

Launch Checklist

A step-by-step checklist from naming your scholarship to announcing your first recipient — and getting your listing featured on Thank a Teacher.

Phase 1 — Decide (week 1)

- ☐ Choose your honoree and confirm how their name may be used
- ☐ Name the scholarship (for example, “The [Honoree Name] Scholarship for Foster Youth”)
- ☐ Decide the award amount and the number of awards
- ☐ Decide whether it is one-time, annual, or renewable
- ☐ Decide who is eligible — current or former foster youth, plus any school, state, or program limits
- ☐ Decide the education levels you will fund: college, university, trade or career school, certificate, apprenticeship
- ☐ Write your honoree story (see Template 6)

Phase 2 — Structure and money (weeks 2–3)

- ☐ Choose how you will hold and pay the award: personally, through your business, through your church or nonprofit, through a community foundation donor-advised fund, or through the school's foundation
- ☐ If you want donations to be tax-deductible, talk to a community foundation, a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, or your own advisor first
- ☐ Ask a tax professional how you should document the award and whether any reporting applies
- ☐ Confirm whether you will pay the school directly (usually simplest for the student's aid) or pay the student
- ☐ Set the funds aside before you announce, so the award is certain
- ☐ Decide who reviews applications — at least two people, ideally three
- ☐ Write down your selection process and keep it (see Template 5)

Phase 3 — Build the application (weeks 3–4)

- ☐ Adapt the application template (Template 3) and eligibility language (Template 2)
- ☐ Choose one or two essay prompts and offer a video or voice option (Template 4)
- ☐ List the verification documents you accept, and offer help to anyone who cannot get one
- ☐ Set the deadline, notification date, and award payment date — and put all three in writing
- ☐ Choose how applications arrive: online form, email, or mail
- ☐ Decide where application materials are stored, who can see them, and when they are destroyed
- ☐ Publish a contact email and a real person's name for questions
- ☐ Ask one young person or one counselor to test the application and time it

Phase 4 — Announce (week 5)

- ☐ Adapt the announcement language (Template 1), short and long versions
- ☐ Send it to high school counselors, college financial aid offices, and campus foster youth programs
- ☐ Send it to county child welfare agencies, ILP coordinators, CASA programs, and foster parent associations
- ☐ Send it to trade and career school admissions offices in your area
- ☐ Post it where your community will see it
- ☐ Submit your scholarship at thankateacher.net/submit-a-scholarship to be verified and featured
- ☐ Confirm your listing details — school or open to any school, amount, deadline, and application link

Phase 5 — Review and award

- ☐ Acknowledge every application within a few days of receipt
- ☐ Screen for eligibility, then score independently with the rubric
- ☐ Have committee members sign the conflict-of-interest statement
- ☐ Meet, discuss, decide, and record a one-line rationale for each decision
- ☐ Notify the recipient first and confirm they accept (Template 7)
- ☐ Collect the payment details your process requires, then pay by the date you promised

- ☐ Notify everyone who was not selected on the promised date
- ☐ Get written permission before publishing any name or photograph
- ☐ Announce the award and thank your honoree or their family

Phase 6 — Keep it going

- ☐ Write down what you would change next cycle, while it is fresh
- ☐ Note which outreach channels produced applicants
- ☐ Set next year's dates and fund the next award
- ☐ Check in with your recipient mid-term, with no strings attached
- ☐ Update your Thank a Teacher listing with the new deadline and amount
- ☐ Consider inviting one or two others to co-fund a second award

What Thank a Teacher does and does not do

We provide inspiration, templates, verification of featured listings, storytelling, and referrals. We do not collect, hold, or distribute scholarship money, we do not receive applications, and we do not select recipients. You may use these templates or build your scholarship entirely your own way — either way, a scholarship that serves current or former foster youth exclusively can be submitted to be featured.

Important

This template is a general educational resource, not legal, tax, or financial advice. Thank a Teacher does not collect, hold, or distribute scholarship money, does not receive applications, and does not select recipients. The sponsor is solely responsible for funding, administering, receiving applications, selecting recipients, paying awards, and meeting all legal, tax, and compliance obligations. Please consult qualified professionals about your own situation. To be featured on thankateacher.net, a scholarship must be exclusively for current or former foster youth.