

INFORMATION TRANSMITTAL 2020.01

DATE: January 2, 2020
TO: Rules and Procedures Bookholders and Permanency Staff
FROM: Marc D. Smith, Acting Director
SUBJECT: 2020 Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarship Program

LAST DATE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED: MARCH 31, 2020
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS: MAY 1, 2020

The purpose of this information transmittal is to announce the Department is currently accepting applications for the 2020 Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program. The DCFS Scholarship Program provides 53 scholarships each year; four of which are awarded to children of veterans.

BENEFITS

Scholarship recipients will receive a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees if they attend their local Illinois community college or any of the following Illinois state universities:

Chicago State University
Western Illinois University
University of Illinois

Eastern Illinois University
Illinois State University
Southern Illinois University

Governors State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University

Note: Tuition and fee waivers are provided only to scholarship recipients who attend an Illinois public university or their in-district community college. Scholarship recipients who attend private Illinois or out-of-state colleges/universities do not receive tuition and fee waivers.

All scholarship recipients will receive a monthly grant of \$537 regardless of whether they attend an Illinois community college or university. The grant is effective the first day of attendance and will terminate at the end of the academic year. This includes recipients who attend summer school and maintain full-time status as defined by the college/university.



Scholarships DO NOT cover room/board/dormitory fees, other non-academic fees, college/university fines, or travel expenses to/from campus. Scholarship recipients are STRONGLY encouraged to use their monthly grant in combination with other scholarships, grants, benefits or loans to pay these expenses. Information concerning any of the following sources of educational funding may be obtained from high school counselors or college/university financial aid officers.

Pell or MAP Grants

Student loans

Basic Education Grant

Supplemental Education Grant

Work Study

Illinois State Scholarship Commission Grants

National Defense Student Loans

Social Security

Veteran's Benefits

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Department scholarship applicants must:

- Be at least 16 years of age and under 21 years of age on the scholarship application deadline date of March 31, 2020.
- Have earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution, or a General Education Development (GED) certificate/diploma or met the state criteria for high school graduation before the start of the school year for which they are applying for the scholarship.
- The Department must have court-ordered legal responsibility for the applicant, the applicant must have aged out of the Department's care at age 18 or older, the Department must have had legal responsibility for the applicant prior to the adoption being finalized, or the applicant must be in the Subsidized Guardianship Program.

APPLICATION

Scholarship applicants are required to submit their applications to the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS) **no later than March 31, 2020**. Applications postmarked after that date will not be eligible for consideration. Incomplete applications will not be eligible for consideration and will be returned to the applicant. If time permits, the applicant can resubmit the complete application packet. Applications submitted by facsimile will not be eligible for consideration.

It is mandatory that scholarship application packets contain the following documents. All documents must come together in one package.

- A completed **CFS 438, DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application**;
- The applicant's transcript of high school grades or copy of GED;
- The applicant's ACT or SAT test scores (attach a copy of the score report);
- College transcript (if attending college);
- Three letters of recommendation from persons unrelated to the applicant; and
- Documentation of the applicant's legal relationship with the Department.

The **CFS 438, DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application**, may be obtained from:

- Any Department Regional office;
- The Department website at www2.illinois.gov/dcfs;
- The Department Intranet site (Under the About Us Tab, click on Policy & Rules & Forms link, then forms, then CFS 438);
- Telephone 217 557-2689 (Springfield) or 312 814-5959 (Chicago)

Send completed scholarship applications to:

Office of Education and Transition Services
Attn: DCFS Scholarship Program
Department of Children and Family Services
406 E Monroe, Station #23
Springfield, IL 62701

Or Email to: DCFS.OfficeofEducationandTransitionServices@illinois.gov

Selection of Scholarship Recipients

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the scholarship program, or do not submit the application by the deadline will not be considered. Scholarship recipients will be selected on their scholastic record and aptitude, community and extracurricular activities, and purpose for higher education. The Scholarship Awards Selection Committee will meet in April to select the scholarship recipients. Applicants will be notified by mail of the committee's decision by May 1, 2020.

Living Arrangements for Scholarship Recipients Under the Department's Care

Permanency workers for scholarship recipients shall establish a living arrangement plan with their scholarship students prior to the beginning of the school year. Scholarship recipients may not live in a Department funded placement while receiving monthly grant payments under the Scholarship Program. However, Department funded placements may be available to the youth under DCFS guardianship during extended academic breaks and summers. Youth also have the option of remaining in their current paid placement and not receive the monthly Scholarship grant payment. Youth in DCFS care may also participate in the Employment Incentive Program or be involved with an internship program during the summer.

Questions

Questions concerning the Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program may be directed to either of the following OETS offices.

Springfield 217-557-2689
Chicago 312-814-5959

Please share the attached scholarship program information sheet with all potential scholarship applicants.

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DATE: January 2, 2020
TO: Scholarship Applicants
FROM: DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services
SUBJECT: 2020 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, as well as, verification of your ACT/SAT scores, 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 a state-supported public school in Illinois (in-district community college or state university), a monthly grant payment, and a medical card. Last year there were approximately 200 applicants (205 to be exact). 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.ed.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.ISAC.org, www.fastweb.com, www.whatsnextillinois.org, www.studentaid.ed.gov, www.scholarshipamerica.org, www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator or www.orphan.org where you may find other scholarship or grant programs that you can apply for.

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 postmarked by 5:00 pm on March 31, 2020. The packet must include the completed application (**be sure to sign it** and that it is the newest version with “Rev 1/2019” in the upper left hand corner), your personal essay, high school transcript, college transcript (if applicable), verification of your ACT or SAT scores, 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.

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