The Power to Shape Futures

THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION AND THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE GUIDE
To learn more about our scholarship program, please visit pittsburghfoundation.org/scholarship.

This handbook provides an overview of the Foundation's scholarship program to assist you in becoming a knowledgeable ambassador for the Foundation and for philanthropy in the Pittsburgh region. Our expert staff will also support you with an annual workshop, webinars and online resources.

Special thanks to the Oregon Community Foundation, for valuable assistance in the creation of this handbook. Photography by Joshua Franzos for The Pittsburgh Foundation. Design by Garrison Hughes.
Thank You

By serving on a scholarship committee, or starting a new scholarship fund, you are making a significant difference in the lives of students. The Pittsburgh Foundation’s scholarship program, and its affiliate, The Community Foundation of Westmoreland County, relies on hundreds of donors and volunteers to help us award an average of $2.5 million in scholarships each year.

Donors who value higher education establish funds for many reasons: to honor or memorialize loved ones, to encourage students as they pursue specific fields, to support study at specific institutions that they respect, and to bridge funding gaps for economically disadvantaged students. Scholarships may fund pre-K tuition, music lessons or other enrichment programs for middle and high school students, undergraduate study, or even technical or graduate school.

Scholarships align with the Foundation’s mission: improving the quality of life in the Pittsburgh region by evaluating and addressing community issues, promoting responsible philanthropy and connecting donors to the critical needs of the community.
THE FOUNDATION’S 320 active scholarship funds grant more than 750 scholarships, providing an average of $2.5 million in financial assistance to students each year. Our program is one of the nation’s largest scholarship programs within a community foundation. Many scholarships may be applied for entirely online through the Foundation’s scholarship search website. The average scholarship award for the 2018-2019 academic year was $3,766, with some of the larger awards ranging from $15,000 to $22,000. The total permanent endowment of scholarship funds is $72 million.
About Community Foundations

A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION is a public charity that administers permanent, named funds established through gifts and bequests from individuals, families, businesses and organizations. Community foundation donors enjoy favorable tax advantages and relief from administrative burdens associated with running a private foundation or establishing an independent nonprofit.

Community foundations make grants — including scholarships — from these funds to qualified charitable, educational and cultural organizations. More than 750 community foundations exist throughout the United States. Community foundations are dynamic and collaborative, bringing together nonprofits, government agencies, donors and the public to discuss and address significant community issues.

Brashear High School students are among those who are eligible to apply for trade and vocational scholarships.
After Spenser Flowers died of an accidental opioid overdose, his parents, Chris and Tina, and brother, Sam, established a scholarship fund to honor his memory. Youth who participate in activities at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Allison Park are eligible.
THE ROLE OF THE DONOR: The donor, through a fund agreement, establishes the scholarship and recommends general eligibility criteria. The donor may choose either to participate in the process as part of a committee or to have no direct involvement.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: Most scholarship funds utilize a committee. It is that committee’s responsibility to honor the donor’s original intent as spelled out in the formal scholarship fund agreement and to follow scholarship criteria specified by the donor and the law. Every scholarship fund has a checklist that sets forth its specific guidelines and eligibility criteria. Some donors may define their intentions broadly, and Foundation staff may establish criteria to narrow the pool of eligible applicants to an appropriate size.

The Foundation follows best practices for attracting a qualified pool of applicants and adheres to state and federal law regarding review of applications and awarding of scholarship funds.

You can expect the Foundation to provide you with:
- Orientation and education for serving on a committee.
- Prompt responses to your questions or concerns.
- Guidance in identifying best practices.
- Support throughout the entire scholarship committee process.
- Appreciation and recognition for your work.

The Foundation expects that you will:
- Represent it professionally and honorably.
- Openly declare any conflicts of interest that may arise.
- Remain objective and nondiscriminatory and utilize established criteria in recommending recipients from an eligible class of applicants.
- Maintain confidentiality and discretion about the Foundation and its donors, grantees and scholarship applicants.
- Respond promptly to communications from the Foundation and provide your current contact information.
- Use the electronic platform provided for application review when applicable.
There are numerous scholarships available to Allegheny County students, including Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts School students.
The application period for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens.

The application period for Foundation scholarships begins around Thanksgiving.

Last weekday of the month is the deadline for most post-secondary scholarships.

Scholarship committee members convene, discuss applications, develop scholarship award recommendations and forward these recommendations to the Foundation for processing.

The last weekday of the month is the deadline for most K-12 non-academic (e.g. music lessons, camp) scholarships and some post-secondary scholarships.

Applicants for scholarships are typically notified now whether or not they have been selected.

Awards are paid directly to the educational institution, provided the student has submitted all requested documents to the Foundation.
Types and Amounts of Scholarship Awards

AWARD TYPES

**SINGLE YEAR:** Awards are given for one year only and applicants are not eligible for additional year awards.

**REAPPLY AND COMPETE:** Recipients are asked to reapply and compete annually, so that the scholarship committee is able to base award decisions on the entire applicant pool, including new and current recipients.

**MULTI-YEAR:** Recipients are awarded funds for multiple years. They receive an annual request to submit their college transcript, confirm their contact information and the institution they will attend in the coming fall semester. If academic progress is satisfactory, the scholarship is paid. Four years of support is usually the maximum and a best practice for undergraduate students with financial need.

Of the Foundation’s 300+ scholarships, more than 20 are specifically for graduating seniors, including Brashear High School students, planning to major in science.
Scholarship best practices dictate that individual scholarship awards should be at least $1,000. If the funds available to award are less than $1,000, the entire amount should be awarded to one student.

Because the cost to attend varies by college (see page 18), it may be appropriate to award a larger scholarship to a student attending a four-year institution and a smaller scholarship award to a student attending a two-year institution.
Thanks in part to Foundation scholarships, Sara Watkins is attending Duquesne University School of Law and Rondell Jordan is at University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Tips for Evaluating Applicants
OUR APPLICANTS COME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE and have different passions and interests, which contribute to the rich cultural tapestry of our region. The Foundation is committed to equitably assessing each student. Students’ backgrounds — the places they come from, their life experiences and the resources available to them — make a difference in how they approach their applications. We take all of these factors into consideration when evaluating applications.

“Equitable” does not necessarily mean “equal.” A student who has a 4.0 GPA but does not have to work is not equal to a student who has a 3.0 GPA, works and cares for a sick parent. Applicants each have their own stories and face unique challenges. We urge committees to consider how adversity has helped or hindered each applicant.

We encourage committees to look for applicants who demonstrate a connection between their academic curriculum, volunteer or work experience, and their educational and career goals. Are the applicants involved in opportunities related to their major? Is the applicant involved in long-term community activities?

Grammar is one factor that some committees may consider when reading essays. However, English may not be the applicant’s first language. Further, the applicant may have attended a secondary school with minimal resources. A public school may have offered fewer tutoring resources and larger class sizes than a private school.

Also, some committees may notice that pronoun use has shifted in recent years. Many languages do not have gender-specific pronouns. Some applicants may prefer to use “they” as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun. Others may not identify as he/she/they and may use another gender-neutral pronoun such as “ze” or “hir.” If the pronoun usage only appears once, it may indicate a grammatical error. If the pronoun is used consistently, it should be considered correct. Applicants should not be discounted for their choice of pronouns.
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEES have a responsibility to honor the donor's intent as outlined in the scholarship criteria. Although criteria may vary from high school attended to selected field of study to robust volunteerism, the two most common criteria are academic merit and financial need.

**Academic Merit**

The required grade point average (GPA) is always listed in the eligibility criteria. Consider course rigor when evaluating applicants. The standard application includes the applicant's transcripts in addition to both the cumulative unweighted GPA and the cumulative weighted GPA. Weighted GPAs take into consideration if a student has taken advanced placement or honors courses. Transcripts may also show SAT and ACT scores. Please see the sample college transcript on page 15 and sample high school transcript on page 16.

**Financial Need**

To determine financial need, please refer to the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as reported on the Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR is the report provided to students after they have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used to calculate a student's EFC, which schools use to determine their financial aid award. For a detailed guide for reading a SAR, please see page 17.

As noted on the FAFSA website, “The Expected Family Contribution is a measure of your family's financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law. Your family’s taxed and untaxed income, assets, and benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security) are all considered in the formula. Also considered are your family size and the number of family members who will attend college during the year.”
Judge Mark Hornak, pictured here in Courtroom 6A of the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, received the James G. Fulton Internship Scholarship in 1977, which set him on a path toward law and community service.
ONCE SCHOLARSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE, the committee chairperson forwards award recommendations to the Foundation, which notifies all applicants of the award decision and requests proof of enrollment from the recipients.

Upon receipt of information from the student, payments are made to the educational institution in the student's name. Payments are typically disbursed in August and September for the coming academic year. Disbursements go directly to the institution.

If a student leaves an educational program, the unused portion of the scholarship is returned to the fund for future use.
The transcript is divided into terms or semesters. It is common for schools to have fall, spring and summer semesters in the academic year. Financial aid is typically divided between the fall and spring terms.

Every course in the university has a credit value assessed to it. This shows the number of credits that the student scheduled (attempted) as well as the number of credits that the student completed (earned) for each course. When a student earns a 0.00 for a course, it is likely that they withdrew (W) from it or simply removed it from their schedule (U). The earned credits are multiplied against the grade for the semester and assessed points. Points determine the GPA.

This shows the Cumulative GPA for the entire time the student has been at the institution. Some transcripts will also show the GPA for the semester or term. Both are helpful in tracking trends in academic performance.
The transcript is divided into academic years with terms or semesters. Each period will show the grade level of the student.

Many schools have unique tracks, programs and proficiencies which have their own set of abbreviations. Pittsburgh Public Schools transcripts may display the following:

- ‘CAS’ for Centers for Advanced Study is a gifted track. These courses are rigorous and factor into the weighted GPA.
- ‘PSP’ for Pittsburgh Scholars Program which assesses some degree of weighting to the course.
- ‘ELA’ for English Language Arts which is a measure of proficiency tied to a standardized state exam. This is a pass/fail course which does not bear credits.

Grades are usually in line with the standard ‘A’ through ‘F’ with the occasional ‘P’ for classes with a ‘pass/fail’ option.

Abbreviations are used in course work. Check these for clues about the student’s rigor when evaluating the GPA. Common abbreviations include: ‘AP’ for advanced placement, ‘H’ for honors, ‘Acc’ for accelerated and ‘IB’ for international baccalaureate.

The student’s unweighted and weighted cumulative GPA is listed, as well as their class rank. Weighted GPAs take into consideration if a student has taken advanced placement or honors courses. Class rank will help you to evaluate the student in relation to others in the graduating class.
SARs and EFCs

**THE STUDENT AID REPORT (SAR)**

The SAR is a report that each student who completes a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) receives each year. We ask that students seeking financial assistance for college include a copy of their SAR with their scholarship application. It is most often used to determine the level of an applicant’s need for financial need-based scholarships, but it can also be used as a tie-breaker for scholarships that do not list financial need as a criterion.

**THE ESTIMATED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC)**

The EFC is a measure of the family’s financial strength and is calculated according to a formula established by law. It considers the family’s taxed and untaxed income, assets and benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security). Also considered are the family’s size and the number of family members who will attend college during the year.

EFC is expressed as a six-digit number on the SAR (shown below) and is the amount that the family can be reasonably expected to contribute towards the student’s educational costs for one year, although not a guarantee of what the family will actually pay, nor is it a guarantee of any amount of financial aid. The lower the EFC, the more significant the need.

The EFC is the most comprehensive way to measure a student’s financial need when used in conjunction with the Estimated Annual College Costs on page 18.

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**Federal Student Aid FAFSA**

2018-2019

Electronic Student Aid Report (SAR)

The SAR summarizes the information you submitted on your 2018-2019 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

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<thead>
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<th>Application Receipt Date:</th>
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**Comments About Your Information**

Learn about federal tax benefits for education, including the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC).
## STANDARD STUDENT BUDGETS FOR PITTSBURGH AREA POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN 2019-2020

### Public Universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>On or off campus?</th>
<th>Tuition &amp; fees</th>
<th>Room &amp; board</th>
<th>Books &amp; supplies</th>
<th>Personal expenses</th>
<th>Transport expenses</th>
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### Community Colleges

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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>On or off campus?</th>
<th>Tuition &amp; fees</th>
<th>Room &amp; board</th>
<th>Books &amp; supplies</th>
<th>Personal expenses</th>
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<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$1,080</td>
<td>$9,500</td>
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### Independent Colleges

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<th>Institution</th>
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<td>Carnegie Mellon University</td>
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<td>Chatham University</td>
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<td>Edinboro University</td>
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<td>Robert Morris University</td>
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Note: These estimates are for informational purposes only. They are based on full-time Pa. resident enrollment and will vary depending on program of study, courseload, dependency status and housing situation. Costs will be higher for out-of-state residents. Source: [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org). Estimates marked * are from cost estimators provided by those schools.
Online Resources

**FAFSA4caster** - A U.S. Department of Education tool that estimates the type and amount of financial aid that a student or family can receive.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

**Federal Student Aid** - U.S. Department of Education information on preparing for education beyond high school.

www.studentaid.gov

**College Navigator** - Information on scholarships and other financial aid.

www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator

**FinAid** - A comprehensive source of financial aid information and tools, including an Expected Family Contribution calculator.

www.finaid.org

**Pennsylvania Higher Education Access Authority** - State agency for student aid organizations, serving millions of students and thousands of schools.

www.pheaa.org

Commencement, including this 2011 ceremony at Carnegie Mellon University, celebrates the hard work of students and their families.
Your Responsibilities

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION** was established in 1945 to improve lives of those living in the greater Pittsburgh region through the power of philanthropy. The Foundation's assets, now more than $1.3 billion, represent the contributions of more than 2,400 individuals and families. The Foundation awards more than $47 million in grants each year, with an average of $2.5 million supporting Foundation-awarded scholarships.

When donors create a scholarship fund at the Foundation, they may choose whether or not to participate in the selection process. In either case, scholarship committees are forwarded to the Foundation’s board of directors for approval.

**Scholarship committee members must:**

- Conform to the Pension Protection Act of 2006 requirements, which state that a donor and his or her relatives and/or employees may not constitute a majority of the committee or otherwise control the committee.

- Declare any conflicts of interest that arise when an applicant under consideration is related to you. No person may serve on a scholarship selection committee if, during that year, a relative of the person is an applicant for consideration by that committee. Although not mandatory, we recommend committee members recuse themselves if they have a personal relationship with an applicant. A good rule of thumb is to recuse if the committee member might purchase a graduation card for the applicant.

- Remain objective and nondiscriminatory throughout the selection process.

- Protect the privacy of students by keeping their information confidential.
In 2018, the Greensburg College Club celebrates 100 years of offering college scholarships to students in Westmoreland County.

Scholarship committee members must:
- Ensure that the donor’s intent, as spelled out in the eligibility criteria, is honored during the scholarship deliberation and recommendation process.
- Develop methods for rating candidates utilizing the stated criteria and electronic materials, where applicable.
- Maintain good communication and forward recommendations to the Foundation in a timely manner.

Time commitment required
- This varies according to the size of the scholarship program, but is typically no more than 10 hours per year per fund.
- Although timing may vary depending on the scholarship, committees are most active in March to June.
- Committee members are expected to review all candidates ahead of their committee deliberation meeting where they may meet in person or via conference call.

For further information on our scholarship program, please call 412-391-5122, or visit our website at pittsburghfoundation.org/scholarship.