



YMCA International Services Refugee Scholarship Program Application Information

BACKGROUND

YMCA International Services is a unique center of the YMCA of Greater Houston that delivers client-centered programs to refugees, immigrants and other vulnerable populations to advance their economic independence, social integration and civic participation. The Y helps newcomers restore hope, build stability, create opportunity and change futures.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicant must be accepted or enrolled as a student at an accredited, post-secondary, educational institution (university or college) and taking **at least 6 hours** during the Fall 2023 semester or accepted or enrolled in an appropriate vocational training institution.
2. Applicant must possess or have possessed one of the following immigration statuses with legal documentation: refugee, affirmative asylee, survivor of human trafficking, special immigrant visa holder, and Cuban or Haitian entrant.
3. Applicant must be a resident of the Greater Houston Area for at least the last six (6) months.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Awardees will be selected by a committee composed of staff of YMCA International Services, and personnel from local educational institutions, refugee communities, and agencies serving eligible populations. The committee reserves the right to modify this program as necessary.

The committee will take the following into consideration: applicant's date of arrival to the country, community involvement as demonstrated by work experience, volunteer experience, or extracurricular activities, financial need, and demonstrated resiliency and character, as evidenced in their personal essays and reference letters.

AWARDS

One-time educational scholarships in the **minimum of \$1,000.00** will be awarded for enrollment in any accredited, post-secondary educational institution (college or university) or vocational training. The **maximum award amount is \$2,000.00** per applicant. Applicants who are awarded the scholarship will be invited to attend an awards ceremony.

Scholarship checks will be mailed directly to the educational institution/vocational training designated on applications.



SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND AWARD DATE

Applications will be accepted from April 24th through June 16th, 2023. **All applications must be received no later than Friday, June 16th at 4pm.** These dates are subject to change.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications may be hand-delivered, mailed, or emailed. Only **complete** applications, including all required paperwork, will be considered. Applications that are partially sent by mail, partially hand-delivered or sent in multiple emails will **not** be considered. **To be considered complete, applications and all required documents must be turned in all together.**

Please hand-deliver or mail a complete application to:

**Attn: Refugee Scholarship
YMCA International Services
3110 Hayes Road, Suite 300
Houston, TX 77082**

OR

Email a complete application to: refugee.scholarship@ymcahouston.org

A COMPLETE APPLICATION INCLUDES:

Completed Application Form. The form is attached to this document. Application forms may be hand-written.

- **Essay Responses.** You must respond to the 2 essay prompts found on page 6 of the application form. Applicants must write in their own words; essays that have been plagiarized will not be considered.

One (1) Recommendation Letter Recommendation Letters may be written by a work supervisor, teacher, or someone who knows you and can testify to your academic ability and/or character. It is not appropriate for family members to write recommendation letters. Be sure your recommendation letter includes the phone number of the person who wrote it and how they know you.

- **Financial Information** Please provide your 2021 or 2022 Tax Return or W-2 Form. If you have none of these things, you may provide your last 3 pay slips. If you are a high school student or a dependent in your household, please provide parent/guardian financial information and your financial information if you have worked. If you are unsure which documents to submit, contact Frances Le Grand (franny.legrand@ymcahouston.org)
- **Copy of High School Transcript, High School Diploma or GED Certificate** If you have attended college previously in the US, please submit those transcripts as well. If you attended university outside of the United States and have had your degree evaluated, please submit a copy of that also. Unofficial transcripts are accepted.
- **Copies of Immigrant Documents** Such as I-94 Departure/Arrival Record, Asylum Court Papers, Visa for SIVs, Permanent Resident Card, or Letter of Certification for Victims of Human Trafficking.

YMCA International Services



Refugee Scholarship Program Application Form

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Name You Prefer to be called (if different from legal first name): _____

Street Address: _____ Apartment #: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Alien Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender (circle one): Male Female

Date of Arrival: _____ Citizenship/Nationality: _____

Immigration Status upon entering the United States (check one)

- Refugee Asylee
- Cuban or Haitian Entrant Special Immigrant Visa
- Victim of Human Trafficking

EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

- Are you a graduating high school senior, have a high school diploma, have a GED/Hi-SET certificate or other high-school equivalency from another country? (Circle one) Yes No
- When did you receive your high school diploma or GED/Hi-SET? _____
- Please fill in the following information regarding previous higher educational institutions attended.

Educational Institution Name (example HCC)	Dates Attended Date Began – Date Completed or Current	Year Completed or Degree Awarded or Expected to Complete	Have you graduated yet? Yes or No

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4. What is the name of the college, university, or vocational training you will attend in Fall 2023?

5. What is your college Student ID #: _____ Last 4 Digits of Social Security Number: _____

6. What is your educational goal? Please describe what career path you are pursuing and what you intend to major in or which vocational training you are attending:

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Please list the most significant school, community, or extracurricular activities in which you have participated (for example: clubs, associations, religious participation, volunteer work, sports, etc.). This includes activities in the US **and** other countries.

Organization/Group Name	Time Commitment (how many hours/month)	How you contributed

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Please list your employment experiences **beginning** with the most recent job in the US **and** other countries.

Company Name	Position Held	Month/Year Began Work - Month/Year Ended Work

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FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Number of People Living in your Household: _____

Ages of Each Person Living in your Household:

Total Annual Household Income from 2022: \$ _____

Financial Documentation Provided (circle one or more)

2021 tax return

2022 tax return

2022 W2

last three pay stubs

REQUIRED CERTIFICATES AND PHOTO RELEASE:

I certify that the information provided in this application and essays is, to the best of my knowledge, true, complete, and accurate. I have not knowingly withheld any facts or circumstances that could otherwise jeopardize consideration of this application. I understand that if any of the information is found to be false, it is sufficient cause for rejection or dismissal from the program. I understand that the information submitted in this application will be shared with the Refugee Scholarship Committee and the Board of Directors of YMCA International Services. If selected to receive this scholarship, I give permission for the release of application materials for promotional purposes. If I attend the award ceremony, I give permission for the release of any photos or videos taken of me and my guests for promotional purposes.

Signature of Applicant

Date



ESSAY PROMPTS:

Both essays must be typed and double-spaced. Each essay should be at least 500 words in length, double spaced, but no more than 1,000 words. **Attach completed essays to application.**

The two essays must be written **in your own words**. Plagiarized essays will not be considered.

Direct plagiarism is using someone else's words exactly. However, it is also plagiarism to reuse the words of another person in a different order. If you use someone else's words, you need to cite the source.

First-Time Applicant

Choose two topics and write two essays.

Topic One:

What were the circumstances in which you were raised? Describe your family, home, neighborhood, or community.

Topic Two:

What do you believe has helped you succeed, and how will you use your success to better the lives of others?

Topic Three:

How have your family's challenges made you a better person? How will these challenges help you to be successful in the United States?

Repeat Applicant (If you have applied for the scholarship before, please answer the questions below.)

Choose two topics and write two essays.

Topic One:

Some say a family needs a community to raise a child. How has your community in Houston helped you to succeed? How will you contribute to this community to help others in the future?

Topic Two:

What important words or advice have helped you on your journey? Why do they continue to be important to you? What advice do you have for other immigrant youth?

Topic Three:

Write about your top three goals. How has your experience as an immigrant shaped these goals?