Scholarship Application Form

Upakar Foundation – the Indian American Scholarship

Application Postmark Deadline - April 30, 2026

Application Instructions

Eligibility Requirements:

To be eligible for an Upakar Foundation scholarship, you must meet all criteria:

- Either you or one parent was born in India
- Be either a U.S. citizen or a U.S. 'Green Card' holder (Permanent Resident)
- Be actively seeking enrollment in an undergraduate 4 year degree program at an accredited College or University or a 2 year Community College in the United States for the 2026-2027 academic year
- Have a 2025 Family Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on the IRS form 1040 (line 7) of less than $175,000
- Have a cumulative non-weighted GPA over 3.6 (on a 4.0 scale)
- Be a graduating United States based high school senior in 2026

Selection Criteria:

Applicants are evaluated on all the following criteria. Have your parent help with the Financial Information section.

- Academic record
- Financial need
- Completed Application Package **(incomplete applications will be disregarded, use as checklist)**
    1. Upakar Scholarship Application (online)
    2. 2 well written on-point essays (topics prompt in Scholarship Application)
    3. Proof of Citizenship (United States and India)
    4. High School transcript
    5. Copy of the official SAT or ACT report
    6. Letter of Recommendation
    7. Financial information
        - FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS, generated from completing FAFSA)
        - 2025 Tax returns (Required – 1040 and Schedule 1and any Schedules C, E and F that were filed) or last tax return filed

Application Package:

- **Upakar Scholarship Application**
  - SAT / ACT super scores.
  - Name and related costs for selected Institution. If decision has not been made, include the one you are most likely going to attend.
  - Scholarships/Grants – if none, write "none."
  - Parental Income Section
    - Parental Adjusted Gross Income – will come from the IRS Form 1040 (Line 7) and must be under **$175,000.**
    - Parental Tax Liability – amount owed to the IRS (Form 1040, Line 11)
    - Earnings per Tax Return – generally from 1099 or W-2
  - Essays
    - Please include a word count at the end
    - Essays that do not answer the specific questions will be considered incomplete; please take the time to answer them thoughtfully and completely.

- **Proof of Citizenship**
  - If you were born in the United States
    - Copy of **your** United States passport name page AND
    - Copy of **parent's** passport name page (if not available, please send an explanation to upakarfoundation@hotmail.com with "No parent passport" as the header)
  - If you were born in India
    - Copy of United States Permanent Resident card ("Green card") OR
    - Copy of your United States passport name page
  - **Black out all passport numbers**.

- **High School Transcript**
  - Provide a transcript from your current high school with the cumulative Grade point average (GPA)
  - Transcripts must have the name of your high school and your name.

- **SAT or ACT** –
  - Print the official SAT or ACT reports that match the super scores on the application.
  - If you did not take the SAT or ACT, state that on application.

- **Letter of Recommendation**
  - Must be from a teacher or advisor. The Letter must be current and may not be from a relative.
  - As a courtesy, give at least 3 weeks to complete your recommendation
  - The Letter of Recommendation must stay confidential. Ask your teacher or advisor to email it directly to upakarrecs@gmail.com (you should not be cc-ed on the email).

- **Financial Information Documentation**

**** Please note, these documents are used in determining your eligibility for the Upakar scholarship. If the financial documents are not submitted your application will be immediately discarded. ****

  - All pages of your FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS) if you filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA, www.fafsa.ed.gov)
  - 2025 IRS Form 1040
    - If you or your parents have a business, partnership, investment properties or farm include all copies of IRS Schedules C, E, F and any K-1s
    - If the FAFSA or 2025 Tax Return was **not** filed, include:
      1. Clear and concise explanation why FAFSA or 2025 Tax Return was not filed
      2. 2024 IRS form 1040
      3. 2024 and 2024 W-2 and 1099 forms
      4. **Also** if you or your parents own a business, include all copies of 2024 IRS Schedule C, E, and any K-1s.
    - **Black out all social security numbers on any forms or backup information**

Submission Deadline:

Online Application and all documents must be completed and submitted by April 30, 2026.

Incomplete applications will **not** be considered (missing information or documents). Please review the Selection Criteria on page 1 to ensure your package is complete.

Award Notification:

Applicants that are awarded scholarships will be **directly** notified in August 2026. The awardees will be posted on www.upakar.org in September 2026. Please ensure your email is valid and is checked regularly. If the committee has any questions, all communications are via email.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

- There are many questions about my parent's finances and required IRS forms. Do I need to answer and submit all of them?
    - Yes, they are the basis of the Upakar scholarship determinations. Please remember this is a merit/need based scholarship and we need to confirm the need portion. Any application that does not fully answer the questions or does not include the requested forms will be **immediately** disregarded. Please get your parent's help with this section if needed. If you are not able to access this information, send an explanation to upakarfoundation@hotmail.com with "No parent financial information" as the header.
- I /my parents don't feel comfortable sending this information. Can I send the required supporting documentation after the Scholarship committee has reviewed my application?
    - No, because these documents are scrutinized as an integral part of the application review process. Without these important documents, your application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed or considered.
- Can I get an exception since I am not a United States Permanent Resident ("Green card" holder) or United States Citizenship?
    - No, an Upakar Scholar **must** be a US Permanent Resident or Citizen
- Life got busy and I missed the deadline. Can I get an extension?
    - There is no exception to the deadline.
- I really need the money to pay for school; can I get an exception to the eligibility criteria?
    - No, an Upakar Scholar must meet the eligibility criteria as listed
- My school does not do weighted grades/cumulative GPA, what should I do?
    - Note this on the application so the reviewers know it is not available.
- I was born in India, was adopted as a child and now I am a US citizen, am I eligible to apply?
    - Yes, as long as you meet the other criteria to be an Upakar Scholar
- I am just outside of the GPA requirements. Can I get an exception?
    - No. In general, an Upakar scholar far exceeds the GPA requirements.
- I did not complete the FAFSA. Am I automatically disqualified?
    - No, but should be a clear and concise explanation for not completing it attached to the scholarship application.
- I would like to drop off my application personally; can I make an appointment or drop it off somewhere?
    - No. If any attempt is made to contact the board members directly or attempts to influence the decision-making process will cause an application to immediately be disregarded.
- I live in India and want to come to America to study. Can I get an Upakar scholarship?
    - No. An Upakar scholar must be graduating from an US based high school and be currently living in the US. Income or a tax return from India cannot be substituted for the American requirements.
- I live in the US and my parents live and work in India. Can I still apply?
    - If your parents live and work in India and you are studying in the United States, you must provide the tax return for your US based guardians or your own if you file independently.
- I am in Graduate school/already in college/planning a gap year. Can I still apply?
    - No, the Upakar scholarship is only for high school seniors going directly to college.
- I have enough money for tuition, can I get a check sent directly to me instead?
    - No, the Upakar Scholarship donors expect the scholarship checks to be sent directly to the Institution on your behalf. Overages must be returned to Upakar and should not be paid out directly to a scholar.