



The National Italian American Foundation Scholarship Program 2020-2021 Frequently Asked Questions

General Scholarship Questions

Q: What are my odds of getting a scholarship? How many people apply each year?

A: Our scholarship program is extremely competitive and all applications undergo a rigorous evaluation process. The odds of being awarded a scholarship depend heavily upon the number of applications received. The NIAF receives between 1,500 - 3,000 scholarship applications each year and depending on available funds, awards between 50 and 100 scholarships.

Q: I don't know/can't find my NIAF Membership ID. What should I do?

A: Your NIAF Membership ID is the number that was administered to you when you signed up for NIAF Membership. Please check your email and your spam folder for the confirming email. You will be asked for the *member's name exactly how it appears on your membership, the zip code on the membership and your NIAF member ID*. If you cannot find this information, please call NIAF at 202-387-0600 or email membership@niaf.org.

Q: I cannot log in to the Community Force website to access the application, what do I do?

A: All new applicants must create a Community Force account to start your application by pressing the grey, "Create New Account" button on NIAF's [Community Force page](#). If you applied to a NIAF Scholarship for the 2019-2020 academic year, you may use the same login as you used last year. **Please note that the application login is different from your NIAF membership login. You cannot access the scholarship application from the NIAF membership portal.**

If you are still having trouble accessing the application after creating your Community Force log-in credentials, please click the "Forgot Password?" link on the login page. It will send you an e-mail from admin@communityforce.com with a link to reset your password. If you do not receive it within 30 minutes, please check your spam folder.

Q: Will I be notified if I do not receive a NIAF scholarship? How will I be notified of the results?

A: All applicants will be notified via email if they have received or not received a scholarship on Monday May 4, 2020 by 5:00 pm (EST). We do not post an exhaustive list of scholarship recipients on our website. The email will be sent to the email address that you register your application with on Community Force. To ensure that you receive your notification, please make sure that you register your application with your most frequently used e-mail address. If you do not receive an e-mail, please check your spam folder. E-mails generated from the NIAF Scholarship application come from admin@communityforce.com and may be directed to your spam.

Q: I don't have an email address and/or Internet access, can you mail me a hard-copy application?

A: No, NIAF scholarship applications are **only** available online. We no longer offer paper applications and will not accept paper copies of application documents. Additionally, an email address is required when completing a scholarship application.

Q: I would like to attend a summer program, can scholarship monies be used toward this program?

A: No, NIAF scholarship awards can **only** be used for tuition and university provided room and board during the academic year (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021).

Q: Can I use this scholarship for books or housing?

A: The scholarship funds awarded by the NIAF are only eligible to be used for tuition payment or on housing accommodations billed through your student account. You cannot use the funds for books or supplies.

Q: Can my high school guidance counselor write me a letter of recommendation?

A: Yes.

Eligibility Questions

Q: What type of students can apply for a NIAF Scholarship?

A: Any high school senior, undergraduate, graduate student or doctoral student may apply for a NIAF Scholarship. This includes students attending medical or law school. For any questions on the application that do not apply to you, please leave them blank unless stated as a required field. If you receive a NIAF Scholarship, you will be asked to show proof of full-time enrollment for Fall 2020 in a US-based, accredited higher education institution in before the scholarship monies can be paid.

Q: What qualifies an applicant as "Italian American"?

A: To be considered "Italian American" for the NIAF scholarship program, the student must have at least one ancestor who has emigrated from Italy (any region). We do not require verification of your Italian heritage.

Q: Do I have to be a member of the NIAF to apply for a scholarship?

A: Yes; you must be a member of NIAF or have a parent, guardian or grandparent who is a dues paying member of NIAF. Do you need to sign up for membership or renew your membership? You may sign up for any level of membership or renew your membership at www.niaf.org/join-the-niaf

Q: I am a high school student; can I apply for a scholarship?

A: NIAF does not offer scholarships for private high school education. Only students *entering or planning to enter* a U.S. based accredited college or university on a full-time basis in the **Fall 2020** are eligible (usually high school seniors or above). Applicants must be enrolled in or have been accepted to a U.S.-based accredited college or university for Fall 2020.

Q: Must I be in a certain age range to be eligible for a scholarship?

A: There is no minimum or maximum age limit to be considered eligible for a NIAF scholarship. Birth date is not a consideration in evaluating applications, but students must be *at least* high school seniors to apply. Students that attend a university later than the traditional age are also eligible to apply.

Q: I won a NIAF scholarship last year (or a previous year), can I apply again this year?

A: Yes; previous scholarship winners can and are encouraged to reapply. Previously awarded scholarship winners are not guaranteed an automatic scholarship renewal. Please note, however, that some scholarships require that eligible applicants must not have previously received the scholarship.

Q: I'm a student going back to school after an absence. Am I eligible for a scholarship from the NIAF?

A: Yes. The NIAF welcomes students of all types to apply for its scholarship funds. If you are attending school after a significant absence, please provide your most recent transcript (e.g. high school, undergraduate) even if a significant amount of time has passed. If you are unable to procure a transcript, please contact the NIAF at scholarships@niaf.org. You can also ask a coworker or supervisor to submit a recommendation in lieu of a teacher or professor.

Q: I'm a student studying abroad in Italy during the next school year. Am I eligible for a NIAF scholarship?

A: It depends. If you are studying *during the academic year* (i.e. not the summer) and with a U.S.-based, accredited institution (e.g. NYU, University of California – Berkeley), then you would be considered eligible for a scholarship from the NIAF. If, however, you are studying during the summer or through a non-U.S.-based, accredited institution (e.g. University of Bologna, University for Foreigners at Perugia), you will **not** be considered eligible for a scholarship from the NIAF.

As an example, if you attend Fordham University (a U.S.-based, accredited institution) and will be studying abroad in Rome during the fall semester and you will still be enrolled as a student at Fordham (but just studying abroad), then you would be considered eligible for a scholarship. If, however, you are taking an academic leave of absence from Fordham and enrolling at the University of Bologna, you would **not** be eligible.

Q: I am *not* an American citizen; can I still apply for a scholarship?

A: To be eligible for a scholarship, you **must** be a citizen of the United States of America **or** a permanent resident alien. If you are a dual citizen of another country **and** the US, you are considered eligible.

Q: My overall GPA is 3.1, but my Major GPA is 3.5. Am I eligible to apply?

A: Only one of your GPAs must be at least 3.5 to be considered eligible to apply. If you are applying based on your Major GPA, make sure that you include it on your application.

Deadlines and Materials Submissions Questions

Q: The website says that the deadline is March 1, 2020. Does that mean midnight on March 1 or 5:00 p.m.?

A: The deadline to apply is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Sunday, March 1, 2020.

Q: How do I submit my transcript?

A: To submit your transcript, please upload it in PDF form in the section dedicated to uploading documents.

Q: What if my teacher only wants to submit a hard copy of my teacher recommendation?

A: If your teacher only wants to submit a paper copy of your recommendation, you can invite your teacher to copy and paste the recommendation directly on the application website. The directions for submitting a recommendation on the application can be found in the e-mail that your teacher receives when you submit your request for a recommendation on Community Force. If they have trouble finding the e-mail, we recommend that they check their junk folder. All letters of recommendation will be kept private and will not be shared with the applicant.

Q: My teacher never submitted a recommendation. What should I do?

A: It is your responsibility to ensure that your teacher has submitted your recommendation by the March 1, 2020, deadline at 11:59 pm EST. The NIAF recommends that you provide your teacher with as much time as possible to complete the recommendation. As the deadline approaches, please contact your teacher to remind them of the upcoming deadline. The NIAF does not make exceptions for teacher recommendations submitted after the deadline. If your teacher recommendation is not submitted by the deadline, your application will not be considered complete and you will not be eligible for a NIAF scholarship. Remember, they must upload the recommendation via the drop box Community Force website.

Q: I am a non-traditional student who has been out of school for many years. I have no ties to any of my previous teachers/professors. Can I have a professional complete a letter of recommendation?

A: We would like you to use a teacher as your evaluator if possible. However, if you feel that your recommendation would be better served by another person because you have been out of school for some time or for another reason, you may have a professional (e.g. a coworker or superior) fill out your form.

Q: I am attending a new school and I don't know any of my professors well enough to ask for a recommendation. Can I have a previous teacher or coach fill it out?

A: Having a current professor or coach fill out the recommendation would be preferable, as that person would have the best knowledge of your current performance as a student. However, if you feel that a current professor would not be able to provide you a recommendation that accurately reflects your qualifications for this scholarship, we will accept a former teacher or coach's recommendation.

Q: I've missed the application deadline for this year. Are there any other scholarships available from the NIAF? When can I apply for the next NIAF scholarship?

A: If the deadline has passed, you will not be eligible for a NIAF scholarship this year. NIAF's next scholarship application will open on December 1, 2020 and close on March 1, 2021. If you have missed the deadline and are looking for other scholarships, the NIAF recommends www.fastweb.com and <http://www.zinch.com/scholarships/> to help students in the scholarship search process.

Financial Need Questions

Q: What does claiming financial need on my application entail? Will claiming financial need exclude me from being considered for scholarships based on academic merit?

A: A small percentage of the total number of scholarships the NIAF grants each year take the financial need of an applicant into account along with academic merit as criteria for selection.

If you are claiming financial need on your NIAF Scholarship Application, the NIAF requires that you upload a pdf copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR) or FAFSA form.

Information on completing a FAFSA form through the federal government can be found on their website www.fafsa.ed.gov

If you claim financial need, you will still be considered for all scholarships you are eligible, whether they take financial need into consideration or not. For those scholarships based on academic merit, your financial need will have no bearing on your evaluation.

The NIAF is not responsible for technical issues with your SAR report. To troubleshoot your FAFSA or SAR report, please contact FAFSA through their website www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Q: I wish to claim financial need, but don't have a FAFSA Financial Aid Form. What is the FAFSA Financial Aid Form and how do I go about getting one?

A: The FAFSA Financial Aid Form is the Free Federal Application for Student Aid sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The NIAF uses this information to make its determinations about the applicants' financial need relative to other students who are applying. If you do not have a FAFSA Financial Aid Form registered with the Dept. of Education, visit their website: www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information on how to submit a FAFSA.

Q: My family hasn't done its tax return for this year, so we can't prepare our FAFSA. What should I do?

A: You can prepare a FAFSA, which will generate your SAR, based on your previous year's tax return. If your financial situation has changed dramatically, please note that in your application.

If you still have questions about the on-line application, please contact scholarships@niaf.org or for an immediate response, call Julia Streisfeld, NIAF Director of Scholarships, Grants and Youth Engagement at (202) 939-3114.