



## Recommendation Letter Tips for Applicants and References

Most Cochise College Foundation scholarships require applicants to submit a letter of recommendation. Recommendation letters are significant in helping to determine who receives a scholarship. Poorly written letters can bring down an applicant's otherwise good score. Well-written letters can help move an application to the top of the list.

Below are some tips for obtaining quality recommendation letters from the appropriate individuals, as well as for what makes a good letter. Additional information and good examples can be easily obtained through an Internet search.

### For Scholarship Applicants

- Give letter writers time – at least a few weeks' notice - to put something together that will make a difference to your application. The more time you give your recommenders, the less they'll be tempted to do a "copy and paste" job, and the better each recommendation will be.
- Choose the right people to write letters on your behalf. Find those who can provide true insight into your accomplishments and potential. It is helpful if recommenders know you personally and are familiar with your work history, credentials, and academic and career aspirations.
- If you choose someone who does not know you well, suggest a brief interview or provide them with information so that they will have substance to include in the letter. Share with them your recent activities and accomplishments, as well as your goals and aspirations. Do not write the letter for them.
- Be honest and realistic about your intentions and your goals.
- Be grateful to your recommenders for taking the time to think about your outstanding attributes and your potential and to put it down on paper.

### For Letter Writers

- Letters that are extremely brief and provide little or no detail about the scholarship candidate do not help the applicant.
- Form letters provided for use by several applicants are easily spotted and can undermine the credibility of the information provided.
- Unless otherwise stated, letters should indicate your relationship with the candidate, the individual's abilities and characteristics, significant accomplishments, and the candidate's potential related to education and career.
- Provide insight for the review committee by using specific examples of the applicant's community involvement, professional accomplishments, academic achievements, or other commitments or background information.
- When considering what to write, think about how you would finish the statement, "I am impressed with Scholarship Applicant A and believe he/she deserves a scholarship because...."
- Letters should be typed and single-spaced. A few concise paragraphs will suffice, and, unless otherwise specified, no more than one page is necessary.
- Letters from employers or college employees should be submitted on letterhead and signed. Contact information should be included.