Guidance and Overview: Completing the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Student Excellence Scholarship Application

Congratulations on reaching your senior year of high school! Please use these instructions as a guide for submitting your application for a Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Student Excellence Scholarship. This is a prestigious honor that is recognized throughout Wisconsin, and beyond, as a mark of excellence in education. Each year, the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation confers 86 Excellence scholarships to students in public schools, 14 to students in private schools, and 2-3 to students in homeschool settings.

The first step is to register as a student using the SmartSimple platform by following the public school student link at: https://hkf.smartsimple.com/, and click on the green button for 'Apply Now'. Enter the required information (full name, email, phone number without spaces/parentheses/dashes, and home address). After submission, you will receive a temporary password and link in your email to proceed.

Welcome to Herb Kohl Philanthropies

Herb Kohl Philanthropies and the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation are dedicated to serving our partners and applicants efficiently and effectively. Welcome to our online application system. This portal is where you can submit, track and manage your requests. We hope our process and website are responsive to you. If you have questions about Herb Kohl Educational Foundation student scholarships, teacher fellowships or principal leadership awards, call 414-224-5214. For assistance with grant applications for Herb Kohl Philanthropies, please call 414-271-6600. Thank you for your interest in Herb Kohl Philanthropies.

Login

✉ Email
🔑 Password

Log In

Having trouble logging in? Please click Forgot Password to request a new temporary password with your user email address.

To go back to our website **click here**

New to the system?

To apply for a Student Scholarship Award click the button below.

Apply Now

To nominate someone for a Principal Leadership or Teacher Fellowship Award click the button below.

Nominate Now

To register for a Charities, Learning Journey, or Philanthropy Award click the button below.

Register Now

Next, you need to build a Personal Profile. Most of the general information will already be filled out from registering your account. Use the click down menu at the end to select the type of school you attend: Public, Private, or Homeschool.

Click on the 'Validate Profile' button at the bottom to complete your profile. This allows you to view the application once you return to the SmartSimple home screen.

Eligibility

Please answer the two eligibility questions pictured below in order to move forward.

ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

* Are you a resident of the state of Wisconsin, USA?

○ Yes

○ No

* Will you graduate from high school in Wisconsin in 2024?

○ Yes

○ No

* What type of school are you attending?:

○ Public

○ Private

○ Homeschool

If you have questions about the eligibility and residency requirement, due to situations like open enrollment, virtual school attendance, migrant students, status as an emancipated minor or homelessness, please contact Herb Kohl Educational Foundation at (414) 224-5214 or via email at contact@herbkohlphilanthropies.org.

Application Information

The Student Excellence Scholarship application asks you to work your way through 10 tabs, which you can follow in sequential order, or click through to jump from section to section. To avoid losing any information, be sure to click the button for 'Save Draft' when leaving any section.

General Information

The information you entered in your profile automatically completes most of the fields in this section. However, there are some additional fields you must complete to move forward.

- Under 'What type of school are you attending?,' select the option for Public or Private School, then select your date of birth.
- If you select 'Yes' under Certificate of Indian Blood Status, answer with your Tribal Nation Affiliation and upload a copy of either your Certificate of Indian Blood or your tribal affiliation card. Please note this is not limited to the 11 federally recognized tribal nations of Wisconsin, but applicants must upload and provide supporting documentation of affiliation or eligibility for membership of any tribal nation.

Type of School:

* What type of school are you attending?:
- ○ Public
- ○ Private
- ○ Homeschool

* Student Date of Birth: mm/dd/yyyy 📅

* Certificate of Indian Blood Status:

Applicants from Wisconsin's First Nations or indigenous persons living in Wisconsin may identify tribal affiliation or American Indian heritage. Checking either "yes" or "no" neither preferences nor disqualifies a candidate for an award.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

- **Save Draft for School Names to appear.**
- Fill in the 'School Information' section.

Arts & Humanities, Competitive Activities, and Service, Civic, & Citizenship

Each of the next three sections contain one subsection to open, and two writing prompts.

Subsections:

- For each section, you must click the 'Enter Activities' button. This will open a pop-up tab that allows you to state any activities you have taken part in and how long you've participated in things related to Arts & Humanities, Competitive Activities, and Service, Civic, & Citizenship.

- Each has a drop-down menu that should cover most activities.

- 'Other Related Activities' can be used to address any activity you don't see on the provided list.
- Please note that it is acceptable to list your activities in as many sections as are relevant for telling your story.
  - For example: activities such as Marching Band may be relevant in both Arts & Humanities and Competitive Activities, and it is acceptable to list them in both sections.

Writing Prompts:

- The first prompt asks you to list awards and recognitions you have received during high school, in relation to the section you're working on.
  - You have 250 words to describe them.
  - It's recommended that you include notes on why or how these would be viewed as notable, as readers don't always have knowledge of local awards.
- The second prompt asks you to describe what participating in the activities related to this section has meant to you, and how you've impacted others during your participation.
  - You have 250 words to discuss.
  - Focus on how you've positively impacted others through your thoughts, words, and actions.

Scholarship and Transcript

This section contains an upload and a writing prompt.

* Transcript

Upload a copy of your transcript as a .pdf file.

Transcript Upload

- Click the green 'Upload' button to upload a copy of your high school transcript.
- The transcript must be in .PDF format, or it will not upload and save.
- The transcript can be an unofficial copy, as long as it is unaltered before upload, and has the signature of an appropriate school official on it certifying accuracy.
- The transcript must be legible and easy to review, even if it has protective devices (ex. watermarks).
- Any inaccurate, falsified, incomplete, or altered uploads may render your application ineligible.

Transcript Background Writing Prompt

* Transcript Background

- This prompt asks you to tell the story of your academic journey, and address ways you have experienced academic success that can't necessarily be seen by reviewing your transcript.
    - You have 250 words to discuss.
    - This is a great place to really tell the story of your journey through high school, and how you have prepared to take the next steps into post-secondary education. It is not necessary to have a 'perfect' transcript (ex. a 4.0 on a 4.0 scale) to be eligible. This is the best section to describe any challenges, how you overcame them, and what you learned from them.

Work and Interests

This section has three writing prompts.

When preparing the application, use FULL NAMES NOT ACRONYMS (e.g., use Future Business Leaders of America, not FBLA)

Work Experiences: Describe each of the work experiences you have had, including where you have worked, how long you worked there, what your duties included, and any leadership experiences you had.

Hobbies, Outside Interests, and Special Talents: Describe your hobbies, your areas of interest (if not already covered in a previous section of the application), and talents you have, including any leadership experiences you have had related to these activities.

Describe what you have learned from your work experiences, hobbies, outside interests and special talents. Describe what values these skills and experiences have to you and others.

- The prompts ask you first to describe your work experiences, then your outside hobbies, interests, and talents, and finally what you've learned and gained from each.
    - In each prompt, you have 250 words to discuss.
    - Focus on how you have positively impacted others through your thoughts, words, and actions in situations relevant to each topic.

Essay

This section has one writing prompt.

Student Essay Instructions

Write a personal narrative essay, not to exceed 500 words, that describes your goals in the following areas:

- Future educational pursuits and goals
- Personal life and goals
- Service to your community or society
- Future career goals
- Tell us something about you that we can't learn from anywhere else in the application

When preparing the application, use FULL NAMES NOT ACRONYMS (e.g., use Future Business Leaders of America, not FBLA)

* Student Essay

This section asks you to write a personal narrative essay, in no more than 500 words, which describes your goals in your personal life, educational pursuits, and future career.

Advice for this section:

- Compose, revise, and edit your responses in a separate document (ex. Google Docs, Microsoft Word, etc.) and then copy/paste the final version into your application.
- Proofread your work! Read it out loud to yourself to help you locate errors.
- Write truthfully and tell your story with humility but take credit for your actions and the impact of your decisions as a student.
- If you are going to describe an activity that several people collaborated on, specifically address your role in that work, and how your work impacted the outcomes of the group's work together.
- Give real-life examples when possible.
- Consider protecting any specifically identifiable information about others when possible.
- Consider addressing how your context affects your decision and impact of your words and actions (including things like geographic location in the state, relative affluence of your school and community, and proximity/availability of opportunities and resources).
- Consider describing the challenges you have faced, or barriers you have overcome, in becoming the student you are today.
- Focus on subjects like innovation, leadership, impact/results, and equity through your words and actions.
- Consider how the letters of recommendation you request will support and deepen the evidence for the things that you share in your essay.
- Only three letters of recommendation are allowed and accepted by the online process.

Recommendations

You must secure three letters of recommendation before submitting your application. Use the application to invite recommenders to complete a letter of recommendation form on your behalf. You will be able to monitor this activity including who has been invited, who has accepted and is drafting a letter, when the letters are completed, or if invitations are declined from within the tab. You will not, however, be able to access the letters themselves. If you want this information, you must request it directly from the provider and separately from the application.

Read the instructions carefully and be sure that your recommenders fit the criteria.

Complete all the required information. (Email, Role, and Status are not displayed on this screenshot)

Prefix	First Name	Last Name

Once you have invited a person to recommend you, their status will change to 'Invited.' They will receive an email with an invitation to accept or decline the invitation to submit a letter. Once they have responded, their status will update to whichever option they have chosen, either 'Accepted' or 'Declined.' Once their letter has been submitted, their recommender status will change to 'Submitted.' If someone declines, or is generally unresponsive, you can also cancel the invitation using the green button with an 'X' on it in the 'Invite Recommender' sub-menu, and then you will have the option to add another recommender in their place.

Advice for this section:

- Actively manage your invitations and completion of letters of recommendation!
  - An application cannot be submitted if it has any number other than three letters of recommendation.
  - Check in often with the people you have asked to write letters. If they did not respond to the invitation, don't wait until the end of the application period to try to solve that problem. The most common error is entering incorrect email addresses, so check them carefully. Spam is occasionally a factor.

- - ○ No extensions of time is granted to applicants or recommenders. Please plan accordingly.
  - Consider being strategic in your invitations, and clear in what you hope a recommender can speak to about your activities, leadership, and the impact of your words and actions.
  - Reach out to recommenders personally before you invite them through the SmartSimple platform, so they know to look out for this request. This also allows you to decide whether or not they might be a good reference for you.
  - Encourage recommenders to give evidence and examples in their recommendations.
  - Letters written in a language other than English will be shown to reviewers in the language in which they were written, to preserve as much of the authentic word selections and intent of the writing as possible. However, English translations will also be made available to reviewers. We will use commonly available services (ex. Google Translate) unless a recommender is able to provide a translation.

Optional Demographic Information

The following information is not part of the scoring or selection process, nor will it be considered as eligibility criteria. It is confidential and will not be revealed to anyone outside of the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation. This data helps the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation understand the impact the awards program is making on students, families, educators, and administrators throughout Wisconsin. You may choose to answer as many of the following 3 questions as you feel comfortable answering.

Signature and Submission

Once you complete the application, fill in content for all required fields, and receive three letters of recommendation, you are able to submit your application for consideration at the Regional level.

I attest that all of the information contained in this application is accurate and true as of the date and time of submission, and certify that the essay responses submitted are my own work.

| * Applicant Signature: | | * Applicant Date Signed: | mm/dd/yyyy |

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Save Draft Submit Delete

After providing a signature and date, click 'Submit' at the bottom of the Signature section to send in your application for consideration. If there are any required fields left empty or recommendation letters missing, you will receive an error message with links that take you directly to the error. Once you submit, you cannot re-open your application for editing, so make sure to look over your work carefully. The deadline for submitting the Student Excellence

Scholarship Application is listed on the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation website. Late applications are not considered, even if the reason that it is late is not the applicant's fault.

Questions

Please contact Herb Kohl Educational Foundation at (414) 224-5214 or via email at contact@herbkohlphilanthropies.org with any further questions.

The Herb Kohl Educational Foundation, and program co-sponsors, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators, Cooperative Educational Service Agencies, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Newspaper Association, and Wisconsin Parents Association, do not discriminate against any student, teacher, or principal award applicant on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity of expression, genetic information, marital status, military status, national or ethnic origin, pregnancy or parenting status, political belief or affiliation, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in the administration of the foundation's educational programs and activities.