

PLANO FIRE-RESCUE ASSOCIATES, INC POLICIES & PROCEDURES HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT

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Purpose and Scope

The Higher Education Grant Program was founded in 2025 to benefit high-school sons and daughters of current Plano Fire-Rescue (PFR) employees and retirees in-good-standing. Plano Fire-Rescue Associates (PFRA) provides funding for this program from private and corporate donations. The amount of each grant varies depending upon available funds each year, and is a one-time grant per eligible student.

Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for the PFRA Higher Education Grant, applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- Be the child or legal dependent (“Qualifying Child” per the IRS) of a current or retired Plano Fire-Rescue employee in good standing.
- Have graduated from high school or earned a GED in the current academic year.
- Have no felony convictions.
- Be enrolled in a full-time program at an accredited college, university, trade, or vocational school.
- Submit official proof of enrollment to the PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee before any grant funds are disbursed.
- Submit a complete application with all required documentation; incomplete submissions will not be considered.
- Applicants who have received the PFRA Academic Scholarship are **not eligible** for the Higher Education Grant.

Roles & Responsibilities

PFRA Board

- Reviews and approves any changes to the amount of grants annually.
- Provides final approval on total funding allocation.
- Reviews and approves the final Annual Report.
- Supports oversight and ensures alignment with PFRA’s mission and fiscal responsibility.

Higher Education Grant Committee

- Executes the operational tasks of the program including application tracking, document verification, communication with applicants, and coordination with PFRA leadership.
- Serves as the primary contact point for applicants and educational institutions.
- Develops and updates the grant application process and timeline.
- Communicates program details and deadlines to PFRA Board.
- Advises PFRA Board of any requested changes to the amount for awards to be presented for General Membership approval.
- Receives and reviews all applications for eligibility based on defined criteria.
- Verifies submitted documentation, including graduation and enrollment.
- Prepares award and denial letters.
- Provides recipient information to the Treasurer for fund disbursement.
- Drafts and submits the Annual Report for board approval.

Treasurer / Secretary

- **Treasurer:**
 - Recommends an annual grant amount based on funds earmarked/available.
 - Issues checks to the awardees’ higher education institutions after receiving approved recipient details.
 - Maintains financial records related to the grant disbursements.

- **Secretary:**
 - Mails out award letters and checks.
 - Assists with maintaining organized records for correspondence and tracking.

Process

Selection Process

- **Eligibility Review:** All submitted applications will undergo a thorough review to ensure they meet the established eligibility criteria outlined above. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be considered.
- **Verification:** The PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee will verify each applicant's documentation, including proof of graduation, proof of enrollment, and other eligibility requirements.
- **Award Decisions:** Once verification is complete, grant recipients will be selected and notified. Final award decisions are made in alignment with available funding and PFRA Board approvals.
- **Disbursement:** Approved grants will be issued as one-time payments and sent **directly to the recipient's accredited higher education institution** to support tuition or qualified academic expenses.

Documentation Requirements

- **Proof of Graduation:** A copy of the applicant's high school diploma, GED or official transcript confirming graduation during the current academic year.
- **Proof of Enrollment:** An official document verifying full-time enrollment in an accredited college, university, trade, or vocational school. Acceptable forms include a registration letter, class schedule, or enrollment verification from the institution.

Timeline

May

- Notify PFRA Board of any proposed updates to anticipated award quantity or grant amounts.
- Prepare summary for General Membership review and approval during the June PFRA Meeting¹.
- Set the **Application Open Date**¹: by June 15

June

- Finalize and approve the amount of grants at the June PFRA Meeting¹.
- PFRA Liaison Officer sends announcement email to PFR employees with full program details.
- Email includes application link, required documents, and submission deadline.

July

- Begin accepting applications and reviewing them on a rolling basis.
- Verify applicant eligibility and required documentation.
- Confirm higher education program contact details for each eligible recipient.
- **Initial Award Notification Date**¹: by July 31
- Prepare and send award/denial letters.
- PFRA Treasurer prepares and sends checks to Higher Education Programs.

¹ Due to this P&P being implemented in the Summer of 2025, for the purposes of the 2024/2025 Academic Year, the Application Open Date, PFRA Meeting Approval Date and Initial Award Notification Date shall be slid one month.

- PFRA Secretary mails out checks and official letters.

September

- **Application Deadline:** September 30
- Continue processing late-stage submissions (if any received before deadline).

October – December

- **Review Period:** October 1 – December 15
- Final application checks and eligibility confirmation.
- Prepare and send late-stage award/denial letters.
- PFRA Treasurer prepares and sends late-stage checks to Higher Education Programs.
- Announce final recipient list.

January – February

- Finalize and publish the Annual Grant Report.

Annual Report Process

1. Collect Data

- Confirm final number of applicants and recipients
- Document total funds distributed
- Track disbursement dates and receiving institutions
- Note any ineligible or incomplete applications

2. Review Outcomes

- Verify that payments were received and processed by institutions
- Collect any thank-you notes or feedback from recipients
- Evaluate trends in applications (e.g., increase/decrease from previous years)

3. Committee Reflection

- Hold a brief internal debrief session with the PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee
- Note what worked well (email timing, deadline clarity, etc.)
- Document any challenges or improvement areas (e.g., incomplete submissions, check delays)

4. Report Drafting

- Draft a 1–2 page annual report summarizing:
 - Program purpose
 - Number of applicants vs. recipients
 - Total amount awarded
 - Names of recipients
 - Notable updates or changes in process
 - Future considerations

5. Review & Approval

- Share draft with PFRA Board for comments or approval
- Incorporate edits as needed

6. Distribution & Archiving

- Send final version to PFRA Board
- Save the report in PFRA shared drive/archive
- Optionally share highlights in PFRA newsletter or internal bulletin

Record Retention Policy

To maintain accountability and comply with applicable public standards, the Plano Fire-Rescue Associates (PFRA) will follow a structured retention policy for all materials related to the Higher Education Grant Program.

Retention Schedule:

Table 1 Retention Schedule:

Document Type	Retention Period	Notes
Approved Applications & Supporting Docs	3 years	Includes proof of graduation/enrollment
Denied or Incomplete Applications	1 year	Destroyed after audit window closes
Award Letters and Disbursement Records	5 years	Includes check details and mailing confirmations
Final Annual Reports	Permanent	Stored digitally in PFRA records
Committee Meeting Minutes & Approvals	5 years	Includes PFRA Board decisions related to grants
Emails with Applicants	2 years	For verification and communication history
Financial Records related to grants	5 years	Aligns with standard nonprofit and IRS retention timelines

Storage & Security:

- Documents containing personal or financial information will be stored securely in PFRA's designated digital archive and/or locked filing cabinets.
- Digital records will be backed up annually and maintained by the PFRA Secretary and Treasurer.

Disposition:

- Upon expiration of the retention period, records will be securely destroyed (e.g., shredding physical copies, wiping digital files).
- PFRA reserves the right to extend retention if necessary for audit or legal reasons

Appeals and Dispute Resolution Policy

The PFRA Higher Education Grant Program strives to ensure a fair and transparent application and award process. If an applicant wishes to appeal a decision or raise a concern regarding the grant process, the following policy will apply:

Appeal Eligibility

- Applicants may submit an appeal **only** if they believe an error was made in the evaluation of eligibility or documentation.
- Appeals based solely on dissatisfaction with the outcome, without evidence of error or new supporting documentation, will not be considered.

Appeal Process

1. Submission:

Appeals must be submitted in writing within **10 business days** of the award notification date. Appeals should be sent to the PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee at HigherEdGrant@pfra.net and must include:

- Applicant's full name and contact information
- A detailed explanation of the reason for appeal
- Any supporting documents not previously submitted

2. **Review:**

The PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee will review the appeal in consultation with the PFRA Board. The review will focus on ensuring the eligibility criteria and documentation requirements were applied correctly.

3. **Decision:**

A written response to the appeal will be provided within **15 business days** of receipt. The decision of the Higher Education Grant Committee is **final**.

Dispute Resolution

- Any broader disputes concerning the administration of the grant process will be addressed through internal PFRA leadership review.
- PFRA leadership will ensure all disputes are handled respectfully, impartially, and in a timely manner.
- Final decisions rest with the PFRA Board.

Appendix

Definitions & Acronyms

This section defines key terms and acronyms used throughout the PFRA Higher Education Grant Policy & Procedure.

Table 2 Key Terms and Acronyms

Term / Acronym	Definition
PFRA	Plano Fire-Rescue Associates – A volunteer service organization supporting Plano Fire-Rescue personnel and their families.
PFR	Plano Fire-Rescue – The fire and emergency services department of the City of Plano.
Higher Education Grant	A one-time financial award provided by PFRA to eligible dependents of PFR employees to assist with post-secondary education expenses.
Higher Education Grant Committee	A designated group of PFRA volunteers responsible for managing the grant application process, eligibility review, selection, and communication with applicants.
General Membership	The collective body of PFRA members who are eligible to vote on organizational matters, including scholarship funding.
Eligibility Verification	The process of confirming that applicants meet the required criteria such as graduation status, enrollment, age, and background requirements.
Annual Report	A summary document detailing the outcomes of the Higher Education Grant program, including awarded grants, total funds distributed, and program evaluations.
Application Deadline	The final date by which applications must be submitted to be considered for the Higher Education Grant.
Disbursement	The process of sending grant funds directly to the recipient's accredited college, university, trade, or vocational school.
Retention Period	The legally or organizationally mandated amount of time that records must be kept before they are securely destroyed.

Application Form

PLANO FIRE-RESCUE ASSOCIATES

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

(To be administered in Google Forms)

Table 3 Application Form

Applicant's Name	
PFR Employee's Name and Position with PFR	
Home address (including Zip)	
Applicant's Telephone # (xxx-xxx-xxxx)	Cell: Home:
Applicant's E-mail address	
High School Graduate or GED for current academic year (attach copy)?	Yes / No
Proof of full-time enrollment in a Higher Education Program? (Attach copy)	Yes / No
Convicted of a felony?	Yes / No
Higher Education Program Name Higher Education Program Address Higher Education Program Student ID	

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLANO FIRE-RESCUE ASSOCIATES HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

Application Checklist

Before submitting, have you included all the following?

_____ **Proof of Enrollment** (i.e. acceptance letter, fee receipt, housing reservation, class schedule, etc.).

_____ **Proof of Graduation** Copy of Diploma or Transcript showing completion in current academic year.

You will be contacted via email when your application has been received. If you are missing anything, we will let you know. Any incomplete applications or late applications (received after the application deadline) will not be considered. **It is advised that Applicants keep an exact copy of attachments in case of loss.** If you have any questions, please contact:

[John/Jane Doe](#), Coordinator

PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee

Email: xxx@xxxxxxx.xxx

Phone: [xxx-xxx-xxxx](tel:xxx-xxx-xxxx)

Communications

(Blue items must be updated each year)

Email: PFR Personnel Invitation to Apply for Grant



Plano Fire-Rescue Associates, Inc.

3948 Legacy Drive, Suite 106-274
Plano, TX 75023-8600

TO: All Plano Fire-Rescue Employees

FROM: [John/Jane Doe](#), Higher Education Grant Coordinator
Plano Fire-Rescue Associates Higher Education Grant Committee

SUBJECT: [2025](#) PFRA Higher Education Grant Program

The Plano Fire-Rescue Associates (PFRA) are proud to support the higher education of the dependents of Plano Fire-Rescue (PFR) employees and retirees who are in the high school Graduating Class of [2025](#). A grant of [\\$XXX](#) will be provided to eligible students who have chosen to further their post-high school education by attending an accredited college, university, vocational or trade school.

The Higher Education Grant is a new program meant to provide academic support to all PFR employee's graduating seniors pursuing higher education. Winners of the PFRA Academic Scholarship will not be eligible to also receive a Higher Education Grant, which will be awarded as long as funding permits. Those who applied for the Academic Scholarship who were not selected, will automatically be considered for the Higher Education Grant.

An overview of the PFRA Higher Education Grant Program and an online application form can be obtained from our website at www.pfra.net – click on *Higher Education Grant* tab for instructions and a link to submit your application for the Grant. **All requests must be submitted by September 30th to be considered.**

If you have any questions, please call, text or email:

[John/Jane Doe](#)
[XXX-XXX-XXXX](#)
HigherEdGrant@pfra.net

e-copies: Captain [XXXXXXXXXX](#) (for distribution to PFR Personnel)
PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee

Email: Non-Recipient

Dear Higher Education Grant Applicant:

Thank you for applying for the PFRA 2025 Higher Education Grant. Unfortunately, the Higher Education Grant Committee was unable to verify one or more of the eligibility criteria for the Grant. As a reminder, to be eligible you must:

- 1) Be a High School Graduate or GED recipient of the Class of 2025 academic year
- 2) Be a dependent of a current or retired Plano Fire Department Employee
- 3) Enrolled to attend a full time accredited college, university, vocational or trade school
- 4) Not have been convicted of a felony

If you feel that this determination was made in error, please contact us at HigherEdGrant@pfra.net.

Sincerely,

John/Jane Doe

PFRA Higher Education Grant Coordinator

Email/Letter: Disbursement to Higher Education Program



Plano Fire-Rescue Associates, Inc.
3948 Legacy Drive, Suite 106-274
Plano, TX 75023-8600

Date

Higher Education Program Name
Student Financial Center
Address
City, ST Zip

To Whom It May Concern:

Plano Fire-Rescue Associates is a volunteer service organization that supports the Plano Fire-Rescue and its personnel. We are pleased to be able to award Higher Education Grants each year to the dependents of PFR personnel. This year, one of our Grant recipients is **Recipient's Name**.

Please deposit the enclosed check in the amount of **\$XXX** made payable to: "**Higher Education Name**" into **Recipient Name's** account to assist in payment of **his/her** educational expenses.

Recipient's Name
Student ID: Account #

If you have any questions, please send your inquiries to the PFRA Treasurer at the above address or by e-mail to: treasurer@pfra.net.

Sincerely,

President's Name, President
Plano Fire-Rescue Associates
president@pfra.net
www.pfra.net

Enclosures: PFRA Higher Education Grant Check for **\$XXX**

Cc: **Recipient's Name**
Address
City, ST Zip

Email: Grant Award

Table 4 logo of plano fire rescue associates



Plano Fire-Rescue Associates, Inc.

3948 Legacy Drive
Suite 106-274
Plano, TX 75023-8600

XXX XX, 2025

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for applying for the *PFRA 2025 Higher Education Grant*. We have received your application and are pleased to award you a Higher Education Grant of \$XXX to further your post high school education. This grant award will be paid directly to your listed Higher Education Program or Institution in the coming weeks. If we require any further information to properly send these funds, we will be in contact.

Congratulations on graduating high school or earning your GED, and we wish you the best as you further your education to embark on your future career.

If you have any questions please reply to this email or contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Best regards,

John/Jane Doe
2025 PFRA Higher Education Grant Coordinator

Bcc: PFRA Higher Education Grant Committee