COVID-19-Related Scholarship FAQs

How has the COVID-19 crisis affected...?

**High school graduation requirements**
The Oregon Department of Education adjusted high school graduation requirements in response to school closures for the 2019-2020 academic year. Students who were on track to graduate in March will graduate. Students who were at risk of not meeting graduation requirements in March are working with school staff on individual plans with the goal of graduation.

**Full-time versus part-time enrollment requirements**
Enrollment status changes due to course cancellations will not affect financial aid during the current term. For scholarships that require full-time enrollment, we have streamlined the exception process, so that students who are unable to enroll full-time due to limited course offerings, challenges with online learning, or other employment, health or changes in family circumstances related to COVID may still receive their scholarship with part-time enrollment.

**Grades for college courses**
Some colleges have shifted from letter grades to pass or fail grades for the Winter and Spring terms. We will be flexible with renewal students’ GPA requirements if they are affected by this change.

**Demonstrated financial need**
Selection committees should note that the remaining financial need amount listed for students in their application materials has not been updated to reflect students’ reality during the coronavirus crisis. That number is based on FAFSA and ORSAA information which uses prior, prior year (2018) tax information. Selection committees should consider the financial impact the current crisis is having on students and consider awarding larger scholarships if the fund’s spending policy allows.

**Changes in college plans**
Students usually commit to their chosen college or university by May 1 each year, but many schools have pushed that deadline to June 1. Selection committees should note that the school students identified on their scholarship application may change.

**Selecting alternate awardees**
Due to the uncertainty students are facing and the increased likelihood of students’ plans changing, we recommend selection committees identify multiple alternate awardees to ensure scholarship funds are put to use.

**Access to scholarship applications**
OCF and OSAC staff are working from home, so we cannot offer printed copies of applications this year. Therefore, we will give online access to all selection committee members. If you do not already use the online portal to review applications, OSAC will email you with instructions to access materials online. OSAC staff will be available to provide any technical assistance you need to ensure you can access materials online with minimal difficulty. You can reach OSAC staff for technical assistance at DonorPortalHelp@hecc.oregon.gov or 541-687-7394.