

## Tips for Scholarship Applicants

Your scholarship application will be reviewed by the scholarship committee. These are DRV employees who serve in all departments of DRV. They take this responsibility very seriously and will be carefully considering your application to make their decisions.

1. **Read** the instruction page included with the application form and **follow the directions**. Each question needs to be answered!
2. This is a **competitive process** and the review committee will be spending many hours reading and comparing all of the applications that are received. Take time to fix errors. Spelling counts, neatness counts, and presentation is everything!
3. Have someone else read your application and attachments; if this is important to you, it's worth getting a second set of eyes to proofread your work.
4. **Your application packet will be photocopied on a black and white copier** so it can be distributed to the review committee. Fancy paper and report covers are not necessary. If you want to see what the reviewers will see, make a copy for yourself and see how it looks.
5. **If you have questions** about any part of the application, **contact the HR Dept**. We're very happy to help you submit a successful application. **503-623-5581**.

### The "dreaded one-page essay"

This is your chance to make your application stand out from all the others. A good essay is interesting, has a beginning, supporting information, a conclusion and is genuine. Avoid cliché language and goals that are at the level of "ending world hunger"- our reviewers see through that pretty quickly.

One of the most important things to include is a **clear explanation of your career goal and how you plan to achieve it**. It's fine to include your ultimate goal, but we need to understand exactly what you will be studying in the coming school year and how that gets you to your ultimate goal. It's probably not a good idea to mention that you are currently undecided about whether you want to study nursing or pharmacy, pick one and be passionate about going in that direction. **The committee is looking for students who will be successful**. If the committee thinks you are unsure about what your plans are, or if your plans are confusing to them, your chances of getting a scholarship will decline.

Make sure that everything in the essay is relevant and ties back to your career goal in some way. We ask about strengths and weaknesses because we want to see how you think they support or hinder your ability to succeed in your chosen field. Why will you make a good doctor, pharmacist, physical therapist, etc.? How will you overcome a challenge? Tell us how your extracurricular activities fit into your life. Has specific volunteer work prepared you to do something special? How do athletics or leisure time activities improve your life? Our committee also understands that many students may also have full or part-time jobs, family members to care for, or other situations that limit the amount of activities they are able to participate in. use these examples as well to best tell your story.

*Returning applicant?* Please do not submit last year's essay! There is a different focus for returning students that is aimed at telling the committee what has happened since last year, how are your studies going? How are you progressing toward your goal? How did the scholarship help you?

## **Letter of reference**

After the goal statement essay, the next most important part of the application is the letter of reference. We do not require that it is sealed or come directly to us because we'd like you to have a chance to review it first.

We ask that it be from a teacher/ instructor/ professor/ supervisor/ school counselor or Supervisor because they know something about your overall academic or workplace performance. Letters from fellow students or coworkers don't carry the same weight. Letters from family members are not allowed. If possible, the scholarship committee would prefer to see a letter from a teacher/ instructor/ professor/ supervisor.

This letter should be on business stationery or at least have all the appropriate contact information listed and should include the title or position of the person writing the letter.

## **Common mistakes**

- Application is missing signature
- Letter of reference is made out to an organization other than the DRV scholarship committee
- Application doesn't copy well because it is in pencil or original paper is colored
- Any part of the application has spelling errors
- Goal statement is more than one page
- Portions of the application are left blank and questions are unanswered
- Letter of reference does not include contact information
- Returning students used last year's essay and/or letter of reference
- Required information is missing
- Listing expenses for the entire program instead of the upcoming school year only
- Including materials not requested, such as awards, certificates, etc.- only the pieces requested in the instructions are provided to the review committee [you can reference these types of achievements in your resume if you wish]

**Final tip-** after you have completed your entire application packet, go back and read the instructions one more time to make sure you have followed the directions and that you are presenting your very best work.