This guide is intended to be a definitive source on scholarship program design and best practices for the Kids’ Chance Council of State Organizations.

Authors:
Vicki Burkhart – Executive Director, Kids’ Chance of America
Kim Stezala – The Scholarship Lady® and Senior Partner, Design Group International
Foreword

Welcome to the Kids’ Chance of America Scholarship Guide created for you, and in some sense by you, based on the collective wisdom of the Kids’ Chance Council of State Organizations (CSO) and Kids’ Chance of America (KCOA).

The growth and diversity of your programs, combined with the vulnerability of the scholarship recipients and their families, prompted KCOA to invest in scholarship program improvement and alignment. This guide represents the culmination of a two-year process but also serves as a catalyst for states as they move forward.

With board approval, we began the process to secure a national expert on scholarship programs who could serve as in-house counsel to the KCOA Executive Director, CSO leadership and sub-committee members. Kim Stezala, Vice President and Senior Partner at Design Group International, an organizational development firm, was selected. She has extensive experience helping scholarship providers practice more effective philanthropy through innovation, evaluation and improvement strategies. She has been involved with the National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) for 13 years as a speaker and writer on best practices, and as a consultant to many NSPA members.

The process to create this guide included three phases:

1) **Discovery and process consulting**, with an extensive review of Kids’ Chance scholarship information, documentation and examples from the field. It also included participation in sub-committee meetings, interviews with five state representatives and ongoing advice as needed.

2) **Formal recommendations** to the KCOA board, which were approved and serve as the basis for the suggested best practices outlined in this guide.

3) **Writing, review and approval** by the consultant, the CSO chair, scholarship sub-committee members and the KCOA leadership.

While we offer this document as a guide and encourage you to adopt the best practices that make sense for you, we also honor your autonomy and creativity to make as many awards as possible to as many kids as possible. If you adopt one good idea from this guide and it improves your program, we will consider that a success! Thank you for your hard work and for everyone who contributed to the creation of this guide.

Victoria Burkhart
Executive Director
Kids’ Chance of America

Rona Finkelstein
Chair
KCOA Council of State Organizations
# Scholarship Guide

## Kids’ Chance of America

## Table of Contents

### Pre-Application Stage
- Financial Aid 101 ................................................................. page 3
- Marketing and Recruitment .................................................. page 5
- Planning for the Future ......................................................... page 8
- Eligibility Criteria ................................................................ page 8
- Judging Criteria .................................................................... page 10
- Operations and Structure (staffed, volunteer-driven, hybrid)................ page 11

### Applicant/Recipient Stage
- Application ........................................................................ page 13
- Selection ............................................................................. page 14
- Payment ............................................................................... page 14
- Renewal ............................................................................... page 15
- Communication ................................................................... page 16
- Student Information and FERPA........................................ page 17
- Recipient Showcasing ........................................................ page 18

### Accountability
- Metrics and Reporting ....................................................... page 19
- Program Evaluation .......................................................... page 20

### Resource Guide/Appendix
- Common Application (Suggested)
- Sample Scholarship Process and Timeline
- Public Information Act Request
- Scholarship Agreement with Publicity Release
- Story-Telling Template
- Scholarship Recipient Engagement Strategies

---

Copyright notice: Excerpts from *Scholarships 101: The Real-World Guide to Getting Cash for College*, published by Kim Stezala, and from original content developed by Ms. Stezala for the National Scholarship Providers Association Toolkit, are granted to KCOA for one-time personal use and may not be published in whole or in part in any current or future method or media without prior written permission.
Scholarship Guide
Kids’ Chance of America

This guide is scholarship-specific and rich with suggestions, best practices and rationale on program choices for the reader to consider. This was the scope approved by the scholarship sub-committee of the Council at the onset of this project in 2017. It is not exhaustive and does not include guidance on general nonprofit management, board development or fundraising.

Pre-Application Stage – Overview

Prior to accepting any applications each state organization should have a basic understanding of financial aid and marketing for recruitment purposes. The organization should also be aware of and using the recently completed Planning for the Future (PFF) tool to contribute, manage and retrieve information on youth and young adults that may be eligible based on the death, serious injury or debilitating illness of a parent, as identified in the workers’ compensation field.

Setting and revisiting eligibility and judging criteria that will help vulnerable students succeed are essential steps, especially because higher education and financial aid are in a state of flux, if not turmoil, at the state and federal level. Whether you operate with staff, volunteers, or a hybrid approach, this guide can serve as a beacon for states seeking affirmation, direction or renewal in their approach.

Financial Aid 101

All states should have a basic understanding of financial aid, how it works and how scholarships fit into the bigger picture. State scholarship coordinators may also want to understand the larger trends that are impacting their scholarship dollars.

KCOA and CSO are encouraging states to adopt a Cost of Attendance scholarship model, allowing students to use the funds on any legitimate item included in a college or university’s published cost of attendance. The rationale and context are described below.

Financial aid is defined as “all forms of financial assistance awarded to a student to pay for college.” Some of this is called “self-help” aid, such as subsidized work-study or loans. Grants and scholarships are the types of financial aid that do not have to be repaid. Sometimes students use these terms interchangeably without understanding the difference.

Grants are more likely to be offered by state, federal and tribal institutions, even if the university is the administrator of those funds. These grants may be based on certain under-represented statuses or income levels. While they are generally need-based, such as a state grant to attend a public institution in that state, they also may have a merit component. Institutional grants are funds coming directly from the college and may be called institutional scholarships.
The distinction between state, federal and tribal grants, compared to institutional grants/scholarships, is important because private scholarship dollars, such as those from Kids’ Chance, must interplay with these other sources. There are two possible unintended consequences that Kids’ Chance should be aware of:

- **Displacement** – which results in no net gain to the student. This occurs if the institution replaces its own institutional scholarship that they would have awarded to give to a student, with funds provided by an outside scholarship source.

- **Over-Award** – which results when the combination of financial aid from multiple sources exceeds the actual cost of attendance. This situation is not allowed by federal policy. Over-awards are more likely to occur with high-merit students who are getting multiple awards, high-merit and high-need students who may be “fully packaged” with no loans, and students who have multiple sources of aid limited to “tuition only” policies. Over-award has been an issue in some states where state-funded programs, such as “promise scholarships,” and large scholarship providers both restrict scholarship use to tuition only and leave students with little choice but to turn down an award.

In the U.S., official Cost of Attendance (COA) is based on eligible expenses defined by the federal government. Students can use financial aid toward covering the COA and each university must publicly post their COA. This excerpt is from www.StudentAid.gov:

“If you are attending at least half-time, your COA is the estimate of

- tuition and fees;
- the cost of room and board (or living expenses for students who do not contract with the school for room and board);
- the cost of books, supplies, transportation, loan fees, and miscellaneous expenses including a reasonable amount for the documented cost of a personal computer; and
- costs related to a disability...”

If Kids’ Chance state organizations or affiliates choose to remain on a tuition only model, then they may consider listing a preference for the funds to be applied to tuition with exceptions made if it would adversely affect a student, such as one who has enough funding to cover tuition but not enough to cover books, supplies, rent, etc.

KCOA and CSO are encouraging states to use Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as a mechanism by which to assess a student’s need. Although it is not a perfect measure, it is the most common financial indicator used by scholarship providers. EFC is explained below.

The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is the amount that the federal government determines a family should contribute to a student’s cost of college. The EFC is calculated by the government based on the financial and situational information students provide in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
KCOA and CSO encourage states to be flexible and forgiving in determining scholarship need if there are extenuating financial circumstances that can be verified. KCOA and CSO do not recommend the use of highly detailed budgets or reporting that require the applicant to provide information about grocery budgets, rent, utilities, car payments, credit card debt or other personal finance information.

States may consider asking, “Are there any significant financial changes since you completed the FAFSA?” because the FAFSA is based on income data from nearly two years before the student would have applied for a scholarship. Another possible question is, “Are there any significant financial barriers not reflected in your EFC?”

Additional questions about litigation, settlements, etc., related to the worker’s compensation case may reveal more about the family’s financial situation, if the state organization or affiliate wants to include these circumstances in the judging and selection process. If those details are not included in the judging and selection process they should not be asked.

States are encouraged to strive for a minimum scholarship amount of $3,000 per student per year.

The reasons for suggesting this minimum are:

- Cost of attendance continues to rise and so does student loan debt, which is at a crisis level.
- $2,800 is the approximate national average of a private scholarship for a full-time student at a four-year university based on figures available in 2011. (Source: Secrets to Winning Scholarships by Mark Kantrowitz, 2011).
- The figure has likely risen and amounts lower than $3,000, for full-time attendance at a four-year university, put Kids’ Chance scholarships behind the national average and may affect brand image.

State organizations and affiliates have the autonomy to localize their scholarship program, but KCOA and CSO would like to see more alignment among the states related to financial aid best practices.

**Marketing and Recruitment**

Through the discovery process, the consultant learned that some states have long-standing marketing methods with strong outreach while others struggle to find enough applicants. The consultant also discovered the delicate balance and challenge in trying to recruit the number of students to match the available funding, thus, not over-recruiting and having to reject applicants. Marketing approaches also vary based on organizational capacity and the level of cooperation with potential referral sources.
KCOA and CSO recommend that states have a multi-tiered approach and track the sources of their applicant pool. Relying on one source only may jeopardize the sustainability of the program if that source becomes unavailable.

In the best-case scenarios, state organizations and affiliates have direct relationships with workers’ compensation insurers, claimant attorneys, medical providers, state workers’ compensation officials, judges, etc. These external advocates are making direct referrals between the eligible families and the Kids’ Chance representatives in the state. States that have not attempted to engage in such relationships should start there based on ample evidence that these entities are effective referral sources.

If a state organization or affiliate has geographic limits on where students can enroll in post-secondary education, be sure that the financial aid office and scholarship personnel at the major colleges and universities that recipients regularly attend are aware of Kids’ Chance.

Here are two examples of states that are finding eligible students beyond the efforts described above and beyond what is underway with KCOA’s Planning for the Future (PFF) initiative:

- In Maryland, the Kids’ Chance board secretary makes a Public Information Act request to the state workers’ compensation commission. A sample is included in the appendix.
- In Louisiana, the Kids’ Chance scholarship program is embedded in the state bar foundation with regular access to possible advocates and people of influence.

In any case, when a state organization or affiliate is trying to find more applicants, it should develop a highly targeted approach that focuses on likely sources where eligible students and their families may be discovered.

The marketing and recruitment tips listed below involve sharing information and making connections with organizations that interact with potentially eligible families.

- Ask the state human resources association if it will promote the scholarship information among its members. Source: www.shrm.org
- Reach out to physical therapy or occupational therapy trade groups in the state. Sources: www.aota.org and www.apta.org
- Connect with trade unions, employers or government agencies involved in major civic projects, infrastructure, construction, etc. (New stadium, highway, or corporate headquarters being built? Do the stakeholders know about Kids’ Chance?)
- Share information with first-responder organizations or state police associations that include thousands of men and women who literally risk their lives to serve their communities. Examples: paov.org and www.illinoisfirefighters.org

- Take a regional approach in higher population states or those with large geographic scope, and pilot recruitment efforts in one area instead of trying to stretch capacity to the whole state. Evaluate the efforts and replicate success in other regions.

- Ask for PSAs (public service announcements) in the major metropolitan Business Journals, or garner reporting coverage by pitching a story about this unique scholarship program.

- Reach out to business, civic and benevolent groups that can help promote Kids’ Chance, help connect to places where eligible families may congregate, or even possibly become donors or volunteers. Examples include Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Elks, Eagles, Lions, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, etc.

- Ask to be listed on scholarship sites maintained by community foundations or philanthropic organizations specific to the state or region. Example: Washboard listing in Washington state www.thewashboard.org/login.aspx.

- Focus on school districts and ask to be included in their scholarship listing, which many times is included in a student web portal such as:

  “You can access local scholarships through your Career Cruising account! Here is how: Go to the Milwaukee Public Schools website (mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us). Hover over the Students tab. Under Tools, click Student Toolbox, which will redirect to clever.com/in/milwaukee.”

- Request a list of counselors from major school districts or from the State Department of Education. The state association of counselors is another good resource. In many cases, non-counselors can join as affiliate members to get the newsletter, share news, attend events, etc. Paid lists are also available, but KCOA and CSO suggest looking at publicly available resources first to ask them advice on how and where to promote the scholarship. Examples: www.psschoolcounselor.org and www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/list/school-counseling-services/contacts/52-250/.

- Connect with state organizations or foundations that have high capacity and funding to conduct statewide outreach specifically about college access and success, financial aid and scholarships. Examples: Oregon Student Assistance Commission oregonstudentaid.gov and Reach Higher Montana www.reachhighermontana.org. They are natural advocates for scholarship providers.

- Distribute information to meet with college access programs or networks, and other scholarship providers, in the state. Listings are available here: www.collegeaccess.org and scholarshipproviders.org.
• Share scholarship recipients’ stories in dissemination efforts to connect an abstract process with the real students who benefit from the scholarship. Examples can include vignettes on the state website, “selfies,” or more professional videos. The point is to give potential collaborators or partners quick, direct access to student stories. Examples include: www.kidschanceca.org/scholarship-recipients.html and www.kidschanceky.org

Lastly, if these suggestions seem overwhelming, consider hiring a temporary assistant, identifying a volunteer, or securing a marketing intern to help build a statewide marketing and recruitment plan, with network contacts/lists, that the Kids’ Chance organization can maintain after the initial work is complete.

Planning for the Future (PFF)

The Planning for the Future (PFF) program was initiated by Kids’ Chance of America in 2015 to capture information about future scholarship candidates beginning as soon as the children were identified, ideally immediately after the report of the death or injury. The PFF initiative was intended to improve the process for eligible families to sign up to be informed about Kids’ Chance scholarships.

Initially, information about the children of parents who were killed or seriously injured on the job was captured on cards and mailed to the KCOA office. Most recently, the PFF process was automated through an online database. State organizations and affiliates receive referrals directly from the online database once a student reaches the eligibility age, in most cases at the age of 16. One of the most difficult aspects of managing this information is that if the compensable injury or death occurred when the child was very young, the contact information may have changed by the time a student is in high school. The PFF program ensures that data is updated quarterly.

Transitioning to the online process was a major undertaking, and we encourage each state to include the PFF link on the front page of their website: www.kidschance.org/planning-for-the-future

Eligibility Criteria

Every state organization or affiliate must follow one requirement of Kids’ Chance scholarship eligibility: the recipient must be the dependent of a worker who suffered a catastrophic injury, debilitating illness or death while performing their job.

As states developed their programs, many times by volunteers, they may have sought direction from other scholarship programs within or outside of the Kids’ Chance network. The leadership of each organization varies greatly, as does their understanding of higher education, financial aid and the changing demographics and choices of college students today.
Based on a review of eligibility documentation and sample Kids’ Chance applications, the consultant makes the recommendations below related to eligibility.

- **Allow flexibility on residency as it pertains to college choices.** Students are faced with higher education decisions that may require in-state or out-of-state tuition, or establishing residency in another state, to gain a more favorable financial aid package or tuition. With a proven compensable claim in the state in which the scholarship organization exists, states should allow students the flexibility to attend college where it best meets their needs.

- **Experiment with an in-state “preference,” instead of a requirement,** if states feel strongly about in-state enrollment. They could allocate scholarships first to students who remain in-state and second to those who leave the state.

- **Implement scholarship programs that are primarily need-based rather than merit-based** to more closely match the original intent of the Kids’ Chance scholarship. Doing so will allow state organizations to be more forgiving about grade point averages or other indicators of merit. Clearly state that the program is need-based at the onset in all marketing materials and in renewal eligibility language so that lower-performing students will not be deterred from applying for the scholarship.

- **Avoid funding of high school scholarships.** While the intention may be generous, this type of funding co-mingles two very different types of scholarships and should be avoided for these reasons:
  - It dilutes the Kids’ Chance brand and could possibly cause confusion; and
  - Giving money to families for high school enrollment has different tax implications and is not governed by the same federal financial aid policies as higher education.

- **Examine and discuss the issue of citizenship internally as it relates to eligibility.** Communicate clearly if U.S. citizenship is a requirement. However, consider the consequence of that limitation to the overall mission and purpose. A person from another country could be employed by a company conducting work in the United States and have a legitimate injury, illness or death. If the mission and purpose is to serve the dependents of the injured or deceased worker, requiring citizenship could conflict with the founding purpose of the organization.

- **State clearly if information derived from the FAFSA (such as the Student Aid Report and Expected Family Contribution) is a requirement to complete the application or if exceptions can be made for extenuating circumstances.**
Judging Criteria

Kids’ Chance has a history of transparency and flexibility to award as many scholarships as possible to eligible students; however, the judging and selection process is sometimes perceived as a mystery to scholarship applicants.

KCOA and CSO encourage every state to conduct a review of the criteria, ratings and tools used in the judging process to check for relevancy and fairness.

Based on a review of documentation and national best practices, the consultant is making the recommendations below related to judging criteria.

- Implement sliding scales or “ranges” of awards instead of the same amount for every student. The judging criteria can state that students with unmet need at X, Y or Z levels qualify for A, B and C level scholarships. This is a more equitable distribution of charitable dollars.

- Based on the stated eligibility criteria, especially related to the primary intent of a “need-based,” “merit-based” or hybrid approach, analyze the degree to which the judging tools, matrices and processes match the advertised intent of the scholarship.

- Depending on the degree of misalignment between eligibility and judging criteria, if any, adjust either or both criteria accordingly. Some scholarship providers ask for detailed information about high school activities, community service, etc., but that information is not judged anywhere, causing an extra burden for the student to collect and provide that information.

- Be transparent and share the basic criteria by which students will be judged on the application itself or scholarship web page. If a holistic judging process is used, state that. If a weighted process is used, share that. For example:

  “All students will be given fair consideration. The scholarship committee uses these criteria to determine scholarship recipients and award amounts:

  - 50% of points allocated based on unmet financial need
  - 25% of points allocated based on past evidence of merit
  - 25% of points allocated based on clearly stated education and career goals”

- Alert applicants if the state has a practice of following up during the judging process with applicants themselves, high school counselors or college financial aid officers.
• Do not require letters of reference or recommendation unless that is a major component of the judging process. Nationally, scholarship providers are reducing or eliminating letters of recommendation if they do not provide significant value or will not be judged. Some providers are changing the recommendation or reference process to a multiple-choice scale on attributes they are seeking in students vs. requiring a formal letter from the recommender.

There are always opportunities for improvement and each state can use its own knowledge, combined with these suggestions, to determine their judging criteria and process.

**Operations and Structure**

In early 2018, the Kids’ Chance Accelerator program was piloted to offer organizational development support to states that face challenges in operations, board development and structure. Through the discovery process in creating the guide, the consultant and leadership identified three main strategies by which the state scholarship programs operate, and possible benefits and drawbacks of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Possible Benefits</th>
<th>Possible Drawbacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Driven</td>
<td>• Low overhead&lt;br&gt;• Altruism&lt;br&gt;• Historical knowledge and willingness to transfer knowledge to new volunteers&lt;br&gt;• Commitment to connect grassroots with top players</td>
<td>• Over-worked volunteers&lt;br&gt;• Turn-over among volunteers&lt;br&gt;• Capacity to deal with change&lt;br&gt;• Capacity to manage or achieve exponential growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffed</td>
<td>• Obligation to deliverables/tasks&lt;br&gt;• Someone is paid to “mind the store”&lt;br&gt;• Stability if embedded in another company or organization&lt;br&gt;• Access to resources of the hosting organization (marketing, legal, administrative support)</td>
<td>• KC scholarship is only one part of their job; balance obligation with other tasks&lt;br&gt;• Jeopardizes KC if larger organization changes their mind and pulls back resources&lt;br&gt;• Costs more than volunteer-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>• Lower overhead than hiring full-time staff; uses contractor to fulfill role and services&lt;br&gt;• Obligation to deliverables/tasks&lt;br&gt;• Helps with capacity issues seen in full volunteer-driven group&lt;br&gt;• A face/name to represent the organization</td>
<td>• Contractor role; perception of that&lt;br&gt;• Possible disputes about roles&lt;br&gt;• Shifts knowledge away from volunteers to “outside” help&lt;br&gt;• Costs more than volunteer-driven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As states consider their organizational structures and the possibilities, Kids’ Chance offers support for those dealing with organizational capacity issues such as:

- **KCOA National Conference in May**, where KCOA provides Kids’ Chance College, with workshops on organizational issues and scholarship best practices, and an opportunity for members to network and learn from each other.

- **Kids’ Chance Accelerator**, in its pilot phase, which has potential for growth and could help more states build their capacity.

- **Camaraderie and generosity of CSO members** to share their knowledge with each other through phone calls, emails, and meetings.

- **Access to national best practices in scholarship program management, student engagement and community-building strategies**, through our alliance with Kim Stezala.

External sources of support may include local nonprofit management, organizational development consultants, the nationally recognized BoardSource organization, [boardsource.org/about-boardsource](http://boardsource.org/about-boardsource), and many other organizations in the philanthropic sector.
Applicant/Recipient Stage – Overview

Depending on the lifecycle and capacity of each organization, states may vary greatly in the level of processes and systems to provide customer service such as communication and stewardship to eligible candidates through the application, review, selection, verification, notification, and award stage.

If capacity allows, state organizations also may consider post-award interaction ranging from website vignettes to special event appearances or even alumni engagement strategies.

The guide provides a framework to help state organizations and affiliates consider their intentions and ways to maximize their awards based on the larger context of student life, higher education, data privacy and financial aid.

KCOA and CSO encourage every state to evaluate the totality of their processes from the applicant to alumni stage and consider implementing the best practices outlined below.

Application

- Streamline the initial application to the degree possible or adopt the suggested Kids’ Chance common application provided in the appendix.

- Ensure clarity and consistency in descriptions of the scholarship, initial applicant eligibility and renewal eligibility. Use the same terminology across multiple documents and website text.

- Ask the student to provide a claim number. Remove burdensome documentation about the claim, current medical appointments, judgments, etc., from the application. At the renewal stage, do not ask students to report again on the parent’s death or disability.

- Alert students to the information they will need to gather to complete their application and the estimated time to do so. It can be discouraging for a student to fill in an application and then learn that they need to upload several documents that may not be readily available.

- Do not request or require photographs at the application stage. This is strongly discouraged in the scholarship community because it has the potential to introduce bias and subjectivity into the process, and it may deter potential applicants from participating.
• Design online applications with functionality for students to save information, log off, and return to complete the application. If this functionality is not possible, then clearly state at the beginning of the process that all applications must be completed in one session.

• Clearly state the deadline and delivery expectations. For print, state “postmarked by” or “received by” date, whichever is the policy. For online applications, state “submitted by [date], [time] and [time zone].” If the state allows rolling admissions, state the timeline of when applications are read, reviewed and decided upon.

• Do NOT ask for full social security numbers. In the era of identity theft, privacy invasion and litigiousness, doing so puts all parties at risk. If necessary to access claim information, only request the last four digits, as shown on the suggested Kids’ Chance common application.

Selection

• As the organization moves through the judging and selection process, balance the need to know with the need for student privacy. Ask, internally, “Is the information we gain going to make a difference in our decision?” If yes, continue pursuing it; if not, do not pursue it.

• Gain clarity and consensus at the board and committee level on the criteria by which students will be judged. Reference the suggestions on page 10 and 11 of this guide.

• Clarify definitions used in the selection process, including the ratings associated with any matrices or scales in use. Train new volunteers and retrain continuing volunteers as needed to build common understanding of definitions. For instance, does everyone involved in the process understand financial aid terminology and how to rate need? Does one judge’s rating of “5” on an essay equal another judge’s “5”?

• Use specific selection criteria but allow for holistic decision-making for outliers. For instance, if “community service” is part of the selection process, consider how to measure students who cannot engage in community service but instead must seek paid employment, babysit siblings or fill the role of caregiver to a parent or family member.

• Although many state organizations award scholarships to every applicant, every organization should have a final selection policy in case the number of students who apply exceeds the scholarship funding available.

• Provide all approved scholarship recipients with a congratulatory award letter clearly stating the terms and conditions of the scholarship and the original attestation language that they signed on the application.
Scholarship Payment

- KCSO and CSO strongly encourage states to send scholarship payments directly to the post-secondary institution. This is considered a best practice and it helps prevent re-packaging of financial aid if a student reports the scholarship to their institution late in the process. By law, students must report all outside scholarships to their college or university.

- All payments should be accompanied with an award letter that clearly states the terms and conditions of the scholarship, including information such as the student’s name and date of birth, if possible. **Do not send social security numbers.** The letter should also explain that if the student does not attend the institution in the second semester, then the remaining funds must be returned to the Kids’ Chance organization.

- If an education provider, such as a career training program, is not a Title IV institution (those that participate in the federal financial aid program) the scholarship coordinator should ask for verification of enrollment and a copy of the bill, with the unpaid portion clearly outlined. In this scenario, take these extra precautions:
  - If sending payment directly to the education program, include a policy that ensures return of the funds if the student fails to attend.
  - If sending a check directly to the student, include a policy and language about the consequences of not using the scholarship as intended. It is scholarship fraud if funds are not used as intended.

- Allow scholarship deferments, especially for this vulnerable population of students, whether it is for a gap year, family medical issues, mission trip or other legitimate reason. If the by-laws of the organization do not allow for deferment, and money must be spent in the fiscal year in which they were approved, then encourage students to re-apply when they return.

- It is not necessary to send payment twice a year to the post-secondary institution unless you have historical knowledge of students dropping out during or after the first semester. In most cases, if you state in your award letter to the college or university that the scholarship amount is to be applied for the entire academic year, the financial aid department will apply it to the financial aid package in two equal disbursements.

Renewal

- Implement a process in which scholarships are “annually renewable” if a student is in good standing. For states with a semester-by-semester renewal process, consider adopting an annual renewal process with semester-to-semester verification for disbursement.
• Make the scholarship application process easier at the renewal stage by providing an “express” or streamlined renewal. Students have already provided the detailed information about the injury, illness or death, and the scholarship program has already invested funds in them. Making the student repeat everything about the incident seems daunting and duplicative.

• Kids’ Chance is not intended, advertised or implemented as a high merit-based program; therefore maintaining “Satisfactory Academic Progress” (SAP), instead of a minimum grade point average, should suffice for semester or annual renewals. SAP is a set of criteria determined by each higher education institution that a student must meet to be eligible for Title IV federal financial aid. If high merit is not expected, then adding a minimum grade point average is duplicative.

• If a student is on SAP probation, then KCOA and CSO suggests that each student be given the grace to improve their grades according to the college or university policy. If the student cannot maintain SAP, therefore making them ineligible for federal aid, the state organization may wish to rescind the scholarship.

Communication

• Based on research available on other scholarship programs, states should be aware that providing vulnerable students with scholarship funding boosts confidence and the benefit to them is often “more than the money.” Each state should convey this in the congratulatory award letters affirming the organization’s confidence in them and their ability to pursue their goals.

• Each state should have a communications plan or checklist of communication tasks at each stage of the process such as:
  o Marketing and recruitment
  o Website development
  o Partner/advocate engagement
  o Application stage
  o Reminder process
  o Selection process
  o Congratulations/award process
  o Terms and conditions for the college and the student
  o Attestation form
  o Renewal process
  o Publicity process
  o Media/image release forms
  o Special event/student speaker protocols
  o Matriculation engagement
  o Graduation congratulations
  o Post-graduation engagement
• Conduct a communications audit annually to ensure that any changes are accurately reflected in all documentation.

• Determine realistic standards and expectations for the frequency of communication with scholarship recipients and their optional or required responses to your communication.

Student Information and FERPA

KCOA and CSO encourage every state to implement an education records release policy with explicit written consent from every scholarship recipient, as indicated below.

• One of the most important and contentious issues in the scholarship industry is related to student information. As a provider of financial aid, scholarship providers previously had the right to request a student’s financial information directly from a post-secondary institution, with or without a student’s consent. In the past, some institutions required student consent as an additional protection to the student and to mitigate their own risk.

• Students have many rights through the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), one of which is to block requests for information about their status. It is important to educate students about the scholarship provider’s need to gain access to their information for disbursement, verification and renewal purposes.

• A complication arose in 2017 when the U.S. Department of Education’s Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) issued guidance stating that regulations in the Higher Education Act (HEA) superseded the allowance for scholarship providers to gain FAFSA-derived financial information, even with a student’s consent.

• In the fall of 2017, most post-secondary institutions stopped sharing crucial financial information with scholarship providers. In March of 2018, the issue was resolved after heavy advocacy efforts by the National Scholarship Providers Association, the United Negro College Fund and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). The federal government made an exception in HEA for scholarship providers, basically re-instituting the ability for post-secondary institutions to share financial information with scholarship providers. However, student consent is now required. More information is available here: www.nasfaa.org/news-item/14730/
• Beyond this FERPA and FAFSA related issue, state organizations should take care to manage applicant and recipient information with the highest security possible based on the detailed and sensitive information gathered in the application process. This includes online and print security, record retention and destruction policies, and common understanding and training for staff, board members and volunteers about the importance of this issue.

Recipient Showcasing

• The most effective strategies to raise awareness and raise money for Kids’ Chance include showcasing the impact of the scholarship and the success stories of recipients. Every state should have a mechanism by which to capture and disseminate student stories.

• No matter what the process, have clear expectations and signed consent to showcase your students. Image release forms, publicity release forms, attestation/truth of their story, etc., are all important protections for the organization and the student.

• Here are a few examples of how and when to showcase students:
  
  o Guest speaker at fundraising event
  o Guest speaker at board meeting
  o Meeting with potential donors
  o Feature story in a newsletter
  o Photo and story on state organization’s website
  o Feature articles in media
  o Interviews with members of media
  o Blog posts – your own or on other blogs
  o YouTube videos – include the link in promotional materials
  o Printed cards with student stories:
    ▪ Send to advocates
    ▪ Send to potential partners
    ▪ Use as leave-behinds
    ▪ Distribute/display at events

• Follow the basic tenets of good story-telling. Coach students if necessary but retain their authenticity. See the appendix for a template.

• Plan to reimburse students for any expenses incurred to participate in events or promotional efforts. Another option is to offer a stipend for participation.

Scholarship Recipient Engagement Strategies

Included in the appendix.
Accountability – Overview

At the state and national level, the Kids’ Chance mantra of “more money for more kids” begins with having a great story and evidence of impact. The metrics and reporting by which each state and the national organization hold themselves accountable is part of the Kids’ Chance culture and is worthy of time and attention in this guide.

The CSO board challenges each state to examine what success looks like now and in the future, and how to measure it. At minimum, states should know the general college-going statistics in their state, the number of potentially eligible scholarship families, and their own numbers about the applicants and recipients.

This section also includes a brief framework for scholarship program evaluation that can be adopted at the discretion of state organizations and affiliates, to the degree that they desire or have the capacity.

Metrics and Reporting

- In any scholarship program, the first step is to know about the eligible applicant pool. Many state organizations use the NCCI database as a first attempt to understand the number of injured, seriously ill or deceased workers in their state, on an annual basis, and we consider this a best practice. Moving forward, states should know this number. Obviously, not all cases will have children on the pathway to college, but it helps to know the total universe.

- Of the total possible pool, what percentage of families are in the Kids’ Chance realm or pipeline, either through PFF, a public information act request or known applicants? At this stage, having a baseline is helpful to set future goals. If 1% are in your database, is doubling that to 2% realistic?

- A broader organizational goal is that Kids’ Chance state organizations and affiliates reach 10% of eligible families through outreach, mailings, etc., and those names are entered in the PFF tool.

- States should know the basic demographic, social and economic profile of college enrollment in their state and compare that to historical information on their scholarship recipients. This information is publicly available, at minimum, from state higher education coordinating boards, flagship universities’ websites or other public websites about college enrollment. The point is to understand the figures while acknowledging that Kids’ Chance students are likely to be more vulnerable and therefore under-represented in college enrollment. For example, if 20% of high school graduates in your state go to college, it is realistic that students dealing with catastrophic
loss may have lower college enrollment rates, especially if they have significant financial need.

- States should track the following figures to better understand their own pipeline, areas of influence, areas of improvement, and areas out of their control. Examples include:
  - Amount of funds raised each year
  - Amount of funds expended each year
  - Range and average scholarship amount each year
  - Number of first-time recipients each year
  - Number of continuing recipients each year
  - Number of people who start the application
  - Number of people who complete the application
  - Number of potential renewals each year (or semester)
  - Number of actual renewals each year (or semester)
  - Number of graduates each year
  - Number of graduates employed, if possible
  - Reasons why students “left” the scholarship (dropped out, didn’t verify, became ineligible)

- In 2019, KCOA and CSO will continue to work together to refine the expectations around data collection, metrics and reporting to the national organization, knowing that many states are run by volunteers and may have limited capacity. The previous points are merely suggestions and highlights of best practices from the scholarship field, but we do seek greater alignment of how we measure impact and report to stakeholders including donors, board members, advocates, and the worker’s compensation community at large.

**Program Evaluation**

- More scholarship providers are engaging in formal program evaluation to gauge their impact, gather evidence of success and learn about areas of improvement. They often use this information to refine what they do, capture recipient opinions and stories, and incorporate it into their fund development efforts. Depending on the capacity of each state organization, KCOA and CSO encourage internal or external evaluation.

- Understand the options and different levels of inquiry you might consider, such as:
  - Measurement – the act of gathering data resulting from use of a tool
  - Assessment – cumulative collection of data and analysis for program improvement
  - Evaluation – judging worth or quality (perhaps also to improve programs)

- Below is a basic framework to begin the conversation about evaluation within your organization:
Purpose & Scope – Why conduct evaluation? Towards what end? What will be included in your scope of inquiry? How large or small will it be?

Audience – Who will participate and be included in the process, and who will read/learn/care about the findings you share?

Capacity – Will you manage the evaluation internally, use volunteers, seek a consultant, or partner with a university?

Methodology – How will you conduct the evaluation? Will you focus on quantitative or qualitative evidence, or a combination of both? Are your methods valid and reliable to tell you what you want to know or discover? To what degree are your survey questions, interview questions or other tools objective and free from bias to the degree possible?

Analysis – Will you focus on descriptive analysis, statistical analysis, thematic/sentiment analysis or a combination?

Reporting – How will you share the findings? Written narrative, slides, data visualization, infographics? Go back to your purpose and audience to help answer this question.

Feedback – How will you manage questions from the people who read or review your report, or those who want to know more?

Budget – Many of the other pieces of the framework are affected by the budget. Are your scope, methodology, analysis and reporting expectations realistic?

- Program evaluation is not required but it is a helpful tool for organizations focused on growth that are seeking validation, ways to improve, and evidence to tell their story with a broader audience.

Closing

Thanks to everyone who participated in the development of the KCOA Scholarship Guide, a valuable resource for use by Kids’ Chance state organization and affiliates. Special thanks to the CSO Scholarship Sub-committee for their dedication in advocating for best practices.

Contact

For more information, please contact:

Kids’ Chance of America
354 N. Lewis Road, #809
Royersford, PA 19468
484-945-9903
admin@kidschance.org
www.kidschance.org
Resource Guide/Appendix

Kids’ Chance Common Application
Kids’ Chance Scholarship Overview 2019

Background:

Kids’ Chance of [STATE] is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides scholarships for children of workers that have been killed or seriously injured in a compensable work-related accident or occupational disease. Scholarships are awarded once a year and students may apply every year for which they are eligible. Current annual scholarship amounts range from [$X,XXX - $X,XXX] and are determined based on the student’s financial need.

Student Eligibility:

☐ Between [AGE RANGE] years old at the time of the application.
☐ Child who is a dependent of a worker killed or seriously injured in a compensable work-related accident or occupational disease with a [STATE] employer.
☐ Demonstrated financial need to pay for post-secondary education.
☐ Accepted or already enrolled at a [university, college or technical school]. (Graduate-level students are not eligible.)
☐ Pursuing a degree as a [FULL-TIME or PART-TIME] student.
☐ Completion of the FAFSA – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – for students attending a 2-year or 4-year college or university.
☐ Other eligibility

Documentation Required:

☐ Completed Kids’ Chance Scholarship Application with student, family and university/college/technical school contact information
☐ Transcript of most recent grades – unofficial transcript is acceptable
☐ Copy of the Student Aid Report (SAR) you received from completing the FAFSA, with your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), IF you are attending a 2-year or 4-year college or university.
☐ Brief description of the applicant’s education and career goals
☐ Copy of deceased parent’s death certificate OR
☐ Proof of compensable injury/illness claim such as determination letter by the state workers’ compensation board
☐ Parents’ basic employer information such as name, address, phone
☐ Brief description of the injury, illness, or fatality
☐ [OTHER MATERIALS – we do not recommend a photo at the application stage]

Deadline: [DATE]
[If online include a time such as 6 p.m. CST]
[If by mail is it the received by date or postmarked date?]

IF MAIL: CONTACT
Address
City State Zip

Questions? Please contact us BEFORE the deadline via phone [XXX=XXX=XXXX or email [address@email.org]
Kids’ Chance Common Scholarship Application 2018 – DRAFT 4

Process:

☐ Please complete the application to the best of your ability. You may need assistance to gather the necessary information.
☐ After initial review, the scholarship committee may contact eligible students to verify information or secure missing information. Please respond to our inquiries.
☐ The scholarship committee will determine the merit of each application and approve scholarships as funds allow.
☐ Kids’ Chance will notify approved students of their award amount, verify enrollment, and upon completion of the process, will send payment directly to the post-secondary institution.
☐ In general, Kids’ Chance scholarships may be used for any item included in the official Cost of Attendance, unless restricted by the state organization. [CHANGE AS NEEDED]

Previous recipient? Please use our expedited short application to verify eligibility and enrollment in school.

A. Student Applicant Contact Information

Name: First, Middle, Last________________________

Address: ___________________________ City, State, Zip____________________

Best phone number to reach you: ___________________________ indicate: home, work or mobile?

2nd phone, if available: ___________________________ indicate: home, work or mobile?

Best email to reach you: ___________________________

2nd email, if any: ___________________________

Age: _______ Date of Birth: _______ / _______ / _______ Last 4 digits of SS#: _______ (only ask if your program has access to additional funding through an organization such as PATH/PHEAA)

B. Parent/Household Information

Parent/Guardian 1: First, Middle, Last________________________

Address if different than above: ___________________________ City, State, Zip____________________

Primary phone number: ___________________________ indicate: home, work or mobile?

2nd phone, if available: ___________________________ indicate: home, work or mobile?

Parent/Guardian 2: First, Middle, Last________________________

Address if different than above: ___________________________ City, State, Zip____________________

Primary phone number: ___________________________ indicate: home, work or mobile?

2nd phone, if available: ___________________________ indicate: home, work or mobile?
C. Injured/Deceased Claim Information

Is the UN-injured/surviving parent employed?

☐ Yes, currently employed as follows:

☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time

Please indicate the status of this parent’s salary compared to what it was at the time of the injury:

☐ Higher salary now ☐ About the same ☐ Lower salary now

Current Employer: ____________________________ Current Position: ____________________________
Employer Address: ____________________________ City, State, Zip: ____________________________
Employer Phone: ____________________________

☐ No

How many people live in the household where you are a dependent? _____ How many under 18? ______

How many other dependents will be enrolled in a college, technical school or university at the same time as you, not including yourself? ______

Name of parent with the compensable claim of fatality or injury:

First, Middle, Last: ____________________________ Relationship to you: ____________________________
Nature of claim: ☐ Work-related injury or illness ☐ Work-related death
Date of injury or death: ________ / ________ / ________
Employer’s name at time of incident: ____________________________
Worker’s Compensation Claim/File Number: ____________________________
Brief description of the accident or incident resulting in injury or death: [150 word limit]

If case of injury/illness is the injured parent currently employed?

☐ Yes, currently employed as follows:

☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time

Please indicate the status of this parent’s salary compared to what it was at the time of the injury:

☐ Higher salary now ☐ About the same ☐ Lower salary now

Current Employer: ____________________________ Current Position: ____________________________
Employer Address: ____________________________ City, State, Zip: ____________________________
Employer Phone: ____________________________

☐ No, not currently employed
If this parent will return to work, please indicate when: Month/Year _____ / ________

Please list any unusual or extenuating circumstances that the scholarship committee should consider in evaluating your scholarship application: [200 word limit]

Now or in the past, is/has any family member been a plaintiff in a lawsuit or workers’ compensation claim from which additional income or settlement may be/has been awarded? IF YES, please explain: [150 word limit]

D. Education Information

Current High School Students Only:
Name of high school: __________________________ City, State, Zip: __________________________
High school cumulative GPA: ________________

College, Technical School or University Enrollment Section:
Name of institution you plan to attend: __________________________
Have you been accepted? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Institution’s mailing address: __________________________ City, State, Zip: __________________________
Institution’s main phone number: __________________________
Name of institution you currently attend if different than above: __________________________
Current Cumulative GPA: ________________ Current Cumulative Credits Earned: ________________
Plan to Enroll: ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time [Note to states: If full time enrollment is required, simply ask this up front so students don’t waste time if they are ineligible.]
Plan to Live: ☐ Campus Housing ☐ Off-Campus Housing (not at home) ☐ Live w/Parent(s)
Intended major, career interests, objectives: [200 word limit]
Type of institution you will attend?

- ☐ College/University (4-5 years)
- ☐ Junior/Community College (2-3 years)
- ☐ Trade/Tech/Vocational (1 – 3 years)
- ☐ Other? Please indicate ____________________________

COA - Official Annual Cost of Attendance at your college or university, as indicated on your college financial aid award letter or Student Aid Report (SAR) from the FAFSA: $__________________________

EFC - Official Expected Family Contribution, as indicated on your Student Aid Report from the FAFSA: $__________________________

If you are attending a trade or vocational program that does not participate in federal financial aid programs, please indicate the cost as follows:

Indicate cost per credit, course or whole program: $__________________________ Circle: Credit/Course/Program

Length of Trade/Tech/Voc Program in months? _______ /months

If you are considering another college, please include that information here – if NOT, THEN SKIP to “Additional Information” section below.

Name of another institution you may attend: ________________________________

Have you been accepted?  ☐ Yes ☐ No

E. Additional information that will not affect your scholarship request:

Where did you hear about this scholarship?

- ☐ High School Counselor/Advisor
- ☐ College Official/Advisor
- ☐ Parent or family member
- ☐ Attorney
- ☐ Case manager
- ☐ Online search
- ☐ Kids’ Chance postcard or email
- ☐ Other, please indicate: ________________________________
- ☐ If you remember the name of a specific person, please indicate: ________________________________

Please list any people who helped you complete the application and materials, and their role, or how you know them: ________________________________

By signing below, you agree that this information is truthful to the best of your knowledge and that the scholarship committee may follow up with you or other parties to verify the accuracy.

SIGNATURE: _____________________________ DATE: _____________________________

Thank you for your application! Final scholarship decisions will be made by [DATE].
Sample Scholarship Process and Timeline

Responsibilities of the Members of the Scholarship Committee

Members of the Scholarship Committee will be primarily board members, but additional volunteers may be acceptable. Members are responsible for reading, reviewing, and presenting their assigned applications to the Scholarship Committee, and ultimately to the Board of Directors. Members are responsible for attending all committee meetings. Committee members are also responsible for maintaining contact with, following up with, and, to the extent they feel comfortable, building relationships with the applicants and their families.

Committee Meetings

The Scholarship Committee will have at least three meetings each year:

- An orientation meeting in 1st quarter to be sure everyone understands the process
- A recommendation meeting in 2nd quarter
- A final decision meeting typically in June/July

Assigning Applications to Committee Members

Committee members will be matched with applicants in a manner determined by the committee. Ideally, Committee members remain matched with their same applicants/ recipients throughout their enrollment, meaning Committee members will review and present their same returning applicants each year.

Scholarship Application Process and Timeline

December prior to scholarship review
- Conference call with Scholarship Chair to review and make any changes to scholarship application for the upcoming year
- Revised application posted on the website

January
- Notice to High School Guidance counselors
- Email and postcard sent to previous scholarship recipients reminding them that applications are available on the website or from the Kids’ Chance office
- Post application and listing on FASTWEB.com
- E-blast to comprehensive email list with link to scholarship application

January-April
- Process the submitted applications (includes review to make sure all information is included; if not, a letter is sent to request missing information)

April
- April 15: Application Deadline
May/June
- May 1: The standard “National Candidate Reply Date” when entering first-year/freshmen notify their college or university of their intended enrollment
- Applications distributed to Scholarship Committee members to be prepared and reviewed
- Scholarship Committee to review applications well before July 15
- June 15: Mid-June Scholarship Committee conference call meeting to discuss process, issues and concerns in preparation for end of July recommendation meeting
- Committee members follow-up with any student who has a scholarship pending

July
- The Committee confirms all scholarship awards
- The Board of Directors approves the final awards
- Scholarship recipients notified with authorization forms/waivers

August
- Scholarship funds distributed to schools’ Bursar’s/Business office

August/September
- Receive authorization forms, thank you letters and photos from scholarship recipients (Kids’ Chance scholars).
- Update Kids’ Chance website, etc. with recipient information, letters and photos.
- Prepare and send press releases to the student recipients’/Kids’ Chance scholars’ local newspapers using eNR. (www.enr-corp.com)

December following scholarship decisions
- End of year reminder letter to recipients to send semester updates, etc.
- End of year “Holiday” mailing from Scholarship Chair to recipients and their families
- Draft application for Scholarship Chair to review
Sample Public Information Act Request

Stacey L. Roig,
Secretary of the Commission
Maryland Workers’ Compensation Commission
10 E. Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21202-1641

February 1, 2018

Re: Kids’ Chance of Maryland, Inc.

Dear Ms. Roig:

As you will recall, I am Secretary of Kids’ Chance of Maryland, Inc., a not-for-profit organization that provides scholarships to children of Maryland workers who have been seriously injured or who have died as the result of a work-related injury. Please consider this letter as a public information request for the following information:

FOR THE PERIOD 7/1/17 THROUGH 12/31/17, please provide:

1) The names and addresses of all employees for whom death claims were filed with the Maryland Workers’ Compensation Commission ("the Commission"), along with the name of the attorney associated with each such claim.
2) The names and addresses of all employees who received permanent total awards from the Commission, along with the name of the attorney associated with each such claim.
3) The names and addresses of all employees who were awarded 250 weeks or more of permanent disability from the Commission, along with the name of the attorney associated with each such claim.

Thank you for your consideration. Please respond directly to me at rfinkelstein@ceiwc.com.

Very truly yours,

Rona S. Finkelstein
410-494-2303

/rsf
cc: Nancy Kellar
SAMPLE
Kids’ Chance of (State)
Scholarship Authorization/Agreement

I understand that scholarships granted by Kids’ Chance of (state) are benevolent awards and these are made based on the funds available to the Kids’ Chance of (state) organization and upon the quantity and quality of applications each year. I understand that scholarship decisions are made by the Kids’ Chance of (state’s) Scholarship Committee and its Board of Directors, and that they have discretion over the number and amount of scholarship awards.

I understand that this scholarship is for (one academic year) and that I am required to re-apply each year prior to the (date) deadline for consideration.

I hereby give consent to Kids’ Chance of (state), its directors, trustees, officers, agents, employees or designees to use my name and likeness in its promotional materials, including but not limited to printed materials, its website and electronic media and I further consent to and authorize that Kids’ Chance of (state) may notify various media (including local newspaper, TV, radio and online news outlets) of the award of a scholarship to me as well as other information concerning such an award including the name of my hometown, high school and the educational institution that I will be attending.

Signature of Applicant: ________________________________________________________________

Under 18, Signature of Parent: __________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________________________________

*Please return this authorization/agreement to the Kids’ Chance office no later than (date).*
Share Your Kids’ Chance Story (Template)

Note: This form can be found on the Kids’ Chance of America website at www.kidschance.org.

When our students receive scholarships, they and their families immediately become part of a Kids’ Chance community that stretches across the country. The Faces of Kids’ Chance program is an opportunity for Kids’ Chance scholarship recipients to share their stories, inspiring other students, volunteers, and supporters to continue to work on behalf of our Kids’ Chance community.

Please take a moment to participate in The Faces of Kids’ Chance program by completing the profile below. Your words will motivate us all!

Name: _______________________________________________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________________________________________

College: _______________________________________________________________________________

Year in School: _________________________________________________________________________

Major(s): _____________________________________________________________________________

Your Kids’ Chance State Organization: ______________________________________________________

Questions:

• How has receiving the Kids’ Chance scholarship impacted you?
• Tell us about the classes and activities you are involved in at school:
• Tell us about your plans post-graduation:
• What’s the best experience you’ve had in college?

☐ Upload Your Photo

Are there other ways you’d like to be involved with Kids’ Chance? Please mark all that interest you.

☐ Participate in an interview to share my story
☐ Participate in an interview with my family to share our story
☐ Serve as a Kids’ Chance ambassador at events

Authorization Agreement
I hereby give consent to Kids’ Chance of America, its directors, trustees, officers, agents, affiliates, chapters, employees or designees to use my name and likeness in its promotional materials, including but not limited to printed materials, its website and electronic media. [Signature]
Scholarship Recipient Engagement Strategies

In January 2019 KCOA hosted two conference calls to gather best practices from state organizations and affiliates about how they engage students. Fourteen states participated in these calls, some to share best practices, and others to hear new ideas for how to engage their students.

In addition, the KCOA scholarship consultant searched for best practices in the National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA) member portal and conducted three interviews with other scholarship providers who excel at student engagement. Two of the scholarship providers are national organizations that operate in collaboration with local leadership. One is a county-wide scholarship program that provides comprehensive student support beyond scholarships. This organization was also the NSPA 2015 Scholarship Provider of the Year. KCOA offers thanks to these organizations and individuals:

- Elks National Foundation, Chicago, Ill – Debbie Doles
- George Snow Scholarship Program, Boca Raton, FL – Tim Snow (local)
- Phi Theta Kappa Foundation, Jackson, MS – Heather Johnson

Suggestions and Examples from KCOA States

On the conference calls, participants were asked four questions as follows:

- How do you cultivate new students?
- How do you keep students engaged?
- How do you celebrate graduation?
- How do you engage students after the scholarship has ended (alumni relations)?

KCOA offers these examples and best practices distilled from state representatives:

Cultivating new students

- Gain access to information or referrals through state Worker’s Comp Commission (WCC) or Department of Labor (DOL). Based on state law, there are varying levels of access to this information and in many cases, it is blocked. However some states are more flexible. In one state the DOL sends Kids’ Chance pamphlets directly to families on behalf of the KC organization. In another state, they get a quarterly report from the DOL. It is recommended that states explore opportunities to access this information with the appropriate state office.

- Build relationships and awareness with attorneys who are involved in Worker’s Comp claims. In one state, the names of injured or deceased workers are acquired from the WCC. The state organization then sends the list of names to the attorneys asking them to pass along Kids’ Chance information to the families, with good results.
• Send information directly to high school guidance counselors via postal mail or email. A few states have purchased lists of counselors and they maintain that list, whereas in other cases the counselor list is available from a state organization or is maintained by a Kids’ Chance board member. It also may be possible to get school districts to post the scholarship information on their intranet or within student career and college information systems.

• Contact employers directly where there is a known accident or tragedy based on news reports or based on DOL Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fatality reports. Visit www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html for federal reporting or contact state offices, www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html, to share information about Kids’ Chance.

• Network with insurance administrators or claim adjustors. Distribute checklists and letter templates for third party administrators to send out to potential families. Attend conferences that target claims adjustors and ask them to look within their caseloads.

• Contact vocational rehabilitation counselors, as a group, or other state associations related to Worker’s Comp and the insurance industry to promote awareness of the scholarship to larger groups.

• Ensure that the Kids’ Chance scholarship is listed on local or state scholarship databases, including those that may be maintained by school districts or community foundations.

• Invite gatekeepers such as superintendents or state education officials to serve on your board or scholarship committee – with the intention of helping spread the word about the Kids’ Chance scholarship at a state level.

Keeping active recipients engaged

• Use special events or fundraisers to drive engagement with students as speakers who tell their story, or simply invite them as guests. If individual speaking poses a challenge, ask students to participate on a panel at sponsor events or ask them to attend a luncheon with dignitaries or other stakeholders.

• Build in renewal check points (each semester) or other strategies via phone, email or text to gain access to information about how students are doing in college – academically, financially and socially.

• Capture bios and photos for use on the state website. Include stories of students and their families that can showcase college success. A few states have tried video contests. In one example, the state organization offers a financial incentive for video “selfies,” where students can earn money to use for current college expenses or for student loan payments.
• Establish an e-newsletter with content about Kids’ Chance, upcoming opportunities or deadlines. The newsletter could also include student support tips such as reminders to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), encouragement about what to expect in college or advice on how to overcome common barriers in college.

• Test and determine which types of social media resonate with students and their parents, not only as a way to share program information but also to help recipients connect and build community. Ask recipients to “follow” your Kids’ Chance social media accounts.

• Reach out to siblings and parents to help prompt current scholarship recipients to participate, respond, renew or otherwise stay engaged.

• Make the effort for personal outreach, to students and parents, instead of generic group emails. Many states found that personal family connections often yielded better results and relationships.

Acknowledging or celebrating graduation

• Overall, call participants from Kids’ Chance state organizations do not have formal plans to acknowledge or celebrate college graduation, with a few exceptions. Current examples included congratulatory calls, emails, graduation cards or plaques, with a few states asking students to connect on LinkedIn. Many people on the call do not yet have large numbers of graduates but the overall sentiment is that they should do something to acknowledge this milestone.

Engaging Alumni

• Continue to communicate with alumni via newsletters or updates; ask students to “opt-in” and give permission for further communication to keep the relationship going.

• Continue to invite alumni to special events and fundraisers. Manage expectations about what is realistic knowing that these young adults have “moved on” in their lives and careers. Offer the option of video stories if alumni cannot attend an event in person or are uncomfortable being on stage.

• Encourage alumni involvement as board members or advisory council members to gain their perspective in a meaningful way.

• Provide a structure for past recipients to mentor or guide newer recipients on how to get involved with Kids’ Chance or to provide public speaking tips before their first event.

• Offer to connect students with board members for job search assistance or career mentoring, as board members are willing and able.
Suggestions and Examples from Other Scholarship Providers

- Determine holistically and proactively the “why” behind student and alumni engagement and build the Kids’ Chance state experience around that “why.”

- Leverage technology to the degree possible to contact with students as they matriculate, graduate and grow into their careers and lives. Make it easy in email or social media: opt-in, click, follow, etc.

- Support, recognize or engage students through awards, titles, designations, membership labels, categories or badges that acknowledge their status and can be promoted on their résumés or LinkedIn accounts. Examples include “chapter officer, state officer, spokesperson, mentor, member, volunteer,” etc. Formalize the process and designate a title based on what the students already may be doing for the organization.

- Provide a scholar orientation via webinar, Google hangout or conference call to help recipients understand how to use the scholarship, how to renew the scholarship and who to contact should they have problems or questions.

- Provide weekly motivational messages to scholarship recipients, especially during the first semester of college. These messages can be automated in an email program.

- Send care packages to students in their first semester and each subsequent year:
  - Leverage volunteer forces through the human resource departments at board members’ or sponsors’ places of employment.
  - Ask volunteers or board members to write letters of encouragement.
  - Conduct a care package drive or cookie drive and find a sponsor to pay for postage; send the packages to students at their college address.
  - Partner with other organizations such as fraternal or benevolent groups or Junior League to maximize efforts and defray costs.

- If hand-crafted care packages are not possible, send small care packages to the students at college via Amazon or another online retailer.

- Offer a grocery or supply stipend, extra book money, or emergency fund, beyond the scholarship. This could help students stay in school, reduce stress and fill a need that is often filled by a parent. (Kids’ Chance acknowledges that scholarship recipients may have reduced parental support because one parent is injured or deceased).

- Negotiate and get other partners involved to enrich the student experience. Seek sponsors for little “extras” that can go a long way to building rapport with students and create memorable experiences they are not likely to forget.
• Invest in small graduation gifts or gift cards with a personal note to each student who reaches that milestone.

• Offer to take students out for coffee or a meal, even on campus, if a Kids’ Chance board member will be in town in their location. This helps establish bonds, puts a face to the brand and helps students feel supported.

• Create and maintain a college advisory panel, comprised of volunteers who work in the college and university space. They could serve as a sounding board or respond to questions students may have about financial aid, enrollment or other challenges for which Kids’ Chance representatives are not equipped to answer or provide counsel. These are vulnerable students who may not have the support they need at home. The point is to add value and expertise beyond the scholarship.

• Maintain a post-college database with fields of information such as major, employer, spouse’s name, permission to text, social media presence (especially LinkedIn or the next iteration of career-focused social media) sibling or family information, current address and primary email. Losing touch students is the biggest risk to future engagement.

• Encourage alumni to give back by volunteering in the office or at events, even if the alumni do not wish to be featured publicly or appear on stage. Ask for help in tracking down other alumni, updating databases, creating awareness of the scholarship, etc., depending on the person’s interests or skills.

• Ask alumni how they want to be involved, if at all, and listen to what they say. Their ideas are more likely to be generationally and culturally relevant than something designed by a person 20-30 years older than them.

• Form opportunities for alumni to give back financially, no matter how small, to current students, and acknowledge this as part of the Kids’ Chance culture and circle of support.

• Instead of student engagement being driven by staff or volunteers, ask alumni to help think through an effective process and provide direction based on their own experiences.

• For students or alumni who are willing to share their story, consider the emotional intelligence of the student ahead of time so their story is not perceived as a “pity party.” Storylines should focus more on the student’s accomplishments and less on the backstory.

• Show a video of a student spokesperson’s story before they appear on stage at large events or fundraisers, because it is more likely that the student will remain calm and maintain composure as they talk in front of a large crowd.

• Create peer support opportunities (which some states already have done) among students who have been through similar situations with injury or loss of a parent as they attempt to earn their degree.
- Codify the level or type of mentoring the program can offer, if at all, and the degree of formality that the students and Kids’ Chance volunteers can handle and sustain.

- Find marketing and messaging opportunities in interactions with current students and alumni stating that “Kids’ Chance Cares.”