



## Local Scholarship Program FAQ

### For Student Applicants

**Q: What is the Local Scholarship Program (LSP)?**

A: This program is run by the Snohomish Education Foundation to provide scholarships funded by local sponsors (families, businesses, community groups and organizations) to graduating seniors graduating from one of the high schools in the Snohomish School District.

**Q: When can I apply?**

A: The application window typically runs from early February to early March each year. Your school counselor will keep you up to date on when the applications open. SEF will also have all dates posted to its website, [www.snoed.org](http://www.snoed.org).

**Q: Where do I apply and what's required?**

A: Apply through the Foundation's [AwardSpring portal](#). You'll need essays, personal statements, transcripts, and any donor-required documents or information. (Check the scholarship pages in AwardSpring for specific details.)

**Q: What criteria are used to evaluate applications?**

A: Selection criteria vary by scholarship but may include academics, leadership, character, volunteer service, community involvement, financial need, intended field of study, work experience, and personal background. The more detail and information you have to supply, the better.

**Q: Can I apply if I'm undecided about my major?**

A: Yes—SEF allows (and encourages where appropriate) listing multiple interests or "undecided" on fields of study.

**Q: How honest must I be?**

A: All application content must be authentic and original. Misrepresentation can lead to disqualification. Write original essays (not plagiarized or AI-generated) and keep your statements personal and honest. Your authentic voice matters – this is what committee reviewers want to see!

**Q: How are winners selected?**

A: Selections are based on published criteria and are made by the sponsor, sponsor-appointed reviewers, or the SEF Scholarship Committee. SEF makes sure sponsors and

committee members with conflicts of interest step aside if need be and have outlines of information on best practices for reviewing scholarships and rubrics.

**Q: When will awards be announced?**

A: Recipients are notified after the SEF Board of Trustees approves selections in April. Notifications are typically made the last week of April.

**Q: I forgot my password. Can you reset it for me?**

A: All users are responsible for their own passwords in the <http://snoed.awardspring.com> system. If an applicant has forgotten their password, they can click the “forgot password” link on the logged-out view of the website. They will be asked to enter their email address and then will receive an email that will help them reset their credentials.

**Q: Why am I getting a message that says “This email address does not exist.”?**

A: If an applicant tries to enter their email on the “forgot password” page and gets this error message, it means that they have not yet created an account. The applicant may create an account by clicking the register button. If the issue continues, please contact [office@snoed.org](mailto:office@snoed.org) with your concern and a response will return within 2 business days.

**Q: Why can't I submit my application?**

A: Applicants need to have completed all questions in each section of the application. Students can see their progress on the left-hand side of their application where a status is displayed (Not Started, In Progress, Completed) and return to the section that requires additional attention. If it still does not work, just click in open white space on the page and the issue should be resolved. Once each section has been completed, they will be able to submit their application.

**Q: I am qualified for the ABC Scholarship, why isn't it showing up in my “Applied Scholarship” list?**

A: If an applicant has an eligibility question, you can check it by clicking on Scholarships on the left tool bar and clicking on that scholarship. After the application is complete, the applicant can click Scholarships in the left-hand menu. Once a scholarship is selected, the scholarship qualifications will appear by qualification group. Each qualification group will have a meets or does not meet indicator, along with the list of qualifications and a meets/does not meet indicator for each qualification in the qualification group to quickly identify what qualification(s) the applicant does not meet.

**Q: I am getting an error message, what should I do?**

A: For error messages or other technical issues, please contact AwardSpring’s support team to troubleshoot. Email [support@awardspring.com](mailto:support@awardspring.com) | Phone 888.258.5628, option 2. Support Hours | Monday-Friday: 8am-7pm (all times Central)

**Q: I missed the deadline, what do I do?**

A: SEF doesn’t accept late applications.

**Q: I accidentally forgot to upload an important document to my application or need to make a change to my application and it’s after the deadline, what should I do?**

A: SEF doesn’t accept any late application materials.

**Q: I didn’t get selected for a certain scholarship, but I think I should have, what should I do?**

A: You may contact SEF ([scholarships@snoed.org](mailto:scholarships@snoed.org)) with any questions directly. We ask that you do not contact the scholarship sponsor directly as often times there are separate reviewers for the scholarships and the sponsor may not be the person to review scholarship applications.

**Q: Can I receive more than one scholarship?**

A: Yes—there’s no stated limit on the number of scholarships you can receive, as long as criteria are met for each.

**Q: What is SEF’s stance on AI use?**

A: SEF and scholarship sponsors want to hear *your* story — the experiences, challenges, goals, and values that make you a strong applicant. AI can be helpful, but when it does too much of the thinking or writing, it takes away from what makes your application meaningful: the voice and experience of you!

**Q: What kind of AI use not OK in my scholarship application?**

A: It can be used for organizing your thoughts, outlining ideas, checking grammar and clarity. You should avoid using AI to: write your essay or responses, generate ideas or personal stories, or “rewrite” your work to sound different.

**Q: What if English isn’t my first language? Can I use AI to help me with my application?**

A: Using AI for basic editing or clarity is appropriate, but know that reviewers care far more about your experiences and goals than perfect grammar.

**Q: Who should I contact if I’m unsure about what is appropriate AI?**

A: If you're not sure whether a tool or use is appropriate, talk with your career counselors or a teacher.

## For Parents, Guardians & Community Members

### **Q: Who can get a SEF scholarship?**

A: Any graduating senior in the Snohomish School District may apply for a SEF scholarship.

### **Q: How does the program work?**

A: Scholarships are hosted by SEF and the majority of scholarships are established by others in the community. SEF doesn't set the criteria for any scholarships except its own. As a donor, you may customize your criteria (to a certain extent) and set parameters for how you would like to award the scholarship as long as it falls within SEF Scholarship policy.

### **Q: Who can establish a scholarship?**

A: Individuals, families, businesses, and organizations can set one up by agreeing to SEF scholarship policies and completing and signing SEF's establishment form for Board consideration.

### **Q: What funding minimums apply?**

A: Annual scholarships must be at least \$500; endowed funds require at least \$10,000 to be "endowed" and to earn investment income.

### **Q: What happens to unused funds?**

A: If no qualifying applicants emerge, funds stay in the restricted account and roll over to the next year. Unclaimed low-balance funds may become part of our unrestricted funding if we do not hear from the donor.

### **Q: How are scholarships funded and managed?**

A: Scholarships are funded by sponsors and held by SEF. If you are interested in establishing a scholarship, funding our programs, or serving on our board and committees, please reach out to [office@snoed.org](mailto:office@snoed.org).

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## For Scholarship Recipients

### **Q: When do I find out I received a scholarship?**

A: Recipients are notified in late April and required to fill out a recipient info form. This will

be sent to you via email and will be in your AwardSpring dashboard to complete. All recipients are also invited to attend award recognition nights that take place in late April / May at AIM, Glacier Peak, or Snohomish High Schools.

**Q: What happens after I receive the scholarship award?**

A: Your funding will be sent directly to your program or institution in July. For SEF to process and send the funds, each student needs to fill out the recipient information form as completely as possible. This needs to be submitted before SEF can send your funding. If you are unsure of what form you need to complete, contact your career counseling office or SEF directly. You can also find the link in your AwardSpring dashboard and in email.

**Q: I don't see my funding in my account at my institution, what do I do?**

A: Contact your new college / program / institution to make sure they received the payment. Depending on the institution or program, it may take a few weeks for the funds to show up in your account. You may contact [scholarships@snoed.org](mailto:scholarships@snoed.org) with questions or get confirmation status of the fund distribution.

**Q: Do I need to attend a ceremony?**

A: Scholarship sponsors and scholarship recipients are invited to ceremonies and it's a great opportunity to make a connection in person. Attendance is not required, but encouraged. This is a chance to network with sponsors and publicly celebrate your achievement. Dates will be shared from your specific high school career center counselors.

**Q: What if I defer college enrollment?**

A: Contact SEF ([scholarships@snoed.org](mailto:scholarships@snoed.org)) to work out an arrangement in compliance with IRS and SEF policy rules. We honor deferrals for one year from graduation date.

**Q: Will my information be kept private?**

A: Yes—all applications and personal data are confidential and our processes follow SEF privacy and data management and protection policies.

**Q: Who can I contact with questions?**

A: Email [scholarships@snoed.org](mailto:scholarships@snoed.org) or discuss with your school's Counseling/College & Career Center. Contact info is available on the district site [sno.wednet.edu](http://sno.wednet.edu).

## **AI Use & Authenticity Guidance for Students**

The Snohomish Education Foundation (SEF) believes scholarship applications should reflect each student’s own voice and experiences. We recognize that artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly common and can be used responsibly as part of the writing process.

SEF does not disqualify on the use of AI; however, we strongly encourage students to use AI thoughtfully and sparingly, and to be the authentic and primary author of all application materials. Reviewers may use AI detection tools at their discretion and will review applications accordingly. Additionally, AwardSpring has an AI detection tool incorporated in it for reviewers to utilize as they wish.

Scholarship reviewers value personal insight, reflection, and actual experiences over “polished” or generic responses. Applications that rely heavily on AI-generated content may feel less authentic and may not be as competitive and reviewed accordingly.

### **SEF Scholarship AI Use Guidance**

The following levels are provided to help students understand appropriate and responsible use of AI tools when completing their scholarship application:

#### **Level 1 – No AI Used (Strongly Encouraged)**

The application was completed entirely without AI tools.

#### **Level 2 – Planning & Structuring (Encouraged Use)**

AI tools were used to help organize thoughts, outline ideas, or clarify what a question is asking. All content was written by the applicant.

#### **Level 3 – Editing & Clarity (Limited Use Accepted)**

AI tools were used for grammar, spelling, or clarity. The applicant reviewed and approved all edits and retained full control over the final responses.

#### **Level 4 – Idea Generation (Strongly Discouraged)**

AI tools were used to generate ideas, draft responses, or suggest content. This level of use often results in less personal and less competitive applications.

#### **Level 5 – Full AI Generation (Strongly Discouraged)**

AI tools generated most or all of the application content. Applications completed primarily by AI may lack authenticity and may not align with SEF’s values or reviewer expectations. There is an AI detection tool within the AwardSpring platform and reviewers can utilize this tool at their discretion.