Ledford Scholarship Application Guidelines

The Ledford Endowment provides stipends for students wishing to participate in undergraduate summer research at a rate of $10.00/hour for up to 360 hours total ($3,600 maximum). Additionally, an allotment of up to $1,000 for reimbursement may be furnished for reasonable equipment and travel expenses. These reimbursed expenses must be directly related to completion of one’s research project. For example, laboratory supplies necessary to complete one’s research or travel to and from one’s research site would be allowable; general summer lodging or tuition for summer courses would not be eligible.

The application must have the support of a faculty member who will agree to serve as a mentor throughout the research project. No funding is available for faculty mentors, although they are eligible for complementary registration fees to the ACA’s fall Summit where the Ledford Scholars present their research. Ineligible projects include mission trips, class trips, or travel for students traveling alone.

Ledford Scholar Responsibilities
Participation in the Ledford Scholars Program carries certain responsibilities for the student researcher:

- Attendance and presentation of research outcomes at the ACA’s Annual Summit, normally held in late September or early October each year. The mode of presentation may change from year to year but will likely include a short oral presentation and/or a poster display; and
- Submission of a final report to the ACA including an annotated bibliography following the Summit. The ACA will cover (in addition to the research stipend) much of the travel expenses for the student presenters at the Summit, including one night’s stay at the conference in a semi-private room (if desired), ACA conference meals, and conference registration fees.

The Application
To be considered for a Ledford Scholarship, students must submit a full application prior to deadline. These applications are completed through the ACA’s website. The components of a completed application include:

a. **Budget estimates:** The budget within the application must outline the estimated number of hours the student will work on the project and the amount of total stipend requested ($10.00 an hour and up to 360 total hours compensated, or up to $3,600 total) and any allocation of equipment and travel (which may not exceed $1,000). The equipment budget should be itemized and as clear as possible in estimating resources needed. The number of estimated work hours should correspond reasonably to the magnitude/complexity of the project.

b. **Project narrative:** in the proposal, the applicant should address the research question, the learning goals, and how these goals will be accomplished in the time allotted to the project as outlined in the budget.

c. **Description of the roles of the faculty mentor** (and any other faculty/staff engaged in the project) and other student researchers (and any on-site supervisor, if applicable).

d. A brief **biographical sketch** including a statement of interest in the proposed research and anticipated outcomes.

e. **A letter of endorsement from the faculty mentor** (on college/university letterhead) stating his or her willingness to mentor the student during the project.
f. A verification that the proposal is and the research will be the work of the student.
g. A letter of endorsement (on college/university letterhead) from the Chief Academic Officer of the applicant’s institution.
h. The student’s most recent transcripts (official or unofficial).

All of the application components except the Chief Academic Officer’s letter are submitted in the web application form. The CAO’s letter is submitted separately the ACA through a distinct website form.

The Review Process
Applications are reviewed by the Ledford Scholar Review Committee, a committee of the ACA’s Council of Chief Academic Officers. It includes three Chief Academic Officers from member institutions who serve three-year terms, and two ACA faculty members selected for a one-year term by the ACA based upon nominations from CAOs. In choosing the faculty members, the ACA strives for disciplinary diversity, e.g., usually one faculty member from the STEM areas and one from the Social Sciences or Humanities (or similar areas).

The Committee evaluates the applications based upon an established rubric. Members use their professional judgment to determine scoring, and scoring means and medians for each application are reviewed during final determination of awards. To ensure maximum objectivity, reviewers will not assess any applications from their own institutions. The substantive components of the proposal are evaluated based upon these criteria:

- The proposal is written clearly and effectively;
- The proposal has a clearly articulated rationale and objectives;
- The proposal presents a research plan that is capable of achieving its stated research objectives;
- The proposal utilizes methodologies capable of achieving its objectives;
- The proposal puts forth a reasonable and attainable timeline and clearly defined budget through which the student can achieve her/his objectives; and
- The proposal entails evidence of significant student/faculty mentor interaction.

In addition to these components of the proposals, the applications will be scored based upon previous experience with Ledford support (i.e., students who have not received an award in the past will receive favor). Finally, per the expectations of the original donor, as a part of the scoring metric, students will be favored in the following order of priority regarding residency: Harlan County, Kentucky or contiguous county; state of Kentucky; five states of the ACA’s region; and Appalachian counties outside the ACA region. Students who did not graduate from an ARC county or a county contiguous to the area are not eligible for the Ledford Scholars program.

Funding of Awarded Proposals
Applicants who are awarded funding are expected to carry out their projects in a manner that follows the original proposal as closely as possible. Ultimate funding will be based upon actual hours worked and actual reimbursements for appropriate research expenses, so it is important that proposals seek to estimate expenses as clearly as possible. ACA funding is furnished to member institutions (rather than directly to students), so it is important that Ledford Scholars understand member institution business protocols and establish with their home institutions the procedures and timelines for payments.

If you have questions, please contact the ACA office:
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