

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES



Independent Order of Odd Fellows

EXCELSIOR LODGE No. 1
1134 First Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816-5802
(Effective March 2026)

2026 EXCELSIOR LODGE No. 1: PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA & GUIDELINES

Excelsior Lodge No. 1 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows is proud to offer a **\$2,000** scholarship to a graduating senior on O‘ahu who has experienced the loss of both parents. This award is intended to support the pursuit of higher education while extending the encouragement and mentorship of a longstanding fraternal organization.

About us:

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows was established in Hawai‘i in **1846**.

Specifically, Excelsior Lodge No. 1 – located in Honolulu – was instituted on **September 9, 1846**, making it one of the oldest fraternal organizations in the Hawaiian Islands.

It was chartered during the Hawaiian Kingdom era, reflecting the early presence of civic-minded and merchant communities who embraced the Order’s founding mission:

To visit the sick, relieve the distressed, bury the dead, and educate the orphan.

These guiding responsibilities were not symbolic – they were practical commitments. In a time before social safety nets, members personally cared for the ill, supported widows and families in hardship, ensured dignified burials, and provided financial and educational assistance to orphaned children.

The principle of “educating the orphan” reflected a belief that education creates opportunity, stability, and dignity. It recognized that children who had lost parental support deserved not only support, but investment in their future.

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

Today, while society has evolved, the mission remains. Excelsior Lodge No. 1 continues this historic commitment by supporting education, offering mentorship, and fostering a community grounded in **Friendship, Love, and Truth.**

Through this scholarship, we honor that original charge – to stand beside those who have experienced loss and to help open the door to opportunity through education.

Purpose & Mission

The Excelsior Lodge No. 1 Orphan Scholarship was established to extend the Lodge's long-standing commitment to Friendship, Love, and Truth by supporting a graduating senior who has experienced the loss of both parents and is pursuing higher education.

For purposes of this scholarship, an *orphan* is defined as a graduating high school senior who has lost both biological or legally adoptive parents prior to the age of 18.

Excelsior Lodge recognizes that while financial assistance is essential, guidance, encouragement, and mentorship are equally important. As a fraternal organization dedicated to community upliftment, we seek not only to award a scholarship – but to welcome the recipient into a fellowship of mentors and supporters who stand ready to encourage their educational and personal journey.

This merit-based scholarship provides financial assistance toward educational expenses including tuition, books, computers, supplies, housing, or other costs directly related to higher education or vocational training.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- **Be a graduating high school senior on O'ahu in the current scholarship year.**
- **Have experienced the loss of both biological or legally adoptive parents prior to age 18.**
- **Demonstrate acceptance into or enrollment at an accredited:**
 - College or University
 - Junior or Community College
 - Vocational or Trade School
 - To qualify, applicants must demonstrate that their selected program provides a clear and direct pathway to employment within a defined field. Programs should be skills-based, industry-recognized, and aligned with current workforce demands. The intent is to invest in practical education that results in job placement, career progression, or measurable income opportunity upon completion.

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

- Certificate Program (maximum award for certificate programs: \$500)
 - Certificate programs are eligible for scholarship consideration when they provide a direct pathway to employment through practical, job-ready skills aligned with workforce demand. Programs must be industry-recognized and offered by an accredited or reputable provider, with a defined curriculum, duration, and clear credential outcome. Applicants must demonstrate that the certification leads to specific job opportunities or career advancement, supported by documentation such as course outlines and expected roles. Priority will be given to programs that result in licensure or widely accepted credentials, demonstrating strong job placement potential.
 - **Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 (or equivalent).**
 - **Be enrolled as a full-time student:**
 - Undergraduate/Vocational/Trade: Minimum 12 credit hours per semester
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Scholarship Award Criteria

The following are mandatory requirements:

- Minimum 2.50 GPA
- Proof of parental loss (documentation required)
- Proof of acceptance to an accredited institution
- Completed application submitted by deadline
- Participation in an in-person or virtual discussion with the Scholarship Committee

After verification of mandatory requirements, applicants will be evaluated on:

- Academic effort and achievement
- Community involvement or service
- Interview presentation
- Responses reflecting Friendship, Love, and Truth

Total Possible Evaluation Points: 5 (Committee discretion)

Application Requirements

- Proof of Acceptance (official letter or email)**
- Official or Unofficial Transcript**
- Two (2) Letters of Recommendation (non-family members)**

Letters must:

- Be typed and dated within the current scholarship year
- Be signed by the author

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

- Be limited to one page (8.5 x 11 inches)
- Address applicant's ability, work habits, leadership, character, and integrity

Digital Self-Portrait

- Submit via email to scholarships@ioofhawaii.org with subject line:
- "2026 IOOF Public Scholarship Application"

In-Person or Virtual Interview

- June 20th at 11:00 (Lunch will be provided)
Location: Excelsior Lodge No. 1, 1134 First Avenue, Honolulu
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Mentorship Invitation

While not mandatory, the scholarship recipient will be invited to:

- Attend one Lodge Social gathering during the academic year as a guest
- Connect with a designated Lodge mentor
- Provide a brief update to the Scholarship Committee at the conclusion of the academic year

Excelsior Lodge stands not only as a benefactor, but as a fraternity of men and women committed to guidance, encouragement, and lifelong support.

Award Notification

- Applications must be submitted between May 1 and May 31 of the current scholarship year.
 - Submit application and supporting documents to scholarships@ioofhawaii.org with proper subject line
 - Awardees will be notified by mail no later than September 30.
 - Scholarship funds will be distributed directly to the recipient or educational institution.
 - The scholarship is awarded for one academic year and is not automatically renewable.
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Closing Statement

Excelsior Lodge No. 1 recognizes the courage it takes to pursue education after profound loss. Through this scholarship, we honor resilience and stand beside the recipient not only as supporters of education, but as a community committed to their continued success.

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

Core Values of Excelsior Lodge No. 1

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is founded upon three enduring principles:

Friendship

We believe in fellowship, mutual respect, and standing beside one another during life’s challenges.

Love

We practice compassion, service to others, and care for our community – especially for those who have faced hardship.

Truth

We uphold integrity, personal responsibility, and honesty in character and conduct.

This scholarship reflects these values and seeks a recipient who demonstrates resilience, responsibility, and commitment to continued growth.

Checklist requirements:

Checklist	Requirements	Criteria:
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Proof of Acceptance	An official letter or email from an educational or vocational institution.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Proof of Academic Ability	Recent High School Graduates; need transcripts either sent to the lodge (at the address above), or emailed from a transcript service. Note: Please send at the end of the semester, or an unofficial transcript is acceptable as long as it has current information. Please follow up with an official transcript when applicable. Scholarship checks will be dispersed no later than September 30, so there will be time to send in information, but please communicate this via email to the lodge.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Letters of Recommendation	Two (2) letters of recommendation are required. A third letter of recommendation is optional. Letter Specifications 1. Authors of the letter can be any of the following but must have thorough knowledge of the applicant and must not be a family relative: a. A High School Teacher or Counselor/Advisor b. A College or University Professor or Advisor c. A Responsible Leader Within the Community d. A Current Instructor, Employer/Supervisor, or Coach 2. Must be typed and dated within the same scholarship

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

		<p>application year as well as signed by the author.</p> <p>3. Limited to one side of a single, letter-size sheet of paper (8.5 x 11 inches).</p> <p>4. Should include the applicant’s ability, work habits, leadership skills and participation in the community, work service, outstanding recognition, personality, and integrity.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Digital Self Portrait	Provide an electronic color self-portrait and submit via email to scholarships@ioofhawaii.org specifying “2026 IOOF Public Scholarship Application” in the email subject line.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. In-Person Interview The presentation is scheduled at the lodge (1134 First Avenue).	See 2026 Odd Fellows Scholarship Presentation: In person presentation or video presentation (for candidates who have lived off island consecutively for the last 6 months) to introduce applicants and what their background is, their field of study and explain a little of their interests. Required to answer presentation questions (See ‘Presentation’).
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Vocational, Trade Schools, and Certification Program Applicants.	Official documentation which demonstrates acceptable completion of and continuation of educational path. Please include the length of time of the program required for completion and certification.

Additional Information:

- a. The student is solely responsible for properly executing and forwarding the completed application to the Independent Order of Odd Fellows as indicated in this Guidelines.
- b. To avoid delays please ensure the year stated in the title of the scholarship application and the criteria & guidelines corresponds to the current scholarship year.
- b. Annual funds are available at the Lodge’s discretion. Awardees will be notified by mail postmarked no later than **September 30th, 2026**. To avoid any additional delays please ensure the applicant’s mailing address is current and clearly legible.
- c. The scholarship is in effect for a one (1) year period and is not automatically renewable.
- d. The scholarship check will be paid directly to the recipient no later than **September 30th** of the current application year.
- e. Applications should **NOT** be sent **via Certified or Express mail requiring a signature**.
- f. The 2026 Scholarship Committee consists of the following individuals:

Gwyn Hirasa	Cathy Ehia
Ted Cheong	Melvina Nakao
Frieda Mendez	Jon Hosaka
David Murai	Craig Lee
Richard Bartlett	Jana Paz – Chairperson

2026 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

THIS DIRECTIVE SUPERSEDES ALL PRIOR EXCELSIOR LODGE NO. 1 SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES, COPIES OF WHICH SHOULD BE DESTROYED.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

The scholarship application for the current year will be posted on the IOOF website no later than April 15th of the current year.

The scholarship committee annually reviews the Scholarship Criteria & Guidelines, which includes the scholarship qualifications, so please check the IOOF website at www.ioofhawaii.org for future updates or ask any scholarship committee member for more information.
