

Preparing for the KC Scholars Application

2026 Application Cycle

Learning Outcomes



What can
APPLICANTS
do to prepare?



What can
EDUCATORS
do to support applicants?



What can
GUARDIANS
do to support applicants?



Helpful
Resources

APPLICATIONS

OPEN JANUARY

CLOSE END OF FEB

APPLY

REVIEW

APPLY



What can applicants do to prepare?



APPLICANT

- Determine **eligibility** for the scholarship.
- Identify a trusted adult as a **recommender**.
- Prepare **transcripts**.
- Practice writing **personal statements**.
- Research the **College-Specific Scholarship** opportunity.
- Attend an **application workshop**.
- Email applicationhelp@greatjobskc.org questions!



Determine **ELIGIBILITY** for the scholarship

- Traditional Scholarship applicants must meet all eligibility requirements to apply:
 - Be a current 11th grader.
 - Live in or be home-schooled or attend public, charter or private school in 6 eligible counties: Wyandotte & Johnson (KS) - Cass, Clay, Jackson & Platte (MO).
 - Have at least a 2.5 cumulative unweighted high school GPA OR at least a 16 on the ACT / 800 on SAT)
 - Be Income eligible (12,000 or less Student Aid Index on [Federal Student Aid \(FSA\) Estimator](#)).
 - Use the [Scholarship Application Resources](#) to help complete the estimator.
 - US Citizenship/Residency is not required.

ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS SHOULD APPLY!

Identify a trusted adult as a RECOMMENDER

- Current teachers, counselors, advisers, mentors, employers, and community leaders make great recommenders!
- A recommender cannot be a family member or friend of the applicant.
- Select someone who knows you well and can showcase your character.
- Connect with your identified recommender BEFORE requesting, verify they are available and willing to complete the form.
- Share your reason for applying with your recommender.
- On the application, you will submit the name and email address of your recommender. They will receive a short form to complete. External recommendation letters are not accepted.
- Applicants cannot submit their applications until their recommender completes the Recommender Form.

Prepare **TRANSCRIPTS**

- Connect with your school counselor to obtain a copy of your transcript at the end of your 11th grade fall semester.
- Transcripts must contain final grades from 9th grade fall semester through 11th grade fall semester (5 semesters total).
- School name and student name must be present on transcript.
- Transcripts may be unofficial. Typically, you can download a copy from your student portal or take screenshots of all final semester grades.
- Do not procrastinate on this section, get help from high school staff!

Practice writing **PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

- Prepare to compose two personal statements of 250 - 750 words each.
- Reflect on your personal experiences. What motivates you to further your education? Outline your achievements and future goals.
- ChatGPT is a great tool for brainstorming, outlining, and reviewing. However, personal statements should be written in your voice, not by AI. We want to hear YOUR story!
 - [A Student's Guide to Writing with ChatGPT](#)
 - [How to Write an Essay with ChatGPT](#)
- Fully address each part of the prompt and use specific examples.
- Proofread for grammar, logical flow, and tone. Have a trusted adult provide feedback.
- Write personal statements in a Word or Google document. When ready, paste your final draft into the application section. You will not receive a copy of your personal statements back upon submitting.

2026 Traditional Personal Statement Prompts

Prompt 1: Everyone has a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful that their application would be incomplete without it. Please share your story.

Prompt 2: Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. How does this motivate you to pursue a college degree?



Research the **COLLEGE-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIP** opportunity

- If not awarded a Traditional Scholarship, you may be considered for a College-Specific Scholarship. If you receive a College-Specific Scholarship, it can only be used at the assigned school. To be considered, you must check "Yes" for consideration in the application.
 - Checking 'Yes' will not decrease your chance of being considered for a Traditional scholarship, it increases your chance of receiving a scholarship overall!
- Use the [College-Specific Roadmap](#) to learn more.
- Filter with the [Find Your College](#) tool to discover campuses that fit your dream and eligibility.
- Review the [College-Specific Quick Guide](#) to understand campus specific requirements like housing, GPA, citizenship status, and more.

Attend an **APPLICATION WORKSHOP**

- Ask your teacher or counselor if your school is hosting an in-person workshop.
- Check out the [KC Scholars application workshop schedule](#), we have in-person and virtual options!
- Come prepared to learn more, ask questions, and work on your application.

Email questions to:

APPLICATIONHELP@GREATJOBSKC.ORG

- KC Scholars staff will respond to your questions within two days, typically sooner.
- No question is too small. We are here to help you SUBMIT!

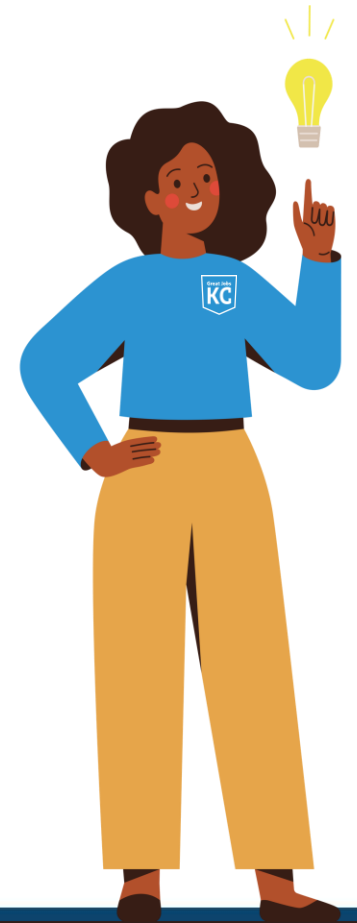


Scholarship Application Resources

What can educators do to support applicants?

EDUCATORS

- Use the month-to-month **applicant support timeline**.
- Register your school for a **Fall Informational Session and Eligibility Workshop** AND **Spring Application Workshop**.
- Identify **eligible** students and encourage all to apply.
- Assist students in preparing **transcripts**.
- Encourage students to practice writing **personal statements**.
- Help students research the **College-Specific Scholarship** opportunity.
- Serve as a **recommender**.
- Encourage all applicants to **begin and submit early**.



Use the month-to-month **APPLICANT SUPPORT TIMELINE**

AUGUST	Request a Fall Application Workshop and review the KC Scholars website for program and resource updates.
SEPTEMBER	Pull 11th grade transcripts and identify eligible / on the cusp students. Prepare academically eligible students to bring financial information to application workshop so they can complete the FSA Estimator. Provide follow-up support for students on the cusp of eligibility.
OCTOBER	Assist students with identifying a recommender, personal statement practice writing, and learning more about the College-Specific Scholarship opportunity. Provide follow-up support for students on the cusp of eligibility.
NOVEMBER	Assist students with identifying a recommender, personal statement practice writing, and learning more about the College-Specific Scholarship opportunity. Provide follow-up support for students on the cusp of eligibility.
DECEMBER	Request a Spring Application Workshop, prepare end of semester transcripts with final grades for students.
JANUARY	Active applicant support. Prepare students to bring transcripts and personal statements to application workshop. Utilize weekly Applicant Progress Report for check-ins. Direct students to virtual KC Scholars workshops for after school support. Advise students to begin early to support their success.
FEBRUARY	Active applicant support. Prepare students to bring transcripts and personal statements to application workshop. Utilize weekly Applicant Progress Report for check-ins. Direct students to virtual KC Scholars workshops for after school support. Advise students to submit early to lessen stress.

Traditional Application Workshops



**High school staff to prepare eligible students for workshop attendance and ensure students have access to technology (personal, school, or KC Scholars requested laptops).*

Fall Informational Sessions and Eligibility Workshops

- Registration Available: August 11 – November 30
- Workshop Dates: August 18 – December 5
- Assist with the eligibility checklist and guide students through the Federal Student Aid Estimator.

Spring Application Workshops

- Registration Available: December 1 – February 20
- Workshop Dates: January 8 – February 27
- Assist identified eligible students with application.



KC Scholars Application
Workshop Registration Form

Identify **ELIGIBLE** students and encourage all to apply

- Review the Traditional Scholarship eligibility requirements [here](#).
- Pull 11th grade transcripts. Identify academically eligible students and those on the cusp (2.4-2.5 GPA).
- Invite academically eligible students to attend requested application workshops.
- Require students to bring financial information (if able) to fall workshops to complete the FSA Estimator and transcripts / personal statements to spring workshops to finalize their applications.

ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS SHOULD APPLY!

Assist students in preparing TRANSCRIPTS

- Transcripts must contain final grades from 9th grade fall semester through 11th grade fall semester (5 semesters total).
- School name and student name must be present on transcript.
- Ensure all identified eligible students have a copy of their transcript at the end of the fall semester (December) or beginning of spring semester (January).
- Transcripts may be unofficial. Students may download a copy from their student portal or take screenshots of all final semester grades.

Encourage students to practice writing **PERSONAL STATEMENTS**

- Prepare students to compose two personal statements of 250 - 750 words each.
- Share the Traditional Scholarship personal statements prompts with English classes to use for a writing assignment or class workshop.
- Host writing hours or a study hall workshop during or after school.
- Educate students on best practices for using ChatGPT for brainstorming, outlining, and reviewing. Personal statements must be written by the student in their unique voice.
 - [A Student's Guide to Writing with ChatGPT](#)
 - [How to Write an Essay with ChatGPT](#)
- Proofread personal statements for grammar, logical flow, and tone. Students should fully address each part of the prompt and use specific examples.

Help students research the **COLLEGE-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIP** opportunity

- If not awarded a Traditional Scholarship, students may be considered for a College-Specific Scholarship. If a student receives a College-Specific Scholarship, it can only be used at the assigned school. To be considered, applicants must check "Yes" for consideration in the application.
 - Checking 'Yes' will not decrease the applicant's chance of being considered for a Traditional scholarship, it increases their chance of receiving a scholarship overall!
- Resources for students:
 - [College-Specific Roadmap](#)
 - [Find Your College](#) tool
 - [College-Specific Quick Guide](#)

Serve as a **RECOMMENDER**

- Applicants are encouraged to ask current teachers, counselors, advisers, mentors, employers, and community leaders to serve as a recommender.
- Evaluate your capacity to serve as a recommender and for how many students. If unable, help students brainstorm who to ask.
- Complete the Recommender Form in a timely manner once the application opens. Applicants cannot submit until their recommender completes the form.
 - The Recommender Form should take less than 5 minutes per applicant. The form consists of questions graded on a leichert scale and one open ended response.

Encourage all applicants to **BEGIN AND SUBMIT EARLY**

- Use these talking points to encourage students:

REDUCES STRESS AND PRESSURE	Submitting early helps avoid the last-minute rush, allowing applicants to work more calmly and with a clear mind. Starting early also leaves room for proofreading, handling technical difficulties, and ensures applicants feel more confident about their application.
ALLOWS AMPLE TIME FOR RECOMMENDER SUBMISSIONS	Applicants must wait for recommenders to complete the Recommender Form before they can submit their application. Requesting the Recommender Form early is respectful and helpful to recommenders and sets the applicant up for success.
PROVIDES TIME FOR QUESTIONS AND FOLLOW-UP	Starting early allows time for applicants to thoughtfully read through and consider the application. Applicants may reach out to applicationhelp@greatjobskc.org with questions or attend an application workshop. Applicants may also follow up with their recommender to share why they are applying and help answer any questions they may have.
ENSURES PEACE OF MIND	Submitting early helps applicants focus on other tasks related to school and life. Preparing for senior year and college is full of big decisions!

What can guardians do to support applicants?

GUARDIANS

- Attend an **application workshop**.
- Alongside student, **research schools** in the KC Scholars College Network.
- Assist student in completing the **FSA Estimator** and **Eligibility** application section.
- Follow-up on **student progress**.
- Help student complete the **Parent/Guardian** application section and sign the **Participation Agreement & Scholar Code of Conduct**.



Attend an **APPLICATION WORKSHOP**

- Check out the [KC Scholars application workshop schedule](#), we have in-person and virtual options.
- Guardians may attend an application workshop with or without their student. Encouraging student participation is appreciated!
- Come prepared to learn more, ask questions, and work on the application alongside your student.

RESEARCH SCHOOLS in the KC Scholars College Network



- Review the schools Traditional Scholarship awardees may use their funds at.
 - ([Webpage section: WHERE CAN YOU ATTEND IF YOU ARE AWARDED A TRADITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP?](#))
- Review the schools that offer a College-Specific Scholarship. Help your student understand their best-fit options and whether they should check "Yes" for College-Specific Scholarship consideration.
 - ([Webpage section: WHERE CAN YOU ATTEND IF YOU ARE AWARDED A COLLEGE-SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIP?](#))
- Read through the [KC Scholars Program Guidelines](#) to learn more about scholarship use and our College Network.

A CHANCE
TO LEARN
THE POWER
TO EARN

Assist student in completing the **FSA ESTIMATOR** and **ELIGIBILITY** application section

- The FSA Estimator is a free financial aid calculation that provides an early estimate (SAI) of a student's eligibility for federal student aid. It assists families in planning for college!
- Collect materials and complete the FSA Estimator with your student.
 - **Materials needed:** Students' financial and personal information, parent's financial information (if applicable), students' spouses' financial information (if applicable).
 - **Download the PDF on the final page** of the estimator, your student will upload this in the Eligibility section of the application.
- Use the [Scholarship Application Resources](#) to help complete the estimator.

Follow-up on **STUDENT PROGRESS**

- Check-in on your student as they work on their application.
 - Key areas to ask about: writing personal statements, requesting a recommender, and uploading transcripts.
- Ask your student if they would like help vs support.
- Applying for scholarships and preparing for college can be stressful. Help create a positive experience for your student by planning an application work hour at a local coffee shop or treating them to ice cream once they submit!
- Read more about supporting teens:
 - [Preparing for College Emotionally, Not just Academically](#)
 - [The Emoji Guide to Teen Mental Health](#)

Help student complete the **PARENT/GUARDIAN** application section and sign the **PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT & SCHOLAR CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Provide your student your contact information for the Parent/Guardian section of the application.
- Before submitting, review the Participation Agreement & Scholar Code of Conduct alongside your student. A parent/guardian signature is required for applicants 18 and under.



Application Quick Links

CONTACT

applicationhelp@greatjobskc.org

WEBPAGES

[Traditional Scholarship Information \(11th grade\)](#)

[Scholarship Application Resources](#)

[Application Workshop Schedule](#)

[Apply](#)



Important Dates

Application Opens: January 8, 2026

Application Closes: February 27, 2026, at 5:00p.m.

Awards Day: May 5, 2026