



# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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## **SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**The deadline to apply is Friday, March 3, 2017 by 5 pm Eastern Time.**

### **Things to consider before completing a Scholarship Application:**

- Complete the FAFSA which will provide you with the SAR report needed.
- Obtain Letters of Recommendation on official letterhead with signatures.
- Obtain Fall 2016 transcripts or most recent available for undergraduate students.
- Review the Southwest Florida Community Foundation Scholarship Listing to determine which scholarships you may be eligible for.
- Begin to prepare for writing a personal essay up to 2 typed pages in length.

### **Q. What documents do I need to upload in addition to filling out the application?**

- A.**
1. SAR(Student Aid Report) from the completion of your FAFSA indicating your EFC Score.
  2. Recent grade transcripts.
  3. ACT and/or SAT Score report.
  4. Letters of recommendation.

### **Q. I don't have my Fall 2016 Semester grades yet. Will you accept a transcript without my Fall grades?**

**A.** No, we will need a transcript including your Fall grades to be considered. Until you have your transcript in hand you can work on other parts of your application, as you can save your application as a draft and return to it at any time. *If you are an adult learner or undergraduate student provide the most recent transcript you have with your GPA.*

### **Q. How do I upload the required documents to my application?**

**A.** If the document is already saved on your computer, you can click the "Browse" button on the application and select the document to upload. If you have access to a scanner, you can scan the document and then upload it. If the file size is too large, your scanner may be set at too high a resolution; consider changing it to 150 dpi. For documents that may be more than one page, make sure that you upload all of the pages as one document. If you upload pages individually, the new upload will override the previous upload. If you do not have access to a scanner, or the file size is too large, consider using the Fax to File feature in the application. This tool allows you to fax documents to your application for uploading. Once you are given a toll-free fax number, you have 20 minutes to fax the needed documents for conversion to a PDF document. Once you are finished faxing you can click the "Finished Faxing" button to see your list of files, which you can then download to your computer for uploading to the appropriate part of your application. The Fax to File feature is located on the left hand side of each application.

*Be sure to save your application each time you upload documents, and always double check to make sure all of your documents uploaded correctly.*

### **Q. I don't have access to a scanner or fax machine. What do I do?**

**A.** Start by talking to your guidance counselor at school to see if the school has equipment that you can access or the public library. If that is not an option please contact the Community Foundation, as we want to ensure that all eligible students have the opportunity to complete an application and are happy to assist you. However, do not send us copies of the required attachments, as everything must be **submitted online**, and hard copies will not be accepted.

**Q. Instead of uploading my SAT and ACT scores, can I just upload my transcript since my scores are on the transcript?**

A. No, you must upload a copy of your scores, and it is preferable that you upload them as a PDF or JPEG document. We have volunteer community members who assist us in reviewing the applications, and they need to be able to open and view a copy of your test scores.

**Q. How long does my Personal Essay have to be?**

A. You have the equivalent of two typed pages available for the essay. The essay is a very important part of your application, as it helps the reviewers get to know you and can help you stand out from the other applicants. You should use the full space available, and we recommend that you copy and paste from a Word document so that you can check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

**Q. What should I include in my essay?**

A. Write about your *goals and plans* for the future as well as achievements, setbacks, and skills. The essay explains to the reviewer who you are. The essay is a very important part of your application, and you should use the full space available, equivalent to two typed pages. Be sure to read the scholarship description and address items in the scholarship description.

Include the following in your essay:

- Goals and plans for your future.
- College/University you plan to attend.
- Goals and plans for your future.
- Planned field of study and why you chose this field.
- Work experience.
- Volunteer experience.
- Extracurricular activities.
- Describe your character and skills that demonstrate your abilities.
- Financial situation if a need based scholarship.
- Academic performance if this is a merit based scholarship.

**Q. Do my letters of recommendation have to be signed and on letterhead?**

A. Yes, they do, and if you have more than one letter, they must be uploaded together as one PDF document.

**Q. What financial documentation is required for those scholarships for which financial need is a consideration?**

A. You must include a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or FAFSA), which is an application students and their families must complete in order to be considered for federal financial aid, and many states and schools also use the FAFSA as part of their application process for non-federal aid. The Student Aid Report (SAR) is the report received by the student that summarizes the student's financial need and provides the official EFC (Expected Family Contribution) number. Be sure and talk to your parents about the documentation required so that there is plenty of time to gather the information needed prior to the deadline, as we cannot review incomplete applications.

**Q. How will I be notified if I am awarded a scholarship?**

A. If you are awarded a scholarship, you will be notified by email and/or a phone call sometime in May. If you are not notified, it means that you were not awarded a scholarship this year.

**If you still have questions:**

email: [Scholarships@floridacommunity.com](mailto:Scholarships@floridacommunity.com) or call the Foundation Office at 239-274-5900.