

P.E.O. STAR Scholarship (STAR) Student Application Instructions



The P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application is submitted online. After your recommending chapter has completed and submitted their recommendation, the system creates an account for you. You will receive an email with your username and password, instructions and a link to the STAR Scholarship application dashboard.

Your deadline is at **11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET)** 30 calendar days from when your link is sent to you from the P.E.O. STAR Project Supervisor. **This deadline is firm.**

The application is divided into sections that you will access through your Applicant Dashboard. These sections are:

- Student Profile
- Request Section (required only for applicants who are under 18 years of age)
- Parent or Guardian Information (required only for applicants who are under 18 years of age)
- Activity Chart 1: Extracurricular Activities
- Activity Chart 2: Community and Volunteer Service
- Activity Chart 3: Awards and Honors
- Essay
- Recommendations (two sections)
- High School Transcript

This document provides an overview of the information to be included in each section. Read through all the sections of the application dashboard prior to beginning.

Save your work as you go! You will have the option to save your work and submit the application at a later time.

Student Profile

This section must be completed first.

In this section you will be asked to provide basic identifying information about yourself and your high school. Be sure to provide a personal email address that you will have access to after graduation.

Request Section

If you answer “No” to the question “Will you be 18 years old as of December 31st of this year?” in the Student Profile, you must get parent or guardian permission to apply for this scholarship. You will use this Request section to send an email request to your parent or guardian so they can provide permission for you to apply.

Parent or Guardian Information

This section will be completed by your parent or guardian. They will receive an email with instructions on how to provide their electronic signature indicating you have permission to apply for this scholarship. Be sure to inform them of your application deadline.

Important information about this section:

- The FIRST status bar will show 100% when you have sent your Parent or Guardian Information Request email.
- The SECOND status bar will show 100% when your Parent or Guardian Information has been received.
- **Both status bars must show 100% BEFORE you submit your application.**

Activity Charts

Before you begin your application, consider the activities which you have been involved in during your high school years. Determine where each activity should be included in the application based on these criteria:

1. **Activity Chart 1: Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular Activities (ECs) are those pursued **in addition** to the normal course of study. This includes clubs, organizations and pursuits such as student council, sports, scouting, religious/cultural youth groups, dance lessons, school/community clubs or employment.

ECs must span at least two years unless it is a one-year activity, such as prom committee.

Activities that are also a class in school are not considered extracurricular unless they involve significant time beyond school hours, such as marching band or yearbook.

You will be able to list and describe up to 12 EC activities and the leadership roles you held in those activities.

2. **Activity Chart 2: Community and Volunteer Service**

Community service (CS) activities are unpaid volunteer efforts within the community that benefit the community at large such as serving meals at a community homeless shelter.

Service or mission trips must include the number of days/weeks working. Include only the hours that you spent actually serving. DO NOT count the hours sleeping, traveling, playing, participating in meetings, etc. For example, a typical seven-day service/mission trip equals about 40 hours of actual work.

You will be able to list and describe up to 12 CS activities and the leadership roles you held in those activities.

3. **Activity Chart 3: Awards and Honors**

This section provides the opportunity for you to describe any awards, honors or experiences that did not fit the criteria for the Extracurricular (EC) or Community Service (CS) sections.

Suggestions include high school or community awards; scouting awards; leadership conferences that are selective in nature (i.e., Girls' State); internships and research projects; foreign exchange opportunities including hosting; school/family cultural trips.

You will be able to list and describe up to eight awards or honors and the leadership roles you held in those activities.

These additional tips will help clarify these three sections for you:

- If you enter the same activity in both the Extracurricular and Community Service sections, use the “Brief description of the activity” boxes to clearly explain how the service hours were earned outside of regular club or organization activities.

For example, as a member of National Honor Society, you attend meetings (EC) but may also earn service hours (CS activities which can be counted and detailed).

- You may enter a school class in EC **only when** the class requires significant time outside of class. Examples include: band, chorus, theater, yearbook.
- Similar activities may be counted separately if they require independent practice or performance time. Examples include: different bands or choral groups, dance lessons and dance team or club and school sports.

Essay

You will write an essay about your career aspirations and higher education goals and share who and/or what served as your inspiration(s). You are encouraged to be creative and express your personality! Your essay will be evaluated on your answering of the essay prompt as well as on your grammar and structure. You will have a 700-word maximum.

Recommendation I and Recommendation II

In each of these sections you will upload one of your letters of recommendation and provide information about the person who wrote the letter.

Letters of Recommendation should be provided by two different adults who know you well and can attest to your character, your talents, and your promise for the future. Teachers, employers, advisors to clubs or activities, coaches, volunteer supervisors and other adults who know you well could be asked to provide these letters.

Relatives or family members cannot serve as recommenders.

You will be able to download the *Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation* that you can provide to your recommenders.

Letters of recommendation for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship may be up to two pages in length, minimum 11-point font. If the letter provided by your recommender consists of multiple pages, it should be scanned and uploaded as one file. Do not upload one page at a time. Acceptable formats are: doc, docx, pdf.

High School Transcript

In this section you will upload your High School Transcript. Transcripts can be official or unofficial. Acceptable formats are doc, docx, pdf. The file size for each upload should not exceed 10mb. If a document consists of multiple pages, it should be scanned and uploaded as one file. Do not upload one page at a time.

Final Review and Submit

When you are ready to submit your application, click on the “Final Review and Submit” button to do a final review of your application. Be sure to check the following:

- Click on your transcript and both letters of recommendation to verify that these documents have uploaded correctly.
- If you are under 18 years of age, confirm that your Parent or Guardian Information has been received.
- Note that every section of your application **MUST** indicate 100% when you submit your application. If a section does not state 100%, there are unanswered required question(s) or missing information in that section.

If You Have Questions

Reach out to your recommending chapter for support. They are encouraged to assist you and are your first contact should you have questions.

P.E.O. Executive Office support is available from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Central Time (CT). For technical questions, send an email request by clicking on the Contact Us link located in the upper right-hand corner of the application. You will receive an email response from the user support desk in 24 to 48 business hours.

All other questions regarding the STAR Scholarship should be addressed to your recommending chapter or to the STAR Scholarship Project Supervisor at 515-255-3153 or star@peodsm.org.

Important Reminders

Your deadline is **11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET)** 30 calendar days from when your link is sent to you from the P.E.O. STAR Project supervisor. **This deadline is firm.**

If you receive a P.E.O. STAR Scholarship and then either choose to take a gap year, otherwise delay your education or attend a college/ university in a country other than the United States or Canada, you will forfeit your award.

If you submit your application and then discover you are no longer eligible, please contact the P.E.O. STAR Project Supervisor immediately at star@peodsm.org. Awards presented and then forfeited are given to another applicant on a wait list. In fairness to other candidates, please keep the P.E.O. STAR Project Supervisor and your recommending chapter apprised of your plans.

P.E.O. STAR Scholarship (STAR)

Frequently Asked Questions



APPLYING FOR THE P.E.O. STAR SCHOLARSHIP

- What does the application entail?
- What is the application deadline?
- On what criteria are STAR recipients selected?
- Does preference go to students with 4.0 GPAs?
- What are the components of the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application?
- What is an unofficial transcript?
- My grades are in percentage or letter mark. How do I convert this to a GPA?
- Who may I contact if I have questions using the online application process?

RECOMMENDATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

- May I apply without a chapter's recommendation?
- How do I find a chapter to recommend me?
- May the chapter member who writes the chapter recommendation also write one of the references required for the scholarship application?
- What advice can be given to reference writers?

RECEIVING AND USING STAR SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

- When and how will I be notified whether I have been selected as a P.E.O. STAR Scholarship recipient?
- Who determines how the \$2,500 scholarship funds are used?
- If I am selected as a recipient, when may I expect to receive the scholarship funds?
- May the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship be renewed?

GENERAL INFORMATION

- What is P.E.O.?
- How can I join P.E.O.?
- What is Cottey College?

APPLYING FOR THE P.E.O. STAR SCHOLARSHIP

Q. What does the application entail?

A. The P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application is completed and submitted online. After your recommending chapter has submitted their recommendation form, the system creates an account for you. You will receive an email with your username and password, instructions and a link to the STAR Scholarship application. The application is divided into a number of sections that you will access through your Applicant Dashboard. Please refer to the Student Application Instructions for details.

Q. What is the application deadline?

A. You will have 30 calendar days to electronically complete and submit your application from the date the link is sent to you from the P.E.O. STAR Project Supervisor. You will receive that link via email after your sponsoring chapter has submitted their online recommendation form. You will have ONLY 30 days from the date the link is emailed to you to complete and submit your online application, including uploading the two letters of recommendation and your high school transcript – official or unofficial – (through the 11th grade/junior year). Applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on the 30th day. **This deadline is firm.**

Q. On what criteria are STAR recipients selected?

A. A woman is eligible for consideration for a P.E.O. STAR Scholarship if she:

- Is recommended by a local chapter of the P.E.O. Sisterhood
- Is a citizen or legal permanent resident of the United States or Canada
- Has a minimum cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Exhibits excellence in leadership, academics, extracurricular activities, community service and potential for future success
- Plans to attend an accredited postsecondary education institution in the United States or Canada full time or part time in the fall of the academic year following her high school graduation

The applications of individuals who satisfy these eligibility criteria will be evaluated on a nondiscriminatory basis without consideration of race, age, national origin, religious affiliation, disability or P.E.O. connection. The merit of the application drives the selection.

Q. Does preference go to students with 4.0 GPAs?

A. No. Applicants for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship are evaluated on demonstrated excellence in the areas of leadership, extracurricular activities, community/volunteer service and potential for future success. The minimum GPA eligibility requirement is an unweighted 3.0. An applicant with a 3.0 GPA has the same chance for selection as an applicant with a 4.0 GPA, so long as all other evaluated areas are equal.

Q. What are the components of the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship application?

A. The application is divided into sections that you will access through your Applicant Dashboard. These sections are:

- Student Profile
- Request Section (required only for applicants who are under 18 years of age)
- Parent or Guardian Information (required for applicants who are under 18 years of age)
- Activity Chart 1: Extracurricular Activities
- Activity Chart 2: Community and Volunteer Service
- Activity Chart 3: Awards and Honors
- Essay
- Recommendations (two sections)
- High School Transcript

Please refer to the *Student Application Instructions* for details.

Q. What is an unofficial transcript?

A. An unofficial transcript is a transcript that has not been made official by a signature, stamp or seal. You may submit either an official or unofficial transcript with your online application. Submit whichever form of transcript your high school will release to you that you can electronically upload to your online application. This document must show all high school grades through the end of 11th grade. The instructions in the High School Transcript section of your Applicant Dashboard will explain how to upload your transcript.

Q. My grades are in percentage or letter mark. How do I convert this to a GPA?

A. Canadian students can convert their grades to GPA by searching the many GPA conversion websites available. An example of such a website you may wish to use is <https://gpacalculator.net/gradeconversion/canada/>

Q. Who may I contact if I have questions using the online application process?

A. For computer/technical questions, send an email request by clicking on the Contact Us link located in the upper right-hand corner of the application dashboard. You will receive an email response from the user support desk in 24 to 48 business hours.

All other questions regarding the STAR Scholarship should be addressed to your recommending chapter or to the STAR Scholarship Project Supervisor at 515-255-3153 or star@peodsm.org.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SPONSORSHIPS

Q. May I apply without a chapter's recommendation?

A. No. The link to the STAR Scholarship application will only be emailed to students who are recommended by a P.E.O. chapter.

Q. How do I find a chapter to recommend me?

A. If you don't know a P.E.O. personally, you can use the Contact Us link at www.peointernational.org to request to be connected with a chapter.

Q. May the chapter member who writes the chapter recommendation also write one of the Letters of Recommendation required for the scholarship application?

A. No. Two letters of recommendation are required in addition to the chapter recommendation. There should be three separate writers. **Relatives or family members cannot serve as recommenders.**

Q. What advice can be given to letter of recommendation writers?

A. Letters of Recommendation should be provided by two different adults who know you well and can attest to your character, your talents, and your promise for the future. Teachers, employers, advisors to clubs or activities, coaches, volunteer supervisors and other adults who know you well could be asked to provide these letters. **Relatives or family members cannot serve as recommenders.**

Following these FAQs you will find a sheet of *Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation* that you can provide to the people who are writing your letters. This document is also available as a separate download in the Recommendations sections of your dashboard.

RECEIVING AND USING P.E.O. STAR SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

Q. When and how will I be notified whether I have been selected as a P.E.O. STAR Scholarship recipient?

A. Awards are announced annually by April 30, and notification is sent to all applicants and recommending chapters.

Q. Who determines how the \$2,500 scholarship funds are used?

A. You and your parent or guardian will decide whether you will directly receive the scholarship funds or whether the scholarship funds will be sent to your institute of higher learning, as well as how the funds will be used. You and your parent or guardian should be aware that the funds may become reportable income for tax purposes. Consult a tax professional if there are questions regarding uses of the funds.

Q. If I am selected as a recipient, when may I expect to receive the scholarship funds?

A. The earliest date that funds will be released is August 1. To initiate the release of funds, you will need to complete several additional sections on your dashboard. All recipients will receive detailed instructions by email about these requirements and their specific completion deadlines.

Q. May the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship be renewed?

A. No. This is a one-time scholarship that must be used during the academic year the scholarship is received. If you plan to take a gap year or otherwise delay your education, you will not be eligible for funding and should not apply.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q. What is P.E.O.?

A. P.E.O. is a Sisterhood of women who are purposeful and passionate about celebrating, supporting and motivating women. Our mission is to help women around the world advance through education. Learn more about our mission and impact at peointernational.org.

Q. How can I join P.E.O.?

A. P.E.O. membership begins with the local chapter. The best way to learn more about joining P.E.O. is by talking to a member of the chapter that recommended you for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship!

Q. What is Cottey College?

A. Cottey College, a nationally ranked, fully accredited, independent, liberal arts and sciences college for women located in Nevada, Missouri, has been supported by P.E.O. since 1927 and offers baccalaureate degrees in a variety of majors. Cottey College, a debt-free institution, welcomes women from around the world.

Cottey College has determined that STAR applicants, by nature of the application and sponsoring process, meet the college's admission standards. Consequently, Cottey is pleased to offer all STAR applicants direct admission plus a generous, potentially renewable, scholarship.

Click on the Cottey College link on the P.E.O. International website for additional information or go to: <http://www.cottey.edu>.



P.E.O. STAR Scholarship

Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation

Applicants for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship are required to upload two unique Letters of Recommendation to their online application. Applicants are advised to request these letters from adults who know them well and can attest to their character, their talents, and their promise for the future.

Relatives cannot serve as recommenders. If you are related to this student, please advise her to find a different adult to provide a letter of recommendation.

About the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship

P.E.O. is a Philanthropic Education Organization where women celebrate the advancement of women; educate women through scholarships, grants, awards, loans and stewardship of Cottey College; and motivate women to achieve their highest aspirations. You can learn more about P.E.O. at www.peointernational.org.

The highly competitive P.E.O. STAR Scholarship is awarded to women graduating high school who exhibit excellence in leadership, academics, extracurricular activities, community service and potential for future success. Applicants must have an unweighted GPA of at least 3.0 in a 4.0 scale and plan to attend an accredited postsecondary education institution in the United States or Canada full time or part time in the fall of the academic year following her high school graduation.

Applicants have 30 days to complete their application, including uploading both Recommendations. **The applicant can provide you with information on her deadline.**

Requirements for Letters of Recommendation

You will provide your Letter of Recommendation directly to the applicant. It is her responsibility to upload the document to her application portal.

Letters of recommendation for the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship may be up to two pages in length, minimum 11-point font. If the letter consists of multiple pages, it must be uploaded as one file. Acceptable formats are: doc, docx, pdf.

Please include the following in your letter of recommendation:

- Your name, address and contact information (official letterhead is preferred).
- Name of the student you are recommending.
- Describe in what capacity and how long you have known the applicant.
- Describe her strengths and challenges based on your personal observations. How has she made a positive impact on her school and/or community?
- How does she exhibit excellence in leadership, academics, extracurricular activities, and/or community service?
- What qualities and skill sets do you believe will carry her successfully into the future?

Please contact star@peodsm.org if you have questions that the applicant cannot answer.