

How to Create a Unit Scholarship Fund

While examples of eligibility criteria are provided below each Unit should develop criteria that best meet its goals and community needs.

Establish the Scholarship Fund

- Create a designated fund specifically for scholarship purposes.
- Set a fixed dollar amount for each scholarship.
- Identify a reliable funding source for the scholarship.

Define Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Consider the following when establishing eligibility:

- Relationship to a veteran or American Legion Family member (e.g., child, spouse, widow/widower, grandchild, great-grandchild).
- Membership in the American Legion Auxiliary, The American Legion, or Sons of The American Legion.
- Residency requirements (e.g., applicant must reside in the state or be a member of the department's American Legion Family).
- Financial need—will applicants be required to demonstrate financial need?
- Minimum GPA requirement, if any.
- Student status—must applicants be high school seniors, or are returning/adult students also eligible?
- Institution type—must the school be in-state? Must it be an accredited institution?
- Application deadline.

Determine Required Application Information

- Completed application form including:
 - Full name, address, city, state, zip code
 - Phone number and date of birth
 - Membership number
 - Name and relationship of qualifying veteran
- Essay requirements:
 - Clearly state the topic, length, formatting (typed, double-spaced)
- Signature of the sponsoring Unit's Auxiliary President
- Community service verification:
 - If required, define the number of hours and acceptable time frame (e.g., during high school years or past 12 months)
- Proof of military service for the qualifying relative or applicant

Academic and Recommendation Requirements

For High School Applicants:

- Letters of recommendation (from teachers, administrators, counselors, clergy, or community members — no relatives)
- Educational background:
 - Cumulative GPA
 - Class rank

- Official transcript
- Standardized test scores (SAT, PSAT, ACT)

For College Applicants:

- Letters of recommendation (as above)
- Academic record:
 - Cumulative GPA
 - Official transcript showing all completed coursework

Judging and Selection Process

- Judges' decisions are final.
- Judges determine the number and amount of scholarships awarded.
- Establish judging criteria and scoring rubric before reviewing applications.

Scholarship Award Guidelines

- Decide on award limits:
 - Will applicants be eligible for one-time scholarships only?
 - Are scholarships renewable, or limited to one per applicant?
- Decide how awards will be distributed:
 - How and when will recipients be notified?
 - Will funds be sent directly to the student or to the school's financial aid office?
 - Will the scholarship be awarded in a lump sum, by semester, or after a completed term?
 - Must the scholarship be used within a specific time frame?