

# Regional College/Returning Student Scholarship FAQs

## The Program

### If I didn't get an RCRS scholarship how soon can I reapply?

You may reapply every selection cycle until you either receive a scholarship or are no longer eligible to apply.

### If I did receive a scholarship how soon can I reapply?

You may reapply one year after receiving an RCRS scholarship while you are completing your two-year degree or certification, and you will be required to submit an unofficial transcript as part of your application.

### Do I have to fill out the whole application again?

We do not retain your previous scholarship applications. You must submit a new application each and every time you wish to apply.

## Eligibility

### If I am already enrolled in college, am I eligible?

Yes, provided you are pursuing either a two-year degree or certification, then you are eligible.

### What does a gap in education mean in months or years?

Preference will be given to those with a “gap” in education of two or more years. A “gap” is considered to be at least one year interruption in education. For example, a student who either graduated from high school or obtained their GED and then went into the military or started working a job full-time for a period of one or more years before deciding to enroll in college is said to have a “gap” in their education. Another example of “gap” would be a student who attended a college or university full-time for any period of time, but who left academia to pursue career, family, etc. and decided to return to school to finish an associate's degree or become certified in a trade.

### Why do you require a gap?

The RCRS scholarship is designed for “returning” students—those who did not make the immediate transition from high school to college, but instead, after some time doing other things, are now returning to education to expand their career opportunities. New Mexico students going directly from high school to a NM college are also eligible for the “lottery” scholarship, and generally there are more scholarship opportunities for traditional students.

### I ultimately want to get a bachelors degree or even an advanced degree. Am I eligible?

If your long-range goal is to pursue a four-year degree, but you are currently pursuing a two-year degree or certification, you are eligible. In fact, we'd like to hear about that goal in the application, since it relates to your career goals.

However, if the program you are currently enrolled in is a four-year degree program, then you are not eligible to apply for the Regional College/Returning Student scholarship. If you are so close to the end of your two-year program that you are already enrolled in a four-year degree program, we would consider that you are primarily in that four-year program. If this is the case, we advise you to read the application criteria for the LAESF four-year degree scholarship program located on the LANL Foundation website.

If you have only one complete semester remaining before completing your two-year program at the time of the scholarship award but are not enrolled in a four-year program, you are still eligible, though it's possible that other applicants will be judged to have a greater net financial need.

Whether or not you hope to go on to a four-year degree does not affect your eligibility. RCRS scholarships are awarded to students with both kinds of goals.

### What if I received a four-year degree (such as a BA or BS) years ago?

If you got a four-year degree some time ago and then had a “gap” in formal education (went to work, started a business, etc.) and are now returning to get a two-year degree or certificate in a new field so that you can significantly expand or change your career goals, you are eligible. For example, if you got a BA in

Literature in 1998 and have been working since then, but now are pursuing a two-year degree or certificate in nursing or engineering technology, you are eligible. (However, we do not award RCRS scholarships for graduate school.)

### Is this scholarship only for people with low incomes?

While financial need is taken into consideration by the selections committee when making award decisions, financial need is only one component of the application process and not an eligibility requirement.

### Is this scholarship only for people who want to study technical fields?

While science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields are given preference for awards, the selection committee will accept applications from students pursuing any educational or vocational goal.

### Is U.S. citizenship required?

No.

### What makes a good application?

The most effective application tells a complete story, including times of success as well as hardship and setback. Include a timeline of employment and activities for the past five years as a minimum. Don't make the reader guess what you were doing during that time. It is very valuable for the selections team to learn about your work, school, and life.

### What if I don't remember my GPA?

Since an official transcript is not an eligibility requirement, just do your best to honestly answer all of academic questions on the application. If you have taken college or university coursework, please provide your cumulative GPAs for both high school and college.

### I am very busy with work, school, and taking care of my family, so I don't have any volunteer activities. What should I say in my application?

The proper response to any question on the application is to be very honest. Since there are many different criteria evaluated in your application, it will not necessarily hurt your scholarship chances if you are less strong in any one area of the application.

### I am currently enrolled in post-high school education right now; do you want to know my grades?

Yes, we would like to know your grades for any college courses completed. It is also helpful to understand what classes you've been taking. Mailing in a transcript, though not required, is perhaps the easiest way of answering this.

### How should I describe student status under “current college information”?

Please answer this in terms of the two-year program you are pursuing or about to enter. For example, if you are enrolled in your two-year program for the upcoming semester or have already been taking classes in that program, please check “enrolled”. (However, if you are already enrolled in a four-year degree program, you are not eligible for RCRS, as explained above.)

### How many years should I cover in my application?

It's best to document as much, if not ALL, of your academic and vocational experience as possible, regardless of your age. Hence, the older you are, the more life experience you will have, and it's all relevant to the application and selections process.

### I don't have any experience in my chosen career field but have personal reasons for pursuing this area. Should I explain how I chose this field?

It is in your best interest to give a detailed account of why you are planning to pursue your chosen educational/vocational path, regardless of your level of past experience or training. It is very helpful for the committee to understand how you developed an interest in your chosen career field as well as what steps you have taken to help you succeed (possibly a paid or unpaid work assignment, a volunteer activity, a hobby or a class, or other reasons for your interest).

