

# LICKING COUNTY FOUNDATION

## 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 trade 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 upon the funds available and the number of recipients selected. The minimum scholarship offer is \$1,000. In recent program years, the Foundation's scholarship offers ranged from \$1,000 to \$10,000. The offer amounts can vary each year.

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

It is possible; however, the students selected typically receive only one scholarship offer.

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

Typically, no. Our scholarships are intended to provide partial support; therefore, we encourage you to investigate other financial 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 nearly 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 you check 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 acknowledgment as part of the LCF scholarship offer acceptance process.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Who is eligible to apply?**

The Foundation's scholarships are open to all 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 within the application, 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 with questions before submitting your application if you do so before the published deadline to submit.

### **Do I have to attend an Ohio college?**

Not necessarily. Licking County Foundation scholarship recipients attend accredited colleges, universities and technical/vocational/trade schools across the United States. However, some funds require that recipients do 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 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 many Licking County Foundation scholarships. 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 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, cumulative GPA is 2.0 for the majority of 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 go to trade school, not college. Can I still apply for a scholarship?**

Yes. Some Licking County Foundation scholarships are available for students planning to attend technical, vocational or trade schools.

**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, students will need to meet any residency requirement at the time they accept a scholarship offer, not just at the time of application.

**Can a Non-traditional 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.

**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 one year, will I automatically receive an award the following year?**

Not automatically. In most cases, students must re-apply each year. Some scholarships allow prior recipients to re-apply. 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 December about continuing eligibility, so it is important to notify the Foundation of any changes to your contact information, especially your email address.

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

The Foundation takes 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 (*Apply Now!*) is located on the **General Information** page 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 entire 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 program cycle.

**Can my application be handwritten?**

No, the Licking County Foundation Scholarship Application is an online application 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 the 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?**

Yes. You may apply for as many scholarships for which you meet the eligibility criteria. However, applicants only need to submit one application to be considered for all available LCF scholarship opportunities within each 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 at 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 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 **Student Aid Report (SAR)** will be produced.

### **What is a SAR?**

The Student Aid Report (SAR) is a summary of the information provided on the FAFSA. The SAR also includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number, which is used to determine your eligibility for financial aid. For your 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 page one only of your SAR to your application. The LCF scholarship application specifies what information should be visible on the document you upload.** The SAR is not the submission confirmation received immediately after submitting the FAFSA, even if the confirmation contains a projected/estimated EFC.

### **What is an EFC?**

The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) 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 EFC to determine your federal student aid eligibility and financial aid award. *The Foundation uses the EFC to determine your composite score for financial-need based scholarships.*

### **How do I complete and file the FAFSA?**

You must file the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). **PLEASE NOTE: Important changes to the FAFSA process went into effect beginning with the 2017-18 school year. Visit the FAFSA website at this link, <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/announcements/fafsa-changes>, to educate yourself about these changes so you know when to submit and what tax information to use.**

### **When will my SAR be available? How do I get my SAR?**

According to the FAFSA website, if you provide your e-mail address on your FAFSA, an email will be sent to you with a link to your SAR within approximately three to five days. If you did not provide your email address on your FAFSA, a paper SAR will be mailed to you and received within approximately 14 days. The SAR is emailed to the student's email address, not to a parent/guardian. If you provided a valid e-mail address, you will receive an e-mail with instructions on how to access an online copy of your SAR. If you did not provide a valid e-mail address on your FAFSA, you will receive either a SAR or SAR Acknowledgement via postal mail.

### **Where can I go for help?**

Your guidance counselor or the financial aid office of the college that interests you 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 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 guidance counselor. The student-reported GPA will be verified with Guidance Counselors after the application period has closed. Unexplainable discrepancies between student-reported GPA and Guidance Counselor-confirmed GPA may result in disqualification of an application. If high school transcripts are required, they will be provided by Guidance 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 checked a status of 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 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; what do I do?**

You would select *Undecided or Undeclared* as the major. This section of the application includes specific instructions.

### **What happens if I'm selected to receive a scholarship, but I changed my major/program or school I plan to attend after I submitted 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 applicant's responses in the sections about *Activities* and *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 received 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 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 of 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 re-issued 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. Donors enjoy reading thank you notes and like to know something about the person who is receiving their scholarship. This is the best way for the donor to understand how important the scholarship is to 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](mailto:scholarships@thelcfoundation.org) or call 740.349.3863, x108 or 740.349.3863, x113 for assistance.