

**American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
Professional Advancement Scholarships
2009-2010**

Information and Instructions

AACN's scholarship program is designed to promote lifelong learning, personal reflection and professional growth. The program may fund academic activities on a *limited* basis, but that would be because a *specific academic course* aligns with an applicant's development plan rather than because an entire academic curriculum results in earning a degree or credential as the end point.

Applicants are advised to be very specific when describing how they will achieve their individual goals through the proposed activity for which they are requesting funding.

In the application, applicants are asked to reflect on their own knowledge gaps and answer these questions when they write their essays:

- What don't I know?
- What do I want to know?
- How do I plan to acquire the knowledge I lack?

Applicants must show a **direct link** between the **content** of the learning activity they are proposing and what they need to learn in order **to overcome the gaps** in their knowledge and skills. When submitting for a course that is part of a structured (academic) program, focus on the *content* of a specific course and show how that content fills an individual learning gap. Do not submit for a general academic program that covers a number of courses over a period of months or years.

Eligibility

- Current active membership in AACN at time of application and throughout the term of the funded activity is required.
- Members of the AACN and AACN Certification Corporation board of directors and national office staff are not eligible.

Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of how well applicants demonstrate these criteria:

- Applicants must be able to assess and articulate gaps in their own knowledge and skills. *What don't I know?*
- Applicants must be able to set professional learning goals on the basis of identified gaps. *What do I want to know?*
- Applicants must be able to identify and evaluate learning opportunities that will move them toward achieving their goals. *How do I plan to acquire the knowledge I lack?*
- Applicants must present a budget of expenses for funding the proposed learning activity. *What will it cost?*

Funding Request

Applicants must present a descriptive accounting of expenses associated with the proposed learning activity. Provide specific dollar amounts for each budget item and a total for the activity.

Funding may be used for registration fees and associated expenses of travel, lodging and incidentals. Partial funding may be awarded.

A maximum of \$3,000 per person per year may be available.

Application Process

Applicants must submit the following:

1. Completed scholarship application form. All sections must be complete; incomplete applications will not be processed. Use MSWord and save your file with your last name in the filename and with the .doc file extension.
2. CV or resume, which may be submitted as .PDF or MSWord file.

Completed application and resume must be submitted together by e-mail as MSWord file or .PDF file attachments (see above) to scholarships@aacn.org. Include your name in the subject line of the e-mail and attach your files. Use your last name in the filename of your attachments. Use .doc file extension for MSWord files.

Double check your application before submitting to ensure that you have followed all instructions. Review "Tips for Finishing Your Application" below.

Evaluations and Awarding of Funds

Applications will be evaluated and scholarships will be awarded on the basis of the following:

- Ability to assess and articulate gaps in the applicant's own knowledge and skills.
- Ability to set professional learning goals on the basis of identified gaps.
- Ability to identify and evaluate learning opportunities that will move the applicant toward achieving his or her goals.
- Clarity and appropriateness of the projected budget of expenses for funding the proposed learning activity

Funds awarded will be sent directly to recipients. Recipients will be required to provide their Social Security number or tax ID number; AACN is required by the IRS to file Form 1099-MISC. Scholarship funding is considered taxable income to recipients unless the recipient qualifies under IRS definitions, in which case recipients may elect to have funds payable to their institution.

Timing of Submissions

Consider the time frame for your proposed learning activity and submit your scholarship application at least 4 to 6 months in advance of beginning your proposed activity in order to allow adequate time for evaluation. Scholarship applications may be submitted any time throughout the year. Applications will be processed on a continuous and ongoing basis.

The decisions of AACN are final. AACN reserves the right to publish statements submitted by scholarship recipients.

Tips for Finishing Your Application

- Have at least one other person read your application. Another set of eyes (or several) can be invaluable in strengthening an application. Ask a trusted colleague or a mentor to compare your application with the criteria and tell you how well they think you made your case. Reflect objectively on their suggestions and adjust your essays accordingly.
- It's always important to proofread carefully and double check spelling, grammar and punctuation. Ask your second reviewer(s) to comment on those aspects, too. A scholarship application isn't judged specifically on those elements, but they add to (or detract from) the strength of its presentation and reflect favorably (or not) on the applicant.
- Use all the space or word-count allowed. The reviewers have only what you write. They can't guess what you meant to say and don't have the benefit of probing for clarification.
- Reviews are blinded and reviewers will not see your CV or resume during the evaluation process. Include any pertinent information from your CV on your application.

AACN's Expectations of Scholarship Recipients

- Recipients will be expected to submit a report to AACN after completing the funded learning activity, documenting their experiences and how it helped them achieve their goals
- Recipients' names will be included in AACN's volunteer database as scholarship recipients.

AACN Professional Advancement Scholarships Application

Demographic Data required

Name
Home address City, State, Zip
Home phone
Employing institution City, State
Position
Academic credentials, certifications
Work phone E-mail
AACN membership number Expiration date of membership
Note: Your AACN membership must be current at the time of application and funding, and must remain current for the duration of your funded activity.

Proposed Learning Activity

Name of program or title of academic course
Dates and location of program/course
Sponsored by
Content description

Clearly and succinctly address the following elements:

Assessment of Gaps in Knowledge and Skills (300 words maximum)

Describe the gaps in your knowledge and skills. How will these gaps be addressed by participating in the proposed learning activity?

Learning Plan Goal Statement and Vision (300 words maximum)

Describe your learning plan and your goals for addressing the gaps identified above and how the learning activity you are proposing will help you achieve your professional goals. In developing your learning plan, be as specific as possible when you are linking your proposed learning activity to the gaps in your knowledge and skills. How will you use the knowledge gained and apply it to your area of nursing practice, your association with AACN, and/or nursing as a profession?

Professional Activities related to proposed learning activity, if any (300 words maximum)

List organizational memberships, community activities, related presentations, and other relevant professional activities that prepare you to take advantage of the learning experience you are proposing. (Reviews are blinded and reviewers will not see your CV.)

Funding Request

How much money will be required to participate in the activity you have proposed? Provide an accounting of expenses with a breakdown of major categories, such as travel, lodging, and registration fees.

Submitting Your Finished Application

When you have completed this application, save the file (use MSWord) with your last name in the filename and .doc file extension, and include your CV or resume in a separate MSWord or .PDF file. Send both files in one e-mail to scholarships@aacn.org. Remember to put your last name in the subject line of your e-mail. Incomplete applications will not be processed.