



ILLINOIS PARK & RECREATION FOUNDATION

Inspire. Educate. Support.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HANDBOOK

V.5

REVISED July 2024

ILLINOIS PARK AND RECREATION FOUNDATION

IN COOPERATION WITH THE



PARK & RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Learn. Connect. Inspire.

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ILLINOIS PARK AND RECREATION FOUNDATION MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

IPRF's Mission is to be a sustainable philanthropic organization benefitting members of Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA).

Our Vision - To invest in developing park & recreation professionals to achieve their full potential.

Our Values - Advancement of Illinois park, recreation, special recreation, and conservation professionals. Committed to support students in the parks, recreation, therapeutic recreation, and conservation fields. Dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

PURPOSE OF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The IPRF Scholarship Program is established and made as an extension of the IPRA community to meet our vision of investing today for in current and future leaders. The Foundation is committed to promoting and supporting the resources necessary to establish a well-funded and promoted campaign through various activities, fund raising and awareness, to the importance of creating a sustainable model of providing continuing education and professional development opportunity to all interested members of IPRA. In turn the goal is to have these individuals have the opportunity to earn and possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and aptitude to be involved in the association and support and encourage career paths for the leaders of today and the future in the Illinois park and recreation industry.

RATIONALE FOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY IPRF

There are so many facets, sub-sections and affiliated components and groups of IPRA that a decentralized approach is not the most effective and consistent way to a common goal such as offering scholarships. Regardless of interest or affiliation with IPRA, with respect to scholarships, and helping those in need who wish to participate in IPRA activities but cannot afford, or those individuals who deserve with merit of their involvement in IPRA or impacts in the community they serve, the cause is important enough to centralize the application process, review and awarding and still have the uniqueness of each origin from which the individual is affiliated.

AWARD AMOUNTS

The level of scholarship amounts request amount may vary up to the following maximums per calendar year, per applicant:

- Professional \$500.00
- Student: \$400.00 for the IPRA/IAPD Soaring to New Heights Conference

These funds are intended to assist in the financial commitment for the applicant to attend the educational opportunity that will best assist in their professional growth and development.

SCHOLARSHIP TYPES

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

These are awarded on an annual basis to full time students from Illinois universities and colleges with a study and curriculum in parks and recreation and/or therapeutic recreation. The scholarship is intended to assist in the financial commitment to attend the Annual Soaring to New Heights Conference hosted jointly by the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association. Deadlines for applications, eligibility, criteria, and post award requirements are all included in this scholarship type. Please refer to the corresponding sections of this Handbook for details.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

These are also awarded to any member of IPRA in good standing. This scholarship is based on merit of the applicant with respect to their achievements and involvement in IPRA and also with serving the community they work and reside, that make the park and recreation movement in Illinois better. Applicants have interest in attending a local, regional, or national recreation sponsored professional development schools, workshops, or conferences related to their job responsibilities; continuing higher education at an advanced level within in area of specialization or development; or obtaining a certification where there is an educational component. Certification exam and membership fees are excluded. No preference, competitive edge or eligibility determination is given for this type of scholarship regardless of years of membership in IPRA, years of professional service, affiliation with IPRA or geographical region where the nominee resides or works.

ROD AIKEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This is awarded on an as needed basis and may not be awarded each year. This is a special scholarship funded by restrictive funds solely designated to this scholarship type. This scholarship was developed in memory and honor of Rod Aiken a former and passionate IPRA member who was committed to the development of young professionals so that Illinois would have a sustainable approach to developing the new leaders of the Illinois park and recreation system through Professional Development School (PDS). Young Professional for this scholarship is defined as working full time as a professional in the park and recreation industry for less than eight (8) years and thirty-five (35) years or younger.

COMMONALITY IN DIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

This is awarded on an as needed basis and may not be awarded each year. This is a special scholarship funded by restrictive funds solely designated to this scholarship type. This scholarship was developed to recognize and celebrate the importance of diversity within the Illinois Park and Recreation industry and to support all efforts for professionals and associates alike to respect and recognize diversity in people, attitudes, and interests in a professional development atmosphere.

GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP GUIDELINES

No preference or difference in eligibility is determined or reviewed of any nominee based on their affiliation with IPRA nor their regional location. All applications are reviewed and evaluated on its' own merit based on the criteria set forth within the scholarship type. This process is also based on the considerations of the Pre-Application Requirements listed below:

Pre-Application Requirements

- Review all application materials located on the IPRF web page: <http://www.iliprf.org>.
- Confirm and validate current membership in good standing with IPRA.
- Research and identify the appropriate type of scholarship that is being sought for assistance.
- Validate that professional development and continuing education opportunity being sought for scholarship assistance is offered, hosted, endorsed, affiliated, or sponsored by the Illinois Park and Recreation Association.

- Secure and assemble all supportive documentation required for application, including but not limited to, resume, GPA/transcripts, letter of reference, proof, or approval from employer about attending opportunity being sought, etc.
- Verify that you apply in the appropriate time frame that corresponds with the month of the educational opportunity. ***Late applications will not be considered for review.***
- Complete and submit all required materials for the scholarship you are requesting. ***Incomplete applications or lack of supporting documentation will disqualify applicants from being considered.***

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION PROCESS

GENERAL

The following are the eligibility requirements and application process used for each scholarship type is as follows:

- **All applications must be sent electronically through the application page within the IPRF web site**
- **Applications are only accepted and reviewed in the corresponding time frames as listed in Appendix A. Application must be approved prior to educational offering.**

(Example: IPRA/IAPD Soaring to new Heights conference submissions must be completed with the Closing Date of December 31.)

STUDENT APPLICATIONS

- All nominees must be a full-time student in park and recreation or therapeutic recreation field of study and attend a college or university in Illinois.
- Student must be in good academic standing with a 2.5 or above GPA.
- Fully completed application.
- The following documentation:
 - a current resume
 - a letter of support from professor or other school official.

PROFESSIONAL APPLICATIONS

- Fully completed application.
- The following documentation:
 - a current resume
 - a letter of support from immediate supervisor and/or agency Director. If not applicable may submit a letter from a colleague or mentor.
- Any special consideration for specialty applications
 - Rod Aiken – Attending PDS only

AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS

The following processes for each type of scholarship are listed below as follows:

- The IPRF Scholarship Review Committee will review all completed applications with all required supporting documentation
- **Professional Scholarship Award:** Upon completion of the review by the members of the Scholarship Committee, applicants who score 75% or higher from a review team member will be designated as “Approve”. Applicants need three approvals to be awarded the requested amount and become a scholarship recipient.
- **Student Scholarship Award:** Upon completion of the review by the University Liaison of the Scholarship Committee, all applicants that meet all the requirements of the scholarship will be awarded the designated amount and become a scholarship recipient.
- An award letter is sent to the recipient and their supervisor (if applicable).
- The scholarship awards may be announced or recognized at the joint IPRA and IPRF Annual Business meeting held during the Soaring to New Heights Annual Conference.
- Recipients are awarded the scholarship reimbursement post attendance, once confirmation of all post award requirements are completed.

POST ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Each recipient must complete the following within 30 days of the ending of the educational opportunity in which they received the award in order to receive the reimbursement of the awarded amount.

- Submit a testimonial and post experience reflection/evaluation of 1000 words max regarding their experience in attending the conference, networking opportunities they participated in and a reflection on the value the experience meant to them and how

what they experienced or participated in will affect their interest and career in public parks and recreation. This is required within 30 days after the conference experience.

- Provide Proof of attendance at the specified education opportunity. This may be completed in any of the following methods:
 - Issued CEU's form
 - A scan or photo of your conference badge
 - A certificate of competition or graduation
 - Screen shot of attendance for virtual education sessions.
- Provide a headshot for promotion materials.
- Submit the proper address and payee of where the scholarship reimbursement award should be sent.
- ***Please allow 4-6 weeks for reimbursement check to arrive.***

CONTACT US

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APPENDIX A – APPLICATION TIMETABLE

Application Period	Closing Date	Committee Review	Award Deadline
January 1 - 31	31-Jan	February 1 - 15	20-Feb
February 1 - 28	28-Feb	March 1 - 15	20-Mar
March 1 - 31	31-Mar	April 1 - 15	20-Apr
April 1 - 30	30-Apr	May 1 - 15	20-May
May 1 - 31	31-May	June 1 - 15	20-Jun
June 1 - 30	30-Jun	July 1 - 15	20-Jul
July 1 - 31	31-Jul	August 1 - 15	20-Aug
August 1 - 31	31-Aug	September 1 - 15	20-Sep
September 1 - 30	30-Sep	October 1 - 15	20-Oct
October 1 - 31	31-Oct	November 1 - 15	20-Nov
November 1 - 30	30-Nov	December 1 - 15	20-Dec
December 1 - 31	31-Dec	January 1 - 15	20-Jan