

MORE THAN
\$700,000

IN SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE

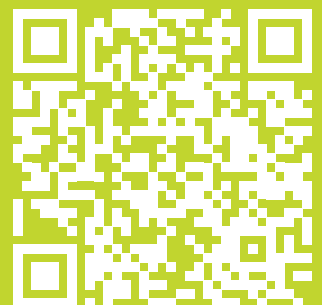
APPLICATION
OPENS
JANUARY 10



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
OF NORTHEAST IOWA

here for good

FIND SCHOLARSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES AND APPLY AT
CFNEIA.ORG/SCHOLARSHIPS



Scholarship Fast Facts

- Over 150 scholarship opportunities
- Over 250 recipients each year
- Scholarship awards range from \$500 to \$20,000
- Average scholarship award = \$3,000

Am I eligible for a scholarship?

Visit our website at www.cfneia.org/scholarships and check out the **Eligibility Checklist** to see if you might be eligible for a scholarship. This checklist will be updated on January 10, 2026.

How do I apply?

- **Process opens January 10, 2026 – Application deadline is March 11, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.**
- Apply online through our website
- Fill out one application to apply for multiple scholarship opportunities
- Scholarship recipients are announced in May

What do I need to apply?

- FAFSA Submission Summary – **not required, but highly recommended**
- Unofficial transcript from the school you are currently attending
- The name and email address for one letter of reference
- Personal essay
- Information for student involvement and activities:
 - Extra Curricular Activities
 - Volunteer Activities
 - Work Experience
 - Awards/Achievements

It's time to apply. What do I need to prepare to help me fill out my application?

You might be surprised to know that many scholarship applications ask for similar if not identical information. Gather the information you need **now** in one place. This will help you save time and present your best work when applying for multiple scholarship opportunities with multiple organizations.

Create your scholarship resume: Gather all the information related to your extra-curricular activities, volunteer activities, employment, and awards/achievements. Applications will ask for dates of involvement, roles/positions, leadership roles, and other notable information.

Ask for a reference letter: Approach someone about writing a letter of reference for you. Don't wait until the application deadline! Giving more time will help them write a better letter. Ask them to comment on your strengths, character, traits that are unique to you, and things that make you stand out. Ultimately, why do they think you deserve a scholarship? It's helpful to provide them a list of your activities and achievements. You can ask a variety of mentors in your life like a teacher, coach, counselor, pastor, or employer. The best references are people who know you well and have watched you grow in some way.

Start writing your Personal Narrative: Many applications will ask about your hopes for the future. Start thinking about the following questions: What are your educational goals and the steps that you will take to achieve those goals? What are your career goals and the steps you will take to achieve them? Why did you choose these goals? Write a first draft and have someone proofread it for error and input.

Fill out the FAFSA: Many scholarships are based on financial need. Even if you think you won't qualify, fill it out! Need is often influenced by the size of an applicant pool and specific scholarship criteria. You never really know if you qualify until you apply. Apply for a FAFSA Submission Report ASAP.

Still have questions, contact Staci Mueller, Director of Scholarship Impact, at smueller@cfneia.org or 319-243-1359, or visit our website for scholarship FAQs.

The below information provides you with details to help you write your personal narrative. Please review this outline and examine the “questions to consider” to better prepare yourself and get started early.

Introductory Sentence:

My name is **** and I am writing to be considered for a scholarship through the CFNEIA Scholarship Program.

Paragraph 1: State Your Educational Goals

What are your educational goals and why? How do you plan to achieve those goals?

Questions to consider:

- What school and major or degree have you chosen and why?
- If you are still undecided, what do you hope to explore and why?
- How do you plan to succeed in school and graduate?
- What has your educational experience taught you thus far about what is needed to reach your goals?
- What are some lessons you hope to gain beyond the degree while in school? For instance, leadership skills, work experience, independence, new perspectives, fields of interest, friends, etc.

Paragraph 2: State Your Career Goals

What are your career goals and why? How do you plan to achieve those goals?

Questions to consider:

- What career do you wish to pursue and why?
- If you are still undecided, what are you considering and why?
- What are your passions and/or interests when it comes to a career?
- What would success look like in a career?
- How do you see your career goals helping your community, family, friends, etc.?
- How do you see your career goals as fulfilling?

Paragraph 3: Personal Background

Tells us about yourself.

Questions to consider:

- Discuss your identity/interests/talents.
- How are you unique?
- What is important to you?
- How did you get where you are?
- Give concrete examples of character, strengths, how you have excelled, and how you have learned from failure or challenge.

Paragraph 4: Scholarship Impact

Questions to consider:

- How will a scholarship help you?
- How will you use it to make a difference?

Final Paragraph: Conclusion

Wrap it up in a few sentences and thank the reader.

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Many scholarship applications require that students submit activity and award information. It is helpful to gather all this information together before filling out an application. This allows you time to think through all the details of your activities, allowing for the best presentation of material. Plus, it saves time when you are ready to fill out applications.

Items on a scholarship resume *(If you are a high school student, focus on high school activities. If you are a college student, focus on your college experience.)*

Volunteer Activities

This can be a BIG deal! Many organizations giving scholarships do so because they care about the community. They value students who also give back through volunteerism. Think of what you have already done. You might be surprised by how much you have volunteered through classes, churches, family activities, and other organizations.

- Activity
- When? How Long? How Frequently?
- Did you do it with a group or on your own?
- Leadership and other notable information about the work
- Example: Volunteered with the Food Bank, Jr. Year of High School, once per month, with Boy Scouts, Earned Badge

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Name of activity
- Role/Position
- When did you participate? How long have you participated?
- Leadership roles
- Other notable information
- Example: Band, Trumpet, Fr. – Sr. Year, Section Leader, Served on Advisory Council to Director and made All-State

Work Experience

- Name of employer
- Type of work
- Dates of employment
- Number of hours per week
- Leadership roles and/or other notable information
- Example: Fareway, Bagger, 2024-current, 15 hrs. per week, Employee of the month in 2025

Awards/Achievements

- Name of award
- When it was awarded
- Significance
- Other notable information
- Example: Honor Roll, Jr. and Sr. Year, High GPA