



# Student Guide

## Class of 2025

**Vashon Community Scholarship Foundation** is a unique, independent local effort to encourage graduating seniors to continue their education and training after high school. Thanks to our thousands of generous donors, engaged community members, and our volunteer board, VCSF has raised more than \$3.75 million to support the dreams of students over the last 38 years.

We find a scholarship for every student who submits a notebook. At our annual ceremony, every student learns about their scholarship awards and hears a spoken tribute about their individual journey. Recipients will have two years to use their scholarship award funds, after which time the award money will be passed on to another student in a future class.

This packet is a guide for seniors graduating from Vashon Island School District (VISD) who wish to submit a scholarship notebook. If students or their families have questions about the scholarship process, please don't hesitate to contact the board at [vashonscholarships@gmail.com](mailto:vashonscholarships@gmail.com).

We look forward to receiving your scholarship notebooks!

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## Important 2024-25 Scholarship Dates

October 17th Zoom Info Session 6:30 pm via Zoom ([link](#) will available on our website)

TOPIC: Introduction to Scholarship Process for VHS Seniors & Parents  
Student Guide available at [vashonscholarships.org/student-guide](http://vashonscholarships.org/student-guide)

November 6<sup>th</sup> REQUIRED: Commit Day 7:30 am & 7:00 pm @ VHS Great Hall

MUST BRING 3 THINGS and receive a blank scholarship notebook in return:

- Signed Commitment Form ***Including naming who will write your letters of recommendation.***
- A rough draft of your Personal Resume
- \$20 fee - your family's contribution to this all-volunteer community effort

January 9<sup>th</sup> DUE: Scholarship Notebooks 7:30 am or 7:00 pm @ VHS Great Hall

Scholarship Notebook Deadline – Digital & Physical Turn-In

All students will turn in a completed scholarship notebook at VHS **and** upload a digital copy at a link that will be posted in the Student section of our website.

**Your notebook contents should be organized in the following order:**

1. Title Page with photo and name
2. Personal Resume (2 pages)
3. Personal Essay
4. Two Signed Letters of Recommendation
5. Four Collage Pages
6. Transcript – **digital version only**
7. Student Bio (2-3 sentences)

May 21<sup>st</sup> REQUIRED: Scholarship Awards Ceremony 5:30pm @Open Space

Students must attend the ceremony to receive scholarship awards. Donors will be present.

May 30<sup>th</sup> DUE: Thank You Notes & Education Plan Form @ VHS Office

To claim scholarship funds, turn in by the end of this week:

- One thank-you note and envelope for each scholarship award received—each one stamped and addressed to the donor(s), with the student's return address *NOTE: Scholarship funds will not be disbursed until thank you note(s) received*
- Education Plan Form, including where you plan to go to school *OR* request to defer (let us know of any change in plans or schools as soon as you know)

## Scholarship Notebook Checklist

Here is a handy checklist for the scholarship notebook you will turn in on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in both digital and physical formats. It should be organized in this order:

- TITLE PAGE - 1 page that contains your name and a current photo (your face should be visible)
- PERSONAL RESUME – 2 pages following the format of the Sample Resume included in this packet:
  - Education** Schools you've attended
  - Clubs and groups both in and out of high school** Including details of your involvement
  - Sports in and out of high school** Include length of time played during high school
  - Honors, Awards, Special Assignments** In and out of school
  - Community service** Including a description, timeline, and the extent of your involvement
  - What else do you do with your time? What makes you happy?**
  - Tell us about a challenge you faced during your high school years**
  - Work experience** Including dates and details of your responsibilities
  - A brief description of a non-academic accomplishment**
  - How would you describe yourself to a stranger in 2-3 sentences?**
  - How do you intend to further your education or training after high school?**
  - What are your hopes and dreams for your future?**
- PERSONAL ESSAY – 1 to 2 pages in length
- TWO (2) LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION - Up to 2 pages each from:
  - One high school teacher or community college instructor
  - One community member who knows you well such as a coach or mentor (*NOT a second teacher unless they know you specifically as a coach or a mentor outside of class.*)

Choose the 2 individuals as soon as possible. At the bottom of the Scholarship Commitment Form, indicate the teacher and community member you will ask for letters of recommendation.

**Letters of recommendation may NOT be from peers/friends or an immediate family member such as parents, stepparents, siblings, aunt, uncle or grandparents.**
- COLLAGE – 4 pages
 

A creative display of photos, newspaper clippings, your art, certificates, awards, etc. *Please note, images in your notebook may be displayed during the ceremony.*
- TRANSCRIPT – **Digital version only** – We will obtain a paper copy of your most up-to-date transcript from VHS later in January, which we will add to your printed notebook.
- PERSONAL BIO FOR CEREMONY PROGRAM – 2-3 sentences

# Sample Personal Resume

John/Jane Doe

222 Westside Highway SW, Vashon, WA 98070

Cell phone: 206-946-0000, Family phone: 206-463-0000, Email: f58hamsun@uno.net

Birthdate: March 23, 2003, Seattle, WA

## Education

- Crown Hill Elementary, Seattle (grades K-2)
- Chautauqua Elementary (grades 3-5)
- Harbor School (grade 6)
- McMurray Middle School (grades 7-8)
- Vashon High School (grades 9-11)
- Running Start at Seattle Central Community College (grade 12)
- Cumulative GPA to date: 3.65

## Clubs and groups both in and out of high school (note details)

- Explorers Program for Vashon Fire and Rescue (2 years)
- Amnesty International (3 years; co-president grade 11)
- UCC Youth Group Choir, Seattle (2 years)
- Honor Society (grade 10 - present)

## Sports in and out of high school (note length of time played)

- Vashon Crew, (2 years; Most Improved grade 10)
- VHS Cross Country (3 years; Most Inspirational grade 9)
- Biking (summer competitions)
- Hiking and camping (Walked across England with my family, frequent day hikes and overnights in the Cascades with friends)
- Snowboarding (grades 8-11)

## Additional honors

- Rotary Exchange student to Poland (summer 2018)
- Freshman English award

## Community service

- Pet Protectors Volunteer (Saturday mornings 1 year)
- UCC youth volunteer with Habitat for Humanity (spring break 2 years)
- Food bank garden work (3 weekends)

### **What else do you do with your time?**

- I play harmonica with a band called Skunk Patrol
- I repair bicycles
- I'm interested in politics (especially this year!)
- I like to read science fiction

### **A Challenge from High School**

- At the beginning of the pandemic, it was so isolating to be taking classes online, and not seeing friends for sports. So, I started riding my bike with a friend every day. I got in great shape and saw every inch of Vashon. My friend and I rode in Passport to Pain to celebrate.

### **Work Experience**

- Yardwork for 2 families (summer, grade 9)
- Camp Burton Kitchen

### **A Non-Academic accomplishment**

- I helped a friend who fell hiking and broke his arm to safety. That experience showed me that I can remain calm in crisis and be resourceful when needed. I would like to get EMT training.

### **Describe yourself to a stranger**

- I am funny, smart, energetic, and enthusiastic. Math is not my strong point, but I care about people, ideas, and nature. I am the middle of 3 boys. We raise chickens and ducks, sell eggs, and recently worked together to build a new and improved coop.

### **How do you intend to further your education after high school?**

- Attend UW or Evergreen State and maybe graduate school in international relations or law school. I would like to work in intercultural justice.
- I'm interested in learning more about boats and repairing engines, so I plan to attend Seattle Maritime Academy.
- I'm inspired by nature, challenged by being in the mountains and dedicated to reversing climate change. I am applying to programs through National Outdoor Leadership School and Wilderness Awareness School to begin learning more.

### **What are your hopes and dreams for your life after high school?**

- I am looking forward to riding my bike across the country and to going to a small arts school where I can focus on learning about the performing arts so I can become a full-time actor.

## Instructions for Personal Essay

Your personal essay is your chance to use your voice to help those reading your notebook get a sense of you as a person. Rather than simply reiterating the personal data from your resume, use this part of the notebook to help prospective donors to get to know you.

### Possible topics:

*Events, people, or places who have influenced you and why. Think challenges and “aha” moments that have inspired your thinking or actions.*

*A special interest or challenge and why it is important to you or what it has taught you.*

*What has led or inspired you to want to further your knowledge with more study or training?*

*Tell us something that you think is important for us to know about you that is not covered in your resume or elsewhere in your notebook.*

### Some Things to Consider:

- Essays must be **at least one full page** long.
- **Ask someone to proofread your essay.** If an essay has numerous spelling and grammatical errors, we may ask you to correct them and resubmit so that donors are not distracted by the errors as they get to know you through your notebook.
- **Do not share information that you do not want shared publicly.** You are giving permission for your essay to be read by scholarship donors, board members, and the selection panel, who are members of your small community.
- **Information from your notebook will be included in the ceremony.** Both as we introduce you and your scholarship(s) and in a multimedia display.
- **WARNING ABOUT AI-GENERATED ESSAYS: The essays that have been generated by AI have been among the worst we have read.** Not only does addressing your topic in your own personal and quirky way give you an opportunity to reflect, but those very personal and quirky attributes are also what makes your notebook come alive. A wise person put it this way: “Why should I bother reading something someone can’t be bothered to write?”

## Instructions for Letters of Recommendation

How to request a letter of recommendation from a teacher and a community member:

Choose 2 individuals who can describe your strengths.

1. Ask only one teacher for a letter of recommendation for your notebook.
2. Ask one community member for a letter of recommendation for your notebook. A coach or mentor can qualify as a community member, even if they are also a teacher, because they know you outside the classroom setting.

**These letters may NOT be written by peers/friends or family members such as parents, stepparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, or grandparents.**

Approach the individuals early (by mid-October) so they have ample opportunity to compose and type their letter for you. Ask them this: *Would they write a letter to help scholarship donors learn about you (what strengths you have shown, what challenges you have overcome, how you show up for others)?* Request they give you their letters by mid-November to early December at the latest. The letters must be signed, whether digital or printed.

At the bottom of the [Commitment Form](#), due November 6<sup>th</sup>, indicate from whom you have requested letters of recommendation.

Check back with your letter writers by the third week in November, at the latest, if you have not yet received the letters. It is your responsibility to obtain the letters before December 23<sup>rd</sup> (Winter Break) and include them in your notebook for submission on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup>. If printed, take a good quality scan or photo for the digital version of your notebook—Vashon Public Library has a scanner, as does Vashon Print & Design uptown.

Make and keep copies of your letters of recommendation. You may want to use them again for your college applications.

When you request a letter of recommendation, you are asking a favor.

An organized, courteous request makes a good impression, and a verbal thank you or a simple thank-you note is so appreciated.



## Instructions for the Bio for the Ceremony Program

We would like you to write your own short biography to be printed in the VCSF ceremony program.

- Your bio will introduce you to the community in 2-3 sentences.
- At the top of the bio, print your name as you want it to appear in the program.

Be specific. Be positive. Be honest. Be yourself.

Submit a copy of your typed bio as the last page of your scholarship notebook. We may make some edits to fit the ceremony program.

### Sample 2-3 Sentence Bios:

*An adventurous Alaskan childhood endowed me with a set of practical skills and a wealth of memories associated with my grandma's cooking. Intrigued with food and healthy eating, I plan to be a chef in my own restaurant.*

∞

*I play the bagpipes, row with the Island Rowing Club and work on the Riptide staff. I look for intellectual challenges and enjoy working on group projects. A Rotary exchange experience in Denmark ignited my sense of adventure.*

∞

*In addition to academics, I enjoy lacrosse, soccer, and piano. I like to solve problems and hope to study engineering. My friends know me for my sense of humor, my positive attitude, and my ability to navigate the Hecate Strait!*

∞

*I am imaginative, quiet, and kind. I write fiction and hope to offer the brief escape of a compelling story to my readers. I find strength and inspiration in standing up for social and political change to benefit the common good.*

∞

*I like to write nearly everything, including "to do" lists. My experience as cheer co-captain has honed my confidence. I consider myself a serious student who embraces challenge and approaches life with empathy for others.*



## Hot Tips for Scholarship Notebooks

**Meet all deadlines.** Plan to finish early, allowing yourself time to solve any last-minute issues.

We strive to give every applicant equal opportunity. Requests for a deadline extension due to health issues or circumstances that are beyond the student's control will *be considered* by the board. Students should email us at [vashonscholarships@gmail.com](mailto:vashonscholarships@gmail.com) with SUBJECT: NOTEBOOK COMMITTEE DEADLINE CONSIDERATION.

**Proofread your entire notebook early to have plenty of time to make corrections.** Ask at least one person to proofread your notebook. They will catch what you miss—even your favorite author needs an editor.

**Donors really love the collage pages!** These pages are a creative visual display about you—they should reflect your personality and interests.

**You should keep a copy of your scholarship notebook.** The items you include in your application may be useful when making applications for college, other scholarships, or employment. *You will not have access to your hard copy notebook again until we return it to you at the Scholarship Ceremony in May.*

**We are Matchmakers, not Gatekeepers!** Our Donors, the Community Selection Panel, and the VCSF Board award scholarships by matching each scholarship's criteria to a student's interests, achievements, and aspirations. We read around 100 notebooks every year and every year we develop respect and tender hearts for every single one!

### **Help Us Make a Match:**

- Put a lot of thought into what you say about yourself and how the pages will look to the reader. Neatness, accuracy, and correct spelling make a very positive impression.
- Your scholarship notebook should be an honest reflection of your personality, interests, accomplishments, and priorities. The world needs the one and only you!
- Remember that every notebook is viewed by several members of the greater Vashon Community. Give only details that you would be comfortable sharing publicly.

Need more information or forms? [www.vashonscholarships.org](http://www.vashonscholarships.org)

Contact us: [vashonscholarships@gmail.com](mailto:vashonscholarships@gmail.com)

## VCSF Scholarship Commitment Form

This form is due on Wednesday, November 6th, at the Notebook Distribution event.

Student name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Student email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Text? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The following are conditions for participation in this program:

- Meet all VCSF deadlines and submit all notebook materials, including the Commitment Form.
- Honor my classmates and the donors by attending the ceremony on May 21, 2025, staying until the last scholarship is awarded.
- Submit a written thank-you note to my donor(s) via VCSF mailbox in the VHS Office by May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Authorize VISD to release my transcript to VCSF and verify my graduation in June of 2025.
- Understand that serious misconduct (per VHS Discipline Code) will jeopardize my eligibility and authorize Vashon Island School District to notify VCSF in the event of suspension or expulsion.
- Acknowledge that I have two years to spend my award funds—the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years, including summer terms—paid directly to an academic institution for tuition or trade/professional program for fees and required equipment.
- VCSF and its donors may publish my name and general biographical information in announcements of scholarship awards.
- VCSF may include images of me from the ceremony on their website and in public relations materials. (*You may opt out of this one item by initialing here: Opt out \_\_\_\_\_*)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, along with my parents/guardian, agree to the above conditions.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*If student is under 18 years of age,*

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

2nd parent signature, if parents live separately: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Request Made for Letter of Recommendation from a teacher who has had you in class:**

This teacher has agreed to write a letter of recommendation:

Teacher's name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Request for Letter of Recommendation from a community member:**

I have asked the following individual to write a letter for me:

Community Member's name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_