



## OUR COMMUNITY'S FOUNDATION – 2010 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Parkersburg Area Community Foundation and the Regional Affiliates: Doddridge County Community Foundation, Jackson County Community Foundation, Little Kanawha Area Community Foundation, Mason County Community Foundation, and Ritchie County Community Foundation

### Tips and Suggestions for Completing Your Scholarship Application

Our Community's Foundation administers more than 150 different scholarship funds. To make the application process as accessible as possible, you can apply for most of the Foundation's scholarships through one, online application form – Our Community's Foundation General Scholarship Application Form. You can access the online application process from our web site: [www.pacfwv.com](http://www.pacfwv.com). Applications must be submitted by March 15, 2010. Take the following steps to complete the online application:

1. Go to the Foundation's web site: [www.pacfwv.com](http://www.pacfwv.com).
2. On the left-hand side of the screen, click on "Find Scholarships."
3. Review the "Quick Eligibility Quiz" to make sure you are generally eligible for a scholarship.
4. Click on "2010 Scholarship Award Descriptions" to read specific descriptions and to select the scholarships for which you meet the specific eligibility criteria. We have provided this information in both a Word document and an Excel chart. You can review and/or search both documents to identify scholarships for which you may be eligible.
5. Click on "Applications and Forms" to access the online general scholarship application form. Click on the link to the online form and then follow instructions to create an account for yourself. You must remember your user name and password in order to access your account again. You do not need to complete the application in one sitting; you can save your work then return to the application to complete it later. When you are satisfied that your application is complete, be certain to click on the "submit" button on the last page of the application. You will receive an e-mail confirmation when your application has been submitted. If you do not receive an e-mail confirmation, check with the Foundation to ensure that your application has been submitted. Submit your application online by March 15, 2010.

A few of our specialized scholarships have separate application forms and different deadlines. You can also access those applications on the Foundation's web site. Remember, that the selection process for all Foundation scholarships is very competitive. We receive more than 2,000 applications for the scholarships we administer and last year were able to award about 240 scholarships. Prepare your application carefully and make the best possible case for why you need scholarship support to help you achieve your education goals. To learn more about our scholarship process for 2010, join us for one of our free scholarship webinars: Monday, February 15, 7:00 p.m. and Tuesday, February 23, 7:00 p.m. You can participate in the webinar from any location at which you have both a telephone and a computer with internet access. To register, send an e-mail to [info@pacfwv.com](mailto:info@pacfwv.com) and we will send you instructions on how to access the webinar.

Here are some other tips to help you in preparing your scholarship application:

- **Apply only for scholarships for which you are eligible.** Carefully review the list of scholarships provided on our web site to identify those for which you meet the stated eligibility criteria. Be sure to look at the scholarships listed for your county of residence as well as ones listed under "multi-county."

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When completing the application, remember to check off each scholarship for which you would like to be considered (and for which you meet the eligibility criteria).

- **Give your application the time, attention, and preparation that it deserves.** Read and follow the instructions carefully. **Complete all sections and provide all required attachments.** The online form will not allow you to move forward to the next page without completing required information. For attachments, you will have the opportunity to upload attachments into the online form if you have these materials available in an electronic format. You are not required, however, to upload these materials. You may mail these materials to the Foundation. You must postmark any material that you mail to the Foundation by March 15, 2010.
- **Proofread your essay.** We suggest that you prepare your essay in a separate document and then copy and paste it into the online form. Before you enter an essay onto the online form, check the spelling and grammar. Ask a parent, friend, or teacher to proofread your essay before you add it to your application.
- **Meet the deadline, which is March 15, 2010.** Your application must be submitted by March 15 or it will not be considered. You must hit the “submit” button on the last page of the application in order for your application to be received by the Foundation. You will receive an e-mail confirmation when your application has been received.
- **Ask for help if you need it.** You can call the Foundation at 304-428-4438 or 1-866-428-4438 if you have any questions about the application process. Or send us an e-mail at [info@pacfwv.com](mailto:info@pacfwv.com).

### Tips for Writing Your Essays

The essay questions may be the hardest part of your application to complete. But this is also where you can stand out from the crowd. The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include details about yourself so the reader can get to know who "you" are and what you stand for. The scholarship selection committee has hundreds of essays to review. It is YOUR job to get their attention. Here are a few tips:

- **Think before you write.** Brainstorm to generate some good ideas, and then create an outline to help you get going. Make sure to address specific questions clearly.
- **Be original and be creative in your answers.** Show, don't tell. Use examples to individualize your responses. Demonstrate the point you want to make. Avoid vagueness to make a strong impression.
- **Create a portrait of a winner.** Create a vivid portrait that will depict the person behind the grades, activities and awards. If a reviewer feels like he or she knows you, you have done your job and created a powerful emotional connection that elevates your application, helping it stand out from others.

### How are Scholarship Applications Reviewed?

Each scholarship has its own selection criteria. Generally, however, selection committees consider the following:

- **Academics** - It may be important to have a competitive GPA; however, selection committees also will consider how challenging your course load is. They will also check to see if you are taking the right courses to reach your goals and how well you did in those courses.
- **Activities/Leadership** - If this is part of the criteria, committee members will examine your school and community activities and they will also look at the range of leadership roles you have played.
- **Service** - Community members will be interested in what service you have provided to your school or community. They may look at activities that go above and beyond the required service job.
- **Financial Need** – The SAR (Student Aid Report) of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Form provides important information, along with the information provided on the financial information page of your application. Please be sure to file your FAFSA early in order to have this information by the Scholarship Application deadline of March 15.
- **Special Circumstances** – If you have overcome an obstacle to achieve your goals, or are facing a special circumstance, the selection committee wants to know about it.