

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

PCCF SCHOLARSHIP TIPS & HINTS

Getting Started & Ways to Create a Stellar
Application

PCCF scholarship application
and information can be found at
www.phelpsfoundation.org.

Have questions?

Contact Lacy Chapman, PCCF
Program Officer at
lchapman@phelpsfoundation.org
or 308-995-6847.



ABOUT PCCF

The Phelps County Community Foundation was established in 1976 through an estate gift from Irene Anderson, who wished for a community foundation to be created to benefit Phelps County. Her initial gift of \$300,000 set PCCF on the path to grow and make significant impact on the lives of residents of Phelps County. In 2020, PCCF now has assets of nearly \$22 million and growing.

PCCF is lead by a 12 person Board of Directors and currently employs 5 individuals. Our organization strives to be a community leader in our county through PCCF's various programs and initiatives. PCCF has been involved in fundraising efforts for several projects in our county including The Tassel, Don Sjogren Community YMCA, Holdrege Veterans Memorial, and the Nebraska Prairie Museum.

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

SCHOLARSHIPS

Because of the generosity of individuals, businesses, and organizations PCCF now holds nearly 80 scholarship funds to support the educational endeavors of graduating high school and college students.

GRANTS

We partner with nonprofits to help them secure funding they need to grow and thrive. PCCF has multiple grant opportunities for organizations in Phelps County to take advantage of including PCCF, Pearson Fund, and Women's' Giving Group.

give2GROW

In its 9th year, give2GROW has raised nearly \$6.1 million for local organizations through our annual giving day held each November.

SCHOLARSHIP TIMELINE

DECEMBER 1, 2020 - Scholarship application opens to students and is available on the PCCF website www.phelpsfoundation.org.

FEBRUARY 15, 2021 - Scholarship applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. in order to be eligible.

MARCH/APRIL 2021 - PCCF Scholarship Committee and other outside review committees begin reviewing applications and will meet to determine the scholarship recipients.

EARLY MAY 2021 - Scholarship awards will be announced. Recipients will be able to see which scholarship(s) they have received by logging into the scholarship application portal. School guidance counselors will also be notified in time for their honors nights.

114

*Number of scholarships
awarded in 2019-2020 to 64
area students.*

\$201,650

*Total amount in
scholarship awards made in
2019-2020.*



IT'S GO TIME!

Starting Your PCCF Scholarship Application

PCCF only accepts online applications through our scholarship portal. The link to the application can be found by clicking "Scholarship App" on PCCF's website, www.phelpsfoundation.org.

PCCF uses what is called an "universal application." This means as you are filling out your application the information you enter helps put you into the running

for all of the scholarships you are eligible to receive. The more information you put into your application the more scholarships you may be eligible for, so make sure to be as thorough as possible in your application.

If you would like to see all of the scholarships offered by PCCF we have included a Scholarship Directory on our website.

FAQ

Why is the FAFSA so important?

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is used by PCCF to determine financial need for all of our "needs based" scholarships.

FAFSA information is sent directly to the school(s) you are planning on attending. PCCF does not see your application. We work with the schools to find out what the student's "out of pocket" expenses will be after financial aid and scholarship(s) offered directly by the school. This form needs to be completed by February and uploaded into your application.

Where to Apply for the FAFSA
<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

LET'S DIVE INTO THE APPLICATION

Below are some tips to remember as you begin your application and set up your student account.

- Make sure to use an email address that is NOT your school email. After you graduate you will not have access to that account. PCCF will communicate with you via email throughout the scholarship process, so it is incredibly important to use a personal email address.
- The email address and password you create (or already have created) will allow you access to not only your application, but also your "dashboard." The dashboard will show you any documents you need to complete as well as allow you to see prior year's applications.
- If you have applied previously and have forgotten your password, you do have the ability to reset your password. PCCF staff does not have access to your passwords so resetting your password will be the only way to log into your account.
- If you think you have registered in our scholarship system, but are unsure please contact Lacy Chapman at lchapman@phelpsfoundation.org before setting up a new account. She will be able to provide you with your username so you can continue into your account. It is important to not have duplicate accounts so all of your PCCF scholarship application information is all complete.
- Not only are there tutorials on the application process posted on our website, but they are also included on the "Log On" page for quick reference.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REFERENCES

Who you select could make or break your application.

Be sure to identify your references early and ask them to be one of your references. The earlier you have them selected you will have time to ask someone else if any of your references do not complete their form.



While all of the information and essay question responses you include in your application are important, so too are the references you choose. You are only allowed one academic reference, so the rest need to be from people such as an employer, coach, mentor - just make sure it is someone who can speak to your character and ability to succeed in school.

Family members and any current PCCF board or staff members cannot complete a reference for any applicant.

Also, it may be worth considering whether or not your reference would be able to write additional information about you. Sometimes the selection of a recipient comes down to information the student may not share about themselves, but a reference would.

Students will not be able to see any of the references responses, but you will be able to see if they have completed the online reference form.

YOU'RE IN...NOW WHAT?

Things to be aware of as you complete your application.

There are several issues you may run into as you complete your application, so we have compiled some of the most common problems students had in the past.

WORD COUNT

Watch the word count on all of the text fields. If you go over the limit you will not be able to submit your application. The system will show you if you are over the limit, so pay close attention.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

When entering the Email addresses for your counselor and references be sure to use the right format (name@Domain.com) and do not hit tab or return after the email address - it will give you an error message!

ESSAY QUESTIONS

DO NOT copy and paste the same essay into all of the essay boxes. All of have a different topic that you will need to write about and not answering the questions for that scholarship may cause the reviewers to not consider your application.



Just another reminder to make sure you use a non-school specific email address when creating your account. This is vital for PCCF staff to communicate with you throughout the entire application process.



MORE THINGS TO REMEMBER

Keep these things in mind...because there is no going back!

1

Double check all of the information and essays you have completed. Once you hit submit you will no longer be able to make any changes.

2

After you hit submit, you will learn which scholarships you are eligible for and see if there are additional essay or reference requirements.

3

Keep logging into your account to make sure all of your references have submitted their online form.

4

If your reference says they did not receive a link to your online reference form, please have them check their spam folder.

Transcripts

Official transcripts from colleges will need to be uploaded by the student. If you cannot upload it yourself, please email it to Lacy Chapman at lchapman@phelpsfoundation.org and she will be able to upload it to your application.

Any high school student taking college courses will need to also submit an official transcript for all of the classes they have taken while in high school.

High school students will have their transcripts, class rank, GPA, and ACT score entered into their application by their guidance counselor.

Changing References

Sometimes students need to change references. If you have NOT submitted your application you can change their email address, but if you HAVE submitted the application you will need to contact Lacy Chapman to make the change(s) for you.

MAKE YOUR APPLICATION SHINE!

Friendly hints from us to you to make your application standout from the rest.

SELL YOURSELF - Your personal essay and any additional essays you complete gives you the chance to share why you are the right pick for a scholarship. Make it compelling, tell your story, but just make sure NOT to use your name in them.

GRAMMAR & SPELLING MATTERS - Your scholarship essays need to be polished and we encourage you to have someone else proofread your application before you submit it. Reviewers reading your application are also reading lots of other students and they have to make tough decisions. Sometimes a student's grammatical and spelling errors will take them out of consideration.

TELL US AS MUCH AS YOU CAN - Really think about all of the activities, community service, work experience, church involvement, awards, honors, or anything you are proud of in your application. By including as much as you can you may end up being eligible for more scholarships!

PICK GREAT REFERENCES - References are incredibly important for the reviewers as this gives them an outside look at you as a student and a person. Make sure to choose references that will be able to share good things about you, and will be willing to write about you. There are times where reviewers learn important things about students in what the references choose to write about them - sometimes causing the student's application to be ranked higher!

REALLY CONCENTRATE ON YOUR ESSAYS - Even with your achievements and grades it is truly the responses to essay questions that help the reviewers make decisions. Do NOT just copy and paste one response into all of the essay fields. There are a wide variety of questions being asked for each individual scholarships and not answering on those specific topics will likely get your application ranked lower.

ANY QUESTIONS?

NEED HELP?

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

Contact Information

Lacy Chapman, Program Officer

Email: lchapman@phelpsfoundation.org

Phone: 308.995.6847

PCCF Website

www.phelpsfoundation.org

Follow us on Social Media

Facebook - @PhelpsCo.Foundation

Instagram - @phelpscocommfnd

PCCF posts reminders and all scholarship related announcements on both of our social media accounts, so be sure to follow us so you can stay in the loop!