

Information for Applicants:

Colleges and scholarship programs often ask for a recommendation because it provides the application reviewers another perspective on all of your accomplishments, lived experiences, and leadership. Oftentimes, the letter provides additional insight on who you are, as well as your goals, aspirations, and commitment to others and your community.

Tips for Requesting a Letter of Recommendation*

- Give the person writing the letter a sufficient amount of time to write a strong recommendation. Begin brainstorming who you would want to write the recommendation as soon as the application is available.
- Ask the recommender if they will be able to complete a strong letter by the deadline and follow up with them four weeks before the deadline to remind them to submit it.
- Have a backup recommender in the situation that the original person you asked is not able to complete the letter in time.
- The recommendation form is online only. Be sure your recommender is comfortable submitting an online form.
- Your recommender does not need to be a teacher or counselor. They can also be someone from the community who can speak about your leadership and service. A relative may not serve as a recommender.
- Provide the recommender a chance to get to know you better; sit down and have a conversation with them about your goals and passions, family history, or provide them with a resume or the college essays you have already written.
- Do they know what your short and long term goals are? Are they aware of your community service and leadership experience? If not, tell them.
- Do they know why you are applying to the scholarship? How your passions line up with the organization's mission? What will the impact of the scholarship be on your future and your family's future?

Information for Recommenders:

The letter of recommendation is an opportunity for you to highlight your observations of interacting with the applicant, especially experiences that the applicant might not have shared on their application. Both the APIASF Scholarship Program and Gates Millennium Scholars Program (GMS) seek students that not only excel academically, but also pay it forward in the community and serve as leaders for their peers. The scholarship is more than a financial award; all Scholars are provided with academic, co-curricular, and professional development opportunities to help ensure their success and graduation from an institution of higher education.

Tips for Writing a Letter of Recommendation*

- Do you feel like you know the applicant well enough to write the letter of recommendation? If not, let the applicant know.
- An applicant's application will be considered incomplete without a letter of recommendation. Be sure to leave enough time to submit the letter before the deadline or let the applicant know that you will be unable to write the letter.
- Learn the purpose of the scholarship, its mission and vision, and tailor the letter of recommendation to the program.
- What would the scholarship award mean to the applicant? How would it impact their family and community?
- What are the applicant's passions and goals? How do they intersect and what are they doing to reach those goals?
- How does the applicant handle challenges? Can you provide an example of a time the applicant overcame a challenge and how they grew from that experience?
- How does the applicant support his/her peers?
- What are some examples of the applicant's commitment to the community and leadership?
- APIASF only accepts online forms. Let the applicant know if you are not comfortable submitting an online form.

NOTE: If the student is applying for GMS, there will be two different recommendations required. The Nominator is someone who is familiar with the student's academic record. The Recommender is someone familiar with the student's community service and leadership activities. Both the Nominator and Recommender are allowed to be the same person. However, two forms must still be submitted.

*These tips are only a few of the many. A strong letter of recommendation is not required to touch on all these points, and may speak of other things not mentioned here.

If you have any questions, please contact APIASF at outreach@apiasf.org or 1-866-808-7032 X104.