



## **Tips for Preparing and Submitting Your Scholarship Application**

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The Bleeding Disorders Foundation of North Carolina (BDFNC) administers two scholarship programs: the BDFNC/Optum Infusion Pharmacy Scholarship, and the BDFNC/George D. McCoy Scholarship. The application process for each program is identical. In an effort to provide clarity and avoid errors and omissions, the Scholarship Committee offers the following tips for preparing an effective application package.

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**Start Early.** You will need time to:

- Complete the simple two-page application form;
- Write a brief essay (1-2 pages);
- Get letters of recommendation from two people;
- Get a doctor's certification;
- Get a current school transcript;
- Get a completed FAFSA.

**Follow instructions.** *Really.*

- In 2023 at least one in three applicants left something missing from their initial submission. Applications that are missing a required component will not be evaluated. BDFNC cannot be responsible for following up with you if your application is incomplete.
- Get all of your documents together in one place before putting them in an envelope or submitting by email as attachments. You should have at least seven different documents: the completed application form, your essay, two (2) letters of recommendation (unless submitted directly to BDFNC), doctor's certification, at least one current transcript, and your financial statement.

**Application Form:** Be sure to sign the form in the space indicated. If you are completing the form electronically, the free Adobe Acrobat Reader will let you apply an electronic signature. The Preview app on an Apple Mac computer has a similar electronic signature feature. Your signature affirms that the information you have provided is truthful and accurate to the best of your knowledge. *Unsigned applications will not be accepted.*

**Essay:** Again, *follow instructions.*

- Describe your occupational goals and objectives in life, and how your (or your family's) experience with a bleeding disorder has affected your choices. You may be able to reuse an essay you wrote for a different purpose, but just be sure it touches on the requested topics.
- Given that BDFNC scholarships are for students who are affected by a bleeding disorder, it is safe to assume that the review committee will be familiar with hemophilia, von Willebrand disease, and bleeding disorders in general.

**Letters of Recommendation:** *Choose your references wisely.*

- Teachers, employers and supervisors are usually good choices. Teachers in particular are most likely to have experience writing effective letters of recommendation for higher education admission and scholarship applicants.



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- A reference from someone who is unrelated to you will often carry more weight than a letter from a family member.
- A recent recommendation – one dated within the current academic year – is preferable to one reused from a prior year.
- Give your reference at least two weeks to prepare a letter.
- While your reference may be comfortable giving you a letter to submit with your application, they may prefer to send it directly to BDFNC by email or US Mail. Mailing instructions are printed on the application form.
- Two letters are required, but you may submit more if you like.

**Doctor's Certification:** This should be a brief letter from a doctor treating your (or your family member's) bleeding disorder. It should list the specific bleeding disorder diagnosis, including severity, if applicable. As with letters of recommendation, give the doctor at least two weeks to prepare the letter.

**Transcript(s):** Send a current transcript -- one that shows the courses in which you are currently enrolled, in addition to those that have been completed. An unofficial transcript (such as a copy you downloaded from your school's website) is sufficient. If you are already enrolled in college but have only one or two semesters of completed courses on your transcript, then it would be prudent to submit your high school transcript in addition to your college transcript.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA, also known as the Student Aid Report):**

- Remember that BDFNC scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit *and* need. Many families are reluctant to disclose their financial affairs, but this is a necessary part of the financial aid process.
- The FAFSA is available not only to students attending undergraduate college, but graduate and professional school, and community college as well.
- Be sure to submit a *completed* (processed) FAFSA. A completed FAFSA will show the Student Aid Index (SIA), a standardized measure of what you and your family should be able to pay toward your education. The SIA is usually printed near the beginning of the FAFSA report, and a copy of that single page will be sufficient for the BDFNC review process.
- The SIA or Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) may also be printed on other official documents, such a college aid offer sheet. This too will be sufficient.
- You may submit an additional personal statement about your finances if you think that the FAFSA does not accurately reflect your situation. Please be specific about your ability to pay for your education. To simply say that "college is expensive" is not enough.
- Optional, but helpful to the review committee, is a statement from your college showing the costs of attending.