Ledford Scholars Program

Information Session

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Ledford Scholars Program

- Full-time undergraduate students from Appalachia, from any disciplines, are eligible, and a variety of fields of study, research approaches, and methodologies are supported each year
- In 2023, for the first time, applicants may select either summer term or fall semester
- Stipends at a rate of $10.00 per hour up to a maximum of 360 hours total ($3,600)
- Additionally, reimbursement allotments of up to $1,000 for project-related expenses
  - *Could include*: lab supplies; travel to research sites; project equipment
  - *Could not include*: general summer lodging; tuition for summer courses
- Must have the support of a faculty mentor who serves throughout the research project
- Awards based upon *anticipated* project budgets; final allotments of funding based upon *actual* hours worked/reimbursements
APPLICATION PROCESS

- Application cycle opens in early December each year
- Submission deadline for all application materials is normally mid-February
- Awards made in the application year fund projects in following summer or fall
- To be eligible, applicants must:
  - Be a full-time undergraduate student in good standing during the academic year the application is made
  - Matriculate at the ACA institution during the fall semester following summer project or during the fall when the project is completed
  - Have graduated from a high school/been home schooled in an Appalachian Regional Commission designated or contiguous county (see www.arc.gov for list of these counties)
- All research projects must receive the endorsement of the Scholar’s faculty mentor and the institution’s Chief Academic Officer
**Scholar Responsibilities**

- Carry out their projects in a manner that follows the original proposal as closely as possible; substantive changes to the project require the endorsements of CAO and Faculty Mentor, and ACA approval

- 4-6 minute video of research presentation, which will be highlighted on the ACA website

- Submission of a final project report to the ACA in the fall semester (September or late November), including a full accounting of expenses

- *Strongly encouraged:* Public presentation at one’s home campus after the project

- Award funding will be provided one’s institution based upon actual hours worked and research reimbursements, up to award maximum, following completion of the final report

- ACA funding is furnished to member institutions (rather than directly to students), so it is important that Scholars understand their schools’ business protocols and establish with their home institutions the procedures and timelines for payments.
GENERAL GUIDELINES

- To be considered for a Ledford Award, students must submit a full application prior to stated deadline. Applications that are missing documentation will not be considered by the review committee.

- Please coordinate with your CAO and your Faculty Mentor to ensure their letters are submitted prior to deadline.

- Applications are submitted electronically (only) through the ACA’s website.

- The CAO’s and Mentor’s endorsement letters are also uploaded directly onto the ACA web portal.
Application Materials

- **Project Narrative:** Address the research question(s), the learning goals, and how these outcomes will be accomplished in the time allotted to the project (corresponding to the budget)

- **Budget:** Itemize your expected budget, with clear and reasonable estimates that correspond to the magnitude/complexity of the project
  - Estimated number of hours expected to work related to the project
  - Direct research expenses related to the project

- **Mentor(s) Role(s):** Describe the faculty mentor’s role in supporting the research project

- **Biographical Information:** Share a brief statement of interest in the proposed research and anticipated outcomes

- **Letter of endorsement from faculty mentor**

- **Letter of Endorsement from Chief Academic Officer**

- **Most recent transcripts (official or unofficial)**

- **Verification that proposal is the student’s own work**
EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS: PROCESS

- Applications are reviewed by the Ledford Scholar Review Committee, a committee of the ACA’s Council of Chief Academic Officers, including three Chief Academic Officers from member institutions and two ACA faculty members.

- The committee is constituted to ensure both geographical and disciplinary diversity.

- To enhance impartiality, committee members do not review applications from their own institutions.

- The Committee’s determination of awards is based upon both mean and median rankings of compiled reviewer evaluations.
EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS: CRITERIA

- The Committee evaluates applications based upon an established rubric:
  - The proposal is written clearly and effectively
  - The proposal has a clearly articulated rationale and objectives
  - The proposal presents a research plan that can achieve its stated objectives
  - The proposal utilizes methodologies capable of achieving its objectives
  - The proposal furnishes reasonable/attainable timeline and defined budget
  - The proposal demonstrates significant student/faculty mentor interaction

- Applications are scored on two additional factors:
  - Applicants who have not previously received a Ledford award will receive favor
  - Applicant proximity to Harlan County, Kentucky
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LEDFORD SCHOLARS WEB PAGE

https://acaweb.org/student-scholarships/ledford-scholarships/

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/ASSISTANCE

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