Allendale Community Foundation

Grand Haven Area Community Foundation

Coopersville Area Community Foundation

Scholarship Timeline

OCTOBER TO JANUARY

Complete the FAFSA once the application is open. You must submit a copy of the first page of the FAFSA (the Student Aid Report) with your scholarship application for the GHACF/ACF/CACF.

NOVEMBER TO JANUARY

Complete the scholarship application at ghacf.org/scholarships. The online application will open in **late November**. You **must** complete and submit your application by the set deadline. Contact the foundation or visit the website for details, deadlines, and updates.

FEBRUARY TO APRIL

The selection committees review applications and select recipients for each scholarship opportunity.

MAY TO JUNE

We present scholarship awards to high school students at their high school awards ceremony, if applicable. College students will be notified via email. Those who applied but were not selected for a scholarship will also be notified via email at a later date.

JULY TO AUGUST

We process and mail scholarship awards to educational institutions. Each institution is responsible for processing and applying any awards received to the student's account. Please inform us if your post-secondary plans have changed to ensure you are able to receive your award.

For more information, contact Kim McLaughlin, our Scholarship Program Manager, at kmclaughlin@ghacf.org or 616-842-6378, or visit ghacf.org/scholarships.

Scholarship Application Tips

First are you eligible?

With a few exceptions, only students residing in Northern Ottawa County or who attend or have graduated high school within the Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Allendale, or Coopersville School Districts may apply. Review the scholarship descriptions at ghacf.org/scholarships for specific opportunities.

Best Practices

1. **Pay attention to details and deadlines!** Ask a parent, friend, or teacher to proofread your application, especially the narratives (more on those below). Also, watch your deadlines. Financial Aid Offices and Scholarship Providers stick to them!

2. **Share your unique story in the narratives.** The GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarship application includes the following questions to help the selection committees get to know you:
   - Eleanor Roosevelt said: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." What are your career goals and dreams? Why?
   - Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
   - Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
   - The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Understand the various criteria that scholarships often look for, such as
   - Special circumstances or obstacles you have faced, such as health issues or working significant hours on top of going to school.
   - Financial need, as indicated on the Student Aid Report (SAR) from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Form.
   - Academics, such as a competitive GPA, test scores, or your chosen field of study or school.
   - Leadership roles and community service you have been involved in.

Scholarship Application Tips

ELIGIBILITY

Q: Why are most GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarships limited to residents of a certain location?

A: Donors select criteria that are important to them and supporting local students remains a top priority with many of our donors. If you reside in an area outside of Northwest Ottawa County, MI, you should check with your nearest community foundation.
The only GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarships that are open to residents of any area are: Dake Community Manufacturing Scholarship, West Michigan Nursery and Landscape Scholarship, VFW Post 2326 Ward-Goff Memorial Scholarships, the St. John's Lutheran Church and School Scholarships, and the Careerline Tech Center Paraprofessional Scholarship. View descriptions of our scholarships at www.ghacf.org/scholarships.

Q: Which scholarships are available to current college students?

A: Details on each scholarship are available at www.ghacf.org/scholarships.

Q: How is financial need determined?

A: The selection committee reviews the Student Aid Report (SAR) that you submit after completing the FAFSA. The committees also consider any unusual circumstances you report as well as the cost of the school you plan to attend and other scholarships you have received.

Q: Are all GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarships need-based?

A: No. However, we require all applicants to complete the FAFSA as we believe it is an important part of the college application process. Please call our office if you have unusual circumstances that make it impossible to complete the FAFSA (616-842-6378).

Q: What happens if I don't attend my first-choice school?

A: Please let us know before scholarship decisions are announced, if possible. Some scholarships are specific to the school you will be attending and cannot be utilized elsewhere.

Q: Can I receive more than one scholarship from the GHACF/ACF/CACF?

A: Occasionally, students may be selected to receive a scholarship from more than one GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarship fund. However, it is the exception rather than the rule.

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LOGISTICS

Q: Is an unofficial transcript of my grades okay?

A: Yes. High school students must submit a transcript with: senior-year grades, cumulative GPA, and class rank. College students must submit a transcript with: college work to date, name, academic year, cumulative GPA, and college/university name.

Q: When will I find out if I have been awarded a scholarship?

A: We notify high school recipients at individual high school award ceremonies in May and June, if applicable. College students receive an email by the end of May. Please keep in mind, we make every effort to send the scholarship award to your school July to August, but it is your responsibility to pay for tuition by the deadline.

Q: How are scholarship awards paid?

A: You must first sign the scholarship agreement and submit a thank you note. We mail checks directly to the college in July and August.

Q: Are these scholarships taxable?

A: We apply these awards directly to college expenses at the institution, such as tuition, fees, and books. Scholarship recipients are responsible for any tax liability incurred as a result of the awards. Please consult a tax professional for additional reporting responsibilities.

Q: If I receive an award, is it important to send the donor a thank you note? Do I have to attend the GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarship event in the summer?

A: These awards are generous gifts from donors and should be acknowledged. A thank you note is required. We gather all thank you cards and provide them to the individual donors who read and cherish them. Attendance at the scholarship event in the summer is highly encouraged to allow you to meet donors in person and celebrate your accomplishments.

Q: Do I have to reapply if I received a GHACF/ACF/CACF scholarship last year?

A: Yes. Most of our scholarships are one-time awards. If you received a renewable scholarship, we will contact you in December with instructions on how to re-apply.

For more information, contact Kim McLaughlin, our Scholarship Program Manager, at kmclaughlin@ghacf.org or 616-842-6378, or visit ghacf.org/scholarships.