

Award amounts vary based on the funds available and the number of recipients selected. The minimum scholarship offer is \$1,000. The offer amounts can vary each year. The amount disbursed cannot exceed your institution's cost of attendance, either alone or in combination with other scholarship/grant aid you are receiving.

Can I receive more than one Licking County Foundation scholarship during the same school year?

Students receive one scholarship offer per academic year; however, sometimes the offer has more than one funding source. Students are provided with all these details when they receive an offer.

Will the Foundation's scholarship provide enough money to pay the entire cost of my education?

Typically, no. Our scholarships most often provide partial support; therefore, we encourage you to investigate other financial resources. (There is a page on our website with *Other Scholarship Resources*.)

How many scholarships are awarded by the Licking County Foundation?

The number of scholarships awarded varies from year to year; in recent years, the Foundation has offered about 400 scholarships per program year.

What expenses can the scholarships pay?

Licking County Foundation scholarships can be used for education-related expenses at accredited, U.S.-based institutions. While expenses such as tuition, books, required course supplies, and fees are considered tax-exempt, we recommend checking with a tax professional to understand whether any portion of your scholarship is considered taxable income. Some related IRS information may be viewed here: <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc421>

Am I required to repay scholarship money?

No. Scholarships are considered “gift aid” and are charitable grants. Recipients are required to submit a form and send a donor thank-you letter as part of the LCF scholarship offer acceptance process.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**Who is eligible to apply?**

The Foundation’s scholarships are open to many types of students; high school seniors, high school graduates within the last two years (no school after high school due to gap year, deferment, AmeriCorps, work, pandemic delay), current undergraduate college students, graduate/professional degree students, and adult nontraditional students (24+ years old; who either never attended post-secondary school or currently/previously attend post-secondary school.) Full-time and part-time students pursuing post-secondary education may apply for Foundation scholarships.

Who is not eligible to apply?

Any member of the Foundation’s Governing Committee or Executive Committee, any employee of the Foundation, any donor or donor advisor to the fund making the scholarship offer, any substantial contributor to the Foundation or fund making the scholarship offer, any major contributors as determined by the Governing Committee, any member of the Scholarship Committee or Scholarship Review Committee, and the relatives of any of the foregoing individuals are not eligible to receive Foundation scholarships. A relative includes a spouse, ancestor, child, grandchild, great-grandchild, brother, and sister, and a spouse of a child, grandchild, great-grandchild, brother, and sister.

Do all scholarships have the same eligibility requirements?

No. Each scholarship fund has specific eligibility requirements that were defined by the donor(s) when the fund was established. These requirements are summarized in the information provided once an online application has been submitted.

How do I know if I qualify for any Licking County Foundation scholarships?

Your answers to the questions within the application will determine your eligibility for all the available scholarship funds that are part of the online system. It is very important to carefully read all instructions, as any scholarship offers will be based on your responses. If those responses are inaccurate, it may result in an offer becoming unavailable. You may always contact the Foundation office at scholarships@thelcfoundation.org with questions before submitting your application; however, no changes may be made after the published deadline.

Do I have to attend an Ohio college?

Not necessarily. Licking County Foundation scholarship recipients attend accredited colleges, universities, and career and technical centers across the United States. However, some funds require that recipients attend institutions in a specific geographic location (e.g., Ohio or Licking County) or a specific institution.

Are scholarships open to graduate students?

Graduate students or people seeking professional degrees are eligible to apply for some Foundation scholarships. The annual online application will consider all available options for this status category in combination with your other answers.

Can I apply for a scholarship if I don't know where I'll be going to school?

Yes. If you don't know which school you're going to attend, you can still apply for the annual Licking County Foundation scholarship opportunities. You would select "undecided" as your response to this question on the application; this response is encouraged if you are not sure at the time you submit your application. (Please note that some scholarships require attending specific institutions.)

I don't have the best grades. Will I still be considered for a scholarship?

Yes. Most of our annual scholarships take grades into consideration, but some emphasize other areas of performance as well. A well-written application essay is also an important component of the review process. Good grades help, but they're not the only requirement for Licking County Foundation support. The minimum, unweighted cumulative GPA is 2.0 for the majority of annual LCF scholarship funds; however, some funds have a higher requirement.

What if my household income is relatively high?

There is no maximum income or financial cut-off. Since many funds consider other criteria besides financial need, all students who meet eligibility requirements are encouraged to apply. Some Foundation scholarships are merit-based and therefore do not consider financial need.

I'm planning to pursue a degree or certificate from a Career or Technical Education center, not a traditional college or university. Can I still apply for a scholarship?

Yes. Some annual Licking County Foundation scholarships are available for students seeking Career or Technical Education degrees or certificates. Institutions must be accredited and located in the U.S.

Do I have to live in Licking County and also be a graduate of a Licking County high school to be eligible for Licking County Foundation scholarships?

No. Most LCF scholarships fall under one of the following categories: *Licking County Resident*, *Graduating/Graduated from a Licking County High School*, and *Graduating/Graduated from a Specific High School*. Only a few funds require more than one of those categories. Your answers to the application questions will determine the right options for you. Please note that students need to meet any residency requirement at the time they accept a scholarship offer, not just at the time of application.

Can an Adult student who didn't graduate from high school apply for scholarships?

Yes, if the student has a GED (or similar equivalency test) and is a Licking County resident. LCF defines *Adult* as someone who is 24 years or older.

Can a student who was home-schooled apply for scholarships?

Yes. Scholarships that specify graduating from or previously graduated from a Licking County high school as part of the eligibility criteria will not be considered.

Can Licking County Foundation scholarships be used for Postsecondary (education beyond high school or GED/HiSET) programs at C-TEC?

Yes, certain Licking County Foundation scholarships can be used for Postsecondary programs at C-TEC, provided the scholarship criteria do not specify that the applicant must be enrolled in a 2-year degree or 4-year degree program, and the applicant meets all other requirements for the scholarship.

If I receive a scholarship offer in one year, will I automatically receive an offer the following year?

Not automatically. In most cases, students must reapply each year. Some scholarships allow prior recipients to reapply. Some scholarships are renewable if recipients continue to meet all eligibility requirements. Students whose offers include this renewable scholarship distinction will be clearly identified in the offer notification email; these students will be contacted to complete an eligibility review form for subsequent scholarship cycles.

I received a renewable scholarship. Do I submit renewal paperwork online?

Yes. All students receiving a renewable scholarship will first need to submit an Eligibility Review Form. Recipients of renewable scholarships are contacted via email in early January about continuing eligibility, so it is important to notify the Foundation of any changes to your contact information, most importantly, your email address.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Will the Foundation release any of the personal information that I submit?

The Foundation takes the confidentiality of your data seriously. We do not collect social security numbers. All information received is confidential and will only be reviewed by the appropriate Foundation staff, Governing Committee, and Scholarship Review Committee members who agree to maintain confidentiality. If you are chosen to receive a scholarship offer, your name will be used by the Foundation in publicizing the offers unless you contact the Program Officer. Living donors and fund representatives will also receive scholarship recipients' names.

Is an essay required?

Yes, an essay is required from all applicants using the online system. In addition, some scholarships require an additional essay. In your essay(s), let your personality shine through; present your ideas in a focused, thoughtful, and meaningful manner; and write in a natural style and support your ideas with specific examples. Have someone else proofread your essay(s), as spelling, punctuation, and grammar are part of the scoring.

Why is an essay required?

The essay is required of all applicants because it provides the reviewers with additional information (beyond the GPA) to assist in the selection of a recipient. An essay is evaluated on how effectively it addressed one of the topics provided; if it was thoughtful, well-written, and specific to the applicant; and, if proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation were used. Scholarship reviewers do not receive the names or GPAs of the applicants whose essays they evaluate.

Are recommendation letters required?

No, the Licking County Foundation does not require recommendation letters.

Where can I find the scholarship application?

The link is in the Scholarship section of the Foundation's website when the application is open for submissions. Applications are completed and submitted online. Information about the annual scholarship program timeline will be listed on the same webpage by the end of November each year. Applicants submit one application to be considered for all available LCF scholarship opportunities within each annual program cycle.

Can my application be handwritten?

No, the Licking County Foundation uses online applications with online submission.

What file types are acceptable when uploading required materials?

All uploaded documents must be in .pdf format.

What if I do not have Internet access or a computer at home?

All applicants must complete and submit an online application; please contact your school, local library, community center, employment agency, or senior center to determine if you are eligible to use their public-use computer terminals.

Can I apply for more than one scholarship?

Applicants only need to submit one application to be considered for all available LCF scholarship opportunities within the annual program cycle. Your answers to the application questions will determine your eligibility, so carefully read all instructions and contact the office before the deadline with any questions.

If I qualify for more than one scholarship, do I need to fill out separate applications?

The LCF online application system uses a *Universal Application* to gather the information that is the same across all applications, as well as several other questions that determine eligibility. You will only complete this section one time. Several applications will also have *Supplemental* sections that contain required items specific to only that scholarship, such as eligibility confirmation or second essays, which must be completed and submitted in order for your application to that scholarship to be complete. Any scholarships on your list that contain *Supplemental* sections will be specified after you submit the *Universal* section. You will submit each *Supplemental* section separately.

What's the deadline for applying?

The DATE of the application deadline will typically be near the end of January; see the Foundation's website for the specific date each year. **The deadline TIME is 5:00pm EST.** The deadline applies to the application and any required uploaded documents.

Can I get an extension if I need one?

No. Because the Foundation receives thousands of applications, in fairness to all applicants, we are unable to extend the annual deadline to individual applicants. If you experience a problem with submitting your application, please contact the office with adequate time for us to assist you before the deadline. If we are aware of any technical issues that originate in our vendor's system, we will provide updates on the ***General Information*** page in the Scholarship section of the Foundation's website.

FAFSA (FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID)**What is the FAFSA?**

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is a form that may be submitted annually by current and prospective college students (both undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to apply for federal student financial aid, such as Pell grants, Stafford loans, PLUS loans, and work-study programs. The FAFSA is also used to apply for most state and college

financial aid. Once the FAFSA is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, it will be processed and a ***FAFSA Submission Summary*** will be produced.

What is a FAFSA Submission Summary?

The *FAFSA Submission Summary* is a summary of the information provided on the FAFSA. It includes your Student Aid Index (SAI) number, which is used to determine your eligibility for financial aid. For an LCF scholarship application, if you file a FAFSA for the school year that coincides with the scholarship cycle, you **will upload a .pdf file of a portion of your *FAFSA Submission Summary* to your LCF scholarship application.** The LCF application specifies what information should be visible on the document you upload.

What is an SAI?

The Student Aid Index (SAI) is a measure of your family's financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law with the information you report on your FAFSA. Institutions use the SAI to determine your federal student aid eligibility and financial aid award. **The Foundation uses the SAI to determine your composite score for its financial-need-based scholarships.**

How do I complete and file the FAFSA?

You must file the FAFSA online via www.studentaid.gov.

When will my FAFSA Submission Summary be available? How do I get it?

Please consult the FAFSA website linked above for information. In general, FAFSA information is emailed to the student's email address, not to other contributors (such as a parent or guardian).

Do I have to submit FAFSA to apply for Licking County Foundation Scholarships?

No, although it is highly recommended because it increases the number of opportunities for which you might be eligible. If you do not provide the FAFSA information, your application will be considered for only the merit-based opportunities.

Where can I go for help?

Your high school counselor or the financial aid office of an institution to which you have been accepted can help you. They can tell you what forms to fill out and the steps to follow to receive the financial aid available to you.

TRANSCRIPTS

I'm a graduating high school senior. Do I need to submit my high school transcript?

High school seniors will report their unweighted, cumulative GPA, including their first semester grades from senior year, on the application and provide contact information for their school counselor. The student-reported GPA will be verified with School Counselors after the application period has closed. Unexplainable discrepancies between student-reported GPA and School Counselor-confirmed GPA may result in disqualification of an application. If high school transcripts are required, they will be provided by School Counselors.

I'm a high school graduate, but have not yet attended school after high school. What do I attach for a transcript?

Your official (signed) high school transcript must be uploaded to your online application. You will upload your own as a .pdf file.

I am either a Current Undergraduate College, Adult Non-traditional, or Graduate/ Professional Degree Student. Can I provide a printout of my transcript from my school's website?

No. Your transcript must be uploaded to your online application. You will upload your own as a .pdf file.

I am currently attending a post-secondary school. Do I need to submit an official college transcript?

No, official transcripts are not required, though still accepted. Unofficial transcripts are also accepted as long as they contain the required information listed in the application. Contact your school's Registrar's Office with questions about how to access transcripts. If you are an Ohio State University undergraduate student, the *Advising Report* is acceptable as an unofficial transcript. If you are a medical school student, contact the LCF office to determine what documentation to submit.

MAJORS and SCHOOLS

I'm undecided about which school I'm going to attend; can I list more than one?

No, you can only select one institution. If you are undecided, select *Undecided* on your application. If you are selected to receive a scholarship, you will provide the actual institution name at that time. LCF encourages students who are not entirely certain to select *Undecided*, to avoid being offered an institution-specific scholarship they cannot accept if they decide to attend school somewhere other than the school listed on their application.

I don't know what I want to major in, or I haven't officially declared a major with my school; what do I do?

You would select *Undecided or Undeclared* as your response. This section of the application includes specific instructions; follow these carefully so you do not receive an offer you cannot accept.

What happens if I'm selected to receive a scholarship, but I change my major/program or the school I plan to attend after I submit my application?

It depends. If the scholarship is not major-specific, then nothing changes. If the scholarship is major-specific and the new major/program still qualifies for the scholarship, then nothing changes. If the scholarship is major-specific and the new major/program does not meet the criteria for the scholarship, you are ineligible to accept that scholarship offer. Similarly, if the scholarship requires attendance at a specific school or in a specific geographic location, and you make a change after you applied that no longer meets these requirements, you are ineligible to accept that scholarship offer. Licking County Foundation must honor the criteria established by the donor(s) who created the scholarship fund.

APPLICATION REVIEW & SELECTION

What are my chances for receiving a scholarship?

Scholarship offers are based on scholarship criteria, the availability of funds, and the competitiveness of the applicant pool for each available scholarship. These factors change with every funding cycle and some years are more competitive than others.

Who makes the award decisions?

A volunteer Scholarship Review Committee appointed by the Governing Committee of the Licking County Foundation and comprised of impartial Licking County residents will review each application and select the recipients based on the criteria established by donors. The Scholarship Review Committee members are unaware of the applicants' names when reviewing applications, and each application is reviewed by multiple Committee members, and their scores are averaged.

How will my application be evaluated?

In evaluating the applicants, the Scholarship Review Committee will review and score the applicants' responses in the sections about *Activities*, *Honors/Recognition Received*, and *Essay*. The selection process utilizes those averaged scores, as well as a score for GPA, and financial need (only for need-based scholarships) to calculate a composite score for each applicant; that composite score is used to select recipients for scholarship offers.

NOTIFICATION & AWARDS

When and how will I be notified if I receive a Licking County Foundation Scholarship?

All applicants are notified via email whether or not they received an offer. You will receive this communication from the Foundation in April. Graduating high school seniors also receive certificates in May at their school's award ceremonies.

What happens if I am selected as a scholarship offer recipient?

You will receive emailed notification of your scholarship offer, including the amount, with instructions on how to respond. You will be required to complete an online *Follow-up Form* and submit a donor thank-you letter to the Foundation if you accept the offer.

If you no longer meet the terms of your scholarship offer, or have made a different decision about attending school, you are asked to submit your *Follow-up Form* indicating that you cannot accept the offer, with a brief note explaining why. Receiving this response allows us to offer the scholarship to another recipient who may be eligible to accept.

Will I receive a check for my scholarship?

No. Scholarship payments are mailed directly to the institution on behalf of the recipient.

When will my school receive my scholarship check?

After you have returned your acceptance materials and they are reviewed and approved, the Foundation sends the scholarship check to your school, beginning as early as the end of July. Your scholarship may be applied in equal amounts to your fall and spring semesters, depending on your school's procedures for external scholarships. The Foundation does not require the scholarship to be split in equal amounts between semesters.

What happens if I move or change schools after I've been awarded a scholarship?

You must notify the Foundation if you move or transfer to a new school, if you want any unused portion of a scholarship to be reissued to your new school. Please contact us as soon as you have made your decision to transfer, and if you continue to meet all required criteria, the Foundation will send a check to your new school upon receipt of reimbursement from your previous institution.

May I contact the donors who provided the funds for my scholarship?

We require all recipients to send donor acknowledgements to the Foundation. Donors enjoy reading thank-you notes and like to know something about the person receiving their scholarship. This is the best way for the donor to understand how important the scholarship is to the recipient. The notes are also shared with Foundation board members and Scholarship Review Committee members, and are included on the Foundation's website and in publicity materials. There are specific instructions and a link to donor bios included on the Follow-up Form.

I have a question you didn't answer here. What should I do?

Please email us at scholarships@thelcfoundation.org for assistance.