

# Akerman Academic Excellence Scholarship

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Network Webinar

February 7, 2020







# Agenda

**WELCOME**


**SCHOLARSHIP OVERVIEW**

**SECTIONS OF APPLICATION**

**SUBMISSION PROCESS**

**Q&A**

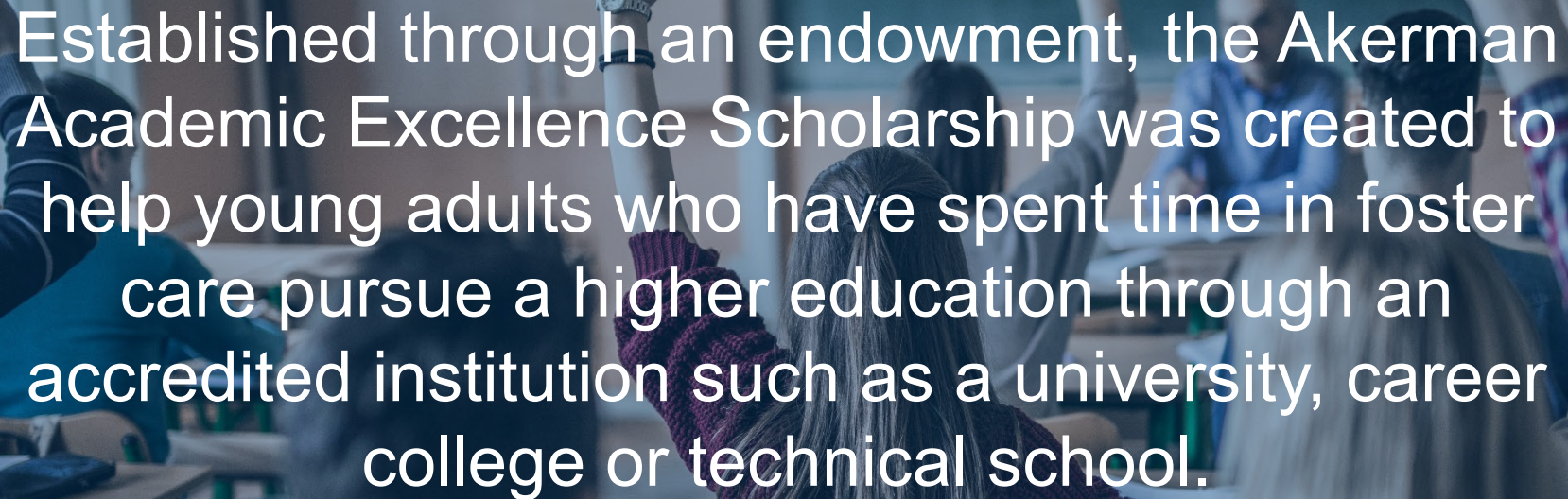
## Partnership

A photograph of a graduate in a blue cap and gown, being embraced by another person. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

In 2015, Akerman LLP, a law firm located in 25 cities across the country, made a commitment to raise \$1 million for the CASA/GAL movement. Funds were divided between local programs and establishing a scholarship program.



# Scholarship

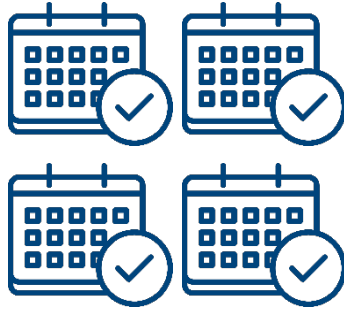
A photograph of a classroom with several students raising their hands. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter and white text. The students are seen from behind, sitting at desks. One student in the foreground is wearing a red sweater and a watch. The background shows a chalkboard and other students.

Established through an endowment, the Akerman Academic Excellence Scholarship was created to help young adults who have spent time in foster care pursue a higher education through an accredited institution such as a university, career college or technical school.

# Scholarship Funds



ONE AWARDEE RECEIVES  
**\$2,500**  
in scholarship funding

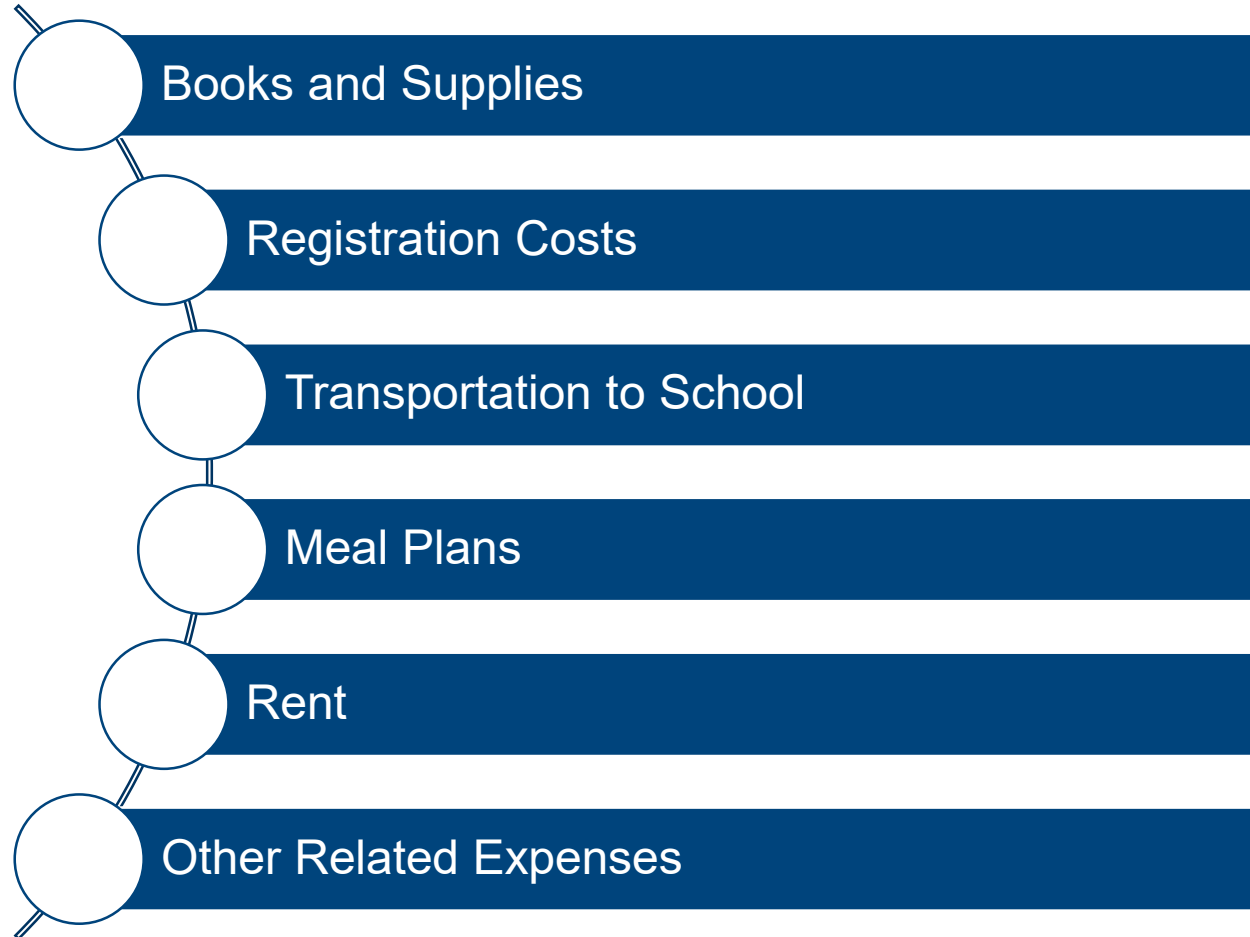


UP TO  
**four years**  
of support  
(totaling \$10,000)



FUNDS SENT TO AN  
ACCREDITED  
**academic  
institution**  
or other professional  
entity

# How Funds can be Applied



# 2020 Selection Committee



**Paige  
Beard**

National  
CASA/GAL

Omaha, NE



**Chris  
Duke**

Akerman  
LLP

West Palm  
Beach, FL



**Kasey  
Dunlap**

Akerman  
LLP

Chicago, IL



**Hank  
Raattama**

Akerman  
LLP

Miami, FL



**Sonia  
Valladares**

Florida GAL  
Program

Tallahassee,  
FL



**Beth  
Zafonte**

Akerman  
LLP

New York, NY

# Qualifications for Scholarship

- ☐ Is or has been in state custody (foster care)
- ☐ Has or has had a CASA or GAL volunteer
- ☐ Be nominated by a CASA/GAL volunteer or CASA/GAL program staff
- ☐ Has graduated from or is scheduled to graduate from an accredited school system, or has received or is scheduled to receive their GED
- ☐ Is applying to be accepted, has been accepted or is currently enrolled at an accredited institute of higher learning
- ☐ Be and remain in good academic standing



# Scholarship Timeline

DATE	DETAILS
Monday, February 3	Launch 2020 scholarship application process
Friday, February 7	Network webinar
Friday, March 13	Scholarship application period closes
Monday, April 13	Finalists contacted for virtual interviews
Friday, May 1	2020 scholarship recipient announced

# Sections of Application

# Application Requirements

- Online application form (completed and submitted by nominator)
- Letter of recommendation from nominator
- Second letter of recommendation
- Timeline of nominee's experience in state custody/foster care
- Nominee's educational information
- Transcripts from nominee's educational institution(s)
- Responses for Nominee Narrative section
- Nominee's personal essay



# Letters of Recommendation

Letters should highlight the nominee's strengths in these areas:

- Scholarship: academic growth or success
- Service: accomplishments in areas of individual and community engagement
- Mentorship
- Leadership
- Extracurricular activities
- Employment

Letters of recommendation must be typed, signed and submitted as a Word (.doc) or PDF file.



Age when first CPS case opened\*

Age when first entering state dependency/foster care\*

Number of placements before exiting state dependency/foster care\*

Number of schools attended before exiting state dependency/foster care\*

Was permanency achieved?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did the nominee re-enter state dependency/foster care?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No



Was permanency achieved?\*

☒ Yes

☐ No

What type of permanency was achieved?

☒ Reunification

☐ Transfer to Relative

☐ Guardianship

☐ Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption

☐ Other:

Reunification with whom?

# Nominee Timeline

# Nominee Timeline

## Second Time in Care

Age when re-entering state dependency/foster care\*

Number of placements in second state dependency/foster care\*

Number of schools attended in second state dependency/foster care\*

Was permanency achieved in this second state dependency/foster care?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did the nominee re-enter state dependency/foster care a third time?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

## Third Time in Care

Age when re-entering state dependency/foster care for the third time\*

Number of placements in third state dependency/foster care\*

Number of schools attended in third state dependency/foster care\*

Was permanency achieved in this third state dependency/foster care?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Did the nominee re-enter state dependency/foster care a fourth time?\*

☐ Yes

☐ No



# Nominee Timeline

## Fourth Time in Care

Tell us about the nominee's fourth state dependency/foster care experience and bring us to date today.

Has the nominee been emancipated?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Will nominee waive emancipation and remain in state custody?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Total number of years in state dependency/foster care\*

Total number of placements while in state dependency/foster care\*

Total number of schools attended while in state dependency/foster care\*

# Nominee's Personal Essay

The essay is an opportunity for the nominee to share their personal story, including values, barriers encountered and future hopes and dreams. Nominees must submit a written essay and have the option of including an additional video essay.

## Suggested topics:

- Reason for entering foster care
- Successes and challenges encountered
- Greatest barriers to success
- People who have been inspirations
- Personal strengths and motivators

# Checklist



Use this document to collect all necessary information prior to completing the online application.

## CRITERIA FOR NOMINEE

- Nominee is or has been in state custody (foster care)\*
- Nominee is a lawful, permanent resident of the United States of America\*
- Nominee has graduated from or is scheduled to graduate from an accredited school system or received or is scheduled to receive his/her GED\*
- Nominee is applying to be accepted, has been accepted, or is currently enrolled in an accredited institute of higher learning\*
- Nominee is willing to publicly acknowledge his or her receipt of the scholarship award

## NOMINEE CONTACT INFORMATION

- ☐ Name\*
- ☐ Gender (not required)
- ☐ Preferred Pronouns (not required)
- ☐ Race/Ethnicity (not required)
- ☐ Date of Birth
- ☐ Address
- ☐ Phone Number\*
- ☐ Email Address\*
- ☐ Current Primary Custodian information
  - Name\*, Phone Number\*, Email Address\*

\*Required

## DEPENDENCY/FOSTER CARE INFORMATION

This information is intended to give the Selection Committee a better sense of the nominee's experience in the child welfare and foster care systems. If a nominee has had multiple entries into state dependency and/or foster care, you will need to provide the following information for the first three entries and a summary of the fourth entry that brings reviewers up to date in the nominee's life.

- ☐ Nominee's age when first CPS case opened\*
- ☐ Age when entering state dependency/foster care\*
- ☐ Number of placements before exiting state dependency/foster care\*
- ☐ Number of schools attended before exiting state dependency/foster care\*
- ☐ Was permanency achieved? (Note: for reunification, transfer to relative or guardianship, be prepared to provide an additional description)
  - Reunification with family
  - Transfer to a relative
  - Guardianship
  - Adoption
- ☐ Total number of years in state dependency/foster care\*
- ☐ Total number of placements while in state dependency/foster care\*
- ☐ Total number of schools attended while in state dependency/foster care\*

## EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

- ☐ Name of the top choice higher learning institute
- ☐ Intended area of study
- ☐ Other grants/scholarships awarded for higher learning purposes
- ☐ Name of last high school attended\*
- ☐ Date of high school graduation or receipt of GED\*
- ☐ High school GPA\*
- ☐ Post-secondary GPA\* (required if applicable)
- ☐ Scores and Tests (Note: Scores and documentation of test scores are required for all completed tests)
  - SAT Math and Verbal Scores
  - ACT Score
  - Technical School Placement Test

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Please include all extracurricular activities.

- ☐ Activity/Organization
- ☐ Roles/Responsibilities
- ☐ Length of Participation

## WORK HISTORY

Please include all work experience.

- ☐ Company/Organization
- ☐ Roles/Responsibilities
- ☐ Dates of Employment

## NOMINEE NARRATIVE

Please ask the nominee to answer the following questions in narrative form. Each question should be answered in 240 characters or less.

- ☐ What do you think is your most significant academic achievement?\*
- ☐ Tell us how you would use the awarded funds.\*
- ☐ Why are you the best candidate to receive this award?\*
- ☐ Where do you see yourself in five years?\*

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

- Application Open: February 3, 2020
- Deadline for submission: March 13, 2020, by 5pm PST
- Scholarship Recipient Announced: May 1, 2020

For questions please contact:

[scholarship@nationalcasagal.org](mailto:scholarship@nationalcasagal.org) | 1.800.628.3233

\*Required



Please upload only Adobe PDF and/or MS Word files.

## DOCUMENTS FOR SUBMISSION

- ☐ Nominator Letter of Recommendation\*
- ☐ Second Letter of Recommendation from Personal, Education or Professional Contact\*
- ☐ Nominee's Personal Essay\*
- ☐ Educational Transcripts\* (Note: Must include high school transcripts. If possible, please scan all transcripts into one file for upload.)
- ☐ Other Files

## NOMINATOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION\*

Attach a typed, one-page (8.5 x 11) maximum letter of recommendation describing why the nominee should be awarded the Akerman Academic Excellence Scholarship. Please include the length of time that you have known the nominee, the nominee's personal strengths, financial need, academic achievement, or any additional information that will inform the Selection Committee as to the reason for the nomination.

## SECOND LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION\*

Attach a typed, one-page (8.5 x 11) maximum letter of recommendation from a personal, educational, or professional contact such as a teacher, guidance counselor, supervisor, or colleague. The letter should describe the nominee's personal attributes, strengths, achievements, or other characteristics that might be of interest to the Selection Committee. Highlighting the youth's successes in the areas of scholarship, service and work are recommended.

## NOMINEE'S PERSONAL ESSAY\*

The personal essay is intended to provide the Scholarship Selection Committee with additional information about the applicant beyond the questions in the nominee narrative. The essay is an opportunity for the nominee to share their personal story, including values, barriers encountered and future hopes and plans.

Nominees must submit a written essay and have the option of including an additional video essay.

- Written - This essay should be typed in Arial 12 point font and not exceed one page in length.
- Video - The video should be no more than 5 minutes in length and can be recorded using any smartphone device or computer. Videos may be submitted in .mp4 or .avi file formats.

For questions please contact:

[scholarship@nationalcasagal.org](mailto:scholarship@nationalcasagal.org) | 1.800.628.3233

\*Required





# Submission Process

# Online Application

## Akerman Academic Excellence Scholarship



Note: Your privacy is very important to us. To better serve you, the form information you enter is recorded in real time.

Established through an endowment by Akerman LLP, the Akerman Academic Excellence Scholarship was created to help young adults who have spent time in foster care pursue a higher education through an accredited institute of higher learning such as a university, a career college, or technical school. In June 2020, a scholarship for \$2,500 will be awarded to an outstanding youth who has been or is currently in foster care and has demonstrated a commitment to academic achievement.

The scholarship recipient must be a full-time student in good academic standing in order to receive scholarship funds (e.g. cumulative G.P.A. above 2.0 at the end of the Spring semester of each academic year). Scholarship funds will be directed to the academic institution or other professional entity on behalf of the scholarship recipient to be used towards books, registration costs, transportation to school, meal plans, and other related expenses. Scholarship recipients who remain in good academic standing and meet any additional requirements may be eligible to receive the scholarship for up to four years.

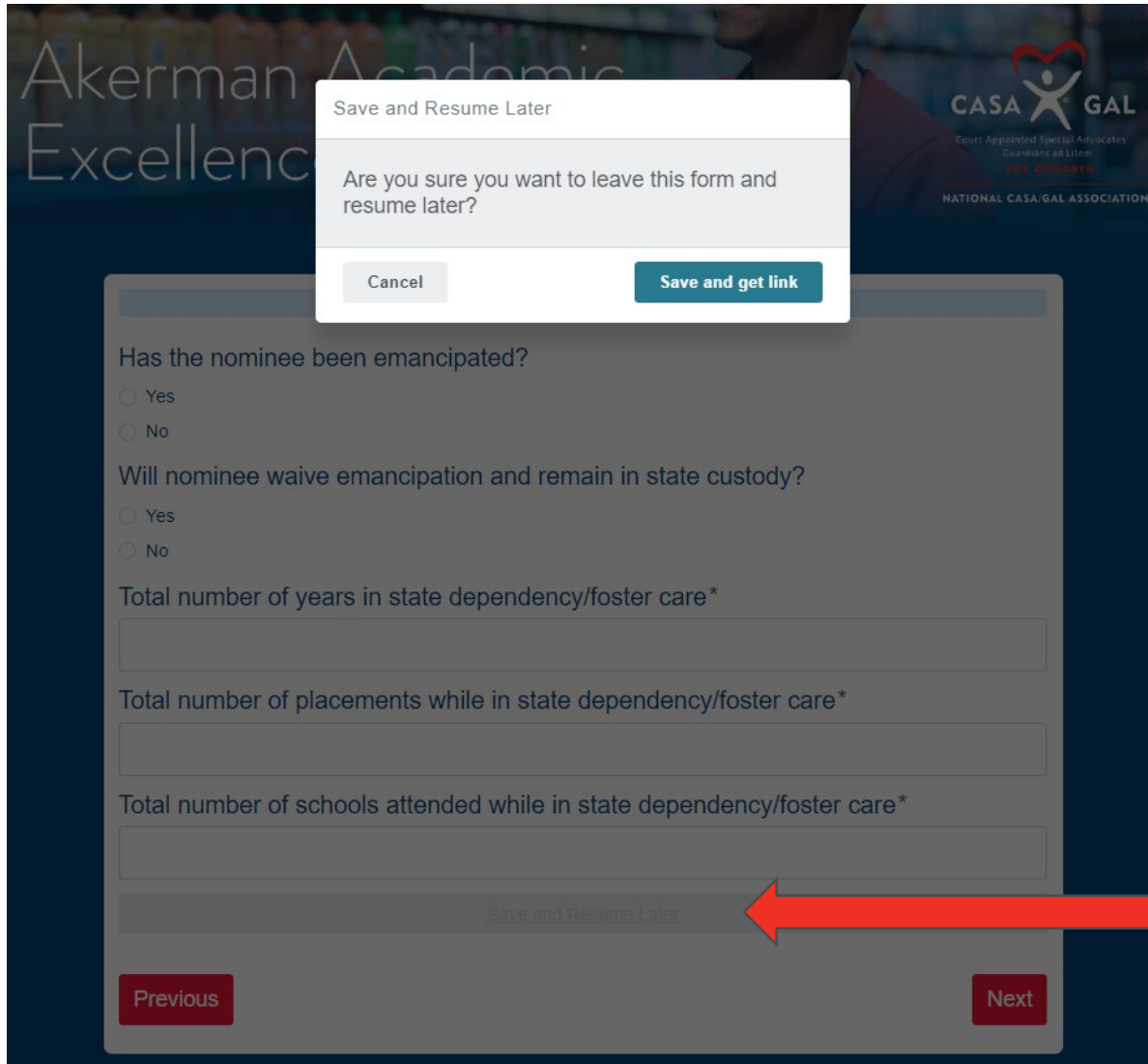
Applicants are identified and nominated by their CASA/GAL program through an advocate or another program representative. Nominators are required to complete the nomination form and submit all requisite documentation. Applications will be evaluated by a Scholarship Selection Committee that will include CASA/GAL and Akerman representatives, who will select the scholarship recipient.

For a list of information needed to complete the application, please see the [checklist](#).

Application Timeline

[https://nationalcasa.formstack.com/forms/2020\\_akerman\\_scholarship](https://nationalcasa.formstack.com/forms/2020_akerman_scholarship)

# Save and Resume

A screenshot of a web form titled "Akerman Academic Excellence" with the CASA GAL logo in the top right. A modal dialog box titled "Save and Resume Later" is open, asking "Are you sure you want to leave this form and resume later?" with "Cancel" and "Save and get link" buttons. The background form contains several questions with radio button options and text input fields. A red arrow points from the "Save and Resume Later" button at the bottom of the form to the dialog box.

Save and Resume Later

Are you sure you want to leave this form and resume later?

Cancel Save and get link

Has the nominee been emancipated?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Will nominee waive emancipation and remain in state custody?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

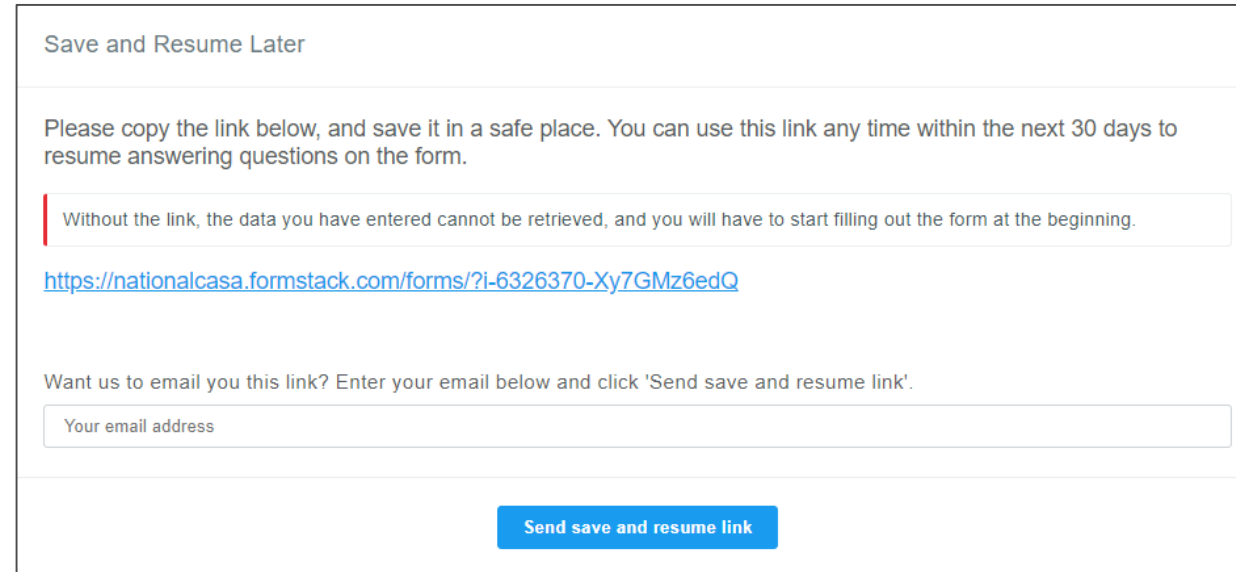
Total number of years in state dependency/foster care\*

Total number of placements while in state dependency/foster care\*

Total number of schools attended while in state dependency/foster care\*

Save and Resume Later

Previous Next

A screenshot of the "Save and Resume Later" confirmation page. It includes instructions to copy a link, a warning about data loss, a URL, an email input field, and a "Send save and resume link" button.

Save and Resume Later

Please copy the link below, and save it in a safe place. You can use this link any time within the next 30 days to resume answering questions on the form.

Without the link, the data you have entered cannot be retrieved, and you will have to start filling out the form at the beginning.

<https://nationalcasa.formstack.com/forms/?i-6326370-Xy7GMz6edQ>

Want us to email you this link? Enter your email below and click 'Send save and resume link'.

Your email address

Send save and resume link



# Uploading Documents

Documents for Submission:

- Documentation for test scores (SAT, ACT, etc.)
- Nominator Letter of Recommendation
- Second Letter of Recommendation
- Nominee's Educational Transcripts
- Nominee's Personal Essay (written required, video optional)

*Please upload only Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word files.*

# Questions?

# Upcoming Webinars

- Substance Abuse:  
An Introduction to Substance Abuse as a Disorder

Wednesday, February 19

10:00-11:00 a.m. PT/1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

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Thank You