Scholarship Application Form

Upakar Foundation – the Indian American Scholarship

Application Postmark Deadline - April 30, 2020

Application Instructions

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 2020-2021 academic year
- Have a 2019 Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on the IRS form 1040 (line 7) 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 2020 and live 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, use as checklist**)
    1. Completed and signed Upakar Scholarship Application Form
    2. 2 well written on-point essays (topics prompt in Scholarship Application Form)
    3. Proof of Citizenship (United States and Indian)
    4. High School transcript
    5. Copy of the official SAT or ACT report
    6. Letter of Recommendation
    7. Financial information
        - Student Aid Report (SAR, generated from completing FASFA)
        - Tax returns (Required – 2019 1040 and Schedule 1), (If you or your parent own a business, partnership or farm – 2019 Schedule C and/or Schedule E)

Application Package:

- **Upakar Scholarship Application Form**
    - Please neatly print your information on the application in blue or black ink. Applications that are illegible or incomplete will be disqualified.
    - SAT / ACT test scores. Use your highest test scores.
    - Sources of Funding. All external funding, not parental or personal contributions.
    - 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
    - Parental Income Section
        - Parental Adjusted Gross Income – will come from the IRS Form 1040 (Line 7) and must be under **$90,000**
        - Parental Tax Liability – amount owed to the IRS (Form 1040, Line 11)
        - Earnings per Tax Return – generally from 1099 or W-2
        - Monthly Mortgage or Rental payment - family home 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 for each business your parents own.
    - Signed application – must be signed by **both** a parent (or guardian) and the applicant.

- **Proof of Citizenship**
    - If you were born in the United States
        - Copy of **your** United States passport name page <u>AND</u>
        - 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") <u>OR</u>
        - Copy of your United States passport name page
    - **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 the official SAT or ACT reports that match the scores listed on the application.

- **Letter of Recommendation**
    - o Must be from a teacher or advisor. The letter must be current and may not be from a relative.
    - o As a courtesy, give at least 3 weeks to complete your recommendation
    - o The letter must stay confidential. Ask you 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**
    - o All pages of your Student Aid Report (SAR) if you filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA, www.fafsa.ed.gov)
    - o Tax returns
        - ▪ 2019 IRS form 1040
        - ▪ If you or your parents have a business, partnership, investment properties or farm include all copies of 2019 IRS Schedule C and Schedule E (listed on IRS Schedule 1)
        - ▪ If the FAFSA or 2019 Tax Return was **not** filed, include:
            1. Clear and concise explanation why FAFSA or 2019 Tax Return was not filed
            2. 2018 IRS form 1040
            3. 2018 and 2019 W-2 and 1099 forms
            4. **Also** if you or your parents own a business, include all copies of 2018 IRS Schedule C and Schedule E

Postmark Deadline:

Application Packet must be mailed in one package that is postmarked on or before April 30, 2020. 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.

<div align="center">

Upakar Scholarship

9710 Traville Gateway Dr #398

Rockville, MD 20850

</div>

Award Notification:

Applicants that are awarded scholarships will be **directly** notified in August 2020. The awardees will be posted on www.upakar.org in September 2020.

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 <u>fully</u> 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 30 or postmarked by April 30? Can I get an extension?
    - The application must be postmarked by April 30. 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.