

SCHOLARSHIP POLICIES

I. USE OF FUNDS POLICY

- A. This scholarship must be used between **June 1, 2026 - March 1, 2027**.
- B. Scholarships may be split across multiple terms or used in a single term; however, the disbursement cannot exceed the tuition bill for the requested term.
- C. Funds may not be carried over from year to year. Recipients must reapply each year for a new scholarship.
- D. Funds are disbursed directly to the educational institution and are not personally issued to recipients.
 - 1. Scholarship funds may only be used for tuition and required textbooks.
 - 2. Special supplies required for a class or program may be covered with prior approval.
- E. Reimbursement requests (i.e., instances where a recipient pays out-of-pocket and later seeks reimbursement) are strongly discouraged. In exceptional cases where reimbursement is necessary, prior approval from The Next Step is required. Unapproved reimbursements will not be honored.
- F. Recipients must submit disbursement requests through the student portal and allow 10 business days for processing. Disbursements will not be issued without proof of enrollment and a tuition bill.
- G. The Next Step will fund a maximum of two certification or vocational/technical programs per recipient.
- H. In rare cases where an educational institution issues a refund due to overpayment on the scholarship to the recipient, the funds must be returned to The Next Step.

II. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE POLICY

- A. **Minimum GPA Requirement:** Scholarship recipients must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA during each term in which they are receiving scholarship funding.
- B. **Official Grade Submission:** All grades must be submitted from an official source, such as a school transcript or academic report issued by the institution. Your current GPA must be included. Screenshots are acceptable. All grades must be submitted through the student portal at the end of each term.
- C. **Scholarship Probation:** If a recipient's current GPA falls below 2.0 during a term, they will be placed on scholarship probation for the following term. During this time, they will continue to receive scholarship funding but must improve their academic standing to remain eligible.
- D. **Continued Academic Standing:** If a recipient's GPA remains below 2.0 for a second consecutive term, their scholarship status will be reviewed, and future scholarship eligibility will be affected.
- E. **Dropped or Withdrawn Classes:** Recipients must inform The Next Step in writing if they drop or withdraw from a class. If a recipient drops or withdraws from a class after the refund date, future scholarship eligibility may be affected.

III. RECOVERY AND CONDUCT POLICY

- A. Recipients must remain actively engaged in a 12-step substance use disorder recovery program.
- B. Changes in recovery status must be reported immediately to The Next Step.
- C. A relapse will result in the forfeiture of the scholarship.
- D. Recipients must abide by standards of ethical conduct at all times.

IV. COMMUNICATION POLICY

- A. Recipients must notify The Next Step of any significant changes in education, employment, recovery status, or personal circumstances that could impact academic progress.
- B. Changes to mailing address, phone number, or email must be reported immediately. All official communication is conducted via text and email.
- C. Recipients are encouraged to share significant life events - positive or negative - that may be relevant to The Next Step's support.

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V. EMPLOYMENT POLICY

- A. Recipients must maintain at least part-time employment unless an exception has been approved by the scholarship committee.
- B. Changes in employment status must be reported to The Next Step.

VI. VOLUNTEER POLICY

A. Volunteer Expectations

1. Annual Volunteer Commitment

- a. **St. Louis:** Scholarship recipients in the St. Louis program are expected to volunteer at least one time for the organization during the scholarship period for which they receive funding.
- b. **Kansas City:** Scholarship recipients in the Kansas City program are encouraged to support the scholarship program by spreading awareness, but there is no formal volunteer requirement at this time.

2. Volunteer Opportunities: Most volunteer opportunities take place in the fall and may include, but are not limited to:

- Recovery Fest STL (September)
- Scholarship Gala (October)
- Writing thank you notes to donors and supporters (October - January)
- Special Events: represent The Next Step at donor lunches and events, trivia nights, golf tournaments, community events, coat drives, food drives, and recovery events
- Post on social media
- Share stories for testimonials

B. Volunteer Reporting and Documentation

1. **Volunteer Reporting:** For events where volunteers must sign up, recipients will be asked to sign in to confirm their attendance. For all other volunteer efforts, recipients should email the program administrator after each activity for documentation.
2. **Reapplication Requirement:** If reapplying for the scholarship, recipients will be asked to summarize their volunteer efforts from the previous year as part of their application.

C. Exceptions and Non-Compliance

1. **Exceptional Circumstances:** If a recipient is unable to fulfill their volunteer commitment due to unusual circumstances, they must contact the program administrator to discuss alternative options.
2. **Failure to Volunteer:** Not fulfilling the volunteer requirement will impact eligibility for future scholarship funding.

VII. SCHOLARSHIP COMPLETION REPORTING

- A. At the end of the 2026-27 scholarship cycle, all recipients must fill out a completion report to help improve the organization, as well as gather necessary data to understand the impact of our scholarship. We ask that all recipients complete the report, regardless of whether they used funds or plan to reapply for the following year.
- B. Funds will not be available for the following scholarship cycle until the report for the previous cycle is completed.

Last Updated: May 11, 2026

Policies may be updated throughout the scholarship cycle as needed. If that occurs, you will