

2026 Friends of the Cary Area Library (FOCAL) Scholarship Application Form



Please complete the following application and submit it and any attachments via e-mail to caryfocal@gmail.com or in person to the Cary Area Library Service Center **no later than Monday, April 27, 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted. Scholarship recipients will be announced at the students' high school Honors Night in May.

The Friends of the Cary Area Library (FOCAL) are pleased to offer two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors attending a two- or four-year college, university, or trade school who reside within the Cary Area Library District. Successful applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a graduating high school senior with a 3.0 or above GPA, accepted and planning to attend a two or four-year college, university, or trade school.
- Complete and sign this application form. Parent/Guardian must sign if under age 18.
- Have assisted FOCAL in setting up or working at a book sale, volunteered at the Library, and/or have been an active member of the Teen Volunteer Board (TVB).
- Respond to all 3 categories, including your choice of two of the essay questions (minimum one paragraph for each essay).
- Provide two short letters of recommendation from a non-family member (supervisor, teacher, coach, counselor, etc) who is knowledgeable of the applicant's character. Letters must be written within three months of the application deadline to meet this criterion.
- Live in the Cary Area Library District and have a current Cary Area Library card.

DATE _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

NAME _____ SIGNATURE _____

Parent/Guardian signature (if needed) _____

ADDRESS _____

CARY AREA LIBRARY CARD # _____

CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL _____ HIGH SCHOOL GPA _____

CHOSEN COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY, or TRADE SCHOOL _____

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RESPOND TO ALL 3 CATEGORIES:

1. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Include volunteer work, clubs or organizations, sports, hobbies, work, etc. Please be very specific and indicate roles held, duration of time spent, and activities in which you participated. Attach document to the application.
2. DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CARY AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY OVER THE YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN A PART OF THE LIBRARY DISTRICT. Please be very specific in describing the volunteer activities in which you participated. Attach document to the application.
3. SHORT ESSAY QUESTIONS: Your choice of **TWO** questions below. The essays must be the applicant's original work. Responses must be double-spaced and printed in 12 pt font. The length of each essay should be a minimum of one paragraph. Attach document(s) to the application.
 - Libraries play an important role in the community. What is your opinion on groups in the community that could benefit from library services?
 - Technology has quickly changed the way libraries function. How will technology continue to change libraries in the future?
 - Libraries support life-long learning. How do you feel libraries can support community members at every stage of life?
 - In June 2023, Illinois became the first state in the country to pass legislation (HB2789) outlawing book bans. Under this law, Illinois libraries must adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights to receive state-funded grants. What are your thoughts on book bans and this legislation?
 - What resources could libraries enhance to be more accessible to the community?

BONUS ESSAY QUESTIONS: Bonus points will be awarded for answering the questions below. Responses must be double-spaced and printed in 12 pt font. Attach document(s) to the application.

1. What is your fondest memory of being at the Library?
2. What are the reasons for choosing the school you will be going to in the fall?