

ACES Fundraising

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION HANDBOOK

Version: 1.0

For ACES Scholarship Applicants

Last Updated: _____

WELCOME TO THE ACES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you for being a part of ACES Fundraising.

The ACES Scholarship Program is designed to help eligible K-12 and postsecondary students obtain educational opportunities when financial need may otherwise create a barrier.

This handbook explains the three scholarship forms available through the ACES App:

1. Initial New Scholarship Application
2. Scholarship Funds Request
3. Annual Scholarship Renewal Application

The goal of this handbook is to help you:

- Select the correct form.
- Submit complete and accurate information.
- Provide the documents needed for review.
- Avoid delays caused by missing information.
- Understand how scholarship decisions are made.
- Request payment after a scholarship is approved.
- Renew an ongoing scholarship for another year.

Receiving an initial scholarship approval does not guarantee that every payment request or future renewal will be funded.

UNDERSTANDING THE THREE SCHOLARSHIP FORMS

FORM 1 - INITIAL NEW SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Use this application when the student has not previously been approved for the ACES Scholarship Program.

This application establishes the student's scholarship account and collects the information needed to determine eligibility.

The initial application includes:

- Applicant information.
- Student information.
- Parent or guardian information for a minor.
- School or educational-program information.
- Enrollment or acceptance information.
- Academic or educational-progress information.
- Household financial information.
- Financial-need information.
- Other scholarships and financial assistance.
- Estimated educational expenses.
- Amount requested.
- Supporting documents.
- Applicant certifications and signatures.

FORM 2 - SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS REQUEST

Use this form after the student's initial or renewal application has been approved.

The Scholarship Funds Request is a limited form used when an approved educational expense becomes due.

The applicant does not need to repeat all household, financial, academic, and eligibility information. That information is already maintained in the active scholarship account.

The Funds Request includes:

- Scholarship account and student.
- School, program, or provider.
- Academic term or payment period.
- Description of the expense.
- Amount requested.
- Payment due date.
- Current invoice or tuition statement.
- Other aid, discounts, credits, or payments applied to the charge.
- Current balance owed.
- Confirmation that no material information has changed.
- Applicant certification.

FORM 3 - ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION

Use the renewal application when an approved student will continue into another scholarship year.

The renewal application updates information that may have changed since the student's last approval.

The renewal application includes:

- Current contact information.
- Current school and enrollment information.
- Academic or educational progress.
- Updated household financial information.
- Updated financial need.
- Other scholarships and financial aid.
- Educational expenses for the next year.
- Information about how prior scholarship funds were used.

- Requested renewal amount.
- Supporting documents.
- Applicant certifications and signatures.

Renewal is not automatic. Every renewal remains subject to continuing eligibility, educational progress, documented financial need, compliance with program requirements, and available funds.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW PROCESS

Every initial application and annual renewal follows a similar review process.

STEP 1 - APPLICANT SUBMITS THE FORM

The applicant completes the correct scholarship form through the ACES App.

The applicant uploads all required supporting documents and certifies that the information is complete and accurate.

STEP 2 - ACES APP PRELIMINARY REVIEW

After submission, the ACES App checks the application for:

- Completeness.
- Required documentation.
- Application status.
- Student eligibility.
- Financial-need information.
- Educational establishment.
- Academic or educational progress.
- Other financial assistance.
- Previous scholarship history.
- Priority-scoring factors.

The App may calculate a Priority Score to help organize the review process.

The App does not approve or deny scholarships.

STEP 3 - SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW

Authorized ACES reviewers consider:

- The application.
- Supporting documentation.
- Financial need.
- Educational benefit.
- Academic or educational progress.
- Other scholarships and assistance.
- Previous ACES scholarship history.
- Compliance with prior requirements.
- Priority Score.
- Available scholarship funds.

A reviewer with a conflict of interest must not participate in the decision.

STEP 4 - FINAL DECISION

The applicant may receive one of the following decisions:

- Approved.
- Approved with conditions.
- Needs more information.
- Waitlisted.
- Declined.

The final decision will identify any award limits, approved expenses, educational-progress requirements, payment conditions, and renewal deadlines.

SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Scholarship support is generally available through an approved ACES Scholarship account.

The applicant and student must ordinarily:

- Be associated with a scholarship account in good standing.
- Submit complete and accurate information.
- Demonstrate financial need.
- Provide enrollment or acceptance verification.
- Attend an approved educational establishment or program.
- Request assistance for an approved educational expense.
- Disclose other scholarships, grants, discounts, and financial assistance.
- Meet applicable educational-progress requirements.
- Follow all scholarship payment, monitoring, and renewal requirements.

Scholarship accounts provide access to the scholarship program but do not guarantee approval or establish ownership of ACES funds.

APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Scholarship assistance may be considered for students attending:

- Public or private K-12 schools.
- Colleges and universities.
- Vocational and trade schools.
- Recognized certificate or credential programs.
- Approved tutoring or academic-support programs.
- Testing, assessment, certification, or credentialing providers.
- Other educational establishments approved by ACES.

ACES may verify an establishment's identity, qualifications, accreditation, licensing, program offerings, costs, refund policies, and payment information.

EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES THAT MAY QUALIFY

Approved scholarship expenses may include:

- Tuition.
- Required enrollment fees.

- Required books.
- Required educational supplies.
- Required uniforms.
- Required equipment.
- Required educational technology or software.
- Approved tutoring.
- Academic-support services.
- Testing or assessment fees.
- Certification or credentialing fees.
- Special educational services.
- Other documented educational expenses approved by ACES.

Room, board, transportation, travel, childcare, medical expenses, and general household expenses are not automatically eligible. These expenses require express program authorization and written approval when allowed.

BEFORE STARTING THE INITIAL APPLICATION

Before opening the Initial New Scholarship Application, gather:

- ☐ Student information
- ☐ Parent or guardian information for a minor
- ☐ Enrollment or acceptance verification
- ☐ Current report card, transcript, or progress record
- ☐ School or program information
- ☐ Tuition and educational-cost information
- ☐ Household income information
- ☐ Financial-need documents
- ☐ Other scholarship or financial-aid information
- ☐ Any hardship or special-circumstance documents

Having everything ready will make the application process faster.

COMPLETING THE INITIAL APPLICATION

APPLICANT AND STUDENT INFORMATION

Make sure all information is current and accurate.

Verify:

- Applicant name and account.
- Contact information.
- Student's legal name.
- Student's date of birth.
- Parent or guardian information.
- Student's grade or program year.
- Expected graduation or completion date.

Incorrect information may delay the review.

SCHOOL AND ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Provide:

- School or program name.
- School address and contact information.
- Type of educational establishment.
- Enrollment or acceptance status.
- Academic term.
- Program or field of study when applicable.
- Expected graduation or completion date.

FINANCIAL-NEED INFORMATION

Financial need is an important part of the initial application and annual renewal.

The application may request:

- Household size.
- Number of dependents.
- Household income.
- Sources of income.
- Other scholarships and financial aid.
- Public benefits or other assistance.
- Amount the household can contribute.
- Significant family expenses.
- Recent changes in employment or income.
- Medical, disability, housing, or other hardship circumstances.

WRITING A FINANCIAL-NEED EXPLANATION

The strongest applications provide enough information for someone who does not personally know your family to understand:

- The total educational cost.
- The amount the household can contribute.
- The amount covered by other assistance.
- The remaining financial need.
- Any circumstances affecting the household's ability to pay.
- How scholarship assistance will help the student continue their education.

EXAMPLE 1 - LIMITED INFORMATION

Response:

“We cannot afford tuition.”

This response does not explain:

- The total tuition cost.

- Other available assistance.
- The household contribution.
- The remaining balance.
- Why assistance is needed.

Additional information would be required.

EXAMPLE 2 - STRONGER INFORMATION

Response:

“Our student has been accepted into an accredited technical program. Tuition and required equipment total \$6,400. After federal financial aid and our planned family contribution, the remaining documented balance is \$1,850. A recent reduction in work hours has limited what our household can contribute this year. We are requesting ACES assistance toward the remaining tuition and required equipment.”

This response provides:

- School and program information.
- Total educational cost.
- Other financial assistance.
- Household contribution.
- Remaining need.
- Explanation of the family’s circumstances.
- Specific amount and purpose.

A complete explanation does not guarantee approval, but it helps ACES make a fair and informed decision.

ACADEMIC AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

K-12 STUDENTS

K-12 students must ordinarily:

- Remain enrolled in an approved educational program.
- Participate regularly.

- Demonstrate reasonable educational progress.
- Meet applicable school advancement requirements.

A strict GPA may not be appropriate for every K-12 student. ACES may consider the student's age, disability, school practices, educational program, and individual circumstances.

POSTSECONDARY AND ADULT STUDENTS

Postsecondary and adult students must ordinarily:

- Remain enrolled in an approved program.
- Maintain the institution's satisfactory academic progress status.
- Maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent.

A student who falls below the standard may be considered for one probationary term.

ACES may consider documented:

- Illness.
- Disability.
- Caregiving responsibilities.
- Military service.
- Housing instability.
- Family crisis.
- Other substantial hardship.

INITIAL SCHOLARSHIP APPROVAL

An initial approval notice should identify:

- The approved student.
- Scholarship beginning and ending dates.
- Maximum approved amount.
- Approved school or program.
- Approved expense categories.

- Academic or progress requirements.
- Required status checks.
- Payment-request requirements.
- Annual renewal deadline.
- Any special conditions.

WHAT APPROVAL MEANS

Approval creates an active scholarship account for a defined period.

The applicant may submit Scholarship Funds Requests for approved expenses during that period.

WHAT APPROVAL DOES NOT MEAN

Approval does not mean:

- The entire approved maximum will be paid automatically.
- Every educational expense will qualify.
- Funds will be paid without supporting documentation.
- The scholarship will renew automatically.
- The same amount will be approved next year.
- Future funding is guaranteed.

COMPLETING A SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS REQUEST

Use the Scholarship Funds Request only after the initial or renewal application has been approved.

The Funds Request should be limited to the specific expense that is now due.

Provide:

- Scholarship account.
- Student.
- Academic term.
- Approved school or provider.

- Expense category.
- Brief description.
- Amount requested.
- Payment due date.
- Invoice or tuition statement.
- Other aid, discounts, credits, or payments.
- Current balance owed.
- Required certification.

Do not repeat the full financial-need explanation, household information, or academic history unless something has materially changed.

SUBMISSION TIMING

Submit the Scholarship Funds Request at least 15 business days before payment is due.

Late requests may not be processed before the school or provider's deadline.

PAYMENT

Whenever practical, ACES will pay the approved educational establishment or provider directly.

Reimbursement may require:

- Proof that the expense was approved.
- Proof that the applicant paid the expense.
- A receipt or account statement.
- Verification that the expense was not paid by another source.

HOW A FUNDS REQUEST IS REVIEWED

ACES verifies that:

- The scholarship account is active.
- The school or provider is approved.
- The expense is approved.

- The invoice is current and readable.
- The amount does not duplicate other assistance.
- The request is within the remaining award balance.
- Required progress records are current.
- Payment information is verified.
- Scholarship funds remain available.

CHANGES REQUIRING ADDITIONAL REVIEW

A limited Funds Request may not be sufficient when:

- The student changes schools.
- The student changes educational programs.
- Enrollment status materially changes.
- The applicant requests a new expense category.
- Household finances materially change.
- Other financial assistance materially changes.
- The request exceeds the approved maximum.

ACES may require additional information, an account amendment, or a new review.

REFUNDS AND CREDITS

The applicant must promptly report:

- Refunds.
- Account credits.
- Withdrawals.
- Cancellations.
- Reductions in charges.
- Changes in financial aid.

Funds attributable to an ACES payment must be returned to ACES or handled according to written ACES instructions.

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP RENEWAL

Use the Annual Scholarship Renewal Application when the student will continue into another scholarship year.

The renewal application confirms or updates:

- Student and household contact information.
- Current school or program.
- Grade, year, or field of study.
- Enrollment status.
- Expected completion date.
- Academic or educational progress.
- Household size and income.
- Significant household circumstances.
- Financial aid and other assistance.
- Educational costs for the next year.
- How prior ACES funds were used.
- Requested renewal amount.
- Applicant certifications and signatures.

STANDARD RENEWAL SCHEDULE

K-12 Students

Annual renewal is ordinarily due by June 1 for the next academic year.

A midyear status update may be required in January.

College, University, and Trade Students

Annual renewal is ordinarily due by June 1 or at least 60 days before the next scholarship year.

Academic results may be required after each funded term.

Nontraditional Programs

Renewal is ordinarily due at least 60 days before the next eligibility period.

Progress verification may be required at the program midpoint.

Late renewals may be considered, but scholarship funds may already have been committed to other applicants.

BEFORE STARTING A RENEWAL

Gather:

- ☐ Current enrollment verification
- ☐ Most recent report card or transcript
- ☐ Updated tuition and educational expenses
- ☐ Updated financial-aid information
- ☐ Current household financial information
- ☐ Explanation of any major changes
- ☐ Explanation of any hardship affecting progress
- ☐ Information about prior ACES scholarship payments

Renewal is a new funding decision. Prior approval does not guarantee another award or the same award amount.

UPLOADING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Upload sensitive scholarship documents only through the secure ACES App.

Do not send tax returns, transcripts, or other sensitive records through ordinary email.

Whenever possible, combine related supporting documents into one PDF.

RECOMMENDED INITIAL OR RENEWAL PDF ORDER

Page 1 - Optional Cover Page

Include:

- Applicant name.

- Student name.
- Application type.

Page 2 - Enrollment or Acceptance Information

Page 3 - Report Card, Transcript, or Progress Record

Page 4 - Tuition Statement or Educational Costs

Page 5 - Financial Aid or Other Assistance

Page 6 and Beyond - Household Financial and Special-Circumstance Documents

FUNDS REQUEST UPLOAD

A Scholarship Funds Request normally requires only:

- Current invoice or tuition statement.
- Documentation of the amount due.
- Other aid, discounts, credits, or payments applied to the charge.
- Proof of payment when reimbursement is requested.

DOCUMENT UPLOAD CHECKLIST

Before submitting:

- ☐ The file opens correctly.
- ☐ Every page is readable.
- ☐ Pages are in the correct order.
- ☐ All required documents are included.
- ☐ Names and dates match the application.
- ☐ Costs match the application.
- ☐ Sensitive information is limited to what ACES requested.
- ☐ The upload completed successfully.

UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION STATUS

DRAFT

The form has not been submitted.

SUBMITTED

ACES has received the form.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW

The application is being checked for completeness, documentation, and eligibility.

NEEDS MORE INFORMATION

ACES requires clarification or additional documents.

COMMITTEE OR BOARD REVIEW

Authorized ACES reviewers are considering the request.

APPROVED

The request has been approved as stated in the notice.

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

One or more conditions must be completed before the scholarship account or payment becomes active.

WAITLISTED

The request may qualify, but funds are not currently available.

DECLINED

The request was not approved. The notice should explain the decision and any available reconsideration process.

PAID

An approved payment has been issued or scheduled.

CLOSED

The eligibility period ended, the student withdrew, or no further action remains.

COMMON APPLICATION MISTAKES THAT CAUSE DELAYS

Applications and payment requests may be delayed because:

- A required document is missing.
- An uploaded document cannot be read.
- The amount does not match the invoice.
- Other financial aid was not disclosed.
- The payment deadline is unclear.
- A required question was skipped.
- A required signature is missing.
- The wrong scholarship form was used.
- The applicant did not respond to a request for information.
- A renewal or payment request was submitted late.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Which form do I use the first time?

Use the Initial New Scholarship Application.

Do I complete a full application for every tuition bill?

No. After approval, use the limited Scholarship Funds Request for a specific charge.

What if the student changes schools?

Report the change before requesting payment. ACES may require an account amendment or additional review.

Does the approved maximum belong to the applicant?

No. The approved maximum is the most ACES may consider during the approval period. Payments require eligible expenses, documentation, continued compliance, and available funds.

Can ACES reimburse an expense I already paid?

Possibly. Reimbursement requires proof of payment and evidence that the expense was approved. Advance approval is preferred.

Does a scholarship renew automatically?

No. The Annual Scholarship Renewal Application must be submitted by the required deadline.

What happens if the student's grades fall below the standard?

ACES may review the circumstances and consider a probationary term or documented hardship exception.

Can ACES ask for additional information?

Yes. ACES may request information needed to verify eligibility, enrollment, financial need, expenses, academic progress, and payment details.

Does a high Priority Score guarantee approval?

No. The score helps organize the review process. Authorized ACES decision-makers make the final determination.

What happens when funds are unavailable?

An otherwise eligible request may receive a partial award, be placed on a waitlist, or be declined based on existing commitments and available funds.

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITY

By submitting a scholarship application, renewal, or payment request, the applicant confirms that:

- The information provided is complete and accurate.
- Submitted documents are authentic.
- Other financial assistance has been disclosed.
- ACES may verify submitted information.
- Scholarship funds will be used only for approved purposes.
- Changes in enrollment, expenses, finances, or aid will be reported.
- Refunds and credits will be reported.
- Additional documentation may be requested.
- Scholarship approval and renewal remain subject to available funds.

FINAL INITIAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before selecting Submit:

- ☐ Student and household information is complete.
- ☐ School and enrollment information is accurate.
- ☐ Financial need is clearly explained.
- ☐ Academic or progress records are included.
- ☐ Educational costs are accurate.
- ☐ Other financial assistance is disclosed.
- ☐ Supporting documents are readable.
- ☐ Required certifications are complete.
- ☐ Required signatures are included.

FINAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS REQUEST CHECKLIST**Before selecting Submit:**

- ☐ The scholarship account is active.
- ☐ The school or provider is approved.
- ☐ The expense is approved.
- ☐ The invoice is current and readable.
- ☐ The requested amount is accurate.
- ☐ The payment deadline is accurate.
- ☐ Other aid, discounts, and credits are disclosed.
- ☐ No material eligibility information has changed.

FINAL RENEWAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST**Before selecting Submit:**

- ☐ The renewal is being submitted before the deadline.
- ☐ Enrollment information is updated.
- ☐ Academic or educational progress is updated.

☐ Household financial information is updated.

☐ Other financial aid is updated.

☐ Next-year educational expenses are documented.

☐ Prior scholarship use and changes are disclosed.

☐ Required certifications and signatures are complete.

Thank you for being part of ACES Fundraising and for helping us support educational opportunities through responsible and transparent scholarship management.