

# Frequently Asked Questions for Scholarship Applicants



## About NCCF scholarships

### **How many scholarships do you award each year?**

The scholarships we award vary each year based on the unique criteria of each scholarship. In 2023, we distributed [nearly \\$1.3 million](#) in scholarships to assist over 300 students throughout North Carolina.

### **What would a scholarship pay for?**

Depending on the scholarship, it may pay for tuition, room and board, books, fees and/or other related educational expenses. This will be outlined in your award notification.

### **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 North Carolina Community Foundation scholarships. You are encouraged to list your first choice and use that school throughout the application. If you are undecided, please be sure to address that in your essay so the reviewers are aware there may be a change.

### **What is the minimum scholarship award amount?**

The minimum scholarship award amount is \$1,000.

## Eligibility requirements

### **What types of students are eligible for scholarships offered by the North Carolina Community Foundation?**

Undergraduates, graduates, medical and professional school students and adult re-entry students who are attending community colleges, four-year universities, career/technical schools, teaching credential programs and graduate, medical or professional schools in the United States are eligible for scholarships offered at NCCF.

### **Do you have scholarships available for graduate students?**

Yes. Graduate students are eligible for any scholarship that does not specify it only supports a graduating high school senior, four-year college/university student, or two-year vocational or technical college education. We also hold scholarships intended specifically for graduate students. By completing the NCCF Universal Scholarships Application, you will be presented with scholarship opportunities for which you are eligible.

**Do all scholarships have the same eligibility requirements?**

No. Each scholarship has specific eligibility requirements defined by the donor when the scholarship was established. Be sure to read the requirements of each scholarship carefully as directed through the universal application and address those elements as needed in your application.

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

Yes. Some of the scholarships take grades into consideration, but other scholarships emphasize alternate areas of performance such as leadership, community service and other extracurricular activities. Good grades are not always the only requirement for scholarship support.

**I'm planning to go to trade school, not college. Can I still apply for a scholarship?**

Yes. Several scholarships are for students planning to attend a technical school, trade school, or participate in an apprenticeship.

**Do I have to be a resident of North Carolina to apply for a scholarship?**

Some scholarships require residency in North Carolina, but not all. To determine whether you are eligible for a scholarship, you should carefully review the criteria.

**I do not qualify for financial aid. Am I still eligible?**

Yes. Not all of our scholarships are based on financial need. We encourage you to apply for financial need-based scholarships and submit necessary financial information for the scholarship committee's review.

## Applying for NCCF scholarships

**How do I apply for NCCF scholarships?**

Beginning on Jan. 16, 2024, all scholarships will be open to accept applications. You must create an account in the [NCCF Scholarships Portal](#) to apply. Read through this [overview on how to apply](#). More information on using the portal is below.

**Can I apply for more than one scholarship?**

Yes. Our NCCF Universal Scholarships Application matches you to scholarship opportunities you may be eligible for. You can apply for any scholarship you are eligible for. We encourage you to carefully read the eligibility requirements of each scholarship you're applying for and tailor your application responses accordingly.

### **Are NCCF scholarships only open to high school seniors?**

You may apply for scholarships as a high school senior and beyond. You can apply for any year you are in higher education, graduate school, trade school, vocational school, etc.

### **What's the deadline for applying?**

The deadline for applying using the NCCF Universal Scholarships Application and submitting all required documents for the 2024-2025 school year is **March 15, 2024, 11:59 p.m.** Additional NCCF scholarships may have different deadlines set by individual Scholarship Administrators, and all applications close at 11:59 p.m. on the posted due date. [You can find a list of those other scholarships on our website.](#)

### **Do I have a better chance if I fill my application out sooner?**

No. Our scholarships are based on various requirements, but they are not “first come, first serve” so please take your time completing the application. It is more important that you provide the correct information and submit it before the deadline than to be the first application submitted.

### **How much does it cost to apply for a scholarship?**

There is no cost to apply for an NCCF scholarship.

### **Which FAFSA page should I send with my scholarship application?**

Please submit Pages 1-2 printed/copied directly from your FAFSA Submission Summary showing your Student Aid Index (SAI) number. You may also use the Electronic FAFSA Submission Summary or Confirmation Page (shows your SAI number).

### **Must I submit an official transcript?**

Graduating high school seniors must submit an official transcript, but current college students do not have to.

Current high school students: Enter your counselor's email address in your application so the counselor can upload your transcript. Transcripts should be uploaded in either Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Before the application deadline, check the Scholarships Portal to confirm that your counselor has submitted your transcript. **It is your responsibility to make sure it is uploaded, or your application will be incomplete without it.**

If you request an official electronic copy of your transcript, please be sure to review the stipulations; some expire after a certain period or cannot be uploaded to a third-party site. Your transcript will need to be viewed after the deadline by the review committee. Be sure to review all limitations prior to ordering an electronic transcript.

**If I received a scholarship last year that I wish to renew, do I need to submit new reference letters this year?**

Yes. Reference letters submitted in previous years will not be active on the current application. We recommend asking new people to serve as current references, but it is not required. At the very least, past references should update their letter from last year with current information and dates. You will need to enter their email address again for this year and they will need to upload the file.

**I haven't decided what my major is. Should I leave it blank?**

No. You should select "undecided" from the list of options.

## Using the NCCF Scholarships Portal

**I created an account. How do I sign in? What do I do if I'm having trouble logging in?**

**Signing in:** To sign into the application, you will need an email address and you will have to create a password. **Do not use your high school email address.** Email addresses provided by your high school have higher security settings and may reject messages from our system. Use an email address you will check often and maintain after high school as all NCCF communications are made via email. You must use the same email and password every time. This email and password can be used every year when you come back to reapply or renew.

**Failed attempts to log in:** After 15 failed attempts to log in, you will be locked out. You will need to reset your password using the "forgot your password" option on the log-in screen. The system will email you a link to reset your password that is valid for up to 24 hours.

**My computer won't let me enter or re-enter my scholarship application. Can you help?**

If you cannot access your application, your computer may be blocking "pop-ups." This may be shown as a message along the top or bottom of your browser. Usually, your browser will give you a button or words to click to temporarily 'enable' or 'allow' the pop-up to proceed. You may need to go to your computer's Control Panel and enter the Internet Options. In the Privacy section, uncheck the Pop-up Blocker box. The online scholarship application is located on a different website, which may trigger the message from your internet service provider. We recommend accessing [the NCCF Scholarships Portal](#) using either Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox browsers.

**Can I complete one application to apply for more than one scholarship?**

Yes! You may be eligible for several scholarship opportunities by completing one form. Some scholarships may require additional information, so make sure to read the criteria about each scholarship. After submitting the NCCF Universal Scholarships Application, the system will guide you through which scholarships you may be eligible for that require additional information. You can answer the questions to apply or click decline opportunity.

A small number of NCCF scholarships require you to apply to each of them individually. You can find a list of [those additional scholarships](#) on our website and apply for them through the Opportunities tab of the NCCF Scholarships Portal.

**What are supplemental questions and how do I answer them?**

Some scholarship opportunities require more specific information than what is asked on the general application like short essays or letters of recommendation. These supplemental questions are presented on the confirmation page immediately after submitting the general application. You can also access them from the Scholarships Portal dashboard at any time following submission of the universal application.

**Can I preview the questions on the application without creating a log on?**

Yes. You can [preview the application](#) before creating a login and starting the application process. The main preview page will show only questions that everyone must answer. To view all supplemental application questions, select "question list." Please note that this list will include supplemental questions for ALL scholarships on the NCCF Universal Application. All letters of reference and supplemental questions are scholarship specific and when you apply, you will only need to answer supplemental questions and submit references for the scholarships for which you are eligible.

### **How can I attach documents to my online application?**

**Recommendation letters and transcripts:** Within the application you will find instructions on how to send upload requests for recommendation letters or transcripts. In this section, you will type in the email of the individual(s) you are requesting a letter or transcript from. The individuals will receive an email that includes a link to complete the questions in that section and/or to upload the letter or transcript. You can send a maximum of three requests, though most scholarships only require two letters of recommendation.

**FAFSA Student Aid Index:** Within the application you will find the section labeled Financial Need. When you answer 'yes' to this question, the 'Additional Financial Information' section will appear. In this section you will answer the questions and upload a copy of your FAFSA Student Aid Index. Documents required can be uploaded as a screenshot, Microsoft Word document or PDF.

### **What happens to my application if I fail to upload an attachment or if my third-party requests (high school transcript or letters of reference) have not been submitted?**

If you fail to upload an attachment, your application will be marked incomplete and will not be sent to the selection committee. No documents will be accepted after the application deadline.

It is your responsibility to check your application **in advance of the deadline** to ensure you have answered all questions, your references have submitted their letters, your transcript has been uploaded, and all required documents are included. If you are a high school student, it is your responsibility to ensure that your transcript is uploaded by your counselor prior to the deadline. If either you or the counselor are having issues, contact [scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org) for assistance prior to the deadline.

You will be able to see the status of third-party requests (for reference or transcript) under that portion of the application. Once the document has been received, the box will provide information about when the document was submitted.

### **Why aren't my references receiving the request?**

The online system will generate an email based on the submitted email address. References may not receive the request if the email is entered incorrectly into the application. The system email may be filtered into a Spam or Junk inbox. We suggest you contact your references at the time you identify them in the application to alert them to be on the lookout for an email requesting a letter of recommendation/transcript. If you need to change the email address of the reference and you have already submitted your application, contact [scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org) for assistance.

## Scholarship awards

### **Who makes the award decisions?**

Each scholarship has its own committee of volunteers who read and evaluate applications. Each scholarship committee makes decisions based on the fund's purpose and in compliance with IRS guidelines.

### **Are scholarships awarded based on merit or financial need?**

Some scholarships are merit based, some scholarships are based on financial need, and some are a combination of both. Scholarship committees make their selections based on a compilation of various criteria, including but not limited to financial need, leadership potential, academic performance, work experience and commitment to school and community, as well as other requirements specific to the individual scholarship fund.

### **When will I find out if I've been awarded a scholarship? Will you let me know if I have not?**

All applicants can log on to the Scholarships Portal at any time to check the status of an application. We encourage Scholarship Administrators to notify all applicants of the committee's decision soon after materials are submitted to NCCF.

### **What happens if I am selected as a scholarship recipient?**

Scholarship recipients will receive an email from NCCF with an official award letter and instructions on how to claim the scholarship. This email will come from [scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org) and will be sent to the email address provided by the applicant on the Student Profile. Award recipients should be on the lookout for these documents to arrive.

**All students receiving an NCCF scholarship must complete and submit the [Scholar Information Form](#) through the Scholarships Portal prior to NCCF making the scholarship payment to the student's school.** The Scholar Information Form provides NCCF with information required to process the scholarship payment to the student's school. The form also provides students the option to upload their acceptance letter and answer questions to share with the donors who established and support the scholarship opportunity. Students who do not submit the Scholar Information Form by Aug 31, 2024, may forfeit their scholarship.

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

Award recipients who move or change schools after the application is submitted should contact [scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org) with the updated information and we will advise on how to proceed. Certain scholarships have restrictions related to the school that the recipient must attend. If you are eligible, we will transfer your award to your new school.

**What if I am only attending one semester and then graduating?**

Scholarships are split between fall and spring semester. If you are graduating early or will not be attending one of those semesters, please notify our Scholarships Team at [scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@nccommunityfoundation.org) to ensure you are still eligible and to discuss how payment will be handled.

**Will my scholarship check be sent directly to me?**

No. Once we have received your required Scholar Information Form and all necessary verification documents, scholarship checks are mailed directly to your school's financial aid office designated for you. The school will deposit the check and post it to your student account. Scholarships are divided into two equal payments – one for the fall semester and the other for the spring semester. Please submit your Scholar Information Form by Aug. 31, 2024, to avoid risking forfeiture of your scholarship.

**If I receive a scholarship for one year, will I automatically receive it the following year?**

Some of our scholarships are renewable for up to four years but others are one-year awards or require that students submit renewal applications the following year. Your Scholarship Administrator can inform you if your scholarship is renewable.

If your scholarship is renewable, you will need to meet any required criteria and submit required renewal materials for additional payments. If your scholarship is NOT renewable but you remain eligible for it, you may re-apply through the NCCF Scholarships Portal next year.