



## Scholarship Program Policies

This document provides an overview of the Windham Endowment's policies concerning its scholarship program, including the schedule, parties involved, and process that will be followed.

### General

To the greatest extent possible, the process of selecting a recipient for a scholarship will be "blind" (i.e., the people evaluating applications will not know the names of the applicants).

All awards are one-time, unless otherwise stated in a scholarship's application or in other materials.

### Timeline

Applications will have a specified due date in early spring, will be evaluated in a timely manner, and the scholarship will be presented near the time of graduation. Awards will be paid out after graduation and after the recipient supplies proof of enrollment in a school or program appropriate for the scholarship.

### Applicants

General requirements are described in the application form for each scholarship.

Some scholarships are restricted to Windham High School (WHS) students while others are open to any high school student who is a resident of Windham, regardless of what high school they attend.

A student may apply for more than one scholarship, although there may be restrictions which are described in the application forms.

All information about applicants, including names, will be kept confidential. The names of winners will be publicized, except in special circumstances.

The children of people involved with the Windham Endowment's Scholarship Subcommittee and Scholarship Selection Committee(s) are not eligible for scholarships administered by the Windham Endowment. In addition, the children of a creator of a scholarship fund administered by the Windham Endowment are not eligible for scholarships offered by way of that fund. In all cases, the Windham Endowment reserves the right to determine the eligibility of all scholarship applicants.

## **Selection Committees**

There will be at least one Selection Committee.

The primary responsibility of a Selection Committee is to evaluate applications for scholarships administered by the Windham Endowment and to select recipients for those awards.

A Selection Committee may also be asked to recommend changes to scholarship application forms and/or the policies that govern the overall management of the scholarships.

### **Selection Committee membership**

The Executive Committee of the Windham Endowment will appoint members for one-year renewable terms.

Members should have little knowledge of and contact with the current pool of applicants.

Each Selection Committee will have an odd number of voting members, with a minimum of three.

In addition to the appointed members, a member of the Board of Directors of the Windham Endowment will be an *ex officio* member of each Selection Committee so that the Executive Committee may be kept informed of each Selection Committee's progress and issues that may arise. The *ex officio* member will not have a vote on any motion considered by any Selection Committee.

The Executive Committee will appoint Selection Committee Chair(s) who will coordinate the meetings and work of Selection Committee.

Each Selection Committee will meet as necessary to accomplish its tasks. Selection Committee members may attend by electronic means (e.g., via a voice or video connection).

The number of Selection Committee members necessary to constitute a quorum for any vote shall be at least 50% of the voting members of that Selection Committee.

Votes may be taken by electronic means (e.g., email, text message, telephone, video conference).

A Selection Committee's choice of recipient for a scholarship will not be subject to approval by the Executive Committee or the full Board of Directors of the Windham Endowment.

## **Screeners**

There will be at least one Screener.

Screeners will be appointed by the Executive Committee of the Windham Endowment and must not be members of any Selection Committee. A person who has a child who is currently a senior in any local high school may not be a Screener, as that relationship might be perceived as a conflict of interest.

A Screener's primary responsibility is to ensure that the identities of applicants remain unknown to Selection Committees so that the selection process for each scholarship is blind.

## **Applications**

Each scholarship will have an associate application form that provides, at a minimum, a description of selection criteria, a list of information and materials that must be supplied by the applicant, and a due date for the application.

At appropriate times, application forms for scholarships will be made available on the Windham Endowment's website and scholarships will be publicized in various media. At a minimum, notices should appear when the application forms become available and again shortly before an application's due date.

Applications must be received in hardcopy form unless otherwise specified in the application itself. In the extraordinary case of illness of an applicant, an exception can be made at the discretion of the Windham Endowment to accept an application in digital form (i.e., scan or photograph).

When submitted, applications become the property of the Windham Endowment. They will be treated in a confidential manner and will be seen only by the Selection Committee and by others associated with the Windham Endowment, as necessary. Portions of an application will be released to others outside the Windham Endowment only with the applicant's permission or in accordance with rules specific to a particular scholarship.

Requirements concerning materials submitted as part of an application

A letter of recommendation from an applicant's immediate family member will not be accepted.

A letter of recommendation need not be written specifically for a particular application if a letter written for another purpose would fulfill an application's requirements.

News articles will not be accepted as part of an application for a scholarship award as they are nearly impossible to redact effectively, endangering the "blind" selection process.

## **Process**

Receipt of applications

Screeners will receive copies of applications either in hardcopy or electronic form and will assign an ID code to each application, marking the applicant information page and each page of the application with that ID code.

Screeners will prepare a key file, listing the names of applicants along with their ID codes.

Except on the applicant information page, Screeners will redact applicant names and other identifying information in the applications.

The Windham Endowment will preserve the original redacted applications along with the original unredacted version of the application, including the applicant information page.

Evaluation of applicants and selection of recipients

Redacted applications, except for the applicant information page, will be converted to a digital format (e.g., by scanning to PDF) and distributed to members of Selection Committees by electronic means.

After receiving applications, each Selection Committee will meet as necessary to review and evaluate the applications.

Each Selection Committee will determine the process and methods used to select the recipients of each scholarship but in all cases will base its selection on the criteria described in the application form for that scholarship.

The choice of a recipient will be by simple majority of those voting.

Recipients may be vetted for eligibility by consulting with school authorities. Each Selection Committee should select a backup recipient in case the recipient is or becomes ineligible to receive the scholarship.

If, for any reason, a Selection Committee needs to contact an applicant during the evaluation process, it will do so indirectly through a Screener so that the selection process remains blind.

After recipients and backups are chosen, the Chair will notify a Screener of their ID codes and the Screener will use the key file to determine the names of the recipients and backups.

#### Notification of recipients

The Windham Endowment will notify recipients of scholarships in writing or by some other method of the Windham Endowment's choosing.

#### Publicity

Except in special circumstances (see individual application forms for details), the Windham Endowment will notify the Guidance Departments at the recipients' schools and publicize the awarding of scholarships with a press release in various media, usually including but not limited to the recipients' names and photographs.

#### Preservation of records

Digital or paper versions of all applications, redacted applications, and (optionally) the Selection Committee's worksheets will be preserved in the Windham Endowment archives for a reasonable period of time.

#### Presentation of scholarship

The presentation of a scholarship will be in accordance with the policies and practices of the recipient's school.

#### Payment of awards

The Executive Committee of the Windham Endowment will determine the timing and payees for scholarship awards.

In order to receive payment of an award, a scholarship recipient must supply proof that they will be enrolled at a school that meets that scholarship's requirements. The Windham Endowment will determine what constitutes proof.

In the event that a scholarship recipient does not supply the required proof within 60 days of the notification of recipients, the Windham Endowment is entitled to revoke the scholarship and its award. At its discretion, the Windham Endowment may then award the scholarship to another applicant or choose not to award the scholarship for the year.

#### Non-award of scholarships

If, in any year, the Selection Committee decides that no applicant meets the minimum requirements for a scholarship, the award for that scholarship will not be made that year.

## **Administration of Scholarships**

### Receipt of funds

The total balance necessary for distribution of a scholarship must be received by November 15th or by another date determined by the Executive Committee of the year prior to the award. If the fund balance on that date is less than that required for the awards, the scholarship's sponsor has the option to *a)* defer awarding the scholarship for a year, or *b)* award the scholarship with the funds available and close the fund, or *c)* transfer any balance to the Windham Endowment Scholarship Fund.