

# 2009–2011 PHILLIPS SCHOLARS COMPETITION

## TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

The Phillips Scholars Program is administered by the MINNESOTA PRIVATE COLLEGE FUND in partnership with the financial aid offices of 16 eligible private colleges and universities.

The program is funded through a generous gift from THE JAY AND ROSE PHILLIPS FAMILY FOUNDATION.

If you have any questions, please contact the Minnesota Private College Fund at: (651) 293-6823 or (888) PRI-FUND

Application Materials Available at:  
<http://www.mnprivatecolleges.org//scholarships/phillips/apply.php>

### BEFORE APPLYING

Understand the program's eligibility criteria and selection process: Review the [Application Brochure](#) and [Selection Process Guide](#) before developing a project idea. Both are posted on-line.

Make sure your idea fits within basic program guidelines:

1. Projects must serve communities in MINNESOTA.
2. The Phillips Scholarship is awarded to an individual. Joint applications are not accepted.
3. You must be a student at an eligible college affiliated with the Minnesota Private College Fund.
4. Your project must be substantial enough to require full-time work during the summer of 2010.
5. You must be able to participate in the program for two full years. *Freshmen are not eligible.*

### IF YOU ARE NOT A SOPHOMORE WHEN APPLYING:

The 2009–2011 Phillips Scholars Competition is open to students enrolled at eligible private colleges and universities who are sophomores in the 2008–2009 academic year. The Phillips Scholars program requires a minimum of 2 academic years of participation.

If you are currently a junior and your major requires at least two additional years of study, you may apply, however you *must* clearly explain that you will be in school for two additional years. Failure to explain may result in disqualification from the competition.

### IF YOU PLAN TO STUDY ABROAD: NEW POLICY

Because Phillips Scholars are expected to participate throughout their junior and senior years, we expect students to make an intentional commitment to their scholarship during both years.

The bulk of planning takes place during students' junior year. Those who travel during their junior year miss opportunities to meet and learn from their fellow Scholars. The planning process is also more difficult.

### APPROVED STUDY ABROAD (Fall Semester of Senior Year)

Applicants should strongly consider all options and be advised that Senior year – Fall Semester is the only approved time to study abroad. Travel at any other time is strongly discouraged because it will conflict with the scholarship project responsibilities.

Extended absence must be proposed in writing and approved IN ADVANCE.

<p>It is your responsibility to make sure the Scholarship Administrator and your campus are informed of your decision and know how to contact you.</p>
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## DEVELOPING A PROJECT IDEA

### Start where you have already been:

Think about your interests and past volunteer experience. What improvements could be made at the organizations or in the communities where you have volunteered? Give your project a firm foundation by exploring your interests, strengths, skills and expertise.

### Think About:

- ❑ Where do you volunteer?
- ❑ What kind of volunteer work do you enjoy?
- ❑ What organizations have impacted you personally?
- ❑ What experiences influenced your commitment to community service?
- ❑ How do you like to spend your time?
- ❑ What is your dream job?
- ❑ What are your hobbies?
- ❑ What are your favorite areas of study?
- ❑ Who are your role models?
- ❑ What are your strengths? Where could you use improvement?
- ❑ Where would you like to spend your summer?
- ❑ Have you come across needs in the community during your volunteer work? Have you ever thought, "If only this organization could . . ."

### Enhance and improve:

The Phillips Scholars Program challenges college students to think of new ways to improve the lives of people in Minnesota. A proposed project can be "new" even if it enhances or improves an existing program. For example, if a nonprofit has a program for single parents, a student could propose adding a new mentoring component to the existing program. Whether you come up with a completely new idea or you propose to enhance an existing program, your proposal should show that you are doing much more than just volunteering.

### Talk to people. Ask for help:

Bounce your idea off as many people as possible. The best proposals are those that are well thought out and thorough. Ask a professor to help you develop your project idea. Have classmates proofread your proposal and make suggestions. See if a current or former Phillips Scholar would be willing to give you a few pointers. Network with people in the nonprofit community. You will be pleasantly surprised at the number of people who are happy to help.

The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation: <http://www.phillipsfnd.org/>  
Explore issues and organizations that receive support from the donor.

Each year The Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation awards millions of dollars to nonprofits, primarily in the Twin Cities. The following *partial list* of recent grant recipients shows the Foundation's areas of interest and *some* of the organizations and initiatives that received support:

1. Self-sufficiency should be the goal of all efforts to assist people.

Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Minneapolis  
Boys and Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities–Life Skills Program  
Casa de Esperanza  
Central Community Housing Trust–Resource Center  
Family & Children's Service–Jobs & Affordable Housing Campaign  
Girl Scout Council of Greater Minneapolis–Activity Center  
Hmong American Partnership–On–The–Job Training Partnership  
Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods–Affordable Housing  
M.O.A.P.P.–Sexuality Education Advocacy Project  
Person to Person Inc.–Independent Living Skills Program  
Project Foundation Home Away Centers Inc.–After Care Program  
Sabathani Community Center Inc.–Family Plus Program

2. Families should be strengthened as nurturing and financially stable environments for children.

Center for Victims of Torture–Child Survivor Project  
Family Alternatives–Kids Capacity Initiative  
Lao Parents and Teachers Association–Youth Prevention and Intervention Program  
St. Paul Neighborhood Network–Production of *Kev Koom Siab*  
Volunteers of America–Grandparents and Parents Program

3. The quality of health care should be continually improved for the benefit of all people.

Centro–Maternal and Child Health Program  
Communication Service for the Deaf of MN–Youth HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention Program  
Midwest Health Center for Women–Pro–Choice Education Coalition  
Pro–Choice Resources–Abortion Provider Expansion & Education Programs

4. Quality education as the key to individual success should be promoted.

City Inc.–Post–secondary Options Program

Heart of the Earth Center–P.M. School

Minneapolis Institute of Arts–Education Programs

Our Savior’s Lutheran Church–English Learning Center

University of St. Thomas–Center for Jewish–Christian Learning

Youth Farm and Market Project

Youthcare Inc.–Young Women’s Mentoring Program

5. People with disabilities and the elderly should be able to live as independently as possible.

Blindness: Learning in New Dimensions–Workforce Centre

Courage Center–Disability and Consumer Advocacy Initiative

Helping Paws of Minnesota Inc.

Lifetrack Resources–Rehabilitation Therapies Division

6. Good relations among people of all races and religions should be fostered and discrimination should be actively opposed.

Eye of the Storm Theatre–Production of “Stop Kiss”

Givens Foundation for African American Literature

ISIAH–Preservation of Immigrant Families Initiative

Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest–North Side Historical Video Project

Multicultural Healthcare Alliance–PathFinder Program

Resource Center of the Americas–Common Circle Project

Stages Theatre Company

Storefront Group–GLBT Youth Initiative

Twin Cities Gay Men’s Chorus

University of St. Thomas–Study of the St. Paul Hmong Community

7. The arts should be supported primarily as a vehicle to address social issues.

Circle Corporation–Expansion of the New Voices Program

History Theatre Inc.

Mixed Blood Theatre Company

PARTS Photographic Arts–Lake Street USA Public Art Exhibit

People for Parks

SASE: The Write Place–Writing for Healing Program

### Contact organizations that already serve your community of interest:

You have an idea. The next step is to make sure that the project is needed. Don't be shy. Contact nonprofit organizations or community leaders to discuss your idea. Explain the Phillips Scholars Program and your proposal. Ask for suggestions. Request a letter of recommendation. Network and get referrals. You will impress the selection committee by showing initiative and demonstrating that your project is *needed* and *wanted* in the community.

### Be creative:

Look to past scholars' projects as guides for developing your idea. Remember, however, that the Selection Committee has the same information. If your project is very similar to one done in the past or if it targets a community that was already served by a Phillips Scholar, it may not fare as well as a unique, untried idea.

### Be realistic:

You cannot solve the world's problems in a summer. You *can* make a difference by setting realistic goals, targeting accessible communities, tailoring the scope of your endeavor and demonstrating that you have made a measurable difference in people's lives.

### Think About:

- Will I be able to work with my target community during the summer?
- How many individuals will be served by my project?
- Is my project substantial enough to require full-time work throughout the summer?
- How will I recruit participants and/or volunteers?
- Will there be any concerns about transportation, costs or safety?
- How much time will be needed for planning, daily activities and administrative tasks?

### Develop a project plan, not just an idea:

Proposals that move beyond the idea stage and into the planning stage always impress the Selection Committee. When it comes to choosing between different proposals, a concrete, step-by-step plan will fare better than the kernel of an idea. Details about planning show the extent to which you have thought about your proposed project. Even if your project ultimately changes, the way you write your proposal helps to show the Selection Committee that you have the skills and knowledge you will need to be a Phillips Scholar.

## DRAFTING A PROJECT PROPOSAL

### Answer the questions:

It sounds simple, but sometimes applicants forget to cover all of the bases. Make sure that your proposal addresses each topic on the application form. If for some reason you do not fit the criteria, explain why the committee should still consider your proposal. Failing to explain something may remove you from consideration.

### Be yourself:

There is no right or wrong way to write a Phillips Scholarship Competition proposal. Each application is unique. Concentrate on communicating your skills, interests, abilities and personality. Show the Selection Committee that you are an ideal Phillips Scholar.

### Be succinct:

The Selection Committee reads a significant number of proposals, many of which are longer than they need to be. Reread your proposal several times. Make sure that you are saying everything you need to say in the fewest words possible. Avoid generalizations and unnecessary repetitions. Each year, one or two proposals stand out because they are easy and *fun* to read.

### Be consistent:

The Selection Committee notices a lot, including the style and format of students' proposals. If you submit something that is sloppy and inconsistent, your proposal may lose points.

### Start early:

Give yourself plenty of time to draft, review and revise your proposal. The proposal should demonstrate that you take initiative, plan appropriately, and get your work done in a timely manner, which are all characteristics of a successful Phillips Scholar.

### Talk to people. Ask for help:

You will be surprised how many people are willing to help you with drafting your proposal. The best proposals are those that are well thought out and thorough.

### *Consider approaching:*

Service Learning Coordinators, Financial Aid Officers, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Officers, Campus Ministry Leaders and Writing Center staff.

### Think About:

- ❑ Is there a Phillips Scholar who could review your proposal?
- ❑ Can you ask someone at a nonprofit or your school to review the proposal and make suggestions?
- ❑ If you are a campus finalist, ask the campus committee for pointers on how to improve and polish your proposal before it is forwarded to the final Selection Committee.

### PROOFREAD:

The little things can mean a lot. Grammatical and spelling errors will disqualify even the most exciting proposal. Demonstrate that you take the project and your academic career seriously by having at least **TWO** people proofread your proposal before it is submitted.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### Letters of Recommendation & Reference Surveys:

The letters of recommendation can be from anyone—professors, employers, mentors, friends, contacts in the community you intend to serve, *etc.* They are an opportunity for someone to explain that you have what it takes to be a Phillips Scholar. The people you identify to write your letters can communicate a lot to the Selection Committee.

### Think About:

- ❑ Is there a former Phillips Scholar at your campus who would be willing to write a letter of recommendation for you?
- ❑ Is there an individual who is respected in the community where you intend to do your project?
- ❑ Are there professors or administrators at your college who are well-known and/or who have experience with your target community?