



January 30, 2020

RE: Modifications to certain NFFF scholarship programs

Dear NFFF Scholarship Applicant:

As described in the attached “Q&A” document, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) has made a number of changes to certain scholarship programs in response to feedback we have received from key program donors. These changes are designed to place the NFFF in a stronger position when we re-apply to our donors for scholarship funding for the 2021 – 2022 academic year and to encourage current and future donors to provide additional support to our scholarship applicants.

While we urge you to carefully read the attached Q&A document and the instructions to the updated scholarship application form, the following are the most significant changes to the program:

- **New Application Deadline:** The application deadline for the NFFF scholarship program has been moved up from April 1 to March 1 for the reasons described in Q&A #4.
- **New Program:** Motorola Solutions Foundation has agreed to fund an Enhanced Scholarship Initiative that is designed to provide full tuition and book coverage for certain students as described more fully in Q&A #13.
- **New Selection Criteria:** Scholarship awards under the existing Sarbanes Scholarship Program will no longer be made at the same level to all qualifying applicants regardless of financial need or academic performance. Instead, awards under that program will be made based on a composite score that considers each applicant’s financial need and academic performance, with an emphasis on financial need. See Q&A #6, 7, 10, and 11. That same composite scoring system will also be used to make awards under the newly created Motorola Solutions Foundation Enhanced Scholarship Initiative and the existing Al Sondej Fund; in addition, awards under these two programs will be made only to applicants pursuing a course of study in either public safety or one of the “STEM” majors in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. See Q&A #13 – 15. Awards made by our partners under their existing partnership programs have not changed.
- **New Application Materials:** The NFFF scholarship application process is now electronic. As part of that process, the form asks each applicant to upload that applicant’s FAFSA form. See Q&A #7. Applicants who do not upload a FAFSA form are still eligible for a scholarship award, although the amount of their award will be influenced by the fact that their composite score (which will be used to determine the amount of their scholarship award) will not include any credit for financial need. See Q&A #8 and 9.

If you have questions or concerns about the modifications to our scholarship program, we urge you to contact Eric Nagle at enagle@firehero.org. We look forward to working with you all to making the 2020 – 2021 scholarship award cycle a success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ronald Jon Siarnicki".

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NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

#1 How many scholarship programs does the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) maintain and how does each program work?

Exhibit 1 to this Q&A document contains a summary of the various scholarship programs maintained by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. For more detailed information, please visit our [website](#).

#2 Why are the changes described in this Q&A document being made?

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation’s scholarship program is completely dependent on support from outside donors.

With the exception of the Al Sondej fund, the NFFF must re-apply for donor support on an annual basis. If the NFFF cannot obtain renewed support from its own donors, it will not be able to maintain the scholarship program.

All of the changes described in this Q&A document have been driven by changes in program design, performance, and accountability metrics that our donors use to determine which charitable organizations they will support. These changes are designed to enable the NFFF to maintain donor support, to continue providing scholarships to our applicants, and to grow the scholarship program to the maximum extent possible.

#3 Has the application deadline changed?

Yes. The application deadline for National Fallen Firefighters Foundation scholarship applications has been changed from April 1 to March 1.



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#4 Why was the application deadline changed?

The scholarship committee had to accelerate the application deadline in order to provide sufficient time to: (i) review the additional applicant information described below; (ii) make sure that scholarship award decisions are sent out to applicants in early summer; and (iii) enable the Foundation to report program results to its key donors in a timely manner, which will maximize the Foundation's chances of receiving renewed support from those donors for the 2021 – 2022 academic year.

#5 Have the award criteria for NFFF scholarships changed?

The award criteria have changed for three components of the NFFF scholarship program: the general Sarbanes Scholarship Program; the Motorola Solutions Foundation Enhanced Scholarship Initiative; and the AI Sondej Fund.

The award criteria for the partner programs have not changed. Please see the [NFFF website](#) for details on our partners' scholarship programs.

#6 What is the composite score and how does it work?

The composite score is a new tool that we will use to determine the relative size of the awards made under the general Sarbanes Scholarship Program, the Motorola Solutions Foundation Enhanced Scholarship Initiative, and the AI Sondej Fund.

In determining awards under these three programs, each applicant will be assigned a composite score representing the sum of that applicant's financial need score and academic performance score.

Applicants with higher composite scores will receive scholarship awards that are enhanced relative to applicants with lower composite scores.



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#7 How will financial need be assessed?

Spouses and life partners are automatically assigned the highest possible financial need score and need not submit financial information.

For all other applicants, financial need will be assessed based on an evaluation of the applicant's FAFSA, which should be submitted in connection with the NFFF scholarship application form. No applicant needs to submit any financial information other than the FAFSA, although if an applicant wishes to provide additional information for consideration, she or he is welcome to do so.

#8 Am I required to submit financial information in order to receive a scholarship award?

No.

#9 If I do not submit financial information, how will that affect my scholarship award?

Because spouses and life partners are automatically assigned the highest possible financial need score and need not submit financial information, these applications will not be affected by the lack of financial information.

Other applicants will continue to be eligible for a scholarship award, and will receive a scholarship award at some level, even if they do not submit financial information. Applicants should note, however, that scholarship awards now vary based on a composite score that represents the sum of an applicant's financial need score and academic performance score. Because the composite score assigns more weight to the financial need score than the academic performance score, applicants who do not submit financial information will necessarily have lower composite scores than applicants who do submit financial information, all else being equal. A lower composite score may lead to a lower scholarship award than would otherwise have been the case.



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#10 How will academic performance be assessed?

Spouses and life partners are automatically assigned a top tier score on academic performance.

For all other applicants, academic performance will be assessed based on an evaluation of factors, including: (i) whether the student is pursuing a major in either public safety or a STEM subject in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; (ii) the nature of the student's course load and the student's GPA; and (iii) the student's tuition load relative to the anticipated employment prospects of the chosen major.

#11 How have the award criteria changed under the general Sarbanes Scholarship Program?

Under the general Sarbanes Scholarship Program as in place prior to January 1, 2020, each applicant received the same basic scholarship award, regardless of that applicant's financial need or academic performance. Effective as of January 1, 2020, awards made under the general Sarbanes Scholarship Program will vary from applicant to applicant and will be based on each applicant's composite score.

#12 Do I need to be a STEM or public safety major in order to receive a scholarship award under the general Sarbanes Scholarship Program?

No.

#13 What is the Motorola Solutions Foundation Enhanced Scholarship Initiative?

This is a new program made possible by a generous donation from the Motorola Solutions Foundation. The program provides for larger, and in certain cases, full scholarships on an academic year-by-academic year basis. In order to be eligible for an award under this program, the applicant must be pursuing a major in a STEM subject or public safety. Awards under this program are made on a year-by-year basis and will be based on an assessment of financial need and academic performance using the same composite scoring system described above.



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#14 What changes have been made to the AI Sondej program?

The AI Sondej program continues to provide four-year scholarships that are awarded based on an assessment of financial need and academic performance, using the same composite scoring system described above. In order to be eligible for an award under this program, the applicant must be pursuing a major in a STEM subject or public safety. Additional details concerning awards made under the AI Sondej fund are contained in the applicant's award letter.

#15 How do I know whether my major is a STEM or public safety major?

In certain cases, the status of a course of study as STEM or public safety will be obvious. For example, majors such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, engineering, computer science, environmental science, and agricultural science are clearly STEM majors. Likewise, majors such as criminal justice, public safety administration, public safety and security, and emergency management are clearly public safety majors.

In situations where the status of a course of study is less clear cut, we will analyze the core curriculum and graduation requirements to determine whether the applicant's proposed course of study qualifies as STEM or public safety.

We are happy to let you know in advance whether we will consider your proposed course of study to be STEM or public safety. Please direct all inquiries to Eric Nagle at enagle@firehero.org.

EXHIBIT 1: SUMMARY OF NFFF SCHOLARSHIP PLANS

Please see www.firehero.org for full details

	Sarbanes Scholarship Program	Motorola Solutions Foundation Enhanced Scholarship Initiative	AI Sondej Fund	Partner Programs
Who is eligible to apply?	Spouses, life partners, children, and stepchildren of firefighters honored at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. Children and stepchildren must be under age 30 and have been under age 22 at the time of the firefighter's death			
What course of study or major must an applicant be pursuing?	Undergraduate or graduate studies, a certification program, or job skills training at an accredited institution, online college, or university	Public safety or STEM major at a four-year accredited not-for-profit university	Public safety or STEM major at a four-year accredited not-for-profit university	Varies based on partner; please see firehero.org for details
Award Criteria	Composite score that takes into account financial need and academic performance, with an emphasis on financial need			
Single Year Award or Multi-Year Award?	Single year award	Single year award	Four-year award, subject to ongoing academic performance and course-of-study requirements	Single year award