The COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of the New River Valley

Policy on Acceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Scholarship Applicants

The Community Foundation of the New River Valley (CFNRV) awards scholarships to dozens of students annually. Applications are reviewed by volunteers who are anxious to learn about each applicant as an individual, to hear their personal story, and to understand their plans for the future. Those applications with personal narratives or essays that are overly generic, have similar word choice, or cut off at exactly the allowed character count – all signs of AI-generated writing – tend to score lower and raise concerns about whether reviewers are getting a true picture of each applicant. When reading applications, our volunteers are most impressed by human emotions and feelings, rather than recitation of facts.

While we recognize that AI tools such as, but not limited to, ChatGPT, Gemini, Jasper, and CoPilot can be powerful tools, they should not be used to replace your unique voice and original ideas. **As such, all CFNRV scholarship applicants must abide by this policy outlining acceptable and unacceptable use of AI. You will be required to confirm in the application that you have read and abided by this policy to be considered for scholarship funding.** If reviewers believe you have violated the policy and used AI tools in an inappropriate manner, you will not receive a scholarship.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) WRITING TOOLS

You may use AI tools to:

- **Understand the narrative or essay prompt:** The CFNRV requires a personal narrative from all applicants, and some individual scholarship funds require additional essays on specific topics. You can feed a prompt into an AI tool to understand what the specific narrative or essay prompt is asking.

- **Reflect on your experiences to brainstorm:** As you get started, you may use AI tools to help you reflect on your core values or think about important events or memories that have impacted you. These tools prompt self-reflection by asking questions to help you gain insight into your own experiences. They do not, and should not, tell you what to write.

- **Edit your writing for spelling, grammar, or length:** AI tools can be used after you have independently drafted your narrative or essay to improve grammar and spelling, and to ensure your essay fits into the required character count.

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Policy drawn from a blog post by Deanna Greene, Senior Scholarship Manager and Development Associate for the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington published February 1, 2025. https://www.cfsww.org/

UNACCEPTABLE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) WRITING TOOLS

You may not use AI tools to:

- **Identify specific responses to narrative prompts:** While AI can help you understand what a prompt is asking, it may not be used to generate the specific ideas, events, or experiences you will write about. For example, an essay may ask you to demonstrate how you have overcome adversity. You may use AI to define adversity if you are unfamiliar with the term, but you cannot ask it to generate a list of ways that people overcome adversity and then pick one you think will impress the reviewers. The focus of your writing should be authentic to you.

- **Outline or write your narrative or essay:** It is unethical to use an AI tool to write or outline your personal narrative or essays. All writing in your application should be in your unique voice and based on your unique experiences. There are even tools available to reviewers online to detect AI-generated writing, and our reviewers want to know about you, not AI's version of you.

- **Review your draft for content:** Spelling and grammar editing from AI is acceptable, but you may not use AI tools to revise your draft for content or alignment with the prompt. Instead, ask a teacher, parent, coach, or friend to read your essay and provide feedback. They can assess whether the essay communicates what makes you a great candidate for a scholarship.

A FEW MORE CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING AI:

While not specific to the CFNRV's policy for AI, we encourage you to consider the following:

- **Be careful about detailing your personal story:** Only you get to decide what you do and do not share with reviewers about yourself to protect your privacy and peace of mind. AI tools have their own terms and conditions, and AI companies may have the rights to any data you share using their tool. Think carefully before you share private information.

- **Written communication is still important:** Even as AI gets increasingly sophisticated, colleges and employers remain focused on recruiting candidates with strong written communication skills. Every piece of writing is a chance to sharpen your skills, so even if AI is available and acceptable, be wary about relying on it too much.

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