

DATE: January 25, 2023

TO: Scholarship Applicants

FROM: DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services

SUBJECT: 2023 DCFS Scholarship Application Process

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarship Program. Enclosed you will find the application you need to apply for this merit-based scholarship. Please note that even if you are currently enrolled in college, we still need a copy of your high school transcript, in addition to your college transcripts.

DCFS awards a minimum of 53 scholarships annually. The scholarship package includes a full tuition and mandatory fee waiver to any community college, university, or college maintained by the State of Illinois, a monthly grant payment, start-up grant and a medical card. The Department may pay for required textbooks and supplies for youth that do not have sufficient resources to purchase the required items. Last year there were approximately 170 applicants. For that reason, we strongly urge you to look into other forms of financial assistance for college. If you have not already completed the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.gov you should do so as soon as possible. It is through that application process that you are able to get grant assistance, such as the Illinois MAP grant and/or the federal Pell grant. You are also encouraged to explore websites, such as www.fc2success.org, www.fastweb.com, www.studentaid.gov, www.scholarshipamerica.org, www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator or www.isac.org where you may find other scholarship or grant programs that you can apply for. Students can also text their first and last name to 312-761-4611 to request assistance from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC).

We would also like to offer just a couple of helpful hints as you complete your scholarship application packet:

1. Be sure to proofread your personal essay. There are some things that “spell-check” just will not catch, so be sure to proofread it yourself, as well as asking someone else to do the same. The essay should emphasize your perseverance to excel, obstacles you have overcome in order to do so, and how you will use this scholarship to its fullest benefit to successfully earn a post-secondary degree.
2. Your three letters of recommendation should come from individuals who know you well, who are not family members, and can provide a brief description of your personal strengths, academic abilities and/or work performance.
3. Your complete application packet must be sent via email to DCFS.Scholarship@illinois.gov no later than March 31, 2023. The packet must include the completed application (**be sure to sign it** and that it is the newest version with “Rev 1/2023” in the upper left-hand corner), your personal essay, high school transcript, college transcript (if applicable), and three letters of recommendation, and verification of your relationship with the DCFS. If any of these items are missing, your application will not be scored and will be returned to you.



Youth who are offered and accept a scholarship board payment are not eligible to also receive a subsidy payment pursuant to an adoption or sub-guardianship subsidy Agreement. A scholarship recipient, “who has an active subsidy Agreement, and their parent or guardian must elect only one payment, either the subsidy payment or scholarship payment.” If the scholarship payment is chosen, any payment pursuant to the adoption/sub-guardianship agreement will be suspended while the youth is receiving the scholarship board payment.