

APPLICATIONS OPEN OCTOBER 1, 2023

**DEADLINE TO APPLY:
JANUARY 13, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. CST**

Common Questions Regarding Application and Scholarship “Also See Additional Instructions/Help Me!”

- 1. Where do I go on the Website to apply?**
Go to the Smith Scholarship Foundation Website: (www.smithscholarships.com).
- 2. How do I get back on the application?**
Once you have created an “Account,” remember that your “required” email address and password will be your “Keys” to return to the application. You can return to your application as many times as you desire. However, once you click on “Submit,” you cannot return to your application. Note: DO NOT click on “Submit” until you are finished with your application.
- 3. Do I have to finish the entire application at one time?**
No... You do not have to complete it all at once, however, make sure you remember that the deadline to submit your application is January 13, 2024. ALL ATTACHMENTS INCLUDING ALL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION MUST BE UPLOADED OR EMAILED to the Foundation no later than January 13, 2024. Do not wait until the deadline. Past Applicants have had trouble uploading the last day due to large numbers of applications submitted at one time.
- 4. What if I do not know the answers to some of the questions?**
If you are unsure of any of the questions, thoroughly review this document and the sample application containing further explanations and suggestions on the Menu Section of the Scholarship Website, and then contact the Smith Scholarship Office via email (appsupport@smithscholarships.com) for further assistance. Only students and school personnel should submit a request, not family or friends of the applicant, as this scholarship is an accountability program. Parents and guardians should not email or call the office. Please do not call unless you have failed to receive an email response within 48 hours. Be sure to remember your username and password to return to your application for submission.
- 5. Use of AI**
Applicants must write their own essays. Students should obtain review and proofreading from teachers or staff, but all content must be written by the applicant. Use of AI in any form for any task is strictly prohibited. Using AI will be classified as Plagiarism resulting in disqualification or termination. We want the real person. Just tell us your story – remember this is not a writing competition.

FASFA

6. **What if I do not have the Income Tax information for this year yet?**

FASFA 2023-24 uses 2021 Tax Information, and the Smith Scholarship Application can be filed starting October 1, 2023. If you are homeless, a ward of the state, or receiving no support from your parents, please follow the FASFA rules carefully so you are properly classified for aid. It is imperative that students obtain homeless or “at risk of homeless” and “unaccompanied” documentation to obtain “independent” classification. Contact your school or district homeless liaison. (Federal Student Aid and Homeless Youth: <https://studentaid.ed.gov>; Dependency Status: <https://fasa.ed.gov>fotw1920>help>).

The new FASFA form allows you to directly upload IRS tax information while completing the new form. The FASFA application must be filed before SSF application is submitted and a copy of the Student Aid Report (“SAR”) and Student Aid Index (“SAI”) attached. You may be required to supply an unredacted copy of ISIR from your university for verification. If unusual circumstances prevent you from submitting the FASFA, contact SSF by email as soon as possible with a written explanation of steps taken to provide the same information. DACA students, while not eligible for aid, should still complete the application and provide the attachments.

7. **Can I mail the application in?**

No. The application is not formatted for printout. Therefore, if you have issues submitting your application, call us and we will help. Ask your school counselor to use a school’s computer if public libraries are closed. The application can also be completed on a smartphone or mobile device. However, it is recommended that essays be prepared on a computer. If you have no way to complete the application, call us and we will provide assistance.

8. **What if I do not have information for “Mother” or “Father?”**

Enter UNKNOWN and make notes on your application explaining your circumstances as directed on the Application instructions, in significant detail to allow SSF to understand your current living arrangements and what events led to your situation. WARNING “Unknown” without accompanying explanation will not be accepted and your application will not be considered. Review the sample form for assistance.

9. **What if I have not taken the ACT or SAT?**

List the date you are scheduled to take the ACT/SAT and follow up by providing your scores. You must take the ACT/SAT and provide scores to be eligible for this scholarship. Ask your counselor or Upward Bound representative for help in obtaining a waiver for the fee and registering. See www.act.org. No minimum ACT is required.

Free College Application Dates! Apply for the Free Application Waiver! Use the waiver to apply during the free application college dates.

Check with Counselors and online for the 2023-2024 dates that all students can apply to most Alabama colleges for free.

10. What if I have not applied for college admission?

Apply now if possible and list the schools you plan to apply for later and why you prefer that institution. Apply for College ASAP. Utilize application fee waivers from your counselor or Upward Bound Program to avoid costs. Deadlines for University Scholarships are early so review scholarships offered by several institutions. The SSF Application requires that you apply to at least 3 other scholarships, including scholarships provided by each of your preferred institutions. Institutions have scholarships that are automatically included with your College Application, but other specialized scholarships require separate applications.

Example. If you list 2 colleges as preferred, you must apply to each college and their scholarship program(s) and an additional outside scholarship. If you apply to 3 colleges and all 3 of their scholarship programs, you have met your minimum requirement of 3 “other” scholarships.

Examples of College Scholarship Deadlines

Auburn University has a mid-January 2024 deadline for freshmen to be accepted and then students must apply using “AUSOM” by February 15, 2024. See Auburn's website.

University of Montevallo – Admission applications must be submitted before students qualify for college scholarships. See “Award Spring” on the website. Most scholarships for freshman must be completed by March 1st.

Troy University – See Troy's “Online Scholarships” and the “Scholarships Portal” on the Troy website for deadlines as they may vary by campus and scholarship type.

- Leadership for Freshman: 12/1/2023
- Legacy for Freshman: 12/1/2023
- Foundation Sponsored March 1st.
- Music and Band Scholarships – Complete Academic Works Application
- Theatre and Dance Scholarships – Complete Academic Works Application.

USA – Some scholarships are automatic for freshmen; others require a separate scholarship application. Apply at “JagSPOT.” December 1, 2023, is application deadline to be considered for general and departmental scholarships.

UAB – Requires students to submit the admissions applications prior to December 1st for all ACT and GPA scholarships. See “BSMART,” the Blazer scholarship management. Scholarship applications for BSMART begin August 1, 2023.

UAH allows students to retake the ACT even after admission to increasing scholarship eligibility.

- Applications for competitive scholarships start August 1, 2023.
- Competitive Scholarships using the UAH Scholarship Application priority deadline is December 15, 2023. See the UAH website for deadlines.

JSU offers Merit Scholarships based upon ACT/GPA scores with applications.

- Visit the website. Music, Drama, and other scholarships require application and audition with specific school departments.

Please visit college websites and contact scholarship personnel at your selected Public Alabama universities. The examples provided may not be updated and should not be relied upon.

See the SSF website for a list of additional scholarships that applicants should also apply for when seeking financial assistance for college.

- 11. If I am a home-schooled graduating senior, may I apply?**
Yes. Homeschooled, private school, and alternative school students are all eligible to apply if they are Alabama residents. Verification of residency is required for all recipients.
- 12. Q: If I am already a college student may I apply?**
If you are attending a community college, you may apply for a scholarship to transfer after completing a two-year program. Contact SSF by email for instructions.
- 13. Q: Must I be a U.S. Citizen?**
No. DACA students are eligible. Applicants must be Alabama residents applying for Alabama Public Universities and Colleges.
- 14. Q: What grade point average must an applicant have to apply?**
C+. A copy of the student's transcript must be attached to the application.
- 15. Q: What ACT/SAT score must an applicant have to apply?**
There is no required test score, but a student must complete the ACT or SAT test and a copy of those scores must be attached. The student must also meet admission requirements for university admittance. Necessary scores vary from institution to institution but 17 is typically the lowest ACT that will be accepted at many traditional four-year schools. It is advisable to retake your ACT several times to increase your scores. Ask your high school counselor or Upward Bound or local TRIO program coordinator for waiver forms to cover the fees of these tests. Apply during Free Application Week. Use study guides and practice tests available online and at your local library.
- 16. Q: Do letters of recommendation (“LOR”) have to be attached?**
Yes. The applicant must submit three letters of recommendation. Ask people who know you well to complete the LOR form. Make sure the person knows the name of the scholarship for which you are applying, your potential careers, area of study or passion, and personal information such as activities, awards, and any hardships. The sincere heartfelt letters make the best impression as they help accurately portray the applicant. The level of professional standing of the writer is of little or no importance. Letters of Recommendation are crucial to identifying deserving students. A “LOR” Form containing specific questions will be sent to the people you nominate.

17. My Counselor / Recommender did not receive an email from the Smith Foundation to complete.

Your Recommender will not receive any communication from the Smith Foundation. An email will be sent from a Third-Party Program called, "Grant Interface." Please be sure to ask them to check their Junk Mail. Several schools block outside emails. Ask for a personal email to avoid this delay.

18. Will I be notified when my application is received?

No. The online scholarship application program will indicate if your application has been successfully submitted. The application program will not permit an applicant to submit unless 2 LOR's have been uploaded to the online application. You must check on your LOR's.

19. May a recipient live off campus?

No. ALL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS MUST LIVE ON CAMPUS FOR ALL FOUR YEARS. Special accommodation may be made for students with disabilities or participants in cooperative education programs.

20. Sororities and Fraternities

Recipients may only pledge social sororities/fraternities after completion of their freshman year. Non-negotiable.

21. Do I have to attend the same college the whole time?

No. It is preferred that the scholarship recipient attend the same school for four years to obtain a degree during that time frame. Requests for transfers may be made under SSF guidelines.

22. Can I work and go to school?

YES, IF IT DOES NOT EXCEED 15 HOURS A WEEK WHILE CLASSES ARE IN SESSION AND JOBS CANNOT INTERFERE WITH YOUR GRADES. Students may work as many hours as they choose during school breaks. Work Study and on-campus employment are best.

23. Will I be allowed to do work-study?

Absolutely. It is wise to apply for work-study jobs at the institution as soon as possible as those positions fill up quickly. Work-study jobs are encouraged since they are on campus and the need for a car is often avoided.

24. Will I be penalized for any other scholarships that I may have received?

No. This allows the Foundation to efficiently utilize its funds for the benefit of more students. The Smith Scholarship is a "last dollar supplemental scholarship." SSF remits payment only after all other scholarships and aid are applied to the student's college bill, the remaining eligible education cost will then be funded. Scholarships are accolades to be included on your resume. Every \$ you receive allows more students to receive funding.

25. What does the Full scholarship pay for?

Smith is a Supplemental Last Dollar Scholarship. Payment for tuition, room, board, books, and required fees are calculated after the application of all other available aid is applied to your student bill. Payments of \$500 up to \$20,000 each year along with dorm packs and

opportunities to receive professional attire, winter clothing, and study abroad conditioned on compliance with SSF guidelines and individual scholar needs. Partial scholarships will vary in financial and non-financial assistance. All funding is dependent on continued compliance with SSF guidelines and rules of accountability, GPA, and giving back.

26. May a recipient of the scholarship use the funds to attend any university, college, junior college, or technical school?

Each recipient's situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis depending on the student's preference, grades, test scores, anticipated major, proximity to family, and other available financial aid. No recipient is guaranteed attendance at their preferred school or a specific amount of financial funding. Recipients are typically provided multiple school options. The selection made by the Board of Trustees, who are Smith Alum and Education Professionals, is non-negotiable.

27. What if I am only interested in attending a specific University or Institution?

The selection of an educational institution should be based on several factors related to financial need and academic readiness. Family or personal allegiance to a specific university (often due to sports) will not be considered an acceptable factor in evaluating a student's desired school. If an applicant is unwilling to consider a variety of educational options and is insistent on attending a specific school, they should probably not apply.

28. Are recipients guaranteed or entitled to a specific financial amount of funding?

No. Funding and program participation vary pursuant to SSF Guidelines related to a student's needs and compliance with SSF Programs. Awards are made of \$500 up to \$20,000 for undergraduate awards made in 2024.

29. What if I do not like rules and have difficulty adhering to instructions?

The SSF Programs both reward and require continued focus on education and volunteer opportunities. Being a Smith Scholar is a privilege and requires a very high degree of motivation, accountability, and devotion to the SSF mission. Carefully evaluate whether this scholarship is appropriate for you before applying. If you do not follow rules or have issues with compliance with accountability and ethic-based goals, you will not be happy in this program.

SSF guidelines answer many of these questions and will control and supersede the information contained herein. See "Additional Instructions"/ "Help Me!"