Letters of Recommendation

Helpful Tips for Submitting a Great Recommendation

✓ Don't just ask anyone to write a letter of recommendation for you! This person should know you well enough to write about your qualities as a person. Too often letters are received that misspell an applicant's name, refer to the incorrect scholarship or just list the student's achievements only, which are already listed throughout the application. The person you ask should be able to write well, and be able to provide a recommendation by the required deadline. Don't ask someone at the last minute!

✓ Who should write your letter of recommendation? Think of employers, teachers, guidance counselors, principals, religious leaders, community leaders, coaches, club advisors, volunteer work supervisors, and friends of the family. Who knows you well and can attest to your abilities?

✓ Offer to give the person your resume or list of activities so they may refer to it when writing your letter, but the focus should be on you as a person. In the letter of recommendation, the writer is assessing your qualities, characteristics and abilities – why should you be the scholarship recipient?

✓ Tailor the letter to each scholarship or do not include the scholarship name at all! It reflects poorly on the applicant to submit a copy of a letter of recommendation that refers to a different scholarship than the one to which the student is applying. You could even call the organization to which you are applying and ask for a specific name to address the letter of recommendation.

✓ Letters of recommendation may be required to address specific topics, such as financial need or community involvement. If a letter is addressing financial need, it should cover the areas that may not be mentioned in the scholarship application: what has the applicant learned to do without? How has this deprivation motivated the applicant to try harder? How has this deprivation resulted in missing out on deserved opportunities?

✓ Most importantly, write a thank you letter to writer to show appreciation for their help!