Scholarship Guide

VHHS Scholarship Program 2025-2026

Part 1
Complete One Time Only

Part 2
Complete for Each Scholarship

VHHS Scholarship Program Guide 2025-2026

Table of Contents:

[Vernon Hills High School Scholarship Program]

[D128 Scholarship Database (Local, Regional, National Scholarships and Search Engines)]

Vernon Hills High School Scholarship Program

Overview

Welcome to the Vernon Hills High School Scholarships! Please peruse the scholarships listed in this guide and then apply via the Google forms linked in the **"Application"** section below. Remember that all of these scholarships will be awarded to graduating VHHS seniors. You can't be considered for a scholarship if you don't apply!

You **MUST** complete **Part 1** one time and **Part 2 for each Scholarship** in order to be considered for a Scholarship. Please review this Guide for the descriptions, eligibility criteria, and essay questions required for each Scholarship prior to starting Part 2 of the application in order to determine the scholarships to which you wish to apply.

DEADLINE: 8:00 AM on February 23, 2026

Application

Part 1 (Complete ONLY Once)

You will complete Part 1 only once! Part 1 of the application asks general questions about you and your high school career.

Part 2 (Complete PER Scholarship)

You will complete Part 2 for each scholarship to which you wish to apply. In Part 2 of the application, you will select the specific scholarship to which you want to apply and you will then be directed to answer questions specific to that scholarship. Scholarships are listed alphabetically in the Scholarship Information below, as well as in Part 2 of the application. You may apply for multiple scholarships, but you will need to visit the link each time to complete a separate form per scholarship.

Scholarships included in VHHS Scholarship Program:

1. D128 Foundation Scholarship
2. Jackie Ferguson Memorial Scholarship
3. James Martin Associates Scholarship
4. Jesse Goldsmith Memorial Scholarship
5. Joyce Kolton Memorial Cougar Scholarship
6. Music Alumni Scholarship
7. Prevention & Wellness Program Scholarship
8. Rotary Club Scholarship
9. Shaan Arora Memorial Scholarship
10. Sharon Arbiture Union Scholarship
11. The Visionary Scholarship
12. Vernon Hills Lions Club Robert N. Molitor Jr. Memorial Scholarship

D128 Foundation Scholarship

The mission of the D128 Foundation for Learning is to enhance the instructional program at Vernon Hills High School and provide resources for educational enrichment to students in keeping with the district's DARING mission. This Scholarship is awarded to students who display the DARING characteristics: Dreamers and Doers, Aware, Resilient and Healthy, Inquisitive, Nimble, and Global. The District 128 Foundation will award at least one of the five scholarships to a student who demonstrates financial need.

Award: Five Seniors from VHHS will be awarded $750 each

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must plan to enroll in a 2 or 4 year college, university, or accredited technical school
- Applicant must have participated in community service
- Applicant must have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher

Essay Questions:

Reflect on the District 128 Mission to be DARING (Dreamers and Doers, Aware, Resilient and Healthy, Inquisitive, Nimble, Global) while answering the following short answer essay prompts:

- Write about a service project in which you participated during high school that was most significant to you and discuss why it was important. *(100 word limit)*
- What are your long term goals and how do you plan to achieve them? *(100 word limit)*
- Describe the most positive classroom experience you have had in high school. *(250 word limit)*

Jackie Ferguson Memorial ESP Scholarship



Jackie Ferguson was a woman of great character. As a VHHS Education Support Professional (ESP), she cared for and helped our students every day. Our VHHS ESP staff is a force of over 87 people, many of whom work behind the scenes. From our campus safety who greet you and keep you safe to our administrative assistants who answer all of your questions, ESP work to ensure the success of all our students. Jackie Ferguson did just that. She embodied the meaning of the words perseverance, fun, dedication, kindness, thoughtfulness, and giving. She cared deeply for our students. Jackie strongly believed in the value of postsecondary pursuits. Therefore, in her honor, the ESP of VHHS are pleased to offer scholarships to VHHS graduating seniors.

Award: A minimum of three Seniors from VHHS will be awarded $500 each

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be planning to pursue post-high school education, trade school, or career training
- Applicant must have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 2.5 or higher

Essay Questions:

Choose <u>one</u> of the following questions:

- What factors, circumstances, individuals, and/or experiences have been influential in your decision to pursue your field of study? Describe how the above will help you in the future. *(250-500 word count)*
- Describe yourself and how you have overcome some difficulty in your life or had an element of your identity challenged. How has this event or moment changed you for the better? How has it led you to choose to continue your education and/or major in the field that you currently want to pursue? *(250-500 word count)*
- What qualities do you possess that positively impact those around you? And how do you think pursuing a post-high school education will help you make a difference in your community or work in years to come? Please give one or two examples. *(250-500 word count)*
- Discuss the importance of diversity and inclusion in today's society and how you have contributed to promoting these values or how you have been personally impacted by this evolution of society. *(250-500 word count)*

James Martin Associates Scholarship

James Martin Associates is pleased to award a $1,000 scholarship to a VHHS graduating senior who has a career interest in the horticulture, forestry, agronomy, landscape, or environmental profession. This scholarship will be awarded to a student who displays strong motivation and drive to reach their personal goals by stretching and growing through experiences and opportunities available during their educational studies.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $1,000

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must demonstrate academic merit
- Applicant must demonstrate financial need
- Applicant must be actively involved in school and/or community service/programs
- Applicant must plan to enroll in a 2 or 4 year college, university, or accredited technical school, or any career/technical program.
- Applicant must plan on pursuing a career in horticulture, forestry, agronomy, landscape, or any environmental field.

Essay Question:

- Imagine that five years from now you are asked to look back at your life and describe the five most creative accomplishments you have made since you graduated high school five years ago. What would they be and why would they be significant to you? Feel free to use creative liberties and use every opportunity to reveal yourself in your essay. *(500 word limit)*

Jesse Goldsmith Memorial Scholarship



The Jesse Goldsmith Memorial Scholarship fund was established by the friends and co-workers of Jesse W. Goldsmith and the Vernon Hills Police department to honor the life of Jesse. The scholarship is awarded to deserving students who wish to pursue a postsecondary education.

Award: Two Seniors from VHHS will be awarded $1,000 each

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be an Illinois resident
- Applicant must plan to enroll in a 2 or 4 year college, university, or accredited technical school
- Applicant must provide a letter of recommendation from a teacher, mentor, or community leader who has observed the student's growth (please ask the teacher/recommender before submitting their name). DO NOT ASK THEM TO WRITE A LETTER. We will either use an existing letter of recommendation that is already in SchooLinks or we will send them an evaluation form to complete after you apply.
- Applicant must demonstrate financial need, academic merit and school/community involvement

Essay Questions:

- Describe why you are applying for this scholarship and your plans for the future (post high school graduation). *(300-500 word count)*
- Describe one or more experience(s) from your life and explain how it has influenced, formed, and developed you to be the person you are today (i.e. developed your morals, formed your ethics and values, explains the reasons for your aspirations in life, etc.). *(300-500 word count)*

Joyce Kolton Memorial Cougar Scholarship



The Joyce Kolton Memorial Cougar Scholarship for academic excellence, community service, and leadership is awarded in memory of Joyce Kolton, Vernon Hills High School's first school nurse.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $1,000

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be attending a four-year college
- Applicant must be involved in school and/or community service activities
- Applicant must have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Consideration will be given to those who show financial need

Essay Question:

- Describe how you have grown and developed as a person throughout your high school years. *(250-300 word count)*

Music Alumni Scholarship



The Music Alumni Scholarship was created by Aviva Chertok Li and Kate Lee, two VHHS alumni, whose years in Orchestra and Choir at Vernon Hills High School inspired them to pursue music professionally and helped them become successful performers and educators.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $500

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must have completed two or more years of high school music classes
- Applicant must plan to pursue post-high school musical education (performance, education, business, etc.)
- Applicant must upload a Musical Resume in Part 2 of the application
- Scholarship will be awarded based on financial need and musical merit

Essay Question:

- Tell us about your musical background and how you plan on contributing to and/or innovating in your chosen musical field. *(250 word limit)*

Prevention & Wellness Program Scholarship

The Prevention and Wellness Program of Vernon Hills High School is given to one graduating senior who has shown substantial personal growth and maturity throughout high school. This student is resilient, persevering through difficulties and overcoming adversity. This student strives for success and believes they can make a difference in the world.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $500

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant plans to pursue any postsecondary education (including 2 year, 4 year and technical degrees or certificates)
- Applicant must provide a reference from a teacher, mentor, or community leader who has observed the student's growth (please ask the teacher/recommender before submitting the name). DO NOT ASK THEM TO WRITE A LETTER. We will either use an existing letter of recommendation that is already in SchooLinks, or we will send them an evaluation form to complete after you apply.
- Applicant must have a cumulative unweighted GPA of 2.0 or higher

Essay Question:

- Discuss how you have overcome a significant life challenge, matured personally, and shown resilience and growth over the course of your high school career. Explain how this will impact your future. *(500 word limit)*

Rotary Club Scholarship



Rotary is a worldwide network of inspired individuals who translate their passions into improving lives in their communities. Rotary members include action-oriented business, professional, and community leaders who support important educational and health causes. The Rotary Club awards scholarships (administered by D128 Foundation for Learning) based on extracurricular activities, community service, academic achievement, and/or financial need.

Award: Four Seniors from VHHS will be awarded $2,500 each

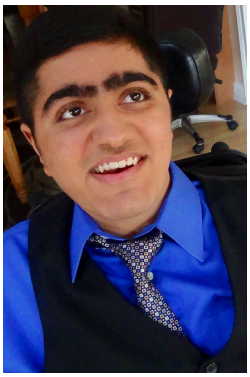
Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be a VHHS senior residing within D128 school boundaries
- Applicant must plan to enroll in a 2 or 4 year college or university to earn an Associate or Bachelor's Degree
- Scholarships awarded based on extracurricular activities, community service, academic achievement and/or financial need
- One letter of recommendation from a community member or activities sponsor with whom you've worked/volunteered for 2 years or more that highlights how you will work to better our world based on their direct experience supervising you. The Recommender must email their LOR directly to Mrs. Carson (nicole.carson@d128.org) by February 23.

Essay Question:

- Discuss your perspective on the value of community service. You may highlight personal experiences or insights about how giving back to the community fosters personal growth, builds connections, and contributes to society. *(200 word limit)*

Shaan Arora Memorial Scholarship



The Shaan Arora Memorial Scholarship is given in memory of Shaan Arora. Shaan was in Karen Martin's Special Education classroom and graduated from VHHS in 2015. He left us at age 20 on April 20, 2016. Shaan touched so many lives in his short life, and every life he touched was enriched by his presence. He had a love for computers, technology, food, and Bollywood music. He loved school and was a popular guy who made everyone smile.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $500

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be a VHHS senior who has a disability or has overcome a disability

Essay Question:

- Discuss your disability, experiences, and/or how you overcame the disability. *(500 word limit)*

Sharon Arbiture Union Scholarship



The D128 Federation of Teachers is proud to award the Sharon Arbiture Union Scholarship to a graduating VHHS senior. Sharon Arbiture was a teacher for 30 years, with nearly 20 years in Community High School District 128. She taught English, Speech, Debate, and she shared a love of reading and writing with her students. She was a founding member of the First Class character education program (now called #VHGIVE) and was the sponsor of the Interact Club. Her fellow teachers are proud to honor her with this scholarship. This Scholarship Award is given to a student who demonstrates determination, leadership, responsibility, and honesty.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $1,000

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must have average to above-average grades
- Applicant must have definite plans to pursue a career in teacher education
- Applicant must be actively involved in school and/or community programs
- Applicant must provide two VHHS teachers' names as references (please ask these teachers before submitting their names). DO NOT ASK THEM TO WRITE LETTERS. We will either use existing letters of recommendation that are already in SchooLinks, or we will send them evaluation forms to complete after you apply.

Essay Question:

- Please compose an essay addressing the following questions: What gives you the desire to pursue a career in teaching? What characteristics do you possess to become a successful teacher? How are you preparing for your future as a teacher? (500 word limit)

The Visionary Scholarship



The Visionary Scholarship is given to one graduating VHHS senior who has a vision to make the world a better place, whether through helping an individual, their community, or the world.

Award: One Senior from VHHS will be awarded $1,500

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be a first-gen student (a student whose parents/guardians did not graduate from a 4-year college or university in the United States)
- Applicant must demonstrate financial need
- Applicant must demonstrate academic merit
- Applicant's extenuating circumstances will be considered

Essay Question:

- What is your vision in making a difference in people's lives and/or making your community a better place? How will you use your college education to make this vision a reality? *(250 word limit)*

Vernon Hills Lions Club Robert N. Molitor Jr. Memorial Scholarship

The Robert N. Molitor Jr Memorial Scholarship was founded in Robert's memory. Robert was a beloved member of the Vernon Hills Lions Club. This Scholarship is awarded to students who share Robert's passion for life and community service.

Award: Two Seniors from VHHS will be awarded $500 each

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be actively involved in community service
- Applicant must demonstrate academic merit
- Consideration will be given to those who show financial need
- Applicant's extenuating circumstances will be considered

Essay Question:

- How has your community service experience(s) benefited both the community and you as an individual? *(500 word limit)*

D128 Scholarship Database

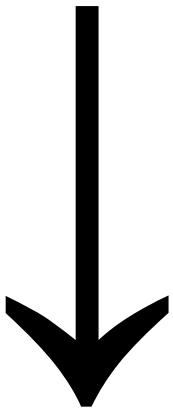
Overview

There are many other sources to learn about local, regional and national scholarship opportunities. Together with LHS, we provide the D128 Scholarship Database–a curated list of local, regional, national, and trades/vocational scholarship opportunities, as well as links to national scholarship search engines. SchooLinks also provides information on many scholarships. From the Dashboard, navigate to Finances and select Scholarship Matching. We are in the process of entering the scholarships from our curated list here–you will see these scholarships under the "District-Posted tab."

Most of these scholarships allow you to upload an unofficial transcript–you can download a copy of your transcript in SchooLinks. If the scholarship requires that an official transcript be sent directly to the scholarship organization, please see Directions on How to Request an Official Transcript in SchooLinks.

For all outside scholarships (not part of the above VHHS Scholarship Program), if the scholarship requires a Letter of Recommendation (LOR), and that letter is already in SchooLinks, please complete the LOR Request Form for non-VHHS specific scholarships. If your LOR is not already on file in SchooLinks, you can ask a VHHS teacher, employer, coach, etc. if they are willing to write you a LOR. If the recommender agrees, they can submit the recommendation directly to the Scholarship Organization.

There are several local/regional scholarships we highlight below that Vernon Hills High School students have received each year; thus, we encourage all eligible students to apply. Please note, these Scholarships require a direct application (they are not part of our VHHS Scholarship Application). As additional scholarship applications open, they will be added below.



Sports Lodge B'nai B'rith Scholarships for Jewish Youth 2026

The Sports Lodge B'nai B'rith awards scholarships to local Jewish athletes based on their accomplishments on the field, in the classroom, and in their community. Candidates from Chicago area high schools shall be entitled to submit applications for the Sports Lodge B'nai B'rith Scholarships for Jewish Youth. The applicant must be a bona fide member of a high school varsity sports activity.

Applicants will be screened by the Sports Lodge Scholarship Committee to determine which candidates shall be granted interviews. Applicants should treat this interview as they would a job interview in terms of appearance and research and be prepared to discuss B'nai B'rith in the interview. Scholarship recipients shall be determined by the Scholarship Committee following the interviews. Scholarships will be awarded in May 2026.

Award: Amount of the award will be determined by the amount of B'nai B'rith's endowment and annual contributions. In the past the amounts have been $1,800, $3,600 and $5,400. This is a one time award that will be paid directly to your college or university to be credited to your account.

Application:

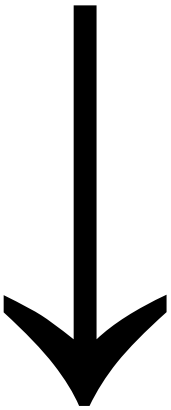
Click here to access the Sports Lodge B'nai B'rith Scholarship Application

Eligibility Criteria/Application Requirements:

- Applicant must submit the completed application and all required materials by **February 6, 2026**
- Applicant must demonstrate financial need; the cut off is $250,000 of joint annual income unless extenuating circumstances exist
- Applicant must submit a statement discussing applicant's educational and vocational/career plans and providing a brief biographical sketch
- Applicant must submit a B'nai B'rith Statement describing B'nai B'rith's history and its impact in society and/or to a friend and/or member of applicant's family and what it would mean to receive a scholarship from B'nai B'rith
- Applicant must submit copies of the parents' and applicant's 2023 and 2024 IRS tax returns
- Applicant must submit a Parental Statement completed by the parent stating why the parent feels the applicant has a need for this award
- Applicant must email their high school transcript to Brent Novoselsky at Brent.Novoselsky@aleragroup.com. Directions on how to download your

transcript in SchooLinks can be found here. *Please note, although the application requests an official transcript, Mr. Novoselsky requested our students download and email their own transcripts together with their application.* **You do NOT need to request an official transcript**.

- Applicant must provide two photographs: one photograph of Applicant playing sport and one more formal Senior Picture or Portrait (not sports related)



AAUW-WAB STEM Scholarship

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) provides educational funding for students interested in science, technology, engineering, and math via the STEM Scholarship. The Waukegan Area Branch of AAUW is offering one or more STEM scholarships for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Award: $1000 (at least one)

Application:

2025-26 AAUW-WAB STEM Scholarship Application

Eligibility Criteria/Application Requirements:

- Applicant must submit the completed application and all required materials by **April 4, 2026.**
- Applicant must be a graduating VHHS Senior who will be attending any US accredited two-year or four-year college (public or private), taking a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester, beginning in the fall 2026, and who will be majoring in the sciences, math, technology, or engineering (see the application linked above for specific majors that would meet this requirement).
- Applicant must submit an official transcript.* See ***How to Request an Official Transcript in SchooLinks** to request your transcript be sent directly to the Scholarship Coordinator. You can also download your transcript in SchooLinks and submit attach it to your application. We advise doing both (requesting an official transcript through SchooLinks, and attaching it yourself with your application).
- Applicant must submit two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a teacher, the second from someone other than a relative or a friend. Please note, we informed AAUW-WAB that it is our school's policy that teachers are not required to re-date and re-sign letters, so you MAY use letters you already have on file in SchooLinks; you do NOT need to ask these teachers for new letters. **Please complete the** LOR Request Form for non-VHHS specific scholarships **for LORs already on file in SchooLinks that you would like the CRC to send. We will forward your LORs to the AAUW-WAB Scholarship Coordinator.**