

# Nursing Excellence Scholarship Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is eligible?

All Inova employees working in a budgeted, tuition assistance-eligible position who are currently enrolled in an accredited BSN, MSN, DNP or PhD nursing degree program. *Employees enrolled in graduate certificate or certification programs are not eligible.*

### I am not an Inova employee, am I eligible?

At this time only Inova nurses are eligible.

### How can I be considered for a scholarship?

You must complete the application packet according to the directions provided in the packet.

### How many scholarships will you award? How much money will I get?/ How many applicants do you have?

Because all of our scholarships are donor-funded, the number of scholarships and the amounts varies every year. Our goal is to support as many students as possible based on the amount of money available.

### How long do I have to stay at Inova after getting a scholarship?

We ask that you remain employed by Inova in a benefits eligible position for 1 year after your final scholarship payment. This is not the date you were awarded the scholarship, but the last date you received money from your scholarship.

### How will I be paid the scholarship money?

Our scholarships are paid as a line item on your regularly scheduled paycheck when you complete the payment request process. After you have been awarded the scholarship by successfully completing the application packet and review process, you will be provided with instructions for how to request a payment.

**Note:** All scholarships are taxable and are reported on your Form W-2.

### How are taxes paid?

The scholarship amount awarded includes that tax amount along with the scholarship amount.

### How does the scholarship work?

Our scholarships are one-time awards that may be used to cover the cost of tuition and nursing related lab fees only. Scholarships may not be used to cover the cost of books, student fees unrelated to nursing, parking, or school supplies.

### Do I have to prove financial need?

No. Our scholarships are merit-based, never based on financial need. Please DO NOT share any information related to need or finances. Our scholarship application will only ask for the name of other Inova scholarships you may have received, never the dollar amount. Any information you provide related to your personal finances is removed from your application and disposed of in keeping with Inova's policies regarding protected information.

### How many scholarships can I receive?

You may receive one Nursing Excellence Scholarship per degree program. For example, if you receive a scholarship for your BSN, you may not receive another scholarship during your BSN program. If you receive the Inova Nursing Excellence scholarship and another scholarship from Inova you must disclose that to the Inova Nursing Excellence Scholarship Committee.

**How often can I access the money?**

You may access your award money until you have completed your degree or exhausted your award. For example, if you are awarded a \$5,000 scholarship you might use \$1225 one semester (after tuition benefits) and have \$3775 left over for the next semester.

**If I have not completed my degree or exhausted my funds after one year does my scholarship expire?**

You may use your scholarship till you have completed your degree or up to 5 years, whichever comes first. In order to continue using your funds past the first year, you will be required to sign and return a yearly renewal form. (Form will be provided to scholarship winners in either December or January.)

**Can I use my scholarship if I have not used my Tuition Benefits?**

You must exhaust your tuition benefits before you can use your scholarship funds.

**When should I turn in my application? When is the application due?**

You should turn in your application when it is complete. We accept applications daily. You may apply as soon as you have an official acceptance letter from your program. Scholarships are awarded only twice a year, once in early January and early June. Please also keep in mind that scholarship funds cannot be paid during the months of November and December. A request for payment can be made in January instead.

**How long will it take to hear back? Is there a timeline for decisions?**

When we've received your completed application packet we will email you within 10 business days to let you know that we have it. When your application is complete, you'll be notified that your application is under review. Decisions are only finalized twice per year, for awards in January and June.

**My program hasn't started yet – should I send an old transcript?**

No – please submit a copy of your official acceptance letter into the degree program.

**How long does the essay need to be?**

The essay should be long enough to answer each question thoughtfully and completely. In some cases this may be one page or more. The essay counts for 40% of the application so it's in your best interest to take it seriously and answer the question as well as you can.

**Why do you need my...?**

You may have questions about the purpose of the information you're providing. Here are the explanations for each piece of the application:

- Resume - Your resume provides insight into your nursing career and history.
- Transcript/Acceptance Letter - this is the best way for us to know you're enrolled in a program with an accredited school of nursing. Our goal is to be sure your nursing program qualifies before you are awarded a scholarship. That way there are no hard feelings later.
- Essay - The essay tells us about your work at Inova, your understanding of Inova's mission and your level of involvement outside the basic requirements of your position. It also tells us your story and helps us get to know you as a person.
- Scholarship Agreement Form - The agreement lays out all the details of the program so you understand our expectations.
- Recommendations - Along with your essay, these are the most valuable piece of your application as they tell us how your leader and colleagues see you and your nursing practice. Your leader's recommendation is based largely on your annual evaluation so you're getting credit for work you've already done.

### **Why would my application be rejected?**

Our scholarship program is competitive, so rejections do happen. *The most common reason an application is rejected is due to lack of funds.* However, there are times when an application doesn't meet our expectations:

- Incomplete Applications - This is simple. If you don't turn in all of your documents or if your recommendations aren't complete, your application is never considered. In this case, it does not count as a rejection. It is not held against you. We follow up by email three times to remind you that we are missing pieces. After the final reminder, we treat these cases as if the application was never submitted.
- Poor Recommendations - If your leader is unable to recommend you for the scholarship because he or she feels you do not meet the criteria, your application will be rejected. If you're concerned, please speak directly with your leader or see the question "What if I don't want my leader to provide a recommendation?"
- Essay doesn't meet the criteria - The essay is one of the most valuable pieces of your application. While we're not expecting dissertation-level work, we do expect you to take it seriously and answer the question thoughtfully.
- Behaving unprofessionally during the application process - Scholarships are an award. They are not an employee benefit or entitlement you are "owed". As such, we expect you to behave in a professional manner and be a good representative of Inova during every interaction with our scholarship council and Inova Edelman Center staff, even over email and in your essay.

### **What if I don't want to apply online?**

Our scholarship application is only available online.

### **How is my application evaluated?**

Completed scholarship applications are reviewed by a member of our System Professional Development Department. Reviewers look for the following:

- Eligibility: Is the applicant eligible for the scholarship? Did the applicant provide all the required documents?
- 40% - Essay: Did the applicant answer the question? Is the response in essay format? Is it clear the applicant is a high-performing employee with career goals that match Inova's mission, vision, values and strategic priorities?
- 40% - Quality of Recommendations: Was the applicant recommended? Did the person providing the recommendation provide extra detail to support the application? Was the second recommendation from an appropriate source (i.e. a true professional colleague, not just a friend from work)?
- 20% - Fit for Scholarship Program: Is the applicant a highly-engaged Inova employee? Is the applicant likely stay at Inova for more than the minimum 1 year period? How long has the applicant been an Inova employee? Was the applicant professional and cordial in all interactions with the scholarship council and Inova Edelman Center staff?

**If your question is not answered here, please send an email to [edelmancareercenter@inova.org](mailto:edelmancareercenter@inova.org)**