

About the Universal Application for Scholarship Administrators



What is the universal application?

The universal application is an online application form that will allow students to apply for multiple North Carolina Community Foundation scholarships using a single application beginning in January 2024. The universal application is being used by more than 130 NCCF scholarships and will provide students with an easier and more efficient scholarship application experience.

Why is NCCF moving scholarships to a universal application?

Previously, students had to research all NCCF scholarships individually to determine the ones for which they may be eligible, potentially missing opportunities. Students had to complete a separate application for each scholarship, including submitting transcripts and letters of recommendation for each.

As a result, many applications were abandoned or incomplete, leading to fewer applicants for scholarships and missed opportunities for students. We anticipate the universal application will lead to an easier and more efficient scholarship application experience for students and their references, an overall increase in scholarship applications, and a more diverse candidate pool.

What are the benefits of the universal application?

- The universal application improves and simplifies the scholarship research and application process for students. It matches student details with scholarship criteria, alerting students to all scholarships for which they are eligible, relieving them from the burden of researching and applying individually to each scholarship.
- We anticipate use of the universal application will increase applications to NCCF scholarships that have historically experienced low application volume and/or have very specific criteria.
- The universal application may also lead to an overall increase in scholarship awards.
- The management and administration process will be streamlined for students, NCCF staff and scholarship administrators.

What will change for students applying for scholarships?

- With the universal application, students will complete one application that looks the same as the application NCCF previously used. However, the universal application will use information submitted on the application (e.g., county of residence, GPA, intended major) to scour scholarship opportunities and present students with additional scholarships for which they qualify, noting those that may have a custom question or supplemental essay.
 - If a student is eligible for scholarships with no supplemental questions, their application will automatically be submitted into the pool for those scholarships.
 - If a scholarship requires supplemental questions, the student will have the opportunity to submit those.
- Students will no longer need to know and track access codes for scholarships they apply for; the universal application will automatically filter students into relevant scholarships.
- Guidance counselors, teachers and others submitting transcripts and letters of recommendation upload one letter per student; the system then applies those documents to all scholarships for which the student has applied.

What will change for scholarship administrators?

- Some scholarships may receive more applications, which may result in additional review for administrators.
- Some scholarships may receive fewer, but better aligned, applications because the universal application will filter in only those students who qualify; this will reduce the time needed to cull applications.
- There will be one deadline for all scholarship applications using the universal application; however, administrators can schedule committee selection meetings based on convenience and committee availability. Application deadlines will no longer be extended, but because the universal application will improve the application process and is expected to lead to an increased pool of applicants, we do not anticipate there will be a need to extend deadlines.
- Administrators and committee members will still have the option to use online tools within the system for committee review, evaluation and selection. Currently, an evaluator of several scholarships may have to answer the same question about an individual student multiple times. With the universal application, the evaluator's answers to common questions about a student auto populate, saving evaluators time and effort.

More information

- [Learn more](#) about the universal application from the perspective of a student, a donor, a guidance counselor, and a scholarship administrator.
- [Watch this six-minute video](#) to view the universal application from a student's perspective.

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