

How Do I Insure That I Do Not Get A USAWOA SF Scholarship?

(2009 Update)

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I just finished processing a total of twenty-eight (28) USAWOASF applications and figured I best write this article while all is still fresh in my mind. I am writing this for the applicants and I hope the parents (sponsors) who see the article in the NEWSLINER or on the web site will share it with the applicants so they understand what many are failing to do.

To fully understand this article I have to provide some limited background information. The USAWOA Scholarship Foundation was created in 2003 with the hopes of increasing the funds collected (they would now be tax deductible, as we are a 501 (C) (3) organization and therefore increase the number of awards to be given each year. This is a very small, volunteer operated, low budget operation, with one volunteer coming into the USAWOA office several times a week to do the required paperwork, answer regular mail, email and telephone queries, process all received applications, while the USAWOA book keeper takes care of the financial records. We are involved in the Combined Federal Campaign so we must also perform and maintain a tremendous amount of paperwork and have an annual CPA audit. The majority of the registrations and paperwork is done in the first three months of the year followed a month later by the start of application receipt and processing.

Now how to insure you are not selected is as follows:

First, wait until the last minute to submit the applications. During the months of January, February, March and the first 18 days of April 2009 we received 5 applications. From 19 April thru 1 May we received 23 applications. I realize some test scores are not available until a little later in the year, but have everything ready to submit as soon as they are available. This means that the one volunteer has a considerable workload that can not be stretched out over several months. It also means there is a chance, however small, that an error may occur in the processing of your application.

Second, do not follow the clearly written instructions;

- Do not complete each blank space on the application form

- Do not type or block print the application, but hand write it so that the information cannot be easily read

- Do not provide the sponsor's USAWOA membership number

- Do not provide the sponsor's social security number

Do not provide the sponsor's or applicant's telephone number

Do not provide the sponsor's or applicant's regular mailing address

Do not provide a word count on the required essay

Do not write the essay on the subject required by the criteria

Do not sign the essay

Do not include a photo of the required size or of the head and shoulder variety

Provide a photo that includes your friends, both human and animals

Provide a portrait in landscape format rather than portrait format so part of your head will be cut off if you are selected for an award

Provide a portrait printed on recycled or regular paper rather than glossy or semi-glossy paper so if you win the photo on the web site and in the Newsliner is hardly recognizable

Do not insure the sponsor is now and has been a member of USAWOA for the minimum of the last six months

Each of these criteria is spelled out for a very specific and sound reason. First, we must insure the applicant is eligible to apply, therefore we require the sponsor's information. Without things like the SSN or Member number we must search the database alphabetically, a time consuming process.

Next, the essay is a multifunctional exercise. It gives the selection committee some insight on the applicants writing ability, ability to follow instructions, and the depth of their commitment to what they indicate is their future field of employment and how they plan to give back to those around them. These are all important factors for the selection committee.

All of these requirements also serve as discriminators. Since we have limited funds the selection committee will rate each applicant. The applicants are then placed on an Order of Merit Listing (OML), by score. The foundation BOD determines how many awards can be made, based on funds available, and then that number of applicants, starting from the top of the list are informed they have been selected for an award.

If you or your child wishes to apply and hope to be awarded a grant, they must learn to read, understand and follow the detailed instructions provided. Also each year the criteria are changed slightly. Make sure the applicant visits the web site and utilizes the proper criteria and application form. There are different forms and slightly different

criteria for the regular (\$1,000.00 grant) and the Grantham On-Line Award that is a four year expense paid scholarship with the process done from your home, on-line.

A new requirement starting with the publication of this article will be to read this article. The application checklist has been modified to show this requirement. I do not write this to ridicule anyone, but rather to show that almost any error that can be made has been made just in this one selection cycle.

We want to provide as much financial assistance as possible, but we must be able to fairly review and rate each applicant to insure our limited funds are provided to the most worthy. By the way this article has 930 words according to Microsoft Word.