Vigilant Fire Company Scholarship

ABOUT THIS SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is a one-time award of $500.00 payable directly to the recipient to provide financial support for a qualified student who demonstrates a commitment to a career in the field of public service. Qualifying students should exhibit high moral values, strong work ethic, unwavering integrity and desire to give back to their community. These inspirational qualities were inculcated in Russell Harkleroad, a 35-year volunteer of the Vigilant Fire Company who retired as Head Custodian of the West Seneca West Middle School. Russell passed away in 2010; he worked hard to see this scholarship achieved. His desire was to make an award available to any student with outstanding personal character and scholastic attributes, and who may not otherwise qualify for a scholarship.

ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants must reside in the Town of West Seneca, NY or attend a New York State regents High School (public or private) located in the Town of West Seneca NY.
- Be a high school senior, graduating in the current academic year
- Must be attending a 2 or 4-year college/university, vocational or trade school full-time in the Fall
- Financial need is not a critical criteria but may be considered if applicant provides information and need

HOW TO APPLY

ALL material needs to be submitted no later than **March 18, 2027** to :

Vigilant Fire Company, No. 1
Attn: Scholarship Committee
666 Main Street,
West Seneca, NY 14224

Vigilant Fire Company, No.1 reserves the right to:

- Amend scholarship eligibility criteria at any time.
- Withdraw a scholarship award at any time prior to its actual receipt by an award recipient.

NOTE: All materials submitted with the application will become the property of the Vigilant Fire Company, No.1 and will not be returned under any circumstances. It is recommended that you make a copy of the information before mailing. All information submitted is confidential and will be used only by the Scholarship Committee. The award recipient's name and school may be released to media and your high school. The scholarship selection will be made without regard to any factor in state or federal law, which would constitute unfair or illegal discrimination. To download an application, go to: **www.vigilantfireco.org**

VIGILANT FIRE COMPANY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Complete Official Vigilant Scholarship application form.
- ✓ Copy of college acceptance letter for Fall Semester.
- ✓ Transcript from current high school.
- ✓ One (1) Reference letter either from
    - applicant's principal, teacher, guidance counselor, college advisor or other school official OR
    - an employer (supervisor, owner or manager), paid or volunteer firefighter, police officer, medical professional, government official, or other character reference from someone who has known you over two years (cannot be a relative).
- ✓ Submission of a personal essay, one to no more than two pages in length (**computer generated, 12 font-Arial double spaced**) explaining, *your interest to pursue an education and/or career path in public service, to include short term and long term goals*. As many students do not select their major until later in school, you will not be required to commit to a specialized course of study. You should have a general interest in pursuing a career path that will help to make a difference in your community or country; such as, fire service, law enforcement, legal, medical, emergency services, government, education, social and human services, etc.
    - Your essay should be written to reflect proper writing mechanics, such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and research citations (APA format) if used.
    - Explanation of financial need (optional but additional points may be awarded).
- ✓ Resume, include work history and positions held and detailed description of duties and responsibilities.
    - List any activities you have been involved with, both in and out of the academic environment. Be sure to list important criteria such as dates involved, roles, awards, accomplishments, training received, whether the activity had any influence on your desire to guide you into a career in public service.
- ✓ Selection (s) for the scholarship award will be made no later than the fourth week of April.

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR VIGILANT FIRE COMPANY SCHOLARSHIP

This form, must be completed by a high school principal, teacher, guidance counselor, advisor or school official that knows and can provide and honest evaluation of the applicant.

This form, must be completed by an employer (supervisor, owner or manager), paid or volunteer firefighter, police officer, medical professional, government official, or other character reference from someone who has known the applicant over two years (cannot be a relative).

Applicants' Name_____ Date _____

Name of High School _____

Name (please print)_____ Position _____

High School Officials' Signature_____ Contact number _____

In what capacity is the Applicant known to you _____

Length of Time has known the applicant _____

Please describe below/and or on the reverse of this paper or on a separate paper, the applicants' involvement and accomplishments since you have known him/her. Of particular interest is how he/she related to others. Please feel free to provide any comments you care to make about the applicant. We are especially looking for a deserving student who has exhibited traits of outstanding personal character attributes of high moral values, strong work ethic and an unwavering integrity with a desire to give back to the community or country.

In particular, students who have shown an interest in a career in public service in such fields as, law enforcement, legal, medical, emergency services, government, education, social work and human services, etc.

IF SO DESIRED, ENDORSEMENT MAY BE COMPUTER GENERATRED AND SUBMITTED ON A SEPARATE PAPER ALONG WITH THIS COVER SHEET.

FREQUESTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON APPLICATION PROCESS

How many scholarships are awarded?
At least one (1) scholarship is awarded annually; the number of scholarships may increase as the pool of award money increases. For the past years, 4-5 scholarships have been awarded.

What is the amount of the scholarship?
Each scholarship is in the amount of $ 500.00, but subject to change.

Most scholarships go to the smartest kids in school, I do OK but I am far from being one of the smartest, do I have any chance?
Grades and GPA will be strongly considered; but this scholarship is also weighted for a student with outstanding personal character attributes and a strong work ethic.

If I am the award recipient, what can I use the money for?
There are many expenses involved in pursuing higher education, such as tuition, books, transportation to/from school, etc.; there are no requirements or strings attached to the scholarship – you may use it for whatever your needs are relative to your educational pursuit.

How is it decided who will be awarded the scholarship?
The Vigilant Fire Company Scholarship Committee, consisting of at least three (3) members meet to review and evaluate each applicant.

What criteria will this committee use to evaluate the applicants?
Using an established RUBRIC, the Scholarship will be awarded to a student who has exhibited scholastic achievement, high moral values, strong work ethic, unwavering integrity and a desire to give back to their community or country. Try to be clear and concise yet responding thoroughly to each criterion.

Can you advise what method the committee will use to evaluate the applicants?
A confidential objective RUBRIC is used to help the committee select the most worthy applicant(s).

Will I be notified if I am selected or another person is awarded the scholarship?
Yes, usually within 60 days of the deadline (2rd week in June).

Is financial hardship considered?
There is some additional weight given to someone with financial need; however, this is not the sole basis for selection of the scholarship award recipient. If there is any financial need, it is recommended you explain this need on a separate sheet of paper (no proof other than your explanation is required).

Any other suggestions?
The committee can only evaluate what was submitted; all facets regarding your education, work history, personal life or anything you believe is important - you are urged to include that information.