



## The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Each Spring the Foundation awards 25 scholarships to graduating seniors from Fort Bend County high schools to pursue their dream of earning a degree. Awards are renewable up to three years or until a bachelor's degree is obtained, whichever occurs first. Applicants may not receive both a George Foundation High School scholarship and a George Foundation Higher Education scholarship within the same year. Awards are for undergraduate study only.

### **AWARD AMOUNT:**

A maximum of \$20,000 per recipient will be awarded over a four year period (up to \$5,000 per academic year).

### **TO BE ELIGIBLE, APPLICANTS MUST:**

- be residing in Fort Bend County
- be U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents or have been granted deferred action status under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA)\*
- be a graduating high school senior
- be able to demonstrate financial need
- have a grade point average of 2.5 or higher, based on a 4.0 scale
- plan to enroll for the first time in full-time (minimum 12 credit hours) undergraduate course of study at an accredited two or four-year public college or university in Texas for the entire upcoming academic year

\*Non-U.S. citizen applicants are required to be U.S. permanent residents and must submit a copy of their U.S. permanent resident card with their application. Student visas or temporary employment authorizations are not acceptable. DACA students must submit a copy of their approval letter.

### **DEADLINE:**

Applications must be submitted by February 15th of each year.

### **NOTIFICATION PERIOD:**

Applicants will be notified by Scholarship America on the outcome of the application in April of each year.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

PLEASE NOTE: This scholarship program is managed by Scholarship America. Scholarship recipients are not selected by The George Foundation Trustees or Staff. Please do not mail application packets to The George Foundation.

### 1. Is there someone I can call if I need help completing the application?

- For questions regarding the requirements and content of the scholarship application, please contact:
  - Foundation staff at [scholarships@thegeorgefoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@thegeorgefoundation.org) or 281-342-6109; or
  - Scholarship America staff at [georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org) or 507-931-1682 (ask for The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program).

### 2. Is there someone I can call if I have any technical issues with the application, submission, system, etc.?

- For questions regarding issues or errors, contact Scholarship America staff at [georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org) or 507-931-1682 (ask for The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program).

## ELIGIBILITY

### 3. I am a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) student. Am I eligible to apply?

- Yes. DACA students are eligible, and will be required to upload a copy of their approval letter in the “Upload Documents” section of the application.

### 4. I am a Non-U.S. citizen with a U.S. permanent resident card. Am I eligible to apply?

- Yes. High school seniors who are U.S. permanent residents are eligible, and will be required to upload a copy of their U.S. permanent resident card in the “Upload Documents” section of the application.

### 5. If I am a refugee, have established asylum status, or if I do not fall into any of the citizenship/residency categories cited above, am I eligible to apply?

- No. Unfortunately, if you are not a U.S. permanent resident or if you do not fall under DACA, you are not eligible.

### 6. If I have a diagnosed learning difference, am I eligible to apply?

- Yes, if you meet or exceed the selection criteria, you are eligible to apply.

### 7. I do not come from a low-income family. Am I eligible to apply?

- This is a need-based scholarship program. Financial need as calculated by Scholarship America must be demonstrated for the student to receive an award. There is no strict household income limit to apply.

- Additionally, the program also takes into account demonstrated leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, statement of goals and aspirations, unusual personal or family circumstances, an outside appraisal, and academic record.
- 8. What is a first generation student?**
    - A first generation student is defined as a college student from a family in which neither parent has a two or four year degree.
  - 9. Can I apply even if I have not been accepted to a college yet?**
    - Yes, you may apply for a scholarship if you have not yet been accepted to a two- or four-year public college or public university. However, the eventual awarding of the scholarship will require verification of enrollment.
  - 10. Am I eligible to apply if I was a home schooled student?**
    - Yes. As a home schooled applicant, you are eligible to apply.
  - 11. If I received a GED diploma, am I eligible to apply?**
    - No. If you received a GED diploma, you are not eligible to apply.
  - 12. Are there scholarships for part-time students?**
    - No. You must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester, both fall and spring each year, in an undergraduate course of study at an accredited two- or four-year public college or public university in Texas.
    - Students will forfeit award if enrolled credit hours fall below the minimum full-time requirement.
  - 13. Am I eligible if I am already enrolled in a bachelor's degree program?**
    - No. Applicants must be high school seniors preparing for graduation, and enrolling for the first time in a full-time (minimum 12 credit hours per semester, both fall and spring) undergraduate course of study at an accredited two- or four-year public college or public university in Texas for the entire upcoming academic year.
  - 14. I will be on deferment for the fall term. Am I still eligible for The George Foundation High School Scholarship program?**
    - No. The High School Scholarship program requires all recipients to be enrolled full time at an accredited two- or four-year public college or public university in Texas for the fall term in the year in which they are awarded.
  - 15. Am I eligible for a scholarship if I am currently enrolled in or planning on pursuing a second degree?**
    - No. You must be a graduating high school senior, planning to enroll for the first time in a full-time (minimum 12 credit hours per semester, both fall and spring) undergraduate course of study at an accredited two- or four-year public college or university in Texas for the entire upcoming academic year.
  - 16. Will The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program pay for me to attend an online accredited college or university?**
    - No, accredited online programs are not covered by The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program.

## APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

### 17. How do I apply?

- Apply online [here](#)

### 18. Is there a fee to apply?

- No. Scholarship applications do not require a fee.

### 19. Is the FAFSA required for my scholarship application?

- Yes. If students want to be considered for need-based scholarships, they must complete the FAFSA.

### 20. Do I have to reapply every year to renew my High School Scholarship if awarded?

- No. You do not need to reapply each year. However, renewal is based upon continuation of program by The George Foundation. Scholarship America will contact you via mail each spring to verify enrollment.

### 21. Can I apply for more than one scholarship?

- Yes. Fort Bend County High School graduating seniors who meet the eligibility requirements for both The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program and The George Foundation Higher Education Scholarship Program are encouraged to apply for both scholarships by submitting the appropriate application for each program. However, applicants may receive only one George Foundation scholarship within the same academic year.
- While students are only eligible to receive either the High School scholarship or Higher Education Scholarship, students remain eligible for the Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) scholarship if awarded, and The George Foundation Endowed scholarship, if offered by the Texas College or University the student is attending.

### 22. If I did not receive a High School scholarship as an incoming college/university freshman, am I eligible for future High School Scholarship awards?

- No. If not awarded the High School scholarship, you will no longer be eligible, as students should be high school seniors preparing for graduation at the time of application.

### 23. I am applying to multiple universities. What university should I put on my application?

- The scholarship application allows you to list numerous schools. However, you will be required to declare the specific institution you plan to attend in the fall, by the first of June via mail. You must attend an accredited, two- or four-year, public college or public university in Texas during the fall term, in order to remain eligible for the High School scholarship.

## APPLICATION

24. **Can I download the application, complete, and send in a hard copy? Does TGF or Scholarship America accept paper applications?**
- No. The application and required documents should only be submitted electronically via TGF's online application program hosted by Scholarship America.
25. **When is the application deadline?**
- Your application must be submitted online by February 15, 2019 by 3:00 p.m. Central Standard Time.
26. **Can I still apply after the February 15th deadline?**
- No. Once the deadline for the application passes, the application will close and will no longer be available for that academic year.
27. **How will I know if you received my application and supporting documentation?**
- Students will receive a screen confirmation, in addition to an email confirmation once their application has been submitted. It is recommended that students print a hard copy of the completed/submitted application for their records.

## PARENT AND TAX INFORMATION

28. **What if my parent(s)/guardian(s) have not filed yet?**
- Scholarship America accepts the most recently filed tax information. (For clarification, this would be last year's tax filing.)
29. **Which parent(s)/guardian(s) needs to complete the Parent/Guardian Information & Financial Data section of the application?**
- Total Income of parent(s) should be reported individually for both parents if applicant is a dependent student, or by the applicant if independent. Provide information for both natural parents, when possible.
  - If the student resides with only one parent, financial information must be received from the parent who claims the child as a dependent for tax purposes.
  - If a parent has remarried, the spouse's information is required if the spouse is a legal guardian of the student, or claims the student as a dependent, or the student is included in the spouse's benefit plan.
  - If necessary, two Supplemental Financial Data forms may be submitted:
    - The first parent/guardian may submit their information within the online application in the "Financial Information" section.
    - A copy of the Supplemental Financial Data form is available to download within the "Financial Information" section of the online application. The student may then print out the form for the second parent/guardian to

complete. The student must then upload the additional document in the “Upload Documents” section of the application.

**30. Am I still eligible to apply if the parent(s)/guardian(s) are unwilling to complete the Financial Data section?**

- Yes. Place a check in the box marked as “Non-custodian statement applies” if your custodial, non-custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) are no longer legally responsible, or have failed to help contribute to your financial needs. If you check the box, you are not required to supply a copy of their W-2’s or federal income tax returns.

**31. Will I be liable for taxes on the scholarship?**

- A portion of each scholarship award may be considered taxable by the US Internal Revenue Service. Scholarship recipients are responsible for ascertaining tax liability for the scholarship, and for reporting the taxable portions of their scholarship as income. See publications 520 and 970 on the IRS website for details.

**32. How do I report my stipend earnings to the IRS when I file my 1040?**

- The information is in IRS publication 970 on pages 5-7.

## **APPLICANT APPRAISAL**

**33. Who should I ask to complete my Applicant Appraisal form?**

- Your Applicant Appraisal form should be completed by someone who can provide information about your character, academic accomplishments, community service involvement and extracurricular activities. Start by asking a teacher, guidance counselor, athletic coach, employer or mentor.
- Do not ask a friend, peer, or family member. An applicant appraisal is similar to a professional reference; choose someone who can articulate your strengths and praise your accomplishments. For example, if volunteer work is among the scholarship’s criteria, ask your supervisor from the organization where you volunteered.
- Be punctual and considerate in the process. Do not wait until the last minute and give the person helping you a day or two to complete the appraisal. As soon as you know you are going to apply for a scholarship that requires an appraisal, start putting the necessary documents together then select and ask your ideal person if they would be willing to help you.
- Please note, a letter of recommendation does not replace the required appraisal form.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

### **34. Can I fax or mail my required documents?**

- It is preferred that all documents are attached to the online application in the “Upload Documents” section, rather than sent by mail.
  - Do not mail any documents to The George Foundation.
  - If the person completing the applicant appraisal strongly prefers to mail the appraisal in for confidentiality purposes; or
  - If the students’ parents are no longer together and the non-custodial parent prefers to send in the Supplemental Financial Data form separately for confidentiality purposes, they may do so, by mailing the completed forms to:
 

Scholarship America  
One Scholarship Way  
Saint Peter, MN 56082
  - All materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2018.
  - It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact Scholarship America via phone or email to confirm receipt.

### **35. I am an eligible non-U.S. citizen or DACA student. What documentation do I need to submit?**

- Non-U.S citizen applicants are required to be U.S. permanent residents and must submit a copy of their U.S. permanent resident card. Student visas are not accepted. DACA students must submit their approval letter.

### **36. How can I upload my transcript onto my application?**

- Please upload all required application documents in the “Upload Documents” section. Scan and attach all files as separate documents.
- If a particular transcript runs more than one page, you must scan all pages and merge into one file, then upload the entire transcript in PDF format to the “Upload Documents” section. The same procedure is required for any additional, multi-page documents you wish to upload.

### **37. I am home schooled, what do I need to provide in lieu of a school district issued transcript?**

- As a home schooled applicant, you should submit your parent-issued transcript.

### **38. I tried to upload a document, and I received an error noting that the file size was too large. What do I do?**

- To reduce file size, try one of the following:
  - Use a pdf converter program
  - Use an online conversion service
  - On a MAC, use Macintosh Preview
  - Compress the file
  - Use Google Drive and Adobe Acrobat to upload, then save as a compressed file

- Use Microsoft Word conversion

## AFTER YOU APPLY

### **39. Am I able to make changes to the application once it has been submitted?**

- Once the scholarship application has been submitted, you will not be allowed to make any changes to it. However, if your information changes and you are selected as a recipient, you will be able to update your information at a later date.

### **40. How are students selected?**

- Scholarship recipients are selected on the basis of financial need, demonstrated leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, statement of goals and aspirations, unusual personal or family circumstances, an outside appraisal, and academic record.
- Scholarship recipients are required to provide proof of Fort Bend County residency.
- Financial need as calculated by Scholarship America must be demonstrated for the student to receive an award.

### **41. Do The George Foundation Trustees or Employees select those who will receive a scholarship?**

- Selection of recipients is made by Scholarship America. In no instance does any officer or employee of The George Foundation play a part in the selection. All applicants agree to accept the decision as final.

### **42. When will I know if I am selected to receive an award?**

- Applicants that were selected will be notified by Scholarship America on the outcome of the application in late April of each year via mail.

### **43. Will I be notified if I do not receive an award?**

- All applicants who were not awarded a scholarship, will be notified via email, once the selection process has been completed in late April.

### **44. If I am selected for a scholarship, how and when should I expect my disbursement?**

- Scholarship America processes scholarship payments on behalf of The George Foundation. Payments are made on the first of August. Checks are either electronically transferred to the college/university a student is attending, or mailed directly to the student (depending on the academic institution).
  - The student is responsible for remitting payment to their college/university, for checks that are mailed to the student's home address.

### **45. Does the amount I receive in scholarships affect my eligibility for financial aid?**

- The scholarship check is remitted (either electronically, or by the student) to the college/university you are attending as credit towards education related expenses. When this happens, the school adjusts your unmet financial need accordingly.

**46. What may the scholarship funds be used for?**

- Scholarship funds cover education related expenses. Students should contact their college/university financial aid department for further detail.

**47. Will the scholarship pay for more than four years of college to earn my bachelor's degree?**

- No. The George Foundation High School Scholarship is intended to provide two or up to four years of funding for recipients.

**48. If I am selected as a recipient, what would be expected of me?**

- Recipients have no obligation to The George Foundation. Recipients are, however, required to notify Scholarship America of any changes in address, school enrollment, or other relevant information, and to send a complete official transcript when requested.

**BEST PRACTICES AND TIMELINE**

- A. Be sure that your physical mailing address is correct.
- B. Make sure that [georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org) is saved in your email contact list to be sure you receive emails concerning your application.
- C. Applicant Appraisal – Make sure you find someone to complete the form and provide them with as much time as possible. Make sure they agree to do it on time.
- D. Review all of the information in your application carefully and remember to have someone else read it.
- E. Mark the scholarship deadline in your calendar. Some scholarship programs have different deadlines so it is very important to keep track of them.
- F. Be sure to allow enough time to complete the application and required documents.

**ESSAY TIPS**

- A. **Grades and Activities:** Scholarship recipients are selected on the basis of financial need, demonstrated leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, statement of goals and aspirations, unusual personal or family circumstances, an outside appraisal, and academic record.
- B. **The Essay:** The personal essay is a critical part of the scholarship application. The essay requires students to answer a specific set of questions. Questions will be evaluated on student's responses that are scored according length, content, use of examples, correct grammar, and spelling and punctuation. Let's break it down:
  - **Length:** Use the maximum number of words allowed for each essay. We understand it may not be the exact number, but if students are allowed 200

words, please try to use them. The space will allow students to provide good examples and a solid response to the essay question.

- **Content:** Focus. Make sure to answer the question that is asked. If a student writes a good essay but never answer the question, chances are that essay will receive a low score.
- **Use of Examples:** Do not simply state what you have done. Provide an example of an activity or unusual personal or family circumstance that directly contributed to that experience.
- **What is an example of unusual personal or family circumstances?** Unusual personal or family circumstances may include learning disabilities that a student has overcome or is working to overcome, parents dealing with major medical issues in the immediate family, loss of job or various financial and life circumstances.
- **Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation:** This is an area where students make the most errors, especially if they are completing the essay last minute and/or do not take the time to have anyone read their work.

**Follow these steps to help write excellent essays and make your application stand out:**

- A. Brainstorm
- B. Write a draft of the essay(s)
- C. Have a teacher, counselor or academic advisor review your essay(s)
- D. Edit the essay(s) using the suggestions made by your teacher, counselor or advisor
- E. Re-read the essay(s) to make sure they say what you want them to and thoroughly answer the questions
- F. Submit your essay(s) on time

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

For questions regarding the requirements and content of the scholarship application, please contact:

- Foundation staff at [scholarships@thegeorgefoundation.org](mailto:scholarships@thegeorgefoundation.org) or 281-342-6109; or
- Scholarship America staff at [georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org) or 507-931-1682 (ask for The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program).

For assistance with technical issues with the system or during the application and submission process, please contact:

- Scholarship America staff at [georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org](mailto:georgefoundation@scholarshipamerica.org) or 507-931-1682 (ask for The George Foundation High School Scholarship Program).