



STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

2021-2022 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

► The application is a two-part process:



A reservation form, which will timestamp your application, open **January 13, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. and submit at 7 p.m**



The complete application, which requires household documents, available **January 15, 2021.**

If you need assistance, call (800) 616-7606 or email scholars@empowerillinois.org.

I. RESERVATION

- On Wednesday, **January 13, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.** applicant families can visit EmpowerIllinois.org to access the reservation forms and begin your application. You cannot submit your reservation form until 7 p.m.
- On the first page of the reservation, you will be asked to provide your name, phone number, home address, email address, and all your students' names. On the second page of the reservation, you will be asked to confirm this information. Your **timestamp will be recorded after you submit the second page of the reservation.** Your timestamp matters and may impact your chances of receiving a scholarship.
- Please note: **the order in which you list your students on the reservation is the order in which your family's scholarships will be awarded.**
- Only one reservation is required per family, even if you are applying for several students. Be sure, however, to list all students you are applying for on your reservation. If you forget a child, you will need to make a separate reservation for that child.
- After completing your reservation, you will receive instructions by email about accessing your student portal. Beginning Friday, January 15, 2021, you can use your student portal to complete part two of the application. You can complete part two whenever you are able, but Empower Illinois **encourage you to submit your application before January 25, 2021, to have the best chance at receiving a scholarship.**

II. APPLICATION

- Through your student portal, you can now begin part **two** of the application process. Part two consists of **six steps.**
- Part two may take some time to complete. If you cannot complete it at one time, you can pick up where you left off the next time you log in to the student portal. When you have answered all the questions for each step, remember to click on "save and continue."
- Until your full application has been completed, your portal status will show as "Application Incomplete." Remember, you can pick up where you left off, provided you clicked "save and continue" before exiting the application.
- You will need to upload required documents. Check page 3 for a list of required documents. These documents include providing financial information.
- If you complete the application in English, scholarship updates will be sent to you in English. If you complete the application in Spanish, scholarship updates will be sent to you in Spanish.

STEP 01

Eligibility Check

- Step 1 will determine your eligibility. You will be asked to provide your address, income information, and some household details. You will also need to provide information about **each** child who would like to apply for a scholarship.
- If a student is **not** eligible, you will receive a notice explaining why.
- If a student **is** eligible, you will receive a “thumbs up.” Please click “continue” to complete the entire application.

STEP 02

Parent/Custodian Information

- Step 2 requests information about parents or custodians. You will need to provide your name, date of birth, address, relationship to applicant(s), and your work status.
- You must provide this information for both parents or guardians, if there is more than one.

STEP 03

Household Financial Information

- Step 3 requests household financial information. You will need to answer questions about your tax status including:
 - » Did your household file your federal taxes in 2019 or 2020?
 - » If you do not have a Form 1040, did you or any adult members of your household receive a Form 1099? If so, please total the amounts that appear on your Form 1099s.
 - » Do you have a Form 1040 or 1099? If not, please total the amount from the most recent paystub or W-2 from all employers for all adult members of your household.

STEP 04

Student Information

- Step 4 requests information about the student applicants. It is very important to provide information for **every student** who wishes to apply for a scholarship.
- You will be asked to provide basic information about the student’s education and learning abilities.
- You must also select your choice of schools, in order of preference. Scholarships are awarded when funds at your school become available. Empower Illinois will make every effort to match students with their first-choice school. If you only have one school that you are interested in attending, please only list that school on your application.

STEP 05

Required Documentation

- Step 5 requests documents to verify your income and your address. Empower Illinois will accept a PDF or clear photo of these documents.
- **Before you begin this step, you must have ALL verification documents ready.** You will need to upload them electronically, with your application.

- You will need to provide your family's most recent tax return for 2019 or 2020. If that is not available, you will need to provide one of the following:
 - » W-2 forms
 - » Form 1099s
 - » Year-end pay stubs
 - » A letter on letterhead from your employer indicating cash wages paid
- You may need a document to prove you currently live in Illinois. If your current address matches the address on the Form 1040, W-2, or paystubs as uploaded above, no other address documentation is required. If not, you must upload **one** of the following:
 - » A current driver's license
 - » An Illinois ID card
 - » A current utility bill or residential lease
 - » State of benefits from WIC or SNAP
 - » A W-2 form
 - » A 1099
- If your student has a current Individualized Education Plan, or IEP, you must also upload the IEP form.
- If your student is a foster child, you must also upload a copy of your student's state issued medical card.
- If you received a tax credit scholarship last year from an SGO other than Empower Illinois and you do not meet the other criteria to be in [Category 1](#), you may need to upload a letter from the school where the scholarship was awarded.

STEP 06 Review

- Step 6 is the final step in the application process. You will be asked to verify all submitted information and answer a few remaining questions.
- After completing this page and submitting your application, you will have completed the process.
- You will receive a notice that your application has been submitted. It includes your Application ID number. Please print this page so you have a copy of your ID number. If you are on a public computer, please log out of your EmpowerXChange portal.

Next Steps

- Within 48 hours of submitting your application, you will receive a confirmation email.
- Your portal will provide real-time access to your application status. You will receive email notification when there has been a change to your status at any of the schools you have selected.
- Empower Illinois will begin making awards by January 29, 2021.
- Login to your [EmpowerXChange](#) portal to check your application status. Prior to your application being processed, you can make edits by clicking "Edit Application."
- Remember, scholarships are awarded to students whose selected school has available funds, and in the order of the time stamped reservation.

Questions? Call our Scholars Helpline at (800) 616-7606 or email scholars@empowerillinois.org.