

SCHOLARSHIP STRATEGIES

A stylized map of Alaska is centered on the page. The map is white with a light blue outline. It features several yellow stars: one in the upper right, one in the upper left, and a cluster of six in the central region. The map is set against a background of blue and green watercolor textures.

**Essential Tips
for
Alaska Native
Students**

A PUBLICATION OF THE CIRI FOUNDATION

Where to Start



As you begin the scholarship application journey, a strategic approach to gathering essential documents and understanding your heritage can significantly enhance your ability to secure funding.

Work with your family to uncover opportunities for which you may be eligible. As you gather this information, consider how each aspect of your heritage and affiliations might connect you to potential funding opportunities. This exploration is an essential first step in the scholarship application process, helping you identify and leverage the unique avenues available based on your personal and familial background.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Completing this checklist will help you identify and pinpoint funding sources for which you may be eligible based on your personal and familial connections. The more funding sources you identify, the greater the potential financial support available to you.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY HERITAGE

Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB): Do you possess a Certificate of Indian Blood card?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list the details:

Tribal Membership: Are you or at least one of your parents a recognized member of a tribe?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, note the tribe's name:

Tribal Service Area Residency: Do you reside within the service area of a tribe, which might differ from actual tribe membership? (e.g. Anchorage is in CITC service area.)

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify the tribal service area:

Village Association or Corporation Shares: Are you or at least one of your parents a member of a village association or a holder of village corporation shares?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, indicate the village association:

ANCSA Corporation Shareholding: Are you a shareholder in any ANCSA Corporations?

• ☐ Yes ☐ No

• If yes, specify the corporation:

Family Shareholding in ANCSA Corporations: Are your parents or grandparents shareholders in ANCSA Corporations?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list the corporations and the relation (parent/grandparent):

RESOURCES

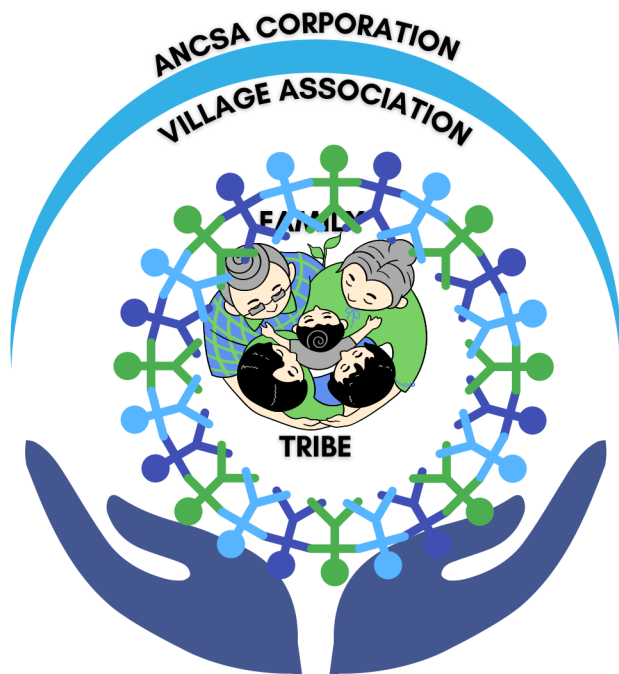
BIA Alaska Regional Office: All Alaska Natives, even those living outside the state, must get their CIB from the Alaska Regional Office. Visit www.bia.gov/regional-offices/alaska for more information.

- Anchorage Enrollment Services is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call (907) 271-4477 or email akenrollment@bia.gov.
- Fairbanks Enrollment Services: Call (907) 456-0522 or www.bia.gov/regional-offices/alaska/fairbanks-agency
- Juneau Enrollment Services: (907) 586-7719, www.bia.gov/regional-offices/alaska/juneau-office

U.S. Department of the Interior: Offers tips on researching your heritage at www.doi.gov/tribes/research.

The CIRI Foundation's *Fund Your Future: Strategies for Educational and Career Advancement*. Visit www.thecirifoundation.org for the latest edition.

Alaska Native Corporations: Contacting the corporations from your family's regions can provide more info. For example, Cook Inlet Region Inc. Shareholder Relations can be reached at (800) 764-2474.



Key Documents



Many scholarship applications require similar documents to verify eligibility for funding. Fortunately, this standardization works in your favor, allowing you to compile a single file with all necessary documentation and streamline the application process.

Prepare in advance by assembling the following documents, commonly requested in scholarship applications:

Tribal Enrollment Verification: Typically, this involves presenting a tribal ID card. However, some scholarships may require proof of your connection to an ANCSA corporation as a shareholder or descendant. This could be in the form of a letter or ID card confirming your heritage and eligibility.

Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB/CIB): This document proves Alaska Native/American Indian ancestry.

Selective Service Registration Proof: Male applicants aged 18 to 25 must provide proof of registration with the Selective Service, a prerequisite for all federally based scholarships. Verification can be completed online at www.sss.gov/verify.

Most Recent Official Transcripts: These documents should reflect your cumulative GPA. High school transcripts or GED certificates are acceptable if you haven't attended college yet. You can request transcripts from your school's Office of the Registrar.

Acceptance Letter: A letter from your educational institution confirming your admission and outlining your declared major or academic program. In some cases, this information may also be indicated on your transcripts or available through your online student portal if a specific letter needs to be provided.

Official Class Schedule with Credit Load: This schedule should detail your registered classes and the number of credits for each. It's obtainable from the Office of the Registrar or your student portal.

Collecting these documents beforehand *will simplify* your scholarship application process, ensuring you are well-prepared for various funding opportunities.

Crafting Your Statement of Purpose

An impactful SOP is a crucial element of many scholarship applications. This outline will help structure your SOP effectively.

Degree Program and Field of Study: What is your (planned) degree program, and what will you study?

Career Aspirations: What do you aspire to be, and how does this align with your long-term career goals?

Personal Motivation: What aspects of your personal history make this field particularly appealing to you?

Field Relevance: Why is this field a good fit for you, and how is it important for your family or community?

Accomplishments: Highlight the accomplishments you are proud of, especially those related to school and community involvement.

Community Contribution: Describe how you are contributing or plan to contribute to a positive impact within the Alaska Native or local community through your chosen field.

Beyond the statement of purpose, scholarship applications may include additional essay questions designed to uncover your personal story, challenges, and interests.

Engaging thoughtfully with these prompts allows you to present a well-rounded picture of who you are. Consider reflecting on the following questions.

Overcoming Challenges: Have you faced significant challenges in your life that you've overcome? Sharing your resilience and growth can provide insight into your character and determination.

Inspiration for Education: What has motivated your pursuit of education thus far? Discussing the influences or events that have shaped your educational journey can highlight your passion for learning.

Passionate Hobbies: Do you engage in hobbies or activities you are passionate about, whether or not they relate directly to your career goals? Expressing your interests outside of academics can demonstrate a well-balanced and engaging personality.

Incorporating responses to these prompts in your scholarship applications can offer a more comprehensive view of your experiences, aspirations, and the diverse facets of your personality.

Essay & College Application Cheat Sheet

Compiled by: Holly Miowak Guise, Former Admission Officer at Stanford University

- Ph.D., History, Yale University
- M.A., History, Yale University
- B.A.H., Native American Studies, Stanford University

General Application Tips:

1. Familiarize yourself with the Common Application to apply to multiple colleges at commonapp.org. Your application should be a highlight reel emphasizing your positive impacts.
2. Consider "fee waivers" if application costs are a barrier, and consult your high school guidance counselor.
3. List all activities, including jobs, family responsibilities, and cultural activities, and include all awards and leadership positions.
4. Choose recommendation letter writers from core subjects who favorably view your performance and give them ample time to write.

SAT/ACT Preparation:

- Register four to 12 months before your college applications. If unsure during the test, use the process of elimination and avoid extreme answers in the reading section.
- Review sample questions online to familiarize yourself with the form at <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/practice-preparation>.

Extra Curricular Activities

List all activities, including jobs, family responsibilities, religious, subsistence, and cultural activities, not just those at school. Be sure to include all awards and leadership positions such as Native Youth Olympics and regional/state awards.

Letters of Recommendation

Choose teachers from core subjects who have a favorable opinion of you. Give them eight to 12 weeks to write the letter. Ask them to include specific examples of what you contribute to the classroom and what you are like as a student.

PERSONAL ESSAY

Keep it simple.

- Stick to five paragraphs, one single or two pages double-spaced.
- Topics on identity and personal growth stand out.
- Write about your passions and familiar topics rather than trying to predict what the reader might prefer.

SHORT ANSWER ESSAY

Be specific.

- Always directly answer the question if there is a specific prompt!
- Use the entire space/word count provided.
- Tailor your answer for each school by incorporating specific details from the school's website, such as academic programs and student resources, including Native American Cultural Centers.

Effective Goals

Applying the SMART criteria guarantees your goals are both clear and achievable:

Specific: Clearly define your goals, including specific actions or events.

Measurable: Ensure that the goal and its outcomes are quantifiable.

Achievable: Your goal should be attainable with the resources you have.

Realistic: Aim for goals that challenge you but are still within reach of success.

Timely: Specify when you plan to accomplish your goal.

Formulating an effective goal statement clarifies your intentions. Here's the method for crafting an impactful goal:

- **Speak Clearly and Simply:** Your goal should be straightforward and understandable.
- **Begin with an Action:** You explicitly outline your intended action by stating "to do" something.
- **Employ SMART Goal Principles:** Your goal should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.
- **Stay Positive:** Focus on your aim, steering clear of negative phrasing.

Example: "I aim to participate in the mini marathon this May and complete the 10-mile race in under an hour, surpassing my personal best."

Now, apply what you've learned to craft your goal statement. Begin by identifying a goal and evaluating it against the SMART criteria.

Goal: _____

Is it **Specific?**

(Who? What? Where? When? Why?)

Is it **Measurable?**

(How will I measure progress? How many? How much?)

Is it **Attainable?**

(Can this really happen? Is it attainable with enough effort? What steps are involved?)

Is it **Realistic?**

(Do I have, or can I acquire, the knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve this goal?)

Is it **Time-bound?**

(Can I set a deadline? What is the deadline?)

Applying for Federal Student Aid

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the gateway to accessing federal student aid. Completing the FAFSA is essential for determining your eligibility for federal grants, work-study programs, loans, and many state and private aid opportunities.

Application: studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

Help Center: studentaid.gov/help-center

Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (800) 433-3243.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TRACKING WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to keep track of each scholarship you apply for. Fill in the details for every application to stay organized and on top of deadlines.

Name: _____

Organization/Foundation: _____

Application Deadline: _____

Portal/URL: _____

Requirements

- ☐ Essays
- ☐ Letters of Recommendation
- ☐ Transcripts
- ☐ Test Scores (SAT, ACT)
- ☐ Proof of Eligibility (e.g., CDIB)
- ☐ Application Form
- ☐ Other Requirements
- ☐ FAFSA

Application Status

- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Working on It
- ☐ Submitted
- ☐ Under Review
- ☐ Awarded
- ☐ Not Awarded
- ☐ Follow-Up (interview, info, thank you)

Instructions:

1. Create a new sheet for each scholarship you apply to keep your applications distinct and organized.
2. Update the worksheet regularly as you progress with each application, especially after completing tasks or receiving updates on your application status.
3. Review your worksheets periodically to make sure no deadlines or requirements are missed and to plan your follow-up actions.

Please note that application requirements vary by scholarship. This worksheet provides general elements, some of which may apply only to specific scholarships.

For detailed information about The CIRI Foundation's scholarship programs and its requirements, visit www.thecirifoundation.org.

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