



COUNCIL
FOR MILITARY SPOUSE CLUBS

**XXX SPOUSES' CLUB
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)
SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
Revised Date**

ARTICLE I: ORGANIZATION

The scholarship committee shall be made up of the Scholarship Chair, two (2) XXX members and one (1) non-XXX community member. The President shall serve on the committee as an advisor. *(This is a minimum number, but should vary based on the size of your program)*
You can add an additional line if your club has a separate judging panel, the number of judges, and any other pertinent details for the panel.

XXX spouses' club board members, scholarship committee members, and judges must not have a family member apply for the scholarship (per IRS and DoDI 1000.15)

Each committee member may only serve for two (2) consecutive years on the committee. They may serve again after leaving the committee for one (1) year.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The XXX will award scholarships annually to:
Graduating high school seniors—full-time vocational or college bound.
Returning College Students dependents (Undergraduate and Graduate) – up until age 26.
Adults, to include members of the XXX, continuing their education by seeking undergraduate degrees or continuing professional certifications.
These awards shall be made on the basis of the criteria set forth in this SOP.
Monies for this purpose shall come from XXX Charitable Funds raised for this purpose.
The committee shall recommend the number and amount of the individual awards to the club board based upon available funds. The club board will have final approval of these awards.
Determinations must be made not later than the April board meeting, or a special meeting of the board convened in April specifically for this purpose.

ARTICLE III: ELIGIBILITY



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Scholarships will be awarded to an applicant who has a parent/guardian who is assigned to the installation (*can include radius if in a location such as National Capital Region*).

Graduating high school students who are the natural-born or legally adopted children of U.S. military members to include the reserve component/National Guard, or of Department of Defense (DOD) civilians assigned to XXX, or of retired or deceased military living in the area are eligible to apply for XXX scholarships. This includes students who finish high school after the first semester and start college before spring graduation.

High school students must provide proof of acceptance or a copy of the application to a bona fide college, university, or trade/technical school as a full-time student as required by the particular school.

Students must have a minimum 2.5 GPA over the last two (2) years of high school and have demonstrated outstanding citizenship.

All applicants must sign an eligibility statement to be included as part of the application information page.

Adult scholarships are limited to spouses of the U.S. military, as referenced/described in ARTICLE III, B., and spouses of DOD civilians assigned to XXX.

Returning college students in undergraduate and graduate programs up to the date of their 26th birthday.

Applicants may only be awarded a scholarship from this organization two times during their college career.

ARTICLE IV: PROCEDURE

Before the Scholarship information is shared, the committee will decide how they will receive the applications (via mail? or via a certain kind of electronic method?)

The principals or guidance counselors of area schools shall be contacted by letter (with possible e-mail reminders) concerning the following information:

The availability of the scholarships and deadline for submission. *It is suggested that scholarship applications be available after the October board meeting and have a deadline of after spring break to give students time to finish application (vary depending on location).*

Include a point of contact with phone and/or e-mail address for the Scholarship Chair.

Request that these scholarships be advertised as available. Many applications shall be available in the schools and other community locations, as advertised, or links to an online application widely disseminated.

The criteria upon which the student shall be judged are:

Scholarship:

Grade point average during the last two years of high school (Require transcript) if HS Applicant



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Freshman year grades and HS GPA for continuing college students

Documents to prove academic achievement for Spouse Education

Citizenship:

as exemplified by character,

leadership,

extra-curricular activities,

willingness to serve and

provide self-help

Essay response

*** (see addendum for rubric reference)*

Some Clubs may have other items to take into consideration when reviewing an application. Just be sure to have these listed in the instructions for the applicants.

The Scholarship Chair shall find out the dates of financial aid or awards assemblies at the participating high schools and notify the Board of the dates to ensure maximum participation from our club if we can participate.

The Scholarship Chair shall be responsible for providing the necessary information to the Publicity Chair who will advertise the availability of these scholarships in venues such as: local newspaper, XXX Newsletter, XXX web page and Facebook page, local magazines, installation signage, local AFN channel (if appropriate), Commanders Channel, and local radio stations.

The Scholarship Chair shall:

Receive all applications and verify that requirements of eligibility are fully satisfied.

Make a copy of the complete application package and file the original for reference. Files of the original applications are to be kept for one year. The applications will be passed to the next Scholarship Chair. ****Keep in mind that applications may also be shared electronically if submitted electronically via Google/Microsoft Forms as long as name references have been deleted.*

Consider that the scholarship chair will need access to a printer and copier if email applications are accepted.

Assign each application a code number or letter and keep a list of the code.

To ensure confidentiality of the applicant, the Scholarship Chair will **black out all references to the applicant's name** on the copy of the original application, (i.e., names on transcripts, SAT/ACT scores, essays, addresses, reference letters, etc.).

Form a judging committee of at least 3 judges per category ****see "Companion Guide to your SOP" for information on your Judging panel.*

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Copies of the blacked-out applications will be given as a packet to judging committee members for evaluation. The Chair keeps all manually blacked out applications in a secure place if more copies are needed.

Deliver to each judging committee member a complete packet of applications with a cover sheet for scoring. (paper copies/electronic copies) Judging committee members will be given appropriate time for personal review and scoring of all eligible applications before the committee meeting. The packet of applications shall be returned to the chair for proper disposal. Scoring will be accomplished according to the following criteria (*this is an example, but depending on your bylaws and committee this might look differently*):

High School Senior applications: 100 points

Essay	20 pts
GPA (unofficial transcript) & SAT/ACT	25 pts
Honors/Awards/Academic Involvement	20 pts
Community Involvement	
Volunteer time and/or job	20 pts
Supplemental Information:	15 pts

(Letters of recommendation, Counselor checklist, student Resume, or something creative) [OB]

Continuing College Education: 100 points

Essay	20 pts
Honors/Awards/Academic Involvement	20 pts
Community Involvement	20 pts
Resume or Supplemental Information	20 pts
Letters of recommendation	20 pts

Military Spouse applications: 100 points

Essay	20 pts
Academic Involvement	15 pts
Community Involvement	20 pts
Letters of recommendation	20 pts
Resume	25 pts

When all the Judging committee members have scored the applications, the Scholarship Chair shall collate the data and call a meeting of the Scholarship Committee for a decision on the number and disbursement amount of scholarships to be considered by the board. The disbursement amounts and number of scholarships usually becomes obvious once all the scores



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are calculated. You will also need to consider how many high school, continuing education and adult applications were submitted and divide the disbursement accordingly. Request an approximate amount of funding available for scholarships from the XXX Treasurer before the scholarship committee meeting when funds are designated for the winners. Once the committee knows how much funding is available, they can make the decisions on who receives the scholarships and how much each person selected receives.

Scholarship selections will be completed by the April board meeting, or the board meeting convened specifically for scholarships. The total number of high school, continuing college education and adult scholarship recipients and the amounts recommended for each shall be presented for approval at that meeting. **No notifications are sent to any applicant before the board's approval**

The Scholarship Committee is given the authority to select and approve the awardees with approval of the full XXX Board. The list is NOT sent to the full membership for a vote.

Upon approval by the board, the Scholarship Chair will:

Send letters of regret to applicants who did not qualify for scholarship awards. Congratulate them on the successful completion of their high school or continuing education and wish them well in their future endeavors. A short e-mail notification may be sent immediately after the board meeting. (Send the reply based on how you do your applications. If online, you can respond by email, if you do your applications via mail, send your reply via mail. Be sure to include the letter of instruction with the reply)

Mail letters of congratulations and invitations for the May awards function to the recipients NLT 30 April. This should be done on XXX letterhead and include the amount of the scholarship awarded and function RSVP information. A short e-mail notification may be sent immediately after the board meeting. (*dates are suggestive, look at your school & board calendar*)

Prepare a letter of instruction to be included in the letters of congratulations with a deadline of 15 May of that year for students to provide the address of their chosen school to which the scholarship check will be sent. The check will be sent directly to the bursar or scholarship office. The letter should contain the following statements:

These funds may only be used for tuition, books/texts. (*See note in addendum for explanation of this rule)

The scholarship award must be used during the fall or spring semester directly after receipt. If it cannot be used during this time frame, the money must be returned to XXX.

The scholarship may be withdrawn for misconduct, at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee with the concurrence of the President.



Keep a list of alternate recipients if a scholarship is returned or is not accepted. Award the alternate(s) the scholarship(s) under the same general conditions required by the original winner(s) with appropriate changes in deadlines.

Provide the appropriate school principals and/or guidance counselors with a list of the winners. Make necessary preparations for publicly awarding the scholarships by completing the following:

Invite all scholarship recipients and their families to the May XXX awards function. The scholarship recipients attend as XXX guests. Give information on time, place, price and point of contact for RSVPs.

Participating high school principals, guidance counselors, outside judges that served, and any individual or corporate scholarship donors should also be invited to the awards function.

The President with Scholarship Chair will make the presentations to the students at the high school honors assemblies and the May awards function.

Arrange with the Publicity Chair for photographs at the May awards function. Request the Publicity Chair contact the post public affairs and the local newspapers for additional publicity.

Updates website and social media based on these dates and the winners' names and photos.

Provide each recipient a letter to be filled out with their college information. (ie. Name/Address of where the money should be sent, and any information that will be needed to have the money sent directly to the college account of the recipient, etc.). Make sure the latter has a due date, so the committee is not trying to track people down at the last minute.

The Scholarship Chair shall provide the Treasurer with a spreadsheet listing each recipient's letter of instruction, award amounts, student ID numbers and names of the receiving institutions. All checks and letters of instruction to Bursar of each institution shall be mailed promptly.

The Scholarship Chair shall provide the Treasurer with any information required by the Internal Revenue Service for completion of Schedule I of their form 990, such as names of recipients, amounts received, plus names and addresses of receiving institutions for any individual scholarship given over \$5,000.

Complete an After-Action Report (AAR) of the activities of the Scholarship Committee and provide a copy to the Outgoing/Incoming President, Outgoing/ Incoming Parliamentarian, and her/his successor.

FURTHER Information from the IRS regarding Nonprofits giving scholarships:

If an organization is starting a new nonprofit with the intent to give scholarships: Scholarship grant programs should be included in the narrative portion of the Form 1023 application.



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In addition, there are specific questions relating to scholarship programs in Section I of Schedule H, which will need to be completed.

Some of the information that must be included on Schedule H include: the types, purposes, and amounts of scholarship grants awarded, how grants are publicized, eligibility and selection criteria, composition of the selection committee, and procedures used to supervise use of the grants.

Already existing nonprofits that would like to give scholarships and their mission and purpose allows for this without changing these statements are able to do so without contacting the IRS (however, different states may require more information or paperwork).

They will provide their Treasurer with any information required by the Internal Revenue Service for completion of Schedule I of their form 990

Such as names of recipients, amounts received, plus names and addresses of receiving institutions for any individual scholarship given over \$5,000.

***Any scholarship given that is strictly for educational purposes, tuition and books, is not taxable. Any scholarship given that is allowed (and used) for other expenses like room and board or student activity fees, are considered taxable and need to be reported to the IRS and 1099 forms need to be generated for the recipient to use when filing their taxes.

The IRS sets forth several requirements for eligibility and selection criteria used by tax-exempt organizations for scholarship programs:

The first step is defining the charitable class to benefit from the program. While there is no specific definition, the IRS has provided some guidance as to what can constitute a “charitable class”.

A charitable class must be large enough or sufficiently indefinite that the community as a whole, rather than a pre-selected group of people, benefits when a charity provides assistance.

There is no magic number of potential applicants that definitively makes a class large and indefinite enough. *(However, if your club is open to just about everyone related to your installation, it seems reasonable to assume the “Charitable Class” benefits the community, rather than the mentioned pre-selected group of people.)*

Selecting recipients Objective and non-discriminatory basis:

Within the charitable class identified, the IRS requires that the ultimate recipients of grants be selected on an “objective and non-discriminatory” basis. Some factors often considered are financial need, academic performance/merit, performance on standardized tests, community involvements or extracurricular activities, letters of recommendation, and personal interviews.



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There is no particular set of factors that must be considered—because advancing an individual’s education is a charitable purpose in and of itself, there is no legal requirement that an applicant demonstrate financial need for a scholarship to further charitable or educational purposes; therefore, scholarships granted by a public charity on the basis of academic merit alone are permissible.

A public charity may consider an applicant’s race or national origin, but cannot preclude groups that have traditionally faced discrimination from consideration

Grants to insiders and employees: **Public charities may not award scholarships to their directors, trustees, officers, or senior managers, or their family members, or to members of its selection committee, or their family members.** (*Note that for these purposes, “family members” include spouses or domestic partners, siblings, children, and grandchildren, as well as spouses or domestic partners of siblings, children, and grandchildren.*) *This means no one from your Board of Directors or any of their family members should be receiving a scholarship from your organization.*

Public charities should also not award scholarships to substantial contributors (generally, major donors who are listed on Schedule B of its annual Form 990), or their family members.

These individuals are collectively referred to as “insiders”.

Public charities can grant awards to its employees and their family members, so long as they are not insiders (*your board members are insiders*) and the grants are limited in number (i.e., they are not granted to all employees, which would instead be considered a taxable employee benefit).