



## 2024 Instructions for Applying for Branch County Community Foundation Scholarships

If you have any technical difficulties while filling out the application, you may contact our staff at 517.278.4517 or by e-mail: [info@brcofoundation.org](mailto:info@brcofoundation.org)

### General Eligibility

To be eligible for ANY Community Foundation scholarship you must be one of the following:

- U.S. citizen
- U.S. national (includes natives of American Samoa or Swain's Island)
- U.S. permanent resident who has an I-151, I-551, or I-551C (Permanent Resident Card)

**Please note: You will be asked to provide documentation if you are the selected applicant for any scholarship.**

### Early Middle College (13<sup>th</sup> year)

**If you will be in a college program while still enrolled in high school during the 2022/2023 school year, you are NOT YET eligible to apply for scholarships. If you have questions about your eligibility please contact us.**

### Beginning the Application Process

1. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>).
2. PLEASE NOTE: We use financial need as one factor in awarding scholarships, and OFTEN THOSE WHO DO NOT QUALIFY FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID ARE GIVEN PREFERENCE. **Therefore, we cannot accept applications without the page of the Student Aid Report (SAR) that shows the estimated amount of family contribution (EFC).**
3. Get copies of your academic transcripts showing your **GPA**, and any report showing your **SAT/ACT scores**.
4. Write down your work history, including any volunteer work, and your volunteer and extracurricular activities.
5. Applicants **must** have a recommendation form. References cannot be family or friends; they should be from an employer, teacher, professor, etc.
6. Your personal resume including a personal statement.
7. One recommendation form (Found on the BCCF website) from a teacher, counselor, employer, pastor, etc. Additional recommendation letters or forms may **also** be required for a few of our scholarships.

The application must be completed in its entirety and must be submitted online. You will not be able to submit your application unless all the required information has been provided. You save your application at any time and return to it.

There are additional attachments that are required for some of our scholarships. A list of attachments is available on our website. Please note these are not required, however, if you submit any of the essays or other attachments that apply to your situation, they will qualify you for more scholarships.

### Complete an Application Online

1. Click on this scholarship [link](#) to access the application online.

2. If this is your first time visiting the website, please create a new account. **DO NOT USE YOUR SCHOOL E-MAIL ADDRESS. PLEASE USE YOUR OWN PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS OR A PARENT’S EMAIL TO CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT.** It will be important to use an address that will be valid throughout your college career for further communication from the Branch County Community Foundation’s staff.
3. If you have created an account before, please do not create a new account; instead use last year’s credentials. If you cannot remember your login information, please contact staff to reset it for you. Please make sure to check the appropriate box if you have received a scholarship from the Branch County Community Foundation before.
4. To start the application process, click on Opportunities tab on the left side of the menu. Then click on the **2024 Scholarship Application.**

## Applicant Information

5. Under Applicant Information, please enter your personal information. All questions with a **red asterisk (\*)** must be answered.

**Please attach your personal resume.** In order to be considered for the Branch County Community Foundation Scholarships, applicants must use the format below for their resume. If they do not use this exact format, their application will not be considered for any scholarships.

The instructions in the scholarship application ask the applicant to attach a two-page **maximum** résumé the following format:

### Name

Mailing Address

Personal Email Address **(DO NOT USE A SCHOOL EMAIL ADDRESS)**

### Personal Statement/Profile

*Tell us why you are attending college; your career goals; how your prior education, work, and/or volunteer experience prepared you for college and/or your chosen career; and why you believe you will be successful in college.*

### Education

*Please list the schools you have attended starting with the most recent. Include certification or degree obtained and dates of attendance, and graduation date or anticipated graduation date.*

### Employment

*List the last three PAID work experiences you’ve had, starting with the most recent job, and include position title, responsibilities, years of involvement.*

### Community Involvement

*List community **volunteer work** (outside of school) you are doing or have done. Be sure to list those that relate to your degree or career goal FIRST. Include position title, responsibilities, years of involvement.*

### Activities

- **List up to 5 organizations** you are a current member of such as ... Student Council, Interact, 4H, etc, and include how long you have been involved and any current titles
- **If you participate in sports, music, arts, etc.** list those, how long you have been involved and any pertinent titles (ie. Captain)

### Awards

- List any honors and awards received Include the year received in the last 5 years. You may include the nature of honor/award (in school or outside school)

6. You will be required to attach a **new** recommendation form: a copy of the recommendation form can be found on our website. Please make sure to give yourself ample time to request a recommendation from a teacher, counselor, employer, etc. As a reminder recommendation forms cannot be completed by you or by family members.
7. ***Make sure to click on the three boxes below the attachment option if they apply to your personal resume.***
8. Please attach the recommendation form. A copy of the recommendation form can be found on our website. Please make sure to give yourself ample time to request a recommendation from a teacher, counselor, employer, etc. As a reminder recommendation forms cannot be completed by you or by family members.
9. When you are done entering your information you may click Next. If you need to gather the attachments, you can save your application and log back in at a later time to continue your application by using the log in you created in the first step.

***\*As a reminder, if you are not done, but need to stop here, you can save your application and return to it.\****

## Educational Information

### *High School*

10. Please enter your Educational Information. Please select the high school you are currently attending or from which you have graduated. If you are enrolled or graduated from a high school not listed, choose other and put the name of the school in the box below. Please enter your GPA. Please attach your high school transcript.
11. If you have completed two years of a foreign language, please check the box below the high school transcript option to be considered for an additional scholarship.

### *Career/Technical Education*

12. If you attended a career/technical school while in high school, please enter the information requested.

### *High School Dual Enrollment*

13. If you were dual-enrolled in college while in high school, please enter your dual enrollment information, and attach a copy of your transcripts, if applicable.

### *Post-Secondary (College) Education*

14. If you were dual-enrolled in college while in high school, or if you are a graduate and already in college, please enter your post-secondary information. Please attach a copy of your college transcript, if applicable. Click Next to continue to your work history.

### *Applicant Work History*

15. Please enter all your work history beginning with the most recent position.
16. If you have had any volunteer experience, please enter it in the next section.

17. If you are a teammate of the Asama Coldwater Manufacturing, Inc. or Gokoh Coldwater, Inc., or if you are related to an Asama or Gokoh teammate, please make sure to click the box at the bottom of the work history tab.
18. If you are employed by Southern Michigan Bank and Trust or if you are related to an employee of SMB&T, please make sure you click the box also located at the bottom of the work history tab.
19. Click Next to enter information about the college or university you wish to attend or are attending.

### *College/University Enrollment & Career Information*

20. It's now time to enter your current or future college information. Enter the semester and year you plan to enroll (for example, fall 2022), whether you are attending part- or full-time, the degree you expect to receive and the career the degree will help you obtain. If you do not have a career or degree goal, please make sure to select other/undecided.
21. If you are a high school student, please make sure to enter the college(s) you have applied to. Make sure to select the State your College is located in from the drop-down. Click the "Accepted" box, if you have any letters of acceptance, and make sure to attach them. For the Degree or Certificate, let us know if you expect to get a bachelors or associates degree or other type of post-secondary certification.

If you are currently in college, you may enter the same college or if you are transferring to a new college, please make sure to enter the new college information.

22. If you are currently, or have been accepted to a nursing program, please make sure to attach your ***proof of acceptance into a nursing program*** to be considered for an additional scholarship, and **check the box**.
23. At the bottom of this section, there are several check boxes. **Please make sure to check all that apply.**  
Click Next

***As a reminder, if you are not done, but need to stop here, you can save your application and return to it.***

## **Financial Information**

### *Part 1: Cost of Degree and Plan to Finance*

24. Under Financial Information, please enter the total cost of your college degree (Example - All four/two years to obtain a bachelor's degree/Associate Degree) and what your plans are to help you pay for the cost of your degree.
25. From your *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*, please attach the **first page** of your Student Aid Report (SAR) which shows the **Student Aid Index (SAI)**.
26. Please also enter your SAI (Student Aid Index) number in the box (required).

**\*\*\*Students that have not received their SAI or estimated SAI can complete the Federal Student Aid Estimator (<https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/>) and submit that number when asked for their Student Aid Index (SAI). Additionally, if students have not gotten their Student Aid Report (SAR) with their Student Aid Index (SAI), they are able to download the estimator results as a PDF and upload that in place of our required first page of the Student Aid Report (SAR). PLEASE**

NOTE: Students will still need to complete a FASFA and submit their SAR at a later date to verify eligibility for need based scholarships. Students who do not submit their official FASFA Student Aid Report (SAR) with their Student Aid Index (SAI) will be disqualified from receiving a Branch County Community Foundation scholarship. Should the scholarship committee determine that the students' verified SAI does not qualify the student for need based scholarships, the scholarship may be awarded to an alternate. \*\*\*

*Part 2: Cost of Degree and Plan to Finance*

27. Now please tell us what the cost of your *first* year of college is, and answer all the other questions about the cost of your degree for first year.

28. Please let us know your plan to cover any remaining balance and give any mitigating reason you may not have worked to earn money for college. Although these questions are not required, the more information you give our scholarship committee members the better they will understand your circumstances. Click Next.

**Additional Attachments**

The information requested for these attachments is **not required** to submit a basic application. However, submitting this information may help qualify you for additional scholarships. On our [website](#), we have provided a list of all the attachments and which scholarship these apply to. You are encouraged to submit as many essays and other attachments that are applicable to you **so that you have the opportunity to qualify for more scholarships.**

**Submission Instructions**

When you are ready to submit, please make sure you have attached all the documents. The system will NOT allow you to submit your application without the required documents.

If you have any technical difficulties while filling out the application, you may contact our staff at 517.278.4517 or by e-mail: [info@brcofoundation.org](mailto:info@brcofoundation.org)

Due Date for Submissions

Scholarship applications are **due by 3:00 PM on April 5, 2024.**

If you have difficulty applying electronically, please contact the Community Foundation for instructions--- 517.278.4517 or [info@brcofoundation.org](mailto:info@brcofoundation.org).

**Paper applications or e-mailed applications WILL NOT be accepted.**

**Review Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

**Ranked by order of importance, reviewers will use the following factors in making recommendations for awardees:**

1. Complete application – all sections are filled out with appropriate information or N/A if section is not applicable.
2. All required submissions were included. **Please read the *Instructions for Applying* and the *documentation noted above* regarding what is to be submitted to verify each eligibility requirement.**
3. Application meets baseline eligibility criteria for the scholarship.
4. Degree to which the application and/or attached documentation demonstrates scholarship-specific preferences/considerations
5. Strong work history or volunteer history, with preference to applicants whose history is related to career goal
6. Academic standing, e.g. overall Grade Point Average (GPA)
7. Application and personal resume are well-written (good spelling and grammar).
8. Applicant has chosen a degree (e.g. Associates in Business Management or Bachelors in Accounting)
9. Applicant has chosen a career (e.g. CPA, Attorney, Nurse, etc.)
10. Extent to which course work is related to career goal, (e.g. those who have attended Branch Area Careers Center in a career pathway related to career goal)
11. Workforce need (in-demand career)
12. Preference to those attending **Michigan** colleges or universities
13. Demonstrated community involvement
14. Strong ties to the region (e.g. applicant expresses a desire to return to the area at some point in career)

### Final Tips

Scholarship selection committees may have hundreds of personal statements to review. It is YOUR job to get their attention. Remember to:

- **Think before you write.** Brainstorm to generate some good ideas and create an outline to help you get going.
- **Be original and be creative in your answers.** Show, don't tell. Use examples to individualize your statement. Demonstrate the point you want to make. Avoid vagueness to make a strong impression.
- **Proofread.** This is very important! You do not want to have any typos on your statement. Check spelling and grammar. Share your statement with a friend, parents, or teachers. Another pair of eyes can catch errors you might miss!
- **Create your portrait.** By doing this on paper, you create a vivid portrait that will depict the person behind the grades, activities and awards. If a committee member feels like he or she knows you, you have done your job and created a powerful emotional connection that elevates your application, and makes it stand out from others.