



Scholarship Application Form

Upakar Foundation – the Indian American Scholarship

Application Postmark Deadline - April 29, 2017

Application Instructions

Carefully review eligibility requirements to ensure you qualify to be an Upakar scholar. It is a 4-year scholarship with yearly renewal requirements.

Eligibility Requirements:

To be eligible for an Upakar Foundation scholarship, you must meet **all** criteria:

- Either you or one parent was born in India
- Be either a U.S. citizen or a U.S. 'Green Card' holder (permanent resident)
- Be actively seeking enrollment in an **undergraduate** 4 year degree program at an accredited college or University **or** a 2 year community college in the United States for the 2017-2018 academic year
- Have a 2016 Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on the IRS form 1040, 1040EZ or 1040A of less than **\$90,000**
- Have a cumulative **non-weighted** GPA over **3.6** (on a 4.0 scale)
- be a graduating high school senior in 2017 and are living in the United States

Selection Criteria:

Applicants are evaluated on **all** of the following criteria:

- Academic record
- Financial need
- Completed application package (**incomplete applications will be disregarded**)
 1. Completed and signed application
 2. 2 well written on-point essays
 3. Proof of Citizenship (Indian and United States)
 4. High School transcript
 5. Copy of the official SAT or ACT report
 6. Letter of Recommendation
 7. Financial information
 - Student Aid Report
 - Tax returns (Required - 2016 1040EZ, 1040A or 1040), (If you or your parent own a business, partnership or farm – 2016 Schedule C and/or Schedule E)

Application Package:

- **Application**

- Please neatly print your information on the application in blue or black ink. Applications that are illegible or incomplete will be disqualified.
- Parental Income Section
 - **Please black out all social security numbers.**
 - Parental Adjusted Gross Income – will come from the IRS form 1040EZ, 1040A or 1040 and must be under **\$90,000** to apply for this scholarship
 - Parental Income Tax Liability – actual amount owed to the IRS from the 1040EZ, 1040A or 1040
 - Exemptions on Tax Return – will come from the IRS form 1040EZ, 1040A or 1040
 - Earnings per Tax Return – generally from 1099 or W-2
 - Monthly Mortgage or Rental payment - your personal rent or mortgage payment
- Self Employed Section
 - If your family owns all or part of a business, corporation, partnership or farm this section needs to be filled out.
- Signed application – must be signed by both a parent (or guardian) and the applicant to be considered!

- **Essays**

- Must be typed and have a word count at the end
- Essays that do not answer the specific questions will be considered incomplete; please take the time to answer them thoughtfully and completely

- **Proof of Citizenship**

- If you were born in the United States
 - copy of **your** United States passport name page AND
 - copy of **parent's** passport name page (if not available, please send an explanation to upakarfoundation@hotmail.com with “No parent passport” as the header)
- If you were born in India
 - copy of United States permanent resident card (“Green card”) OR
 - copy of your United States passport name page
- These may be independently verified with the Immigration and Naturalization Service
- **You may black out all passport numbers.**

- **High School Transcript**

- Provide an **official** transcript from your current high school with the cumulative Grade point average (GPA)
- Transcripts must have the name of your high school, your name and, whenever possible, date of birth.

- **SAT or ACT –**

- Provide a copy of the official SAT or ACT documentation

- **Letter of Recommendation**
 - Must be from a teacher or advisor. The letter must be current and may not be from a relative.
 - Request the person to write the letter, and as a courtesy, they should have at least 3 weeks to complete your recommendation
 - The letter must stay confidential. Ask your recommender to return the recommendation letter to you in a sealed envelope with their signature written across the seal. Submit the sealed recommendation with your application.

- **Financial Information Documentation**
 - All pages of your Student Aid Report (SAR) if you filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA, www.fafsa.ed.gov)
 - Tax returns
 - 2016 IRS form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ
 - **also** if you or your parents have a business, partnership or farm include all copies of 2016 IRS Schedule C and Schedule E (will be reflected on IRS form 1040)
 - If the FAFSA was **not** filed, include:
 1. note of explanation why FAFSA was not filed
 2. 2015 IRS form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ
 3. 2015 and 2016 W-2 and 1099 forms
 4. **also** if you or your parents own a business, include all copies of 2015 IRS Schedule C and Schedule E

Postmark Deadline:

Application packet must be **mailed in one** package that is **postmarked** on or before **April 29, 2017**. Any items sent in the mail requiring a signature by the receiving party will **not** be accepted.

Incomplete applications will **not** be considered (missing information or documents). Please review the Selection Criteria on page 1 to ensure your package is complete.

Upakar Scholarship
9710 Traville Gateway Dr #403
Rockville, MD 20850

Application and supporting documentation will not be accepted as an email attachment and supporting documents will not be accepted separately from the application package.

Award Notification:

Applicants that are awarded scholarships will be **directly** notified in August 2017. The awardees will be posted on www.upakarfoundation.org in September 2017.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

- There are many questions about my parent's finances and required IRS forms. Do I need to answer and submit all of them?
 - Yes, they are the basis of the Upakar scholarship determinations. Please remember this is a merit/need based scholarship and we need to confirm the need portion. Any application that does not **fully** answer the questions or does not include the requested forms will be **immediately** disregarded. Please get your parent's help with this section if needed. If you are not able to access this information, send an explanation to upakarfoundation@hotmail.com with "No parent financial information" as the header.
- I /my parents don't feel comfortable sending this information. Can I send the required supporting documentation after the Scholarship committee has reviewed my application?
 - No, because these documents are scrutinized as an integral part of the application review process. Without these important documents, your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed or considered.
- Can I get an exception since I am not a United States Permanent Resident ("Green card" holder) or United States Citizenship?
 - No, an Upakar Scholar **must** be a US Permanent Resident or Citizen
- Does the application need to be received by April 29 or postmarked by April 29? Can I get an extension?
 - The application must be postmarked by April 29. There is no exception to the deadline.
- I really need the money to pay for school; can I get an exception to the eligibility criteria?
 - No, an Upakar Scholar must meet the eligibility criteria as listed
- My school does not do weighted grades/cumulative GPA, what should I do?
 - Note this on the application and have a school official confirm that by a signature or letter.
- I was born in India, was adopted as a child and now I am a US citizen, am I eligible to apply?
 - Yes, as long as you meet the other criteria to be an Upakar Scholar
- I am just outside of the GPA/AGI requirements. Can I get an exception?
 - No. In general, an Upakar scholar far exceeds the GPA and AGI requirements. However, if there are more than 4 dependents listed on your parents' tax return; send an email to upakarfoundation@hotmail.com with "More than 4 Dependents" as the header. You may be granted an exception.
- Does Upakar offer mentorships for Upakar scholars?
 - Yes, but it is up to the Upakar scholar to contact the Mentorship chair.
- I did not complete the FAFSA. Am I automatically disqualified?
 - No, but should be a clear and concise explanation for not completing it attached to the scholarship application.
- I would like to drop off my application personally; can I make an appointment or drop it off somewhere?
 - No. If any attempt is made to contact the board members directly or attempts to influence the decision making process will cause an application to immediately be disregarded. Please mail it to the address above by the application deadline.
- I live in India and want to come to America to study. Can I get an Upakar scholarship?
 - No. An Upakar scholar must be graduating from an US based high school and be currently living in the US.
- I am in Graduate school/ already in college/planning a gap year. Can I still apply?
 - No, the Upakar scholarship is only for high school seniors going directly to college.