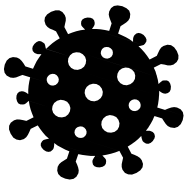
Elks National Foundation, Inc.

2023 Most Valuable Student Contest

Note on COVID-19



When reviewing an MVS application, it is essential to keep in mind that each applicant had their high school world turned upside down as freshmen in March 2020.

The vast majority switched to online learning, which may have impacted their academic performance. In-person extracurricular opportunities may have been limited. A family's financial situation may have been greatly impacted by this crisis. Many felt these impacts well into their junior year in 2022.

MVS applications are meant to paint a full picture of the applicant's high school career through the seventh semester. Be flexible, be kind, and be sure to keep the potential impact of the COVID-19 crisis in mind.

Scoring Applications

Applications can receive a Total Score of up to **1,000 points.**

Leadership..... 550 points

Academics..... 350 points (Automatically scored, unless unchecked before judging starts.)

Financial Need ..... 100 points (Automatically scored, unless unchecked before judging starts.)

Before judging begins, the Scholarship Coordinator will choose what sections the committee will score.

- Leadership section only (default setting)
- Leadership and Academics
- Leadership and Financial Need
- All three sections—Leadership, Academics, Financial Need

Judges will score on a scale of 0-10. Categories are weighted to yield a total score for each category, as outlined below. Applicants advance to the next level of judging based on their average combined Academic, Leadership, and Financial Need scores. If an applicant is not scored by any judges, the objective machine score ("computer score") is used to advance applicants.

Lodge level: The three highest scoring females and the three highest scoring males move on to the next level of judging.

District level: In states with District judging, the following quotas are applied:

- Districts with 6 or fewer Lodges: 6 highest scoring males, 6 highest scoring females
- Districts with 7 to 9 Lodges: 9 highest scoring males, 9 highest scoring females
- Districts with 10 or more Lodges: 12 highest scoring males, 12 highest scoring females.

If a Lodge or District does not judge applications, each applicant's machine score will be used to advance applicants to the next level of judging.

State level: Each state association has a quota of winners to advance to the national level. Click here to learn more about this quota for your state. The quota should be divided evenly among the highest scoring females and highest scoring males. For an odd quota, the next highest scoring female or highest scoring male is included to fulfill the quota.

Leadership Score (Up to 550 points)

Community Service: 150 points
This score is based on the type of activity, the commitment to the activity, and the approximate total hours of community service during the past three years. Rate the applicant based on community service participation throughout his or her high school career. Check the Counselor Report in the academic section to see if the applicant's school requires community service as a prerequisite for graduation. Take into consideration the school's requirement but remember to consider quality over quantity.

Look at the applicant's motivation to serve and his or her volunteer activities. Is there evidence of meaningful contributions to the community? Is the applicant giving back to his or her community unselfishly?

Compare the amount of community service to work experience and involvement in extracurricular activities. Take into consideration whether the applicant spends a significant amount of time at a part-time job since activities might be limited by this commitment.

This score should measure the quantity and *quality* of service.

Honors and Awards: 50 points
Honors and awards must be significant. An exceptional applicant has national and/or international honors and awards, as well as state and regional honors and awards. An average to strong applicant has significant state and regional honors and awards, as well as significant honors and awards at the community and school levels. A weak applicant has no significant honors and awards.

The following is a list of honors and awards that are felt to be significant. The final decision determining which awards and honors are deemed significant is up to your committee; these are just some basic guidelines as to what is generally considered significant.

- Eagle Scout Award
- Girl Scout Gold Award
- Teen of the Year (In general, count "...of the Year" awards but not "...of the Month" awards)
- Statewide or National Conference Attendee (ex: Boy's/Girl's State, HOBY)
- National Merit Finalist, AP Scholar
- Major Athletic Awards (ex: athlete of the semester, year, state, state winner)
- Major Academic Awards (ex: national honors society awards, state/national academic titles)

Extracurricular Activities: 150 points
This score should be based on the activities listed, how long they were involved in each activity, and any leadership positions the applicant may have held.

Rate the applicant based on his or her leadership ability. Look at the applicant's position(s) of leadership and the responsibilities held in that leadership role. Has the applicant held leadership positions with increased responsibility and leadership across the four years as reflected by increasingly higher positions held? Has the applicant forged frontiers in activities? Do the leadership positions demonstrate a passion for the activity?

When considering length of involvement, please keep the COVID-19 pandemic in mind.

Employment: 50 points
Scoring in the work experience category is based on approximate total hours worked during the past three years. Work includes time spent taking care of siblings, working on a family farm or in a family business, even if the applicant was not paid.

Is work experience during the school year done while maintaining academic excellence and service in school and community activities? Did the applicant overcome adverse family social or economic conditions and still achieve? Does the student work full-time during the summer? Compare the amount of work experience to involvement in extracurricular activities. Take into consideration whether the student spends a significant amount of time at a part-time job, since activities might be limited by this commitment.

When considering total hours worked, please keep the COVID-19 pandemic in mind.

Essay: 150 points
Essay scores should be based on the mechanics, style, and content of the essay. Essays should be clearly written and well organized and should sustain a well-focused discussion. The essay should enable you to get to know the applicant better. The writer should answer the question and explore ideas with insightful reasoning, persuasive examples, a mature outlook, and/or a deep concern for society. More important, what do you think of the applicant's response? Is it well written? Will this applicant make us proud to call them an Elks scholar?

Academic Score (Up to 350 points)

Scoring this section is at the discretion of the Scholarship Coordinator. See directions above. An automatic machine score is assigned, otherwise.

The Counselor Report information is used to judge this section, based on the applicant's GPA, class rank vs class size, rigor of academic program, and Honors/AP/IB classes taken. Following are basic guidelines and advice as to what is generally considered academically significant.

Things to Consider:

- Applicant's GPA and the ranking system used by the school. Is the student's GPA weighted or unweighted? See ISTS table linked below for more information.
- Applicant's rank and the number of students in the senior class.

- Applicant's senior class schedule. How many courses is the student enrolled in? What is the quality and intensity of the courses? Is the student enrolled in honors, AP, or IB courses? If so, how many? Is the student dual enrolled at a college? Does the student have a challenging senior course load, or did they take on an easier course load?

10: Outstanding–The applicant's academic information exemplifies superior or exceptional characteristics in each criterion. (A+)
9-8: Excellent–The applicant's academic information illustrates extremely strong, but not exceptional, characteristics contributing to the standard. The reviewer may have a reservation, but there are redeeming features to compensate for or outweigh the reservation. (A/B+)
7-6: Strong–The applicant's academic information demonstrates strong characteristics; however, the reviewer may have reservations. (B)
5-4: Average–While the applicant's information is satisfactory, the reviewer may have major reservations. (C+/-C)
3-2: Below Average–The applicant's application lacks certain requested academic information. The information presented is not satisfactory. (D)
1: Weak–The majority of academic information is missing.
0: No information provided.

- ISTS GPA Table

Financial Need Score (Up to 100 points)

Scoring this section is at the discretion of the Scholarship Coordinator. See directions above. An automatic machine score is assigned, otherwise.

If scoring, consider the applicant's Adjusted Gross Income, number of household members, and number of household members who will be attending college in the fall of 2022. This section may also include an explanation of special circumstances, which should be taken into consideration as well.

These are just some basic guidelines as to what is generally considered significant. This is where the pandemic could have been particularly disruptive. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

- The applicant has one parent who is deceased.
- The applicant has both parents deceased.
- The applicant does not have any communication or financial support from one parent or does not know that parent's whereabouts and only receives support from one parent.
- The parent is a single parent supporting the applicant independently.
- The applicant's parent(s) are unemployed or have lost their job since the last tax year.
- The applicant mentions unemployment (parent or self) due to COVID-19.
- The applicant's family has extensive medical bills or other debt.
- The applicant is a ward of the court.
- The applicant is an emancipated minor.

Use your best judgement to determine if the student has an extenuating financial circumstance that would make paying for college difficult.

- US Department of Health and Human Services 2022 Poverty Guidelines
- ISTS Expected Family Contribution Table

If you are having issue with or have a question about the mechanics of using the MVS Portal to score MVS applications, please visit our Scholarship Coordinator website for training videos at enf.elks.org/ScholarshipCoordinator.