

**Scholarships** **2026**  
**2027**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS**





## New and Renewal Scholarship Applications

Community Foundation staff understands that applicants may have questions as they begin the application process. We ask all applicants to carefully and completely read this document before beginning an application or reaching out to staff who are working diligently to process student applications. Frequently asked questions and answers are provided below for the following categories:



## Tips for Success

- Complete your application well before the deadline.
- Read the descriptions for each scholarship completely and apply only if you meet the listed criteria.
- When registering for our scholarship portal, provide an email address that you check frequently. We notify award recipients exclusively via email, so it is crucial to provide an accurate email address.
- Add scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org to your email client's "safe senders" list. Again, we send all notifications by email, and if our email goes to your spam folder, you may miss a critical email.
- Check your email frequently. We recommend that you check your email at least three times per week.
- Spend time writing complete and thoughtful responses to the essay question(s). The essay prompt for most of our scholarships is as follows: **"Please outline your academic and career goals and aspirations."** We recommend that you provide a response that is at least 500 words. If you qualify for scholarships that require supplemental documents, you may be asked to write an essay for consideration for those opportunities.
- Write your essays as well as your community service, extracurricular activity, honors and awards, and employment log in a separate place, like Word or Google Docs, then paste your answers in the application.
- You will need to upload your most recent academic transcript (high school seniors, we are looking for your grades through the first semester of your senior year) and your FAFSA Submission Summary for the 2026 academic year. Please ensure that you have these documents in a pdf format and are ready to upload them.
- Some scholarships require letters of recommendation, ensure that you request recommendations at least three weeks ahead of our advertised deadline.
- Respond to follow-up communications and requests for additional information from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. Failure to respond or complete an acceptance form may result in a missed opportunity.



## Key Dates and Application Status Updates

### When do applications open and close?

**Applications will close at 11:59 p.m. EST on the Close Date.** After 11:59 p.m. on the close date listed below, we will be unable to accept any additional submissions or materials for your application. Materials will not be accepted via email or postal mail, please ensure you upload all requested materials into the scholarship portal.

| Scholarship Application           | New or Renewal                   | Open Date                     | Close Date                    |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| E. David and Linda C. Ballard     | New or returning                 | October 27, 2025              | November 14, 2025             |
| Jim Kennedy for Children of Cox   | New applicants only              | December 1, 2025              | January 20, 2026              |
| Adams Veterinary Technology       | New applicants only              | December 8, 2025              | March 2, 2026                 |
| Couchman Next Step to Success     | New applicants only <sup>1</sup> | December 8, 2025              | March 2, 2026                 |
| Dreams Squared                    | New applicants only <sup>2</sup> | December 8, 2025              | March 2, 2026                 |
| Nancy Penn Lyons                  | New applicants only              | December 8, 2025              | March 2, 2026                 |
| Community Foundation Gen. Sch.    | New applicants only              | December 8, 2025              | March 2, 2026                 |
| Mayor's Youth                     | New applicants only              | December 8, 2025              | March 2, 2026                 |
| Renewals for Jim Kennedy Scholars | Renewing scholars only           | December 8, 2025 <sup>3</sup> | February 6, 2026 <sup>4</sup> |

1. Returning recipients will be sent a follow-up form to complete in February 2026. 2. Returning recipients are encouraged to reapply and will receive priority consideration. 3. Renewal application will be sent by December 8, 2025 please check your email of record. 4. Unless otherwise discussed.

### Can I get an extension if I need one?

**No.** The Community Foundation cannot provide an extension to any applicant for any reason. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed. If you have a disability and are experiencing accessibility challenges in completing our application(s), please notify staff as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations or other arrangements.

### I am a parent/guardian, should I complete scholarship applications for my student?

We understand that students may need assistance or guidance when completing scholarship applications, however, we recommend that parents/guardians allow students to lead in the scholarship application process.

### What is the most important aspect of my application?

**Please follow all instructions outlined in the scholarship application.** We cannot stress this enough. Each scholarship committee carefully reviews and considers every section of your application, so be sure to fill out every section completely and upload all documents. All document uploads must contain your name. Please ensure that you follow all instructions regarding document uploads. Applicants who fail to follow instructions and provide incorrect uploads cannot be considered.

### How do I write a good answer to the essay questions?

A good essay is one that answers the essay prompt completely and is on-topic, is free of spelling errors, and uses proper grammar. We recommend having someone with strong writing skills review your essay(s) before you submit your application.



### What is the status of my application?

Foundation staff aim to provide continuous updates throughout the scholarship process to applicants.

**Foundation staff will send all award and declination notifications by July 6, 2026.** Please wait to reach out with questions on the status of your submitted application until after July 6, 2026.

### When will I find out if I received a scholarship?

Final status notifications will be sent out via email no later than July 6, 2026. Due to the high volume of

applications received and each scholarship's unique committee review process, not all students are notified of their award status on the same date. If you applied and/or qualified for multiple scholarships, you may receive notifications about the status of each scholarship several days or even weeks apart. Additionally, applicants for a scholarship may receive award or declination notifications at different times.

**Please wait to reach out with questions on the status of your application until after July 6, 2026.**

## Eligibility and Who Should Apply

### How can I determine which scholarships I am eligible to apply to?

Each scholarship fund has specific eligibility criteria that were defined by the donor when the fund was established. Some scholarships are geared towards supporting students from a specific town or place, while others aim to support students with exceptional academic merits. Please read the description of each available scholarship in our portal. If you meet the minimum eligibility criteria, we welcome your application.

### Should I apply if I just meet the minimum requirements? Is it worth my time?

**Yes!** You are welcome to apply for any of the available scholarships where you meet all of the eligibility requirements. While each donor has specific criteria, they are looking for students with diverse talents, leadership experience, and interests within their specified eligibility range. It is up to you to decide if the application is worth your time, but we always encourage eligible students to apply.

### Should I apply if I don't meet the eligibility requirements of a scholarship?

**No.** Scholarship criteria were established for each of the scholarships by a donor with an interest in supporting a specific category of student. Unfortunately, if you do not meet the eligibility criteria, your scholarship application will not be reviewed, as these criteria cannot legally be waived.

### What is the scholarship committee looking for?

Each scholarship committee is looking for different students with various qualities. Each committee prioritizes differently students' academic record, work experience, community involvement, and financial need. It is important to have well-written essays, so we encourage you not to wait until the last minute. We also recommend having a family member, a mentor, or a trusted friend proofread your essays for typos.

### How is financial need determined?

All scholarships require the completion and submission of a FAFSA Submission Summary formally the Student Aid Report that includes the applicant's Student Aid Index. For the 2026-2027 academic year, you must provide a 2026-2027 Submission Summary. Please complete the FAFSA online at the [FAFSA website](#). For instructions on how to complete the FAFSA, visit [this link](#). Unfortunately, the Community Foundation cannot provide advice or technical assistance on how to complete the FAFSA. If you have problems with completing your FAFSA, please go to the FAFSA website and contact their expert staff, who can help you address your challenges. Staff at your high school or college/university should also be able to provide additional assistance if you are having difficulties. It can take several days to receive a FAFSA Submission Summary after you complete the FAFSA. Please do not wait until scholarship deadline day to attempt to complete your FAFSA and your scholarship application. Please complete your FAFSA early in your scholarship application process.



### How is the Student Aid Index (SAI) determined?

The FAFSA Central Processing System uses a complex formula to calculate the Student Aid Index (SAI). The Community Foundation has no role in this determination.

### What if my FAFSA report does not reflect my actual financial need?

The FAFSA Central Processing System uses a complex formula to calculate the Student Aid Index (SAI). The Community Foundation has no role in this determination.

## How to Apply and Use Our Online Application System

### How do I find the scholarship applications?

All of our scholarship applications can be found in our [online application portal](#). Once you have created an account and logged in, click **Apply** on the top left, and a list of scholarship opportunities and descriptions will populate. Again, review all of the scholarship descriptions before applying.

### Can I submit a paper application if I do not have access to a computer?

All of our scholarship programs require an online application. We cannot accept paper applications in place of a required online application, nor should you attempt to create your own application for review. No exceptions can be made. If you do not have a computer or internet access, we recommend going to your school, a local library, or a community center to use a public computer. Once you begin the application process, you can save your application and work on it over time as needed.

### How do I update my profile information?

To edit the details you've previously entered in the profile section, click the pen icon on the applicant dashboard and make any updates or changes. Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the page to save your changes.

### How do I reset my password?

Click **Forgot your password** on the Scholarship Application Portal login page. An email will be sent to your inbox with instructions on how to reset your password. Please allow 15 minutes for the email to send. If the email does not arrive in 15 minutes, please check your spam box.

### If I have submitted my application, can I go back and make an edit to the application or materials uploaded?

We will review all submitted applications as-is and cannot allow edits to be made to an already submitted application. For these reasons, please make sure you carefully review all content and materials you provide before submitting. Please triple-check your application before hitting **Submit**.

### Can I submit multiple applications for the same scholarship?

**No.** If you submit multiple applications by creating multiple accounts, each of your submissions will be disqualified.

### Do you review applications that are complete but not submitted?

**No.** We can only review applications that have been submitted to our system. Saved applications that are still in "draft" status at the time the application closes are not included in our review pool and will be automatically denied/abandoned. Please make sure you submit your application once it is complete.



## Application Documents and Application Tips and Tricks

### Getting started

Once you have created an account in our [scholarship portal](#) and logged in to the system, click the **Apply** button on the top left of the screen. Review the descriptions for all available scholarships to determine your eligibility to apply. You can then click **Apply** to begin an application.

### What documents will I need to upload?

All required documentation must be openable/readable, and it must contain the applicant's first and last name. Transcripts must contain the school's name as well as the applicant's first and last name. Please do not submit documents that are not complete or have been cropped or altered in any way. If we cannot validate your documentation, you will not be considered for scholarships.

Every scholarship application will require the following documentation:

- **Your 2026-2027 FAFSA Submission Summary.** Go to the [FAFSA website](#) to download this document. For more information regarding this requirement, please [read this section](#). Please note that we need your *entire* Submission Summary. The report should be at least five pages. For more information about obtaining your FAFSA Submission Summary, [review this section](#).
- **Your most recent academic transcript.** If you are a high school senior, we prefer to have a transcript that includes your grades through the first semester of your senior year. If you are a current college student, we need your most recent academic transcript that includes your grades through the fall semester or quarter. If you are an adult or returning learner, we need your transcript from the last institution you attended (high school, college, or trade school), or you will need to upload your GED report.
- **Letters of recommendation.** Some scholarships require letter(s) of recommendation for consideration. The application will allow you to email your recommender, and they can upload the recommendation letter on your behalf. It is wise to notify your prospective recommenders so that they may begin preparing your letter well before the application deadline.
- **Your SAT and/or ACT score report** if you are a high school senior who has taken these tests. We want the report from your best test. Do not submitted superscoring results.
- **Your MCAT scores** if you are a medical student.

### What document format should I use?

We recommend uploading all documents as PDFs. Many software and programs will convert a file format into a PDF; please use your program of choice and convert your files into PDFs. If we cannot open or cannot review an applicant's required documents, the application will be considered incomplete and will not receive consideration. Therefore, we encourage students to test their document uploads to ensure that they can be opened with a PDF reader or web browser and to ensure that the information is readable. We will not accept emailed or paper documents mailed to our office.

### I have a document that is multiple pages, can I upload multiple screenshots to satisfy the requirement?

Our system will not allow applicants to upload multiple files for one document. If your academic transcript is five pages and you screenshot each page, you will need to turn those screenshots into one pdf document to upload. Incomplete documents will not receive consideration.

### Will you accept a Word document that contains a picture of my SAR, transcript, or reference letter?

**No.** We are unable to accept Word documents (files ending with .doc or .docx) for any of the required materials.

### Can I upload a note with a link to a document or photo in Google Drive?

**No.** We will not accept any documents or images that are not uploaded directly to the application.



### **I'm missing one of the required documents. Should I upload a note explaining why?**

Each of the required documents must be uploaded to your application for it to be considered complete. If you have questions or concerns about this requirement, please contact our scholarship staff at [scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org](mailto:scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org).

**All reference letters are due at the time the respective application closes. Applications without all required reference letter(s) will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.**

### **Do you require official transcripts?**

We do not require official transcripts and can accept either official transcripts or unofficial transcripts for all of our scholarships. The transcripts should show your name, student identification number and school name. The transcript must be uploaded into the scholarship application portal. If you are having trouble accessing this information, please contact the registrar's office at your school to help you navigate your particular school's process for obtaining an unofficial or official copy of your transcript. Mailed or emailed transcripts will not be accepted. You should acquire an official or unofficial transcript, scan it, and upload the resulting document into the scholarship portal. We use the transcript to confirm student's academic standing, courses taken, and performance history.

### **Can I submit my FAFSA Student Aid Report (SAR) later if my tax forms are not ready by the deadline?**

**No.** Scholarship applications submitted without the FAFSA Submission Summary report will not be considered complete and will not be reviewed. Many of our scholarships require the student to demonstrate financial need. We use the Student Aid Index on the Submission Summary to determine financial need. For details regarding what is considered sufficient tax information for completion of the FAFSA, please visit the [FAFSA website](#).

### **Can I submit a FAFSA Student Aid Report (SAR) from last year?**

**No.** You must submit a 2026-2027 FAFSA Submission Summary for all scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 academic year. Please upload the most current FAFSA Submission Summary report in PDF format to complete your application for scholarship consideration.

### **What information must be visible on my FAFSA Submission Summary?**

Your FAFSA Submission Summary must include the current FAFSA year (2026-2027), your name, and your student aid index (SAI). If you are applying for the Jim Kennedy Scholarship program, your Cox employed parent/guardian must be listed as a contributor on your FAFSA.

### **How do I obtain a PDF of my FAFSA Submission Summary?**

To access your online SAR and save as a PDF, do the following:

1. Have your FAFSA ID (username and password) available.
2. Go to the <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> home page and click **Login**.
3. Log into the system.
4. Click on the **View or Print your Submission Summary** option near the middle of the "My FAFSA" page, and choose to save as a PDF file.
5. Save all pages of the Submission Summary to your computer as a PDF file (typically 5-12 pages total).

If you continue to have difficulties, please contact the [FAFSA help center](#) directly. Community Foundation staff cannot provide technical assistance with problems with the FAFSA website.



## Scholarship Payment Information

### **If awarded, when will I receive the scholarship funds?**

If you are selected as a scholarship recipient, you must complete and digitally sign an acceptance form. Once we have received the signed form, the Community Foundation will mail scholarship checks directly to each awarded student's college. From the date you submit the acceptance form, please allow up to ten business days for us to process your check and an additional two to three weeks for your school to receive and process your check. We ask that you complete this form as quickly as possible so that we can make sure the award is received in a timely manner by your school. Issuance of payments will begin in July 2026.

### **If awarded a scholarship, do I get the check?**

**No.** For legal reasons, scholarship award checks are sent directly to your college and credited by your school to your student account. No other arrangements can be made due to rules set by the Internal Revenue Service on how scholarship payments can be made to individual students.

### **How long does it take for colleges to process the award?**

Schools take different amounts of time to process scholarship awards. After the initial three to four weeks following submission of your acceptance form, it is best to work directly with your school to determine where they are in their own timeline for applying these funds to your student account. If a check has not been received by the school four weeks after staff notified you that a payment was mailed, please email [scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org](mailto:scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org) for more information.

### **What should I do if I decide to transfer schools and have been awarded a scholarship?**

If you have been awarded a scholarship to attend a school and are now transferring to another school, please notify us as soon as possible. Incorrect enrollment information can delay receiving your scholarship funds by one month or more.



## Renewable Scholarships and Updating Your Contact Information

### What should I do if I move or my contact information changes?

Please email us at [scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org](mailto:scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org).

### What is the difference between a one-time scholarship and a renewable scholarship?

A one-time scholarship is one that is awarded in the fall and disbursed in full for a single academic year. By contrast, a renewable scholarship is awarded as a total package and disbursed across a number of semesters or academic years. Recipients of renewable scholarships will receive a notice by email when it is time to renew their scholarship, which requires the completion of a renewal form every semester or year, depending on the scholarship. You must continue to meet the scholarship's eligibility in order to qualify for continued receipt of the scholarship.

### Which of your scholarships are renewable and how often can I renew?

The Jim Kennedy Scholarship is renewable on a semester basis. The following scholarships are renewable annually, provided the scholar meets the renewal criteria: Boys High Scholarship, James E. Cox, Nancy Penn Lyons, Pattillo, James & Virginia Smyth, Tech High School, and Everett Williams.

### How do I renew my scholarship?

Students who have been awarded a renewable scholarship will receive an email notification with instructions when the renewal application opens. Some scholarships are paid out once at the beginning of the school year while others are split into two payments. Please refer to your award agreement to be informed of the payment schedule. All renewable scholarships will require an unofficial transcript, a copy of your upcoming semester schedule, and completion of a short online application. Please wait for additional instructions from the Community Foundation staff for more specifics on what is needed and how to submit renewal materials.

**Please do not attempt to complete or upload any materials to a new scholarship application; this will delay the processing of your award when it is time to renew.**

### What should I do if I transfer to a different college?

There is a question included on the renewal survey that asks whether you have transferred schools. Please be sure to answer this question accurately and completely. If you have already completed your renewal application when you decide to transfer, please contact the Community Foundation **as soon as possible**. Incorrect enrollment information can delay receiving your scholarship funds by one month or more. The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta cannot rush scholarship checks for recipients who have provided incorrect information.

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## Still Have Questions?

### Does it help my chances if I call to introduce myself to the Community Foundation?

**No.** The staff is extremely busy processing applications. It is our hope that by reading this document and the instructions in the portal, students will feel comfortable preparing scholarship applications.

### What should I do if I still have questions?

If you have unanswered questions after reviewing this document, please email [scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org](mailto:scholarships@cfgreateratlanta.org). We ask that you email your questions rather than call so that we can provide you with the most comprehensive response as quickly as possible.