

JB Pritzker
Governor



Marc D. Smith
Acting Director

DATE: January 8, 2021
TO: Scholarship Applicants
FROM: DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services
SUBJECT: 2021 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 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 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. For that reason, we strongly urge you to apply for 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. The FAFSA is the application for grant assistance, including 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 where you may find other scholarship or grant program opportunities.

We would also like to offer 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” will not catch, so be sure to proofread it yourself and ask someone else to review it, also. 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 who can provide a brief description of your personal strengths, academic abilities and/or work performance.
3. The application deadline is March 31, 2021. Your complete application packet must be sent to the DCFS.OfficeofEducationandTransitionServices@illinois.gov mailbox on or before March 31 or postmarked on or before this date if mailed. The packet must include the completed and signed CFS 438-2021 which is the application form. Due to pandemic-related limited availability of ACT and SAT testing, the test scores will not be considered for any applicants in the 2021 selection process. Even if you have taken one or both tests, do not submit the scores because they will not be included in the final scholarship selection. Be sure to include your personal essay, high school transcript, college transcript (if applicable), and three letters of recommendation. If any of these items are missing, your application will not be scored and will be returned to you.

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