

# Ball State University Guardian Scholars Program

#### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Ball State University Guardian Scholars Program is designed for Indiana students attending Ball State University who are either current or former foster youth. The Guardian Scholars Program provides not only scholarship support but also a variety of postsecondary support and referral services to help eligible recipients achieve their goal of a baccalaureate degree at Ball State University. The Ball State Guardian Scholars Program admits up to five incoming freshmen or transfer students each year (Fall Semester only). Each scholarship award will be up to a total of \$2,500 per year (and can be disbursed for the Fall, Spring, and/or Summer semesters), and the award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance as determined by Ball State University's Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. The scholarship is renewable for up to four years, subject to review. (Recipients *must* live in University-owned housing in order to receive room and board. Guardian Scholars who are incoming freshmen are *required* to live in University-owned housing the first two years. Upperclassmen and transfer students who choose not to live in University-owned housing may face a reduction in their award amount.) Recipients must be pursuing their first baccalaureate degree; and scholarship recipients are selected by a review committee, based on a competitive application process.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS: Ball State University seeks applicants who meet the following criteria:

- Be accepted to Ball State University
  - Be a first-time Ball State freshman, or a transfer student\*
  - Be a full-time student
- Have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale as an incoming freshman or transfer student (academic GPA as calculated by Ball State's Office of Admissions)
- Have experienced foster care\*\* (Applicants must provide documentation of foster care and length of time in foster care.)
- Qualify for "independent student status" under federal financial aid guidelines
- Be pursuing first baccalaureate degree
- Must apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA by the March 10<sup>th</sup> deadline prior to Fall Semester (and update annually for continuation) and demonstrate financial need
- Must complete Education and Training Voucher application (if eligible) by deadline prior to Fall Semester, update as needed, and follow ETV guidelines
- Be an Indiana resident (with preference given to individuals under 30 years of age at the time of application)

\*Ball State University students who are formally admitted and actively participating in the Guardian Scholars program (including those students admitted prior to Fall Semester 2012), and who otherwise meet all of the above criteria, may apply for this scholarship.

\*\*According to the federal definition, foster care means 24-hr substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential child caring institutions, pre-adoptive homes, and other state sanctioned voluntary placements. Facilities outside the scope of foster care include, but are not limited to, detention facilities, psychiatric hospitals or facilities that are primarily for the detention of children who are adjudicated delinquent.

## **REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY**

A Ball State University Guardian Scholar is expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5; maintain satisfactory academic progress; maintain fulltime enrollment at Ball State, and to fully participate in the Guardian Scholars program and activities; be receptive to staff monitoring academic performance and university records; and abide by all university standards for appropriate conduct. Each Guardian Scholar will sign a Student Agreement form and will be reviewed at the close of Spring Semester each year on program compliance and academic progress.



### The following details the Guardian Scholars Scholarship application process and applicable deadlines:

- 1. To receive a Guardian Scholars Scholarship, individuals must have officially applied and been admitted to Ball State University.
- 2. Individuals must complete the FAFSA by the March 10<sup>th</sup> deadline prior to Fall Semester (and update annually for continuation)
- 3. Individuals must submit complete Guardian Scholars Scholarship application materials. These materials will be available in hard copy at the Guardian Scholars Office (Social Science Research Center, North Quad 245), as well as electronically from the Guardian Scholars' website at: <a href="www.bsu.edu/ssrc/guardianscholars">www.bsu.edu/ssrc/guardianscholars</a>. Applicants for a Guardian Scholars Scholarship should submit completed application materials in hard copy to the address below. Applications will be due March 15<sup>th</sup> for Fall enrollment (preference will be given to applications received on or before March 15<sup>th</sup>, and no applications will be accepted after April 15<sup>th</sup>):

Guardian Scholars Scholarship Review Committee c/o Guardian Scholars Program Coordinator North Quad 245 Ball State University Muncie, IN 47306

A complete Guardian Scholars Scholarship application packet must include the following:

- ✓ Completed "Guardian Scholars Program Application" form (pages 3 & 4)
- ✓ Current copy of high school and/or college transcripts (unofficial acceptable)
- ✓ "Personal Statement" describing personal goals and aspirations for college minimum of 500 words, maximum of 1,500 words, typewritten, single-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font (page 5)
- ✓ Written "Verification of Foster Care Status and Length of Time in Care" (to be obtained from the youth's Local Department of Child Services County Office) (page 6)
  \*\*For questions regarding this form, or for assistance with getting it returned to you, please contact the Guardian Scholars Program Coordinator at (765) 285-5538, or gscholars@bsu.edu.
- ✓ Two original, signed, letters of recommendation (e.g., from teacher, guidance counselor, principal, CASA, Independent Living provider, and/or DCS case manager) (Page 7; these 2 letters are <u>in</u> <u>addition to</u> the "Verification of Foster Care Status" letter required for this application)
- 4. Applications will be initially screened for minimum criteria related to eligibility and completeness by the Guardian Scholars Program Coordinator, and those applications meeting all necessary criteria will be submitted to the Guardian Scholars Review Committee for consideration
- 5. The Guardian Scholars Review Committee will meet annually to review and select awardees for the Fall semester only
- 6. Finalists may be asked to interview with the Guardian Scholars review committee.

#### Students who apply for the Guardian Scholars Scholarship will be expected to do the following:

- Complete Education and Training Voucher application (if eligible) by deadline prior to Fall Semester, update as needed, and follow ETV guidelines.
- Apply annually for other available financial aid for which applicant is eligible, e.g., federal Pell Grants.

## **Guardian Scholars Program Application Personal Information** Name Date Middle Last First Address \_\_\_\_\_ State Zip County of Wardship Phone \_\_\_\_\_Email\_\_\_\_ Age Date of Birth Gender $\Box M$ $\Box F$ (Check One) □Caucasian □African American/Black □Latin American/Hispanic Race □Multiracial □Other, □Single □Married □Divorced □Widowed (Check One) Marital Status Do you have dependents? □Yes □No (Check One) If so, how many Total Years in Foster Care Number of Foster Care Placements Were you involved with an Independent Living Services program? □Yes □No (Check One) If yes, which one? Current/Former DCS Staff name and contact phone number: Name\_\_\_\_\_Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_ Has your case been dismissed? □Yes □No (Check One) **Educational Information** School currently attending\_\_\_\_ Name City State Current Cumulative GPA Have you been admitted to Ball State? □Yes □No (Check One) Intended Major\_\_

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## **Guardian Scholars Program Personal Statement**

This is an opportunity for you to share with the Guardian Scholars Program more about who you are. Please describe to us your personal goals and aspirations for college. Your essay will be used in the application review process, so please be thoughtful and concise. Be sure to include a minimum of 500 words, maximum of 1,500 words, typewritten, single-spaced, 12-point, Times New Roman font.

## Guardian Scholars Program Verification of Foster Care Status

Applicant: Please fill out the top section of this form. Then take it to your local DCS office (your current or

former DCS worker, if possible), so that they can verify your foster care status. Ask them to complete the bottom half of this form and the required letter. Attach both the form and the letter to your application. Applicant's name \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant's address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_ (DCS Staff Member) I give my permission for To release the information requested for my Guardian Scholars Program Scholarship application. Applicant's signature \_ Dear DCS Staff Member, The youth named above is applying for a Guardian Scholars Program Scholarship from Ball State University. For eligibility screening, we require a letter on agency letterhead documenting the time he/she spent in foster care. Please complete this form and attach a signed letter on your agency's letterhead documenting the dates during which the youth was in foster care through any agency, and their current status. Also, if you are aware of any support services for which the youth will be eligible during postsecondary schooling, such as ETV, 21st Century Scholars, please inform us. Please return this form and your letter to the student for inclusion in the application packet.

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_

If you have any questions regarding this form or the requested letter, please contact the Guardian Scholars Program at 765-285-5538, or gscholars@bsu.edu. Thank you for your support of this student.

DCS Staff Member's name

Agency address \_\_\_\_\_

## Guardian Scholars Program Instructions for Letters of Recommendation

Applicant: Please share these instructions with those you ask to provide a letter of recommendation for you. If you are asking the same DCS staff that completed the "Verification of Foster Care Status" form, then their letter of recommendation can be included on the letterhead that they must provide to accompany that form that includes your foster care dates and current status.

For all others providing a letter of recommendation:

- If you represent a school, agency, or other professional organization, please use your letterhead
- Make sure the letter has an original signature
- Letters must be returned to the student applicant for inclusion in their completed application packet. Student applicants should mail their completed packet to the Guardian Scholars Program at:

Guardian Scholars Scholarship Review Committee c/o Guardian Scholars Program Coordinator North Quad 245 Ball State University Muncie, IN 47306

• For any questions, please feel free to contact the Guardian Scholars Program Coordinator at (765) 285-5538, or <u>gscholars@bsu.edu</u>.