



## **ELYRIA ROTARY CLUB SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS**

The following information is provided to assist parents whose sons and daughters are considering applying for the Elyria Rotary Club Scholarship. Because this information is general in nature, it may assist parents and students in applying for other scholarships, as well.

- 1. Encourage your son or daughter to apply.** It is often rumored that a great deal of scholarship money goes unrewarded. Although that really *isn't* true, what is true is that students sometimes underestimate their chances of success and hesitate to apply for scholarships. Your persuasion may be just what is needed to get the application process underway.
- 2. Girls are awarded more scholarships than boys.** Why? Far fewer boys apply. Whether it's because boys are less comfortable writing about their activities and interests, or because boys conclude before beginning the process that they won't succeed, or because of other reasons, the pool of male applicants for scholarships is small. If you have a son, you may find it takes extra effort to convince him to apply. If you have a daughter, she may find an extra advantage in the smaller applicant pool, since there may not be as many male applicants as she expects. In either case, it's worth applying. The results might be surprising.
- 3. File your federal income tax return now.** Most parents don't realize how important this step is in procuring scholarship funding for college. Much of the information required in applying for college financial aid is taken from your federal income tax return forms.
- 4. Submit the FAFSA as early as possible.** The FAFSA, or Free Application For Federal Student Aid, is the *key* to college financial aid. The FAFSA will require much of the information from your federal income tax forms. Completing and submitting the FAFSA early is important because some colleges award funds more generously to early applicants than they do to those students of similar circumstances who apply later. This is one instance in which you want to be at the front of the line. Colleges won't allocate *any* money for your son or daughter, however, until he or she has submitted the FAFSA.
- 5. FAFSA and the college financial aid process.** The FAFSA is a multi-page form available in all high school guidance offices. It is also available online at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). If you complete the FAFSA online, in lieu of signature, you must utilize a PIN number, which is also able to be obtained through the online process, but which is a separate step. Regardless of which method you choose for applying, do so as early as possible. Much of the financial information requested can be taken directly from your federal income tax return forms. Once the FAFSA is submitted, you will receive a report which will identify an amount labeled "Expected Family Contribution" ("EFC"). This figure represents the amount which, according to your FAFSA information, the family is expected to be able to



contribute toward the cost of your child's education during that scholastic year. This same figure will be transmitted to all the schools which your son or daughter lists on the FAFSA as those to which he or she intends to apply. Colleges and universities use the EFC figure in determining how much financial aid to provide to a student. No student can receive financial aid without the EFC having been determined. In addition, many private scholarships, including the Elyria Rotary Club Scholarship, require the EFC to be reported on the application. Private scholarships usually have application deadlines, so, for both the private scholarships and the college and university financial aid award process, submitting the FAFSA early improves your chances of receiving a scholarship or award.

**6. Double-check for accuracy.** While filing the FAFSA early is important, making sure that the information submitted is accurate and complete is equally important. If the information is incomplete, or inaccurate, the FAFSA will be rejected or returned. The FAFSA will then remain unprocessed until complete or corrected information is supplied, all of which will delay receipt of the information you and the colleges and universities need to determine financial aid awards. You lose the value of having applied early if the information you submit early is not complete and correct.

**7. Make sure that all reference letters are submitted on time.** For the Elyria Rotary Scholarship, all letters of reference are to be returned, in **SEALED** envelopes, along with the completed application. Once your son or daughter has selected two references and asked those people to write letters of reference, you should follow up with those reference providers. You may have to contact them more than once. This follow-up is extremely important because, if both required letters of reference are not included in the student's application by the deadline (**April 15, 2024**) your son's or daughter's application will be *disqualified* from consideration. Make sure that the people your son or daughter requested to write these letters have completed them and returned them to your son or daughter in sufficient time to reach the Committee before the application deadline. Please know that letters of recommendation can also be emailed directly to [Scholarship@ElyriaRotary.com](mailto:Scholarship@ElyriaRotary.com). The potential loss of a \$20,000 scholarship makes this a truly important item worthy of diligent follow-up.

**NOTE: Reference letters written by the applicant's parents or by others related to the applicant will not be considered.**

**8. Please refrain from contacting Committee members.** The Scholarship Committee spends a great deal of time carefully reviewing each application. If the Committee finds that it needs additional information from an applicant, a committee member will contact your son or daughter. After the Committee has chosen a recipient, all applicants will receive written notices regarding their applications. Please do not call or otherwise contact committee members to check on the status of your son's or daughter's application. The Committee is committed to making its decision by mid-May 2023.

**9. Don't dread all this. It's not as bad as it sounds.** The worst part of this process is having to get it all done early. Once your son or daughter receives an award for financial aid, the process will seem to have been time well-spent. Forge ahead and keep your eye on the prize. Good luck!