



Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Applicant Package

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) Scholarship Program! The Vernon CommUNITY Fund and Vernon City Council are dedicated to enriching the local community, and promoting higher education is aligned with our overall mission to contribute to the betterment of the Southeast Los Angeles County region. Vernon leaders are excited to offer the VCF Scholarship to students who are committed to investing in their education for a brighter future.

The City Council of the City of Vernon created the VCF to provide grants to charitable and governmental entities for projects and programs that benefit those residing and working in Vernon and its surrounding areas. The City Council established the Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee (Grant Committee) and provided the basic guidelines and operational procedures for said Committee and its officers, including those related to the allocation of funds and the processes for reviewing and ranking applications and awarding grants. Since its inception in 2014, the VCF Grant Committee has awarded approximately \$5 million in grants to non-profit organizations in the Vernon Area.

Over the years, the Grant Committee has sought to expand the work of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund in meaningful ways. The VCF Scholarship Program began as a concept, but quickly gained traction amongst Vernon leaders. The program was deemed to be a great opportunity for the VCF to establish a personal, viable connection with youth in the Vernon Area while supporting their pursuits of higher education and, in turn, elevating the region as a whole by ensuring that the career goals of students in our community are more attainable.

In 2018, the Vernon City Council authorized the Grant Committee to proceed with the implementation of the VCF Scholarship Program. The implementation of this program is the result of much thought, planning, and care. It has been designed with a true philanthropic mindset. It is the hope of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund and Vernon City Council that the VCF Scholarship Program will be a vehicle that offers many motivated, exceptional young people a path to accomplish their academic and career goals.

Again, thank you for your interest in the VCF Scholarship Program. The selection team looks forward to reviewing your application package and congratulates you on your many educational achievements thus far.

Sincerely,

Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Administration



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I. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Guidelines

The Vernon CommUNITY Fund (VCF) Scholarship Program focuses on 12th grade students living or attending school in the Vernon Area (which includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles).

Scholarship Criteria

Vernon Municipal Code (VMC) Section 2.48.120(B) sets forth the specific selection criteria for scholarship recipients and will be the specific standards used to identify qualified applicants who, ultimately, will be recommended as scholarship recipients. Selection criteria have been identified to clearly define the profile of the scholarship recipient.

Many factors will be considered when evaluating scholarship applicants. Scholarship criteria include an applicant's financial need, academic achievement, and the geographic distribution of scholarships. The scholarship criteria support the purpose of the Vernon CommUNITY Fund, which was established to provide charitable contributions in support of improved quality of life, strengthening of families, and affirmation of Vernon's ties with neighboring communities in pursuit of bright futures. The VCF Scholarship Program was created to provide disadvantaged youth in the Vernon Area the opportunity to achieve success in their post-secondary educational endeavors.

Award Criteria

- Financial need (30 points)
- Community/extracurricular involvement and leadership (30 points)
- Academic achievement (20 points)
- Awards and recognition (10 points)
- Personal and/or family attributes and values (10 points)

Eligibility

12th grade students enrolling in a post-secondary educational institution with full-time status who reside or attend school in the Vernon Area (as defined above) may submit an application for a VCF Scholarship.

Specific eligibility standards are identified within this section. In order to be considered for award, applicants must meet all of the following detailed criteria:

- Graduating High School Senior
- Achievement of a Minimum Weighted Grade Point Average of 2.0 in high school level coursework for trade school or two-year College applicants; or Minimum Weighted Grade Point Average of 2.5 in high school level coursework for four-year College/University applicants at the time of VCF Scholarship application submission
- Pursuit of a two-year or four-year Degree from accredited College/University; or pursuit of Trade School Certification



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- Full-time enrollment at post-secondary educational institution of choice (minimum of 12 units for college) at the time of award
- Immediate transition into a post-secondary educational institution upon graduation from high school (must begin post-secondary coursework within 6 months of graduation)
- Residency or school attendance in the Vernon Area (U.S. Citizenship is not required)
- Demonstration of strong leadership skills and responsibility (successfully communicated in scholarship application)
- Active in extracurricular activities (i.e., school/community involvement/employment/internship)
- A minimum of 20 hours of community service from 9th grade to first semester of 12th grade
- Not a City of Vernon employee or a legal dependent of a City of Vernon employee, Vernon City-appointed official, or Vernon City-elected official

Application Procedures

The information requested on the application is a reflection of the selection criteria designated for the VCF Scholarship Program. The following question and answer section (Q&A) addresses issues related to the VCF Scholarship application process:

- Q:** Where and when are scholarship applications available?
A: Beginning on January 1st of each year, applications will be available on the Vernon CommUNITY Fund website: www.vernoncommunityfund.org
- Q:** Where should scholarship applications be submitted?
A: Students may submit their complete application packages to the Vernon City Hall City Administration Office. Contact information is available on the website if any questions or technical issues arise during the application submission process.
- Q:** When are scholarship applications due?
A: The Vernon CommUNITY Fund will accept scholarship applications through the last Thursday in March.
- Q:** What additional information/documents must accompany the scholarship application?
A: As per the eligibility criteria noted above, students must submit proof that they reside or attend school in the Vernon Area (e.g. utility bills, proof of school enrollment); most recent report card; evidence of GPA with high school transcripts; sworn statement (found on the Vernon CommUNITY Fund website in scholarship applicant package) of a teacher or program director/supervisor with knowledge that applicant has performed the minimum amount of community service; and evidence of extracurricular activities. Although not required, students may also include letter(s) from post-secondary educational institution(s) along with their scholarship application.
- Q:** How and when will the scholarship award winners be notified?
A: Scholarship grant applicants recommended for award will be reviewed at the regular VCF Grant Committee meeting in May. Applicants selected for award will be notified within one week of scholarship award via email.



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Q: How and when will the scholarship awards be disbursed?

A: Award disbursement will occur in June, with checks directly mailed to scholarship grantees.

The VCF Grant Committee retains the right to withhold scholarship grants in any given year if no candidate is determined to be qualified.

Additional Considerations

- Scholarship amount will be based on applicant competition and funds available for award
- Personal interview of scholarship applicant may or may not be required, and shall be determined after initial review of applicant pool
- Applications may be summarily denied, with or without prior notification to the applicant, if any statements or representations in the application and supporting materials are found to be untruthful, dishonest, or misleading

Selection Procedures

Procedures for selection of award will mirror the current process used for the award of direct service grants through the Vernon CommUNITY Fund. The initial evaluation of a scholarship application will be a joint effort amongst City staff and consultant, Jemmott Rollins Group (JRG). Ultimately, the application of any candidate(s) recommended for award will be brought to the VCF Grant Committee in May for deliberation and approval(s) of grant(s).

The VCF Scholarship Program is designed to benefit a broad class of beneficiaries through an objective process that is nondiscriminatory in nature.



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II. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Timeline

A VCF Scholarship Program Timeline has been established based upon the calendar year. In summary, applications are accepted beginning January 1st through the last Thursday in March of a given year. In May, the Vernon CommUNITY Fund Grant Committee will select scholarship grantees. Funds for scholarship awards will be dispersed in June to all scholarship grant recipients.

January – March

Window to receive candidate applications for VCF Scholarship Program

April

Review of candidate applications to determine recommended grant awards for VCF Grant Committee approval

May

Approval of VCF Scholarship Grant Awards at the regular May VCF Grant Committee Meeting (held on the 3rd Wednesday in May at 10:00 a.m.)

June

VCF Scholarship Grant Awards are processed for payment



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III. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Application Requirements

Complete application information (see below) must be received no later than **5:00 p.m. on the last Thursday in March (March 27, 2025)**. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete and submit all parts of the application by the deadline.

- ✓ Applicant Checklist
- ✓ Applicant Information
- ✓ Financial Analysis Summary
- ✓ Autobiographical Essay
- ✓ Two (2) Recommendation Forms
- ✓ Proof of Educational Institution Acceptance/Enrollment
- ✓ Volunteer Hours Verification
- ✓ Copy of Current Transcript/Report Card
- ✓ Proof of Vernon Area Residency (if not attending school in Vernon Area)

A complete application package must be delivered to:

Vernon City Hall
4305 Santa Fe Avenue
Vernon, CA 90058
Attention: Diana Figueroa, City Administration

OR, sent via email to dfigueroa@cityofvernon.org

Failure to submit all requested materials by the deadline will disqualify you. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.**



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IV. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Checklist

Please complete the following checklist:

- ☐ Applicant Checklist completed and signed
- ☐ Applicant Information completed and signed
- ☐ Financial Analysis Summary completed and signed
- ☐ Autobiographical Essay completed as per formatting requirements and attached to applicant package
- ☐ Two (2) Recommendation Forms completed and signed
- ☐ Proof of Post-Secondary Educational Institute Acceptance/Enrollment attached to applicant package (if not available at time of application, must be presented prior to grant check release if selected for award)
- ☐ Volunteer Hours Verification section(s) completed and signed
- ☐ A copy of Current Transcript AND most recent Report Card attached to applicant package
- ☐ If not attending a high school in the Vernon Area, Proof of Vernon Area Residency attached to applicant package (e.g. utility bills) AND a copy of a valid photo identification (e.g. school I.D., California I.D., Driver's License)

I confirm that I have reviewed the checklist and that this scholarship application package includes all required materials for proper evaluation.

Applicant Initial: _____



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V. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Information

1. Name: _____ Birthdate: _____
2. Address: _____ Zip Code: _____
3. Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
4. Email Address: _____
5. What college/university/trade school will you attend after high school graduation?

6. List all trade schools, community colleges, and/or four-year institutions to which you have been accepted.

7. College Major/chosen field of study? _____
8. Career Objective: _____
9. Do you live in the Vernon Area*? _____
(*Vernon Area includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles.)
10. High School Name: _____ City/Zip Code: _____
11. Are you the first member of your immediate family to attend college? _____

I certify that all statements made in this application are true and complete. Furthermore, I agree and understand that any misrepresentation or omission of a material fact, or any falsification of official documentation will be justification for rejection of my award.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
(If applicant is under 18 years of age)



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VI. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Financial Analysis Summary

College/University/Trade School Attending: _____

Cost Analysis

Registration per Year (include all semesters/quarters for the year): \$ _____

Books/Fees per Year: \$ _____

Housing (Dorms/Rent): \$ _____

Total Annual Cost: \$ _____

Awards/Financial Aid Assistance

Have you applied for other scholarships? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If awarded, please list names of awarding organizations and associated amounts:

Organization Name	Amount
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____

Have you applied for Financial Aid? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If awarded, please list the type of financial aid (e.g. loan, work study program, grant) and associated amounts:

Type of Financial Aid/Assistance	Amount
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____



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Please sign to acknowledge the following statement:

I will report all awards, scholarships, and income to the educational institution (college/university/trade school) that I am attending. I have truthfully and accurately detailed the costs for my educational pursuits and the financial aid (if any) that I will receive. I understand that the information included in the Financial Analysis Summary Sheet will not impact my eligibility to receive a VCF Scholarship. I accept that the VCF Grant Committee's decisions regarding VCF Scholarship awards and dollar amounts are final and indisputable.

Applicant Initial: _____



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VII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Autobiographical Essay Guide

Autobiographical Statement

In essay form, please respond to as many of the following prompts as are applicable to your situation and/or personal experience:

- Effectively express your career goals and detail your plan to achieve success in your chosen field of study
- Identify work, volunteer, internship(s), and/or extracurricular experience and how and why it has impacted you
- Describe who or what has most influenced and motivated you to pursue a higher level of education and explain why
- Indicate why receiving a scholarship from the Vernon CommUNITY Fund will assist you in achieving your academic goals
- Discuss your academic ability and potential to be successful in your pursuits
- Provide a coherent, well-organized written product that conveys why you should receive a VCF Scholarship
- Identify any unique characteristics about yourself, your family and/or life circumstances that you would like to be considered in the evaluation of your application package

The prompts above appear in no particular order of importance, nor are you required to address each in your essay. The essay guide has been designed to provide you with insight into what the VCF Grant Committee may be interested in learning about you as a VCF Scholarship Applicant.

Your essay must be submitted in the following format:

- Typed (12-point font)
- Double spaced
- Written in first-person
- A combined total of three (3) pages or less

Reminders for Your Written Work

Structure/Organization

Your essay should give the reader a concise sense of who you are and how your particular life experiences have contributed to your current path. The structure of the essay should support its overall message and convey your personality. The story that you are telling should be logical, with a clear introduction, solid supporting ideas, and a conclusion.



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Specific Examples

If you choose to reference life experiences or situations in your essay, they should be specific and not general. Each example that you include in your essay should help showcase your character traits and distinguish you, as an individual, from the other applicants.

Significance

The experiences or situations you include in the essay should address the prompts in a meaningful way. Additionally, they should show significance to your overall message, and lend support to your educational, career, and personal goals.

(Please insert your essay following this page)



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VIII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Recommendations

Please have two (2) teachers or mentors complete the attached Recommendation Forms as part of your VCF Scholarship Applicant package. Formal letters of recommendation will not be accepted in lieu of the Recommendation Forms included in the applicant package, but can be submitted along with all other application materials, if desired.

Recommendation Forms shall be completed by an individual who can effectively evaluate the qualities you possess as a student, volunteer, and/or employee. He/she must complete the form in its entirety, with his/her contact information and the relationship to the applicant clearly articulated.

(Please insert any optional letters of recommendation following this page)



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Recommendation Form

Name of VCF Scholarship Applicant: _____

To the individual completing this form:

The person whose name appears above is applying for a Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship. The selection committee dedicated to evaluating all scholarship applicants kindly requests that your answers to the questions about the applicant be specific, thorough, and candid. Please make note of particular examples that illustrate his/her maturity, initiative, and potential to succeed in the applicant's educational endeavors and chosen career. Please understand that your recommendation may be made available for inspection at the applicant's request in accordance with the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and related laws and regulations.

Please complete the following:

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

If a question included on this form is not applicable to your relationship with the applicant and you are unable to evaluate them on that subject as a result, please indicate "N/A", or not applicable as a response.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____

2. What is your relationship to the applicant? _____

3. What is your assessment of the applicant's ability to succeed in his/her goal to attain a higher level of education?



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4. What unique qualities does the applicant possess that distinguish him/her amongst their peers?

5. Based on your knowledge of the applicant, how would you rate the applicant's skills, characteristics, and motivation?

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Deficient
Academic Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential for Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please add any additional insight or comments you may have about the candidate below:

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____



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Recommendation Form

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Please complete the following:

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

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Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

If a question included on this form is not applicable to your relationship with the applicant and you are unable to evaluate them on that subject as a result, please indicate "N/A", or not applicable as a response.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____

2. What is your relationship to the applicant? _____

3. What is your assessment of the applicant's ability to succeed in their goal to attain a higher level of education?



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4. What unique qualities does the applicant possess that distinguish them amongst their peers?

5. Based on your knowledge of the applicant, how would you rate their skills, characteristics, and motivation?

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Deficient
Academic Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highly Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential for Growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please provide any additional comments you may have to share about the candidate below:

Your Signature: _____ Date: _____



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IX. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Program Proof of Post-Secondary Educational Institution Acceptance/Enrollment

Proof of post-secondary educational institution acceptance and/or enrollment is one of the requirements for a VCF Scholarship. Please submit documentation that fulfills this requirement along with your application package.

If you have not received an official notification of acceptance from the institution that you will attend and you are selected for scholarship award, proof of acceptance/enrollment must be presented prior to the issuance of the scholarship grant check. If this applies in your case, please include an explanation of the particular circumstances affecting you and acknowledge that you will be required to produce proof prior to the issuance of any scholarship grant award.

(Please insert proof of post-secondary educational institution acceptance/enrollment following this page OR a written statement of your intent to produce proof prior to receipt of grant check should you be selected for award)



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X. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Volunteer Hours Verification

As one of the eligibility requirements for the VCF Scholarship, applicants must complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours of community service between 9th and first semester of 12th grade. In order to verify that the applicant has performed the minimum amount of community service, the application requires that a sworn statement be submitted by a teacher or program director/supervisor with knowledge that applicant has performed the minimum amount of community service.

The below section(s) must be completed by an authority who may validate the service hours completed by the applicant. The confirmed total number of hours dedicated to service should be NO LESS than twenty (20).

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Type of work performed by applicant: _____ Number of hours worked: _____

I verify that the above is true and correct (sign here to attest): _____

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Type of work performed by applicant: _____ Number of hours worked: _____

I verify that the above is true and correct (sign here to attest): _____

Your Name: _____ Title: _____

School/Organization: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Type of work performed by applicant: _____ Number of hours worked: _____

I verify that the above is true and correct (sign here to attest): _____



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XI. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Transcript/Report Card

As one of the application requirements for the VCF Scholarship, applicants must provide a high school transcript to verify the Grade Point Average achieved at the time of application submission. This should be attached to the applicant package.

Additionally, the applicant must attach his/her most recent report card along with the VCF Scholarship application package.

(Please insert transcript and report card following this page)



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XII. Vernon CommUNITY Fund Scholarship Applicant Proof of Residency

As one of the eligibility requirements for the VCF Scholarship, applicants must either attend school, or be a resident of the defined Vernon Area (which includes the cities of Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Huntington Park, Commerce, the area within the City of Los Angeles known as Boyle Heights, and the unincorporated area known as East Los Angeles). Proof of U.S. citizenship is NOT required. Acceptable forms of proof include household utility bills and/or other documentation that identifies the applicant and/or their guardian's name and address.

A copy of a valid form of photo identification must also be included with the VCF Scholarship Application Package (e.g. school I.D., California I.D., Driver's License).

(Please insert proof of residency and photo identification following this page)



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XIII. VCF Scholarship Grant Agreement

I understand that, if I am selected for a VCF Scholarship award, my scholarship is contingent upon my attending a post-secondary educational institution (trade school or college), as represented in this VCF Scholarship application. If for any reason I do not attend, I will return the full amount of my scholarship award to the City of Vernon.

I agree with the terms detailed above and I acknowledge the obligation to return any funds that are not used for the purpose of furthering my post-secondary education.

Applicant Printed Name: _____

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
(If applicant is under 18 years of age)

Date: _____



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Congratulations. You have completed the VCF Scholarship Applicant Package. We thank you for your interest and wish you the best in your pursuit for post-secondary educational opportunities.

You will receive feedback on your VCF scholarship application in the form of an email. Please feel free to contact 323.293.7074 with any questions.

Thank you.