

## Frequently Asked Questions - FAQs

All graduating seniors attending either Austin Public Schools (APS) or Pacelli Catholic School should apply for The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship. The questions and answers below give families more information about the requirements and eligibility. More detailed information is available from high school staff and Riverland Community College.

### 1. What is The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship?

The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship (THFAAS) is a scholarship that students can use while earning a college education at Riverland Community College. This scholarship covers your tuition and fees and includes a stipend for needed books and materials. The scholarship amount will vary for each student and will pay for up to 100% of tuition and fees that are not funded by federal grants, state grants, or other scholarship funds. THFAAS will pay for up to 65 college credits towards an approved program of study at Riverland Community College.

### 2. Why offer this program to the graduates of APS/Pacelli? For the following reasons:

- Education is an important key to financial well-being and societal contribution
- To reinvest and strengthen the Austin community
- To plant the seed of post-secondary education and training at an early age

### 3. Who qualifies for The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship?

- Students must be a graduate of Austin Public Schools or Pacelli high school.
- Students must have 50 documented volunteer hours in the community. Please refer to the below FAQ about volunteer hours for more information about this.
- Students must meet at least ONE of the following requirements by the end of the first semester of the student's senior year:
  - Earn a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.5 or higher.
  - Pass all courses with a GPA of 2.5 or higher in their Junior & Senior year of High School.
  - Achieve a composite ACT score of 18 or higher.
  - Be a graduate of the Be Your Best College Prep Summer Academy at Riverland.
  - Achieve an ASVAB Score of 31 or higher. (ASVAB is an optional career assessment)
  - Be in the top 75% of their graduating class and meet at least one of the following categories:
    - Be a first-generation college student (meaning that neither parent has a 4-year college degree);
    - Be a low-income student (for example the family could qualify for free and reduced lunches);
    - Self-identify as a member of a racial/ethnic minority.

(This information is needed to qualify the student under the previous Cycles for Success Scholarship Program criteria.)

- Student must be enrolled in an approved program of study, and be in good standing, at Riverland Community College.

**4. What is the scholarship amount?**

The scholarship amount will vary for each student. It will pay for up to 100% of the student's tuition and fees that are not funded by Federal and/or Minnesota State grants or other scholarship funds. For 2019 and future graduating seniors, the scholarship will pay for up to 65 college credits towards an approved program of study at Riverland. There will be some exceptions for programs or majors that require more than 65 credits. In addition, students will receive a stipend of up to \$1,000 for required books and materials needed for courses, which are purchased at Riverland book stores.

Students will receive a pro-rated scholarship amount based on the number of years attending APS/Pacelli. See the percentages below for graduates of APS/Pacelli:

- Attend 4 years – 100% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.
- Attend 3 years – 75% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.
- Attend two years – 50% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.
- Attend one year – 25% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.

**5. Will students who live in neighboring school districts and apply to APS/Pacelli under the Schools of Choice Agreement (open enrollment) be eligible for this award?**

No. Students must live in the Austin Public School enrollment district to be eligible for The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship.

**6. Will students who attend APS/Pacelli and transfer OUT of the school district before graduating be eligible to receive the scholarship?**

No.

**7. Will students who attend APS/Pacelli and transfer INTO the school district before graduation be eligible?**

Yes. Students will receive a pro-rated scholarship amount based on the number of years attending APS/Pacelli. See the percentages below for graduates of APS/Pacelli:

- Attend 4 years – 100% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.
- Attend 3 years – 75% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.

- Attend two years – 50% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.
- Attend one year – 25% of the tuition and fees for 65 college semester credit hours not funded by grants or other scholarships will be covered.
- Student must be a graduate of APS/Pacelli.
- Student must be enrolled in an approved program of study at Riverland.

**8. What is the application process?**

**Students MUST** apply during their **senior year of high school**. The online application process is available beginning October 1st at [www.austinassurance.org](http://www.austinassurance.org). Students who complete the application form by the last Friday in April during their senior year in high school, have met the volunteer hour requirement, and qualify for the scholarship, will be included in the scholarship awards ceremony at their high school.

Students **MUST COMPLETE THE APPLICATION PROCESS DURING THEIR SENIOR YEAR** to be eligible for the scholarship. The senior year application sets the start date for the students' eligibility. The scholarship funding is available to qualified students for up to five years after graduation. For example, a student who completed the scholarship application form in their senior year, but doesn't enroll at Riverland right away, will still be eligible to use the scholarship for up to five years after their high school graduation.

**9. How long will the application take?**

It is estimated to take about 15 minutes to complete the form.

**10. Is an essay or essay questions required?**

No, there are no essay requirements.

**11. Is there a cap on how many students can qualify for the Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship?**

No, there is no cap on the number of students who qualify for this scholarship. Students who apply, meet the requirements, and attend Riverland Community College would be awarded The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship.

**12. Is there a volunteer hour requirement to be eligible?**

Yes, students are required to complete volunteer hours in the community in order to qualify for the Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship. Students must enter their volunteer hours and find opportunities in the "Get Connected" program from Mower County United Way.

<https://uwmower.galaxydigital.com/> **Important details:**

- Volunteer work is an unpaid activity that benefits the community, specifically working with non-profits or providing a service to an individual who may need assistance. Example: shoveling snow for your neighbor or volunteering to read at the library. Volunteering at your place of work does not qualify.

- Hours begin to count at the start of your Freshman year of high school.
- You must perform a service for someone other than family members. For example, chores at home, on the farm, and babysitting younger siblings do not count as volunteer hours.
- Volunteer hours may not be court ordered.
- Volunteer hours must be completed by the last day of your Senior year of high school.

**Required number of hours:**

- The Class of 2019 – 12.5 Volunteer Hours
- The Class of 2020 – 25 Volunteer Hours
- The Class of 2021 and beyond – 50 Volunteer Hours

**13. What can I do now, prior to applying for the scholarship?**

- Apply to Riverland Community College if you have not been, or are not now, a Riverland student through PSEO or Concurrent Courses at your high school.
- Complete an intent to return form if you are, or have been, a PSEO or Concurrent student. You don't need to reapply to the college.
- Schedule a time to complete the Accuplacer course placement assessment.
- Apply for FAFSA/Financial Aid starting October 1.
- Attend a Financial Aid night to learn more about what types of financial aid are available and how to apply for them. These sessions are open to all APS/Pacelli students and parents. More information at: <https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/ahs/Pages/counseling/counseling.aspx>
- Attend a FAFSA Completion Help Session where staff will help you complete the online FAFSA application. These sessions are open to all APS/Pacelli students and parents. More information at: <https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/ahs/Pages/counseling/counseling.aspx>
- Start working towards completing necessary volunteer hours in the community.

**14. How will this award work with other college financial aid?**

- The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship is structured as last dollar funding to help students and their families pay for college (this type of scholarship is also referred to as "gap" funding). The scholarship amount will be customized for each student. It will pay the remaining tuition balance after state and federal grants and other scholarships have been applied.
- Each student is expected to complete the FAFSA or the Dream Act Application, or the FAFSA Forecaster, in order to receive full funding by the scholarship. For more information and to apply on-line visit the FAFSA web page at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or the Dream Act Application at <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=2065>.
  - NOTE: the FAFSA is a free application. You should not pay to complete the form. College staff can help you complete the form.
  - For more information on help sessions click here: <https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/ahs/Pages/counseling/counseling.aspx>

- The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship will provide each student with a one-time stipend of up to \$1,000.00 for required books and course materials.

**15. What are the eligible universities and/or colleges?**

Students must attend any Riverland Community College campus to be eligible. Riverland has campuses in Austin, Albert Lea, and Owatonna, as well as online programs.

**16. Can the scholarship be transferred to another college, university or vocational training program?**

No.

**17. Are there additional requirements that must be met after the initial award? What happens if the student fails to meet the requirements?**

- Yes. Applicants must demonstrate, after the first semester and all following semesters that they are making regular progress toward a degree or certification as defined by Riverland.
- The first semester that a student fails to meet Riverland's academic requirements the student is placed on warning, allowing them an additional semester to bring their performance in line with the requirements.
- If a student on warning fails to meet the academic progress in the subsequent semester, their scholarship is placed in suspension status. The student would not receive the scholarship the next semester. The scholarship can be reinstated if the student demonstrates that they have met all the academic requirements of The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship and Riverland's program requirements. The scholarship would be reinstated prospectively.

**18. How many years is the scholarship available to APS/Pacelli graduates?**

- The scholarship is only available for five years following the student's graduation from APS/Pacelli unless interrupted by military service.
- Students honorably discharged from military service within five years of graduation from APS/Pacelli will have the scholarship available to them for three years following the student's honorable military discharge.

**19. If the scholarship award is not needed due to other scholarships, can the award be applied to room and board fees?**

No.

**20. Can you attend Riverland Community college part-time or full-time (12 or more semester credits)?**

Students can attend Riverland part-time or full time with The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship.

**21. Is there an application fee to apply to Riverland Community College?**

No, there is no application fee for Riverland Community College.

**22. When will the scholarship funds be available?**

Funds are disbursed to Riverland Community College in the name of the recipient beginning with the fall semester for qualified APS/Pacelli graduates.

**23. Are deposits required to secure enrollment covered?**

No, there is no deposit required to secure enrollment.

**24. How long do students have to use The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship?**

The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship is designed to provide funds for up to 65 Semester credit hours or up to five (5) years after graduation, whichever comes first. **The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship funds are only available IF AN APPLICATION IS COMPLETED DURING A STUDENT'S SENIOR YEAR.**

**25. Are summer semester classes covered by The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship?**

Students will not be eligible to have summer classes covered by the scholarship the summer immediately following their senior year of high school. Students who are required to take summer courses during the summer immediately following their senior year of high school, based on their academic program, can complete an appeal to have these covered.

Subsequent summers will indeed be covered by the scholarship for degree seeking students who intend to complete their degree at Riverland Community College.

**26. How long will The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship be available?**

The Hormel Foundation Austin Assurance Scholarship will be available as determined by The Hormel Foundation.

**27. If I don't qualify for the scholarship, is there an appeal process for me to go through?**

Yes. Please view the Appeal Page. <https://austinassurance.org/appeal/>

**28. Any other questions?**

If you have additional questions after going through the website and reading this information, please feel free to contact us at the below contact information:

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