Traditional Scholarships
Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY & HOW TO APPLY
The following are common questions about our traditional scholarship program including eligibility, how to apply, and how scholarships are awarded.

Who is eligible?
The Community Foundation has over 125 different scholarship opportunities available for both traditional and non-traditional students pursuing education or training beyond the high school level.

Traditional Students are generally defined as students who transition straight from high school or a GED program to post-secondary education.
Non-Traditional Students are generally defined as students who 1) did not immediately continue their education after completing high school or a GED/TASC program, taking one year or more between, or 2) continued their education but were interrupted for personal or financial reasons that resulted in a break from their education for more than a year. Non-traditional students are typically over the age of 20. In addition to applying for traditional scholarships in the spring, non-traditional students can also apply for scholarships anytime throughout the year using the Non-Traditional Scholarship Application.

An eligible applicant must be a current high school senior, high school or homeschool program graduate, or have received a GED or TASC certificate. Applicants must be enrolled or planning to enroll in a post-secondary education or training program for the upcoming academic year.

What does a scholarship cover?
Scholarships through the Kosciusko County Community Foundation only cover "qualified educational expenses" which are defined as tuition and academic fees. Food and housing will not be covered as it is not a charitable expense, according to the IRS.

I am not a Kosciusko County resident. Should I apply?
The vast majority of our scholarships require residency in Kosciusko County, Indiana, or graduation from a high school serving Kosciusko County in order to be eligible. If you have found our site through a scholarship-finding website or service, such as scholarships.com, and you do not live in Kosciusko County, Indiana or the surrounding area, please call us at 574-267-1901 to ask whether or not you are eligible to apply before you begin an application.

I applied for scholarships last year. Can I apply again?
Yes! Students are eligible to apply each year that they remain enrolled in school. You may use the same login information to access our scholarship portal and re-apply year after year.

Can graduate students apply?
Yes. However, we do not currently have any scholarship opportunities that are designated specifically for graduate students. If you are a graduate student, please understand that your application will be reviewed along-side students who are pursuing their first degree.

Graduate students who transitioned straight from high school to undergraduate studies and then onto graduate work would be considered traditional students.

When can I apply?

The <u>Traditional</u> Scholarship Application opens each year in early December. **Completed applications along with all required supplemental information and required recommendations must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on March 1.** We strongly recommend submitting your Common Application *by February 15* so you have enough time to provide any requested supplemental information for your scholarship opportunities.

The <u>Non-Traditional</u> Scholarship Application is open year round. Completed applications are pulled for review on the second Monday of each month. Applicants can expect the review process to take approximately 30 days.

Where is the application?

All Kosciusko County Community Foundation scholarship applications are housed in our Scholarship Portal. A link to the Scholarship Portal can be found on our website at https://www.kcfoundation.org/scholarships.

Do I need to create an account for the Scholarship Portal?

Yes. The first time you use our Scholarship Portal, you will need to create an account by clicking on the Create New Account button. Be sure to use an active and valid email address that you check frequently to setup your account. We <u>do not</u> recommend using your high school email address as it will expire after graduation.

The email address tied to your account is how the Community Foundation will communicate with you regarding your application and scholarship awards. Please check your email regularly.

Please note that the Community Foundation launched a new Scholarship Portal in July 2023. Students that have not applied for a scholarship since then will need to create a new account.

How do I apply for Traditional Scholarships?

1. Login to the Scholarship Portal and click on the Apply button at the top of your Dashboard.
2. Find the Traditional Scholarship Application and click Apply.
3. Read all the instructions and follow them carefully to complete the application.

It's important to note that the Traditional Scholarship Application is a two-step application process. In step one, you will complete and submit the Common Application. In step two, you will complete and submit the Supplemental Information Pages for each scholarship opportunity that requires an additional essay or recommendation. **Your common application, all supplemental information and recommendations must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on March 1.** Because of this, we recommend submitting your Common Application <u>by February 15</u> so you have plenty of time to complete and submit the Supplemental Information Pages, which only become available once you have submitted your Common Application.

How do I know which scholarship opportunities I am eligible for?

The Common Application will use your responses to determine the scholarship opportunities to which you are eligible to apply. If the scholarship opportunity does not require any supplemental information, you will be automatically applied to it. If the scholarship opportunity requires an additional essay or additional recommendations, you will be required to complete and submit a Supplemental Information Page to be eligible for that scholarship.

To view the criteria for each of our scholarship opportunities, please go to http://kcfoundation.org/scholarships.

What documents/information will I need to apply?

You may be asked to upload the documents listed below. Please note that some of these are optional or only required for certain scholarship opportunities.

- Your most recent high school or college **transcript** that includes grades from the fall semester. Your transcript does not need to be official.
- You will be given the option to provide **SAT or ACT scores.** If your reported scores do not appear on your transcript, you will be asked to provide separate documentation to verify your scores.
- To be considered for need-based scholarships, you will be required to provide a **FAFSA Submission Summary** that includes your name and Student Aid Index (SAI).
  - ↘ Please note that a new FAFSA form is being released by December 31, 2023. Because of this, you may receive your FAFSA Submission Summary later than usual. If you are seeking need-based scholarships, you will not be able to submit your Common Application until you have received your FAFSA Submission Summary.
- A high quality **photo** of yourself (must be a .jpg).
- A copy of your birth certificate or green card may be requested as **proof of citizenship or legal residency**. This is only required for a small handful of scholarship opportunities.

These documents will need to be scanned and uploaded to your application. Documents can be formatted as a .pdf or .jpg unless otherwise specified.

Who decides the scholarship winners?

The Community Foundation depends on a large number of community volunteers who serve on our scholarship committees. Each committee reviews applications for a specific scholarship opportunity and makes recommendations for recipients and alternates. The committee's recommendations then go to the Community Foundation's Board of Directors for final approval.

When do I find out if I received a scholarship?

Local high school seniors are notified at their high school's awards program in late May or early June. All other recipients are notified via mail in mid-May.

Recipients will receive a packet that includes a congratulations letter with information about the scholarship award and instructions to submit a scholarship agreement form to formally accept the scholarship. Recipients will be asked to verify their selected college, university or trade school, their major, and provide their student ID number.

Can I receive more than one scholarship from the Community Foundation?

Yes. However, the Community Foundation will not award a total amount in excess of your tuition and required fees.

SETTING UP AN ACCOUNT

The following are questions specific to setting up and account on the Scholarship Portal.

Which email address should I use?

You should use an active and valid email address that you check frequently to setup your account. We <u>do not</u> recommend using your high school email address as it will expire after graduation.

The email address tied to your account is how the Community Foundation will communicate with you regarding your application and scholarship awards. Please check your email regularly throughout the application process.

Which address should I use?

We recommend using your **permanent** address. For most students, this is your parent or guardian's address. The address you provide when setting up your account is where we will mail important award information should you receive a scholarship. We also use your address to verify your county of residence.

Address 1 should be the physical address of your permanent residence. If your mailing address is different, you will enter that in Address 2.

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION

The following are questions specific to the information being requested on the Common Application.

General:

Is it beneficial to submit my application before the deadline?

YES! We use a two-step application process for Traditional Scholarships. In step one, you will complete and submit the Common Application. **We recommend submitting your Common Application by February 15.**

This will give you plenty of time to complete step two before the deadline on March 1. In step two, you will complete and submit Supplemental Information Pages for each scholarship opportunity that requires an additional essay or recommendation. These pages are not available until you have submitted the Common Application and you want to be sure you give your references enough time to complete their recommendations by the deadline.

Your common application, all supplemental information pages and recommendations must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on March 1.

Can I save my work and finish my application later?

Yes! Click on the Save button at the bottom of the application and logout of the Scholarship Portal. The next time you login, your Common Application will appear on your Dashboard. Clicking on Edit Application will allow you to return to your application and continue or finish your work.

Why do you need this information?

Each of the 115 scholarship opportunities associated with the Traditional Scholarship Application has its own unique eligibility requirements. These requirements were established by the donor when they set up the scholarship fund. While some questions on the application may seem silly or out of place, we need that information to help us determine if you're eligible for a particular scholarship opportunity.

The question is multiple choice, but none of the options fit me.

We have tried to supply additional instruction where applicants may encounter this issue. If there is no additional instruction provided that helps you select an answer, please contact the Community Foundation at 574-267-1901 or scholarships@kcfoundation.org for assistance.

How do I upload a document?

Most schools and libraries offer free access to scanners. If you do not have access to a scanner, you can set up an appointment with Community Foundation program staff for assistance or you may upload a picture of the document from your smartphone.

How can I track the status of my application?

The status of your Common Application and all Supplemental Information Pages can be found on your Dashboard. You will be automatically taken to your Dashboard upon logging into the Scholarship Portal or by clicking on the HOME icon within the portal.

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Can I make changes to my application once I submit it?
No. Once you submit your Common Application or a Supplemental Information Page, you will not be able to make changes. If a change must be made, contact the Community Foundation for assistance.

Education & Academic Performance:

What type of student am I?
To optimize scholarship opportunities, current **high school seniors** should select the "graduating high school senior" option. **Traditional Students** are generally defined as students who transitioned straight into a higher education program after completing high school, homeschool or a GED/TASC program. **Non-traditional Students** are generally defined as students who 1) do not immediately continue their education after completing high school or a GED/TASC program, taking one year or more in between, or 2) continued their education beyond high school or a GED/TASC program, but were interrupted for personal or financial reasons that resulted in a break from their education for more than a year. Non-traditional students are typically over the age of 20.

Graduate students that have transitioned from high school to undergraduate to graduate school consecutively are classified as traditional students. Graduate students that have taken more than one year between undergraduate and graduate school should select non-traditional.

Why isn't my elementary school/middle school/high school listed?
These questions are used to determine your eligibility for scholarship opportunities that are open to students who attended a specific elementary, middle, or high school. To limit the length of the drop down list, we have provided the most common choices of our applicants and those that may be criteria for particular scholarship opportunities. If your school is not listed, please select "other" and enter the name of your school if prompted.

Why isn't my college or university listed as an option?
To limit the length of the drop down list, we have provided the most common college choices of our applicants. If your college is not listed, please select "other" from the drop-down menu and enter the name of your chosen school in the text box provided.

Please note that the Community Foundation may not be able to award scholarships to students attending a for-profit college, university, or trade school. All of the schools included in our drop down list are nonprofit. For more information about for-profit schools, visit the For-Profit Schools page on our website at https://www.kcfoundation.org/scholarships/for-profit-schools.

What if I haven't decided which school I will be attending?
Select the school you would most like to attend. If you are torn between two schools, you will need to select one in order to proceed with your application. Should you receive a scholarship award, you will be asked to verify your choice at that time.

What is a Technical/Trade Program?
A vocational, trade or technical program provides students with the training needed to specialize in a skilled trade. Students may graduate with a certificate, license, or associate degree. These programs are typically designed to be less than four years.

Examples of a vocational, trade, or technical program include, but are not limited to, welding, plumbing, CNC machining, culinary arts, auto mechanics, x-ray technician, barbering/cosmetology, law enforcement, certified nursing assistant, dental hygiene, or carpentry. If you are unsure if you are enrolling in a vocational, trade, or technical program, contact the Community Foundation for assistance at 574-267-1901 or scholarships@kcfoundation.org.

My major isn't listed as a Field of Study.

The Field of Study question is used to determine your eligibility for scholarship opportunities that are open to students pursuing a specific field of study. These are broad categories that may encompass many different majors. To limit the length of the drop down list, we have provided the most common fields selected by our applicants and those that may be criteria for particular scholarship opportunities.

To see a list of possible majors that might fit under each field of study, refer to the "*How to Choose a Field of Study*" guide provided on our website. If you do not see your major listed on the guide, choose the field of study that you feel is most suitable. We have also provided the option to select "other" or "undecided." However, we recommend that you do not select "other" or "undecided" unless absolutely necessary.

In some cases, a major could fit within multiple fields of study. If you need assistance choosing your field of study, contact the Community Foundation at 574-267-1901 or scholarships@kcfoundation.org. We can help you determine which option would yield the most scholarship opportunities.

Does my transcript have to be official?

No, your transcript does not need to be official. It just needs to be the most recent transcript issued at the time of application which should include fall semester grades. If you are a current college student, please provide your college transcript.

How do I determine how many college credits I've earned?

Most semester long classes are 3 credit hours. Check your transcript or ask your guidance counselor if you are unsure.

Do I have to provide SAT or ACT scores?

No. You are not required to report SAT or ACT scores, but you are given the option to do so. Test scores are considered by our reviewers when evaluating academic performance, but you will not be penalized if you choose not to provide them.

If you are a homeschool student, we strongly recommend providing test scores on your application.

Do you accept superscores for the SAT?

No. Superscores are when you combine your highest score received in each section from multiple testing dates. Please enter your total score from a single testing date. If this score is not included on your transcript, you will be asked to provide documentation to verify the score reported.

Financial Need:

Most of your scholarship opportunities are need based, how do you determine need?

The Community Foundation determines need based on your Student Aid Index (SAI) which can be found on your FAFSA Submission Summary. We also consider any additional information you provide regarding your finances for post-secondary education. This information will not be shared with reviewers.

Please note that even if you provide the requested financial information, it may still be determined that you are not able to demonstrate need based on the requirements of the scholarship.

Do you want all the pages of my FAFSA Submission Summary?

No, we do not need to see all of your Submission Summary and financial data. What we do need to see is your **Student Aid Index (SAI)** and **your name** to confirm that it belongs to you.

I want to be considered for need-based scholarships, but I don't have all of my financial information yet.

You must provide the requested information before you will be able to submit your Common Application.

If you haven't filed the FAFSA yet, we recommend doing so as soon as possible.

If you have filed the FAFSA and are just waiting to get your Submission Summary back, move on with the rest of the application. Return to the Financial Information section once you've received your report.

What if I don't file a FAFSA?

If you are opting to not file a FAFSA, indicate that you do not wish to provide financial information. You will only be matched to scholarship opportunities where financial need is not an eligibility requirement.

I've applied for other scholarships, but I haven't heard back from them yet. Should I include them in my Secured Financial Aid amount?

No. We just want to know the grants and scholarships that have been awarded to you at the time of your application. This can include grants, other scholarships, and aid from your institution.

Activities, Community Service and Work Experience:

How do I decide which activities to list on my application?

You are limited to listing 15 extracurricular activities and 10 community service activities. If you have more than that, we recommend choosing the most significant activities in each category. You are not required to provide any, but you cannot add more.

If you are a current college student, please be sure to include college activities. A good rule of thumb is to list your activities from the last four years. If you are a junior or senior in college, graduate student or non-traditional student, we do not necessarily need to know what activities you were involved in during high school.

What's the difference between an extracurricular activity and a community service activity?

Extracurricular activities are any sports, clubs, organizations, etc. that you participated in either through school or outside of school. Examples include, but are not limited to, sports, booster club, academic societies, student council, band/orchestra, choir, youth group, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, PTO, and service clubs. Work experience should not be included here.

Community service activities are instances where you volunteered your time to impact others without compensation (money or class credit). Examples include mentoring at BYC, building for Habitat for Humanity, tutoring, fundraising, mission trips, etc.

I'm not sure if my activity should be listed under extracurricular or community service?

There are several circumstances where a club or organization may be listed as an extracurricular activity, but the volunteer activities you did with the club or organization can be listed under community service. Please contact the Community Foundation at 574-267-1901 or scholarships@kcfoundation.org if you need assistance.

Examples we have seen in the past:
- You are a member of National Honor Society (NHS) which should be listed under your extracurricular activities. The tutoring you do through NHS should be listed under community service.
- You participate in your church's youth group which should be listed under your extracurricular activities. The mission trip your youth group went on should be listed under community service.
- You participated in Kosciusko Youth Leadership Academy (KYLA) which should be listed under your extracurricular activities. The fundraiser you organized as part of your KYLA project should be listed under community service.

What counts as work experience?

Work experience does not need to be formal. You may choose to include babysitting, lawn mowing, etc. If you received payment (other than an allowance from your parents) for a job you performed, you can include it in work experience. Internships, both paid and unpaid, may also be included.

Recommendations:

What recommendations are required to apply?

Every applicant is required to provide at least two recommendations: one from a teacher or professor and one from a secondary reference who can speak to your extracurricular involvement. You will request these recommendations as part of your Common Application. Some scholarship opportunities will require a supplemental recommendation from a specific individual like a coach, employer, pastor/church youth leader, community service leader, peer, band/color guard director, or service group leader. You will request these recommendations on the Supplemental Information Pages for those scholarship opportunities.

The Community Foundation will not accept letters of recommendation submitted by mail, email, or in-person. References must complete an online recommendation form tied to your application.

How do I request the required recommendations?

To request a recommendation from your reference, you will be asked to provide their email address. You will be given the opportunity to send them a personalized email. They will also receive an automated email from the Scholarship Portal with a link to the recommendation form.

We strongly suggest talking to your reference before providing their email address for a few reasons: 1) to ask their permission and verify their email address, 2) to let them know they will be receiving an email with a link to the online recommendation form, and 3) make sure they understand that their recommendation form must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on March 1 or you will not be eligible for the scholarship opportunity requiring that recommendation.

When are recommendation forms due?

Recommendation forms must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on March 1. Otherwise, you will not be considered eligible for the scholarship opportunity requiring that particular recommendation. This means that if one of your references on the Common Application does not submit their recommendation by the deadline, your entire application will be considered incomplete, and therefore, you will not be eligible for any scholarship opportunities.

I've completed my Common Application, but my teacher/professor and/or secondary reference haven't submitted their recommendation form yet. Can I still submit my Common Application?

Yes! In fact, we recommend it so you can move on to step 2 of the application process. Your teacher/professor and secondary reference have until 5:00 p.m. on March 1 to submit their recommendation.

Who should I choose to complete a recommendation form?

Every applicant is required to provide at least two recommendations: one from a teacher or professor and one from a secondary reference that can speak to your extracurricular involvement. Some scholarship opportunities will require a supplemental recommendation from a specific individual like a coach, employer, pastor/church youth leader, community service leader, peer, band/color guard director, or service group leader. We recommend that you choose people who are able to speak about your character and why you are deserving of a scholarship. Your references cannot be related to you.

We strongly encourage applicants to speak with their selected references prior to submitting their email address in order to inform them of the process and the deadline. We have seen references decline the request for a recommendation because the student did not ask their permission first. References have also failed to complete their recommendation because the applicant used an incorrect email address or the reference was not made aware of the deadline. Always talk to your references first! Ask permission, verify their

email address, explain the process, and tell them the deadline. And don't forget to follow-up to make sure they received an email from you and from us.

I have already collected recommendation letters; can I upload them to my application?
No. The Community Foundation <u>does not</u> accept recommendation letters. References must complete and submit an online recommendation form tied to your application.

Will I be able to see my references' recommendations?
No, you will not be able to view the completed recommendation forms. You can, however, see whether or not their recommendation form has been submitted.

How do I know if my references have completed their recommendation form?
When viewing your application, you will be able to see if the reference has submitted their form or when the last email request was sent to them.

My chosen reference doesn't have email, can I still use them?
Yes. Send an email to scholarships@kcfoundation.org with your name and your reference's name. We will send you instructions for how to proceed.

The deadline is approaching and my reference has not yet submitted their recommendation form.
It is so important to communicate with your references throughout the application process! We have experienced several cases in which the reference never received the email request because the student misspelled the email address or the email went directly to the reference's spam or junk folder. We have seen references miss the deadline because they were never told when the recommendation form needed to be submitted.

If one of your references has not completed their recommendation and the deadline is approaching, reach out to them to verify that they plan to complete the recommendation and they are not having any issues accessing the form. If needed, you can contact the Community Foundation at 574-267-1901 or scholarships@kcfoundation.org for assistance with replacing your reference with someone new.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION PAGES
The following are questions specific to the Supplemental Information Pages that applicants must complete as step two of the application process.

I've submitted my Common Application, but I don't have time to complete all of the supplemental information right now. Can I come back to it later?
Yes! The next time you login, a list of your scholarship opportunities will appear on your Dashboard. From there, you can view any applications that have already been submitted or edit any applications that still need to be submitted. Clicking on "Edit Application" will allow you to complete and submit the Supplemental Information Page required for that particular scholarship opportunity.

What if I don't want to provide the required supplemental information for a particular scholarship opportunity?
You don't have to. Just click on the *ABANDON* button to tell us you don't want to be considered for that scholarship opportunity.

This scholarship requires a recommendation from a specific person (employer, coach, pastor, etc.). I do not have a person to ask that fulfills that requirement.
Unfortunately, you will not be eligible for that scholarship if you cannot provide the required recommendation(s). Please click on the *ABANDON* button.

Two of my scholarship opportunities are asking for the same supplemental recommendation. Do I have to provide it twice?

No. If the same supplemental information is required for more than one scholarship opportunity, you will only have to provide that information once. Additional supplemental information pages will pre-populate with your previous response to that question.

For example, if a recommendation from a coach is required for more than one scholarship opportunity, you will only have to enter your coach's email address on the first supplemental information page that requests it. You will then see your coach's email address on all additional supplemental information pages that require a recommendation from a coach.

However, you MUST click Submit at the bottom of EVERY supplemental information page to be considered for each scholarship opportunity. Even if the entire page is pre-populated with the requested information.

What counts as proof of citizenship or legal residency?

A small handful of scholarship opportunities require applicants to be a citizen or legal resident of the United States. For those scholarship opportunities, applicants will be asked to upload proof of citizenship or legal residency. The most common and acceptable forms of documentation are a birth certificate or green card. We will also accept Certificates of Naturalization or Citizenship, a U.S. Passport, or a Real ID compliant driver's license, permit, or identification card. Please ***DO NOT*** upload a copy of your social security card.

If more than one of your scholarship opportunities requires this documentation, you will only have to upload it once. Your document will then appear on all other supplemental information pages that require it.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Have a question that isn't answered here?

Contact the Community Foundation staff at 574-267-1901 or scholarships@kcfoundation.org. We will be happy to assist you!