



A Volunteer's Guide to

Reviewing Scholarship Applications

Welcome

Golden Belt Community Foundation is pleased you are on our scholarship review committee. We are continually impressed with the seriousness with which committee members approach the task of selecting recipients. Volunteer participation and willingness to objectively review student applications ensures that recipients are selected in a fair and consistent manner. The future of the economy and the quality of life we enjoy, now more than ever, rest on providing educational opportunities.

Before reviewing the scholarship applications, please sign and return the enclosed Confidentiality Policy and Conflict of Interest Statement.

Thank you for volunteering to be a scholarship committee for Golden Belt Community Foundation. We hope you will find this experience rewarding as you assist students with reaching their educational goals. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sue Cooper

sue@goldenbeltcf.org

Scholarship Committee

Frequently Asked Questions

What is my role?

Your primary role as a volunteer is to assist with evaluating student scholarship applications. You are expected to read and score applications as thoughtfully as you can.

Can we tell applicants whether they will receive a scholarship?

No. You must keep all information you learn about applicants, including the results of the scholarship selection process strictly confidential until after the scholarship committee has approved the awards in early May. Often there are awards ceremonies in the high schools where scholarship recipients are announced. Students will be notified individually in writing of the foundation's decisions.

What else can I do to help with the Foundation's Scholarship Program?

You have a unique opportunity to help promote Golden Belt Community Foundation's scholarship funds. Tell others about your role in evaluating scholarship applications. Encourage students to apply for scholarships at the foundation. And, tell others you know about the foundation's *commitment to increasing scholarship resources* for the area.

Scholarship Timeline

- January** Scholarship applications are available January 1st, on Golden Belt Community Foundation's website, www.goldenbeltcf.org/scholarships
- March** Application deadline is March 1st, at 5 p.m. Staff screens for eligibility. Volunteer Reviewers will evaluate applications and make final recommendations to the GBCF board of directors. The GBCF board of directors makes the final approval.
- April** Selected recipients will be notified via email of their awards and are required to complete award acceptance steps.
- June** Staff mails scholarship checks to Universities.

Scoring Applications

Overview

The scholarship selection process begins when applications arrive at Golden Belt Community Foundation office. The foundation staff screens applicants for eligibility and follows up with students and Guidance Counselors to gather all necessary information. This section of the handbook will give you tips on what to consider and guides to help you interpret the information you will be reviewing when making your selections.

Not all of the below scoring areas are applicable to all scholarship applications.

Scoring System

1. You will receive an email in April inviting you to review/score scholarship applications.
2. To review scholarships you click “[login](https://goldenbeltcfscholarships.communityforce.com/Funds/Search.aspx)” in the upper right hand corner of the following link:
<https://goldenbeltcfscholarships.communityforce.com/Funds/Search.aspx>
3. Click on Review Applicants
4. Click on scholarship name
 - a. There will be a list of students that are eligible for the scholarship
 - b. Click on the applicant’s name to view their application
5. Each scholarship fund has its unique criteria that was established in the Golden Belt Community Foundation Scholarship Fund Agreement, when the scholarship fund was established. Simply, score the applications in each of the designated areas.
6. Applicants are ranked according to their score. **Priority funding should be given to applicants with the highest scores.**

Scoring Tips

Transcripts - the Foundation wants you to use the scoring guide using the most current high school or college transcripts. If the student is a graduating senior with college classes please score using their high school transcript only. If the student is already a full-time college student you will use their current college transcript. Use the cumulative GPA for scoring purposes. Also, use the attached transcript rather than the self-reported GPA in the application.

ACT Score – The American College Testing score assesses college readiness with a standardized test for high school students. Students are tested in the following areas: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The composite score is the average of the four tests, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Expected Contribution (EFC) - The Expected Family Contribution Financial Score, on the Scoring Key, will not need to be included if the scholarship does not consider financial need. Students provide financial information on the aid form FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), submit the forms online to the processing centers for each respective form, and the information from the forms goes into the aid calculations (the Federal Methodology and the Institutional Methodology). The output of those need analysis calculations is the student's expected family contribution (EFC) toward the cost of college. The student's EFC is the minimum amount the student or the student's family is expected to contribute toward the cost of college. Thus, EFC represents a dollar amount. It is the "output" of the aid forms and calculations.

- a. The EFC formula focus primarily on the assets and income, family size and the number of dependent children enrolled in college in a given year to assess the family's ability to pay for college using the income and assets that they have. EFC is used to analyze a students' need for financial aid using a simple formula that subtracts the student's expected family contribution (EFC) from a college's total cost of attendance ($\text{Cost of Attendance} - \text{EFC} = \text{Financial Need}$). If a student's EFC is less than a college's cost of attendance, then the student qualifies for need-based financial aid.
- b. Cost of attendance is obviously one of the two variables needed to determine need-based aid eligibility. The cost of attendance is the average annual cost of enrolling at a college, including tuition, fees, room and board.
 - i. U.S. Department of Education reports the following average annual costs for 2014-2015:
 1. 4-year public \$16,188
 2. 4-year private \$41,970

Activities and Community Involvement: look at not only the number of activities the applicant participated in but also if they had a leadership role and their length of involvement.

Work Experience: sometimes students cannot participate in activities because of financial obligations. Look to see if they work after school or just in the summer and also keep in mind how long they have been at the job.

Essay: did the student answer each essay question and is the essay written well, engaging, and informative.

Recommendation: Was the person writing the recommendation a teacher or professional and where their referral strong and positive.