

Every scholarship is created and funded by a different donor, and some donors may expect you to prepare an essay for their application. Essay questions and requirements vary from application to application. We often get asked if you can use the same essay for every application, and the short answer is no. You can use a base story, but you should not copy and paste one essay for each application. Your essay needs to be edited and answer the exact question the specific scholarship opportunity asks.

Below are some examples of high-quality student scholarship essays. These are EXAMPLES and any applications using these materials will be removed from consideration.

This scholarship donor asked applicants to write about a local leader who inspires them.

In a country that boasts a diverse cultural population, it's important that marginalized communities come together and rise to stand for their place and help foster such diversity in a safe space. Vida Lin, founder and president of the Asian Community Development Council, is a notable female figure advocating for the well-being and empowerment of the Asian community in the state.

Her involvement and dedication to helping the Asian community are inspiring. After she and her family faced adversity regarding a lawsuit and bullying at school, she noticed a stark deprivation in resources for the ever-growing Asian American community in Southern Nevada and has since worked tirelessly to help provide such resources and garner a sense of community. Traditional Asian values regarding failure, language barriers, and normalized, casual racism make it hard to ask for assistance, but in the midst of the COVID pandemic where hate crimes against Asians rocketed, it became even harder to seek help. With years of experience serving as a leader in ACDC, Asian Chamber of Commerce, and OCA, Vida Lin has helped create a safe space with programs and resources for people in need of help to access easily. Some programs she helps run include food distribution, help with attaining citizenship, a hotline with a language bank to help with social services, health insurance and rent, mental health, COVID vaccines, and anti-Asian violence. These resources revolve around helping solve issues that Asian Americans face as people of color and some as recent immigrants.

Lately, there have been some notable instances of hate crimes and tragedies within the Asian community and Vida Lin was always on the scene, helping victims recover. With the heartbreaking news of the recent robbery in Shanghai Plaza, a cultural hotspot of Asian restaurants and stores, Vida Lin and the Asian Community Development Council developed a campaign and fundraiser to help with medical bills and recover their business. Another instance is when the owner of Cloud Tea Boba was mercilessly beaten and attacked by a man fueled by racist hatred. Vida and the Asian Community Development Council helped the business owner along on his journey to recovery and issued a statement condemning the violence and thanking police for the assistance.

She is an influential woman in the Asian American & Pacific Islander community for thousands of children to look up to. Her contributions to the community will trickle down for generations as her services help thousands of AAPI families build a foundation in the US to achieve the “American Dream.”

This scholarship donor asked applications to share their college/career goals.

Even as society progresses, a constant pressing issue is disease and illness that continues to significantly affect people around the world. Working in the medical field grants healthcare workers the opportunity to give patients a second chance at the blessing of a healthy life. Watching my loved ones fall victim to cancer and irreversible blindness from glaucoma only to find that there is no cure. This further fueled my desire to help heal members of the community around me and contribute to the discovery of treatments through biomedical research. I hope to leave an impact, whether it be helping a child hurt a little less or saving a patient's life, bringing the patient's family to peace.

For this reason, I aspire to pursue post-secondary education at MIT as a biomedical computation major to work in the medical field. It is the field that continues to try even in the face of inevitable defeat, one that sees the magical potential in people rather than just the reality of their conditions. It chooses to trust the science and it's the field that dares to believe in the improbable and chooses hope over fear.

This scholarship donor asked applicants to share how their school activities helped them become who they are today.

After developing a passion for biology in middle school, I've taken advantage of every opportunity to learn more. In my freshman year, I sent out 30 emails to different university labs. The result: 30 rejections, but I was undeterred. Starting out in my school's storage room, I used a twenty-year-old incubator to develop an algae-based bandage for chronic wounds and became an International Finalist in the Conrad Challenge out of 300+ teams from 30+ countries. I graduated from my cramped storage room to labs in summer research programs. I took my curiosities to new heights by researching novel nanoparticles that combat stem cell cancers at UMass Amherst and designing novel fungicides at the Summer Science Program.

My research took on new meaning during junior year when my dad was hospitalized with severe atherosclerosis and labile diabetes, a deadly concoction as he could die of a heart attack at any second. My parents were forced to sell our restaurant amidst deteriorating family finances, and my family moved to Korea temporarily for significantly cheaper surgery. For 5 months, my world consisted of spotty wi-fi and 1 AM school start times in a hospital 6000 miles away from home. At dawn, I was a student, at sunrise, I was a researcher, and in the morning, I was a full-time caretaker.

However, I persevered. I worked on my school work at my father's bedside, attending Google Meets for my classes at ungodly hours of the morning. I competed in Science Olympiad from 1-4 AM, but managed to earn 12 medals. Hundreds of hours of research developing a successful therapeutic that combats

COVID-19 induced blood-clotting culminated in my abstract being recognized by the FDA and being accepted as one of four high-school oral presenters in the world at the 2020 MRS conference, the world's premier materials science conference.

Moving forward with the resilience I've learned, I'll fight inequity and pursue research in heart disease, one of the least understood but most deadly conditions in the world. Majoring in Molecular and Cell Biology and pursuing a minor in Public Policy, I'll pursue an MD/PhD and become a cardiac surgeon. I'll work for Doctors without Borders and pursue a medicine/public policy career to increase healthcare access and affordability so that people like my family don't have to take drastic measures for medical procedures. I'll continue to research novel peptide-based and nanoparticle therapeutics for blood diseases and cancers, continuing the line of research I did in high school — interests I'll explore at Harvard.

As a first-generation student, I've been accepted to Harvard's Class of 2026. However, due to my father's medical bills, failing finances from my parents' restaurant, and being a triplet with my siblings simultaneously attending college, I'll be unable to attend Harvard or pursue post-secondary education without scholarships. I'd be truly blessed to earn this scholarship to be the first in my family to go to college and continue to be proactive and innovative to solve the problems I am most passionate about.