



Colorado Sports Hall of Fame Scholarship

Guidelines

2026 Program Year

1. Program Overview

The CSHOF Scholarship is an annual \$10,000 scholarship awarded by the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame (CSHOF) to a graduating Colorado high school senior, in support of the organization's mission to build and support programs for youth across the state as they grow toward leadership.

2. Eligibility ("Charitable Class")

To qualify as a permissible charitable scholarship under IRS rules, the pool of eligible applicants must be broad and open, with recipients not pre-selected or identifiable in advance.

- Applicant must be a senior at an accredited Colorado high school (public, private, charter, or homeschool with equivalent accreditation) in the year of application.
- Applicant must plan to enroll in an accredited two- or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical program following graduation.
- Application is open to any qualifying senior, who has competed in a high school sport and has overcome adversity.
- Applicant must be a US Citizen.
- Immediate family members of CSHOF board members, staff, or Selection Committee members are not eligible (see Section 6, Selection Committee and Conflicts of Interest).
- No individual is guaranteed selection; all applicants are considered on the same objective, published criteria.

3. Award

- Amount: \$10,000 per recipient, one award per program year unless the Board approves additional awards.
- Funding source: CSHOF general operating/scholarship fund.
- Disbursement: Paid directly to the recipient's college or university, to defray tuition and required expenses; CSHOF requires a verified report of enrollment before releasing funds and reserves the right to request a follow-up report at the end of the first term.
- The recipient must send the CSHOF the proper instructions and address on where and when to send the check.
- Renewal: This is a one-time award; it is not automatically renewable in subsequent years.

3.1 Financial Aid Coordination (Scholarship Displacement)

Some colleges reduce a student's institutional aid when an outside scholarship is received, which can offset some or all of the benefit of this award. To minimize this:

- The award letter will state that the CSHOF Scholarship is intended to supplement, not replace, the recipient's existing financial aid package.
- Recipients will be encouraged to notify their school's financial aid office of the award and to ask whether the school reduces loans/work-study before reducing grants or institutional scholarships.

3.2 Tax Treatment

Scholarship funds used for tuition and required fees are generally not taxable to the recipient under IRC §117. Amounts used for room, board, travel, or other non-required expenses may be taxable. CSHOF will include a brief advisory to this effect in the award letter and recommend that recipients consult a tax advisor; CSHOF does not provide tax advice.

4. Application Components

Applicants must submit a complete application package by the deadline (see Section 7, Timeline). Incomplete applications will not receive full consideration.

No applicant is guaranteed an award. Submission of an application does not create any right or expectation of receiving the CSHOF Scholarship. All application materials become the property of CSHOF upon submission and will not be returned.

- The application will require the applicant (and a parent/guardian, if the applicant is a minor) to sign a certification that all information provided is accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge.

4.1 Academic Information

- Unofficial high school transcript, including cumulative GPA and class rank (if available).
- Standardized test scores (AP, IB, PSAT, ACT, or SAT)—optional.
- College or post-secondary enrollment plans.

4.2 Activities and Distinctions

- List of academic and extracurricular activities, awards, clubs, and other distinctions (athletic participation may be included but is not required).

4.3 Financial Need Documentation (Required)

- A statement from a parent or guardian summarizing the family's financial circumstances, including any extraordinary expenses (employment status, medical expenses, support of other dependents, etc.).
- Copies of the front page of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' most recent two years of federal tax returns (Form 1040 only; schedules and W-2s not required).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s)' most recent pay stub(s).

4.4 Essay

- Typed essay, maximum 350 words, addressing: personal background, adversity the applicant has faced and overcome in their personal or academic life, future goals, what the applicant expects to gain from a college education, and why the applicant is a strong candidate for the CSHOF Scholarship. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to describe how sports or physical activity helped them overcome that adversity.

4.5 Letters of Recommendation (Two Required)

- One letter from the applicant's high school, on school letterhead, addressing the applicant's overall record and achievements and any circumstances the Committee should weigh in reviewing the application.
- One letter from a non-family adult who knows the applicant well and can speak to the applicant's overall qualifications.

4.6 Household Information

- Household composition, dependents, and permanence of housing, to provide the Committee context alongside the financial need documentation.

5. Selection Criteria

Selection Committee members will evaluate complete applications using the following criteria. No single factor is determinative; the Committee weighs the full application holistically.

- Academic performance and rigor of coursework.
- Extracurricular involvement, leadership, and community contribution.
- Demonstrated financial need.
- Strength and content of the essay.
- Strength of letters of recommendation.
- Overall alignment with CSHOF's mission of supporting Colorado youth.

6. Selection Committee and Conflicts of Interest

- The Selection Committee is appointed annually by the CSHOF Board of Directors.
- A majority of the Committee must be individuals who are not related to, or appointed at the direction of, any donor to the scholarship fund.
- Committee members (and their immediate family members) are ineligible to apply for or receive the scholarship in any year they serve.
- Committee members must disclose any personal or professional relationship with an applicant and recuse themselves from scoring that application.
- The Board reviews and approves the Committee's composition and the selection procedure annually.
- At least one alternate Committee member will be designated each year to fill in when a primary member recuses due to a conflict of interest, ensuring that the Committee retains a quorum and its required independence ratio.

7. Timeline

Milestone	Timing
Application window opens	October 1
Application deadline	January 31
Selection Committee review	February
Recipient notified	First week of March
Recipient recognized	CSHOF Induction Banquet, spring

7.1 Submission

All materials can be submitted via email to CSHOFScholarship@gmail.com or via mail to:

Colorado Sports Hall of Fame
Empower Field at Mile High, Gate 1
1701 Bryant Street, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80204

Any questions can be emailed to CSHOFScholarship@gmail.com.

8. Recordkeeping and Compliance

For every program year, CSHOF will retain records sufficient to satisfy IRS substantiation requirements for scholarship grants to individuals, including:

- Name and address of each applicant and recipient.
- Amount awarded to each recipient.
- Purpose of the scholarship.
- How the recipient was selected and by whom.
- Any relationship between a recipient and CSHOF officers, directors, or substantial contributors.
- Retention period: application and award records are retained for a minimum of seven years, consistent with CSHOF's Form 990 recordkeeping practice; unsuccessful applicant records may be purged after three years.
- Data privacy: financial documents (tax returns, pay stubs) are collected and stored securely, accessible only to Selection Committee members and designated staff, and are securely destroyed once the retention period lapses.

Legal note: Selection criteria must be applied on an objective, nondiscriminatory basis. Eligibility may not be limited to a pre-selected or identifiable individual. Given ongoing legal developments regarding race-conscious eligibility criteria (post-2023), CSHOF should consult counsel before adopting any criteria based on race or ethnicity.

9. Publicity and Outreach

9.1 Publicizing the Scholarship

To maintain an open, broad applicant pool, CSHOF will publicize the scholarship annually through:

- The CSHOF website and the 18-88/CSHOF Scholarship page.
- Direct outreach to Colorado high school counselors and athletic directors statewide.
- CSHOF social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, X).
- Coordination with organizations such as CHSAA to reach a statewide audience.

9.2 Use of Recipient's Name/Likeness

The application will include a consent provision permitting CSHOF to use the recipient's name, photo, and biographical information in connection with publicizing the scholarship and the Induction Banquet. Recipients may decline specific uses upon request.

10. Annual Review

These guidelines will be reviewed by the CSHOF Board of Directors annually, prior to the opening of the application window, and updated as needed to reflect changes in funding, IRS guidance, or program priorities.