

# Liftoff

Elevating the  
Trajectory of Success



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND NOMINATION FORM

Liftoff is a youth development and scholarship program administered by the Academic Development Institute and made possible by and through the generosity of Robert J. Woods and Joan Jarrett Woods and the Foundation they created, known as The Woods Foundation.

The Liftoff program's goal is to boost the prospects of accepted students in Logan County, Illinois, so that they aspire to college<sup>1</sup> matriculation, prepare for college success, and persist to complete college. Students selected for participation in the Liftoff program are Logan County residents attending Logan County schools (or Olympia Middle School/High School) and have shown they possess the academic potential but face obstacles that impede their prospects for attaining a college education. After selection into the five-year Liftoff program and the successful completion of the program's requirements, The Woods Foundation grants each student a college scholarship.

Each year, The Woods Foundation, based on the recommendation of an independent selection committee, will normally approve the selection of four students completing 7th grade and offer them the opportunity to earn a college scholarship if they and their parents or guardians accept the terms and conditions of the Liftoff program.

<sup>1</sup> Students may earn scholarships to attend technical or trade schools, junior colleges, community colleges, or four-year institutions, hereafter all referred to as college.

## THE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Scholarships will be awarded for attendance at any accredited university, college, community college, or technical school leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree or its equivalent as determined by Liftoff program staff.

The participants will have an opportunity to earn a scholarship for the freshman year of college equal to the cost of tuition, room and board, books, and modest personal expenses to attend Illinois State University during the year of matriculation. This does not mean that the student must attend ISU. Rather, the cost structure of ISU will be used to determine the limit of the award. With the guidance of Liftoff program staff, participants will be required to apply for available financial assistance from other sources, such as the State of Illinois and federal programs for financial need.

The participant will receive an award for the second year of college equal to that of the first year, adjusted for the next year's cost, upon completion of at least 24 credit hours of freshman course work with grades of C or better for the 24 hours. A student with 24 credit hours of C work and additional hours of less than C would still be eligible.

During the second year of college, the student would be expected to complete at least 27 credit hours of college course work with grades of C or better for the 27 hours. Again, the student would receive the same amount, adjusted for the next year's cost, to attend the third year of college.

By the end of the third year of college, the student would be expected to be in good academic standing with the college and have accumulated at least 90 hours of completed college work. The student would then receive a scholarship on the same basis as the previous years, adjusted for the next year's cost.

No employee or board member of ADI or The Woods Foundation or their immediate families and other designated parties and their immediate families are eligible to receive scholarships.



## SELECTION CRITERIA

Students will be selected for participation in the Liftoff program and the opportunity to earn college scholarships based on their potential for college success, recommendations of their nominators, and the likelihood that the Liftoff program and scholarship will make a dramatic difference in their trajectory of success. Selection criteria include:

1. Must be a resident of Logan County, Illinois.
2. Must attend a school located in Logan County, Illinois, or Olympia Middle School/High School while also a resident of Logan County, Illinois.
3. The requirements of 1 and 2 above must be met until the student first attends college.
4. Potential for success in college, as may be demonstrated by achievement tests, school performance, and/or the testimony of the school-affiliated nominator. High achievement (school grades) at the time of nomination is not a criterion for selection, but potential for post-secondary academic success is a criterion.
5. The likelihood that the Liftoff program and opportunity to earn a scholarship will make a significant difference in the student's trajectory of success by overcoming such obstacles as:
  - Lack of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, or social awareness.
  - A family background that does not necessarily provide informed guidance or high expectation for the student to go to college.
  - Family resources that would make support for college attendance a financial impossibility or heavy burden.
6. Evidence of a potential for hard work and responsible behavior in preparation for college and during college.
7. No employee or board member of ADI or The Woods Foundation or their immediate families and other designated parties and their immediate families are eligible to receive scholarships.

## CONDITIONS FOR ACCEPTANCE AND TO REMAIN IN THE LIFTOFF PROGRAM

To remain in the Liftoff program, receive its services, and earn their scholarships, students must:

1. Participate in the Liftoff program, successfully completing at least 80% of the Liftoff program's activities and assignments made by Liftoff program staff. At any time in which the level of successful completion falls below 80%, the student will be reviewed by Liftoff program staff and a recommendation will be made to The Woods Foundation to either drop the student from the program or allow the student a probationary period to bring the level of participation up to 80%. Any award may remain unearned based upon additional information received by The Woods Foundation.
2. Maintain a grade average in junior high school and high school that is the equivalent of a C+ (2.5 on a 4-point scale). In any year in which the student's grades fall below this level, the student will be reviewed by the Liftoff program staff and a recommendation will be made to The Woods Foundation to either drop the student from the program or allow the student a probationary period to bring the grade average up to a C+.
3. Enroll in courses recommended by school guidance counselors to prepare for acceptance to and success in the college of the student's choice.
4. Graduate from a Logan County, Illinois, high school (or Olympia High School) by the summer after the projected graduation day for the student's class as of the student's entry into the Liftoff program.
5. Not be suspended or expelled from school.
6. Not be convicted for violation of a law.
7. Not exhibit behavior that the Liftoff program staff deems embarrassing to the Liftoff program and its sponsors.
8. Participate in at least one extra-curricular, church, or youth organization program each semester as approved by the Liftoff program staff.
9. Reside in Logan County, Illinois, until matriculation to college.
10. Attend a school located in Logan County, Illinois, or Olympia Middle School/High School while also a resident of Logan County, Illinois.
11. Complete, with Liftoff program staff, a progress report twice each year for presentation by the student at the individual parent sessions.
12. Authorize Liftoff program staff to receive grade and class attendance information directly from the school the recipient is attending.

## CONTINUED

Actions by recipients that may violate the conditions of acceptance of the award or other information that would jeopardize the grant award will be taken into account in maintaining the availability of the scholarship award, and the Liftoff program reserves the right to terminate its scholarship and program obligations when a recipient violates the conditions for acceptance of the award or behaves in a manner that Liftoff program staff determines to be contrary to its purposes or detrimental to the public image of the Liftoff program.

### LIFTOFF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

#### Junior Cohort (8th grade through 10th grade)

Students will normally be selected for the Junior Cohort at the end of their seventh-grade year. The Junior Cohort will be mentored by the Senior Cohort.

Junior Cohort activities will include:

- Monthly meeting of the Junior Cohort with Liftoff program staff and Senior Cohort.
- Monthly individual session with each Junior Cohort member and Liftoff program staff.
- Quarterly meeting of parents of Junior Cohort with Liftoff program staff and Senior Cohort.
- Twice-annual individual session with each Junior Cohort member, the student's parents, and Liftoff program staff.
- 15-hour summer Study Skills and Personal Development program each summer.
- Group visits to two career sites each year, meeting with people in jobs of general interest to the Cohort members.
- Group visit to one college each year, with a report submitted after each visit.

Meeting agendas may include school guidance counselors, college representatives, and College Cohort members. In individual sessions, Liftoff program staff will review the student's course selections, academic progress, and plans for college and career selection. Students maintain journals and complete assignments as determined by the Liftoff program staff. Students contribute to twice-annual, individual progress reports prepared with Liftoff program staff, presented by the student at parent sessions, and distributed to the student, the student's parents, nominators, and The Woods Foundation.

#### Senior Cohort (11th grade and 12th grade)

The Senior Cohort will serve as mentors for the Junior Cohort.

Senior Cohort activities will include:

- Monthly meeting of the Senior Cohort with the Junior Cohort and Liftoff program staff.
- Monthly individual session with each Senior Cohort member and Liftoff program staff.
- Quarterly meeting of parents of Senior Cohort with Liftoff program staff and Junior Cohort.
- Twice-annual individual session with each Senior Cohort member, the student's parents, and Liftoff program staff.
- 15-hour summer Study Skills and Personal Development program each summer.
- Individual visits to two career sites each year, meeting with people in jobs of interest to the Cohort member.
- Individual visits to three colleges/technical schools during junior year and early in senior year, with a report submitted after each visit.

Meeting agendas may include school guidance counselors, college representatives, and College Cohort members. In individual sessions, Liftoff program staff will review the student's course selections, academic progress, and plans for college and career selection. Students maintain journals and complete assignments as determined by the Liftoff program staff. Students contribute to twice-annual, individual progress reports prepared with Liftoff program staff, presented by the student at parent sessions, and distributed to the student, the student's parents, nominators, and The Woods Foundation.

## College Cohort

Students will begin receiving the scholarship awards upon entering college as full-time students, enrolled for at least 12 hours of college credit work each semester and meeting other requirements described above. Each College Cohort member will attend the 15-hour summer program and the Annual Dinner unless school-related activities preclude attendance.

## Annual Logan County Liffoff Dinner

Each year, a dinner with a speaker and opportunities for sharing experiences will be held for all participants in the Liffoff program, their immediate families, Liffoff program staff and families, and invited guests.

## Mentoring

Each Junior Cohort member will be matched with a Senior Cohort member who will serve as the Junior member's mentor. In addition to the monthly meeting that includes both Junior and Senior Cohort members, the Senior Cohort members will be coached by Liffoff program staff to, for example, provide friendly guidance for their mentees at the high school and send cards of encouragement. A Senior Cohort member may serve as mentor for more than one Junior Cohort member.

## PROCESS FOR SELECTION

**STEP 1:** Liffoff program staff will solicit confidential nominations for the awards from school personnel, church leaders, leaders of youth organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, and the YMCA, as well as agencies such as Catholic Social Services and Pastoral Counseling. The goal is for a list of nominating agencies that is comprehensive and representative of every segment of the county population.

- Nominating agencies will agree not to inform the students or anyone else of the nominations.
- Each nomination must be made by two nominators, at least one of whom must be a teacher, administrator, or other professional staff member at the school the student currently attends in order to vouch for the student's potential for post-secondary academic success.

**STEP 2:** The combined nomination (includes both nominators' contributions) will include general school academic information; behavior and character traits needed for ultimate success in college; family background; the obstacles that would hinder the student from preparing for, attending, and succeeding in college; and reasons why the Liffoff program would especially benefit this student's preparation for college and success in college.

**STEP 3:** An independent selection committee consisting of three people selected by ADI (not including staff for Liffoff, employees of ADI or their families, board members of ADI, board members of The Woods Foundation or their immediate families) will screen the nominations and normally select four students each year who best fit the selection criteria.

**STEP 4:** The Liffoff program staff will prepare a descriptive report on these students, which will be presented to The Woods Foundation Board. The Woods Foundation Board will accept or reject each of these students based on their determination of the candidate's adequate fit with the selection criteria.

**STEP 5:** At this point, the Liffoff program staff and the nominators will meet with each student and his/her parents or guardians, preferably in the student's home, to explain the conditions of the Liffoff program. Should the student and the student's parents accept the conditions of the Liffoff program, the student will be enrolled in the Liffoff program.

*No grant will be made to any disqualified person, as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.*

- **Personal Wellness**
  - Stress Management (Physical and Mental)
  - Nutrition
  - Self-checking
  - Coping Skills
  - Importance of Enjoyable Exercise
  - Creating a Health Plan
  
- **People Plus**
  - Professional vs. Casual Interactions
  - Social Cues
  - Social Media
  - Networking and Extracurriculars
  - Public Speaking
  - Written Communication vs. Verbal
  - Cultural Awareness
  
- **Actistar (Study Skills)**
  - Study Environment
  - Overcoming Test Anxiety
  - Close Reading
  - Writing and Peer Review
  
- **Creative Power**
  - Personal Expression
  - Problem Solving
  - Improvising
  
- **Pathways**
  - Accountability and Responsibility
  - Career Readiness
  - Ethics, Values, and Morals
  - Persistence and Grit
  - Acknowledging Your Accomplishments
  - Civic Responsibility

# NOMINATION FORM

for Enrollment in the Liftoff Youth Development Program

**Deadline for receipt of applications is March 11, 2023, at the end of the business day. Application must be received by fax, email, or postal or delivery service at:**

Liftoff  
Academic Development Institute  
121 N. Kickapoo  
Lincoln, IL 62656  
Fax: 217-732-7906

Questions? Call Andrew Brinkman or Kathy Schmidt  
217-732-6462  
abrinkman@adi.org  
kschmidt@adi.org

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Agency 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominating Agency 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address of Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINATORS

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Nominee parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Age of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

School Attended by Nominee in 2022-23: \_\_\_\_\_

School Nominee will Attend in 2023-24: \_\_\_\_\_

In nominating this student for enrollment in the Liftoff youth development program and eligibility for a college scholarship, we the Nominators, on behalf of the Nominating Agency(s), understand the criteria for selection and:

- Agree not to inform the nominee or anyone else of the nomination.
- Agree not to inform the nominee or anyone else of the selection. Notification of selection will be made by Liftoff program staff and the nominators at a time and in a manner determined by Liftoff program staff.
- Agree not to notify unsuccessful candidates or anyone else of their nominations at any time.
- Certify that the information provided on this application is accurate to the best of the Nominator's knowledge.

Nominating Agency 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominator 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

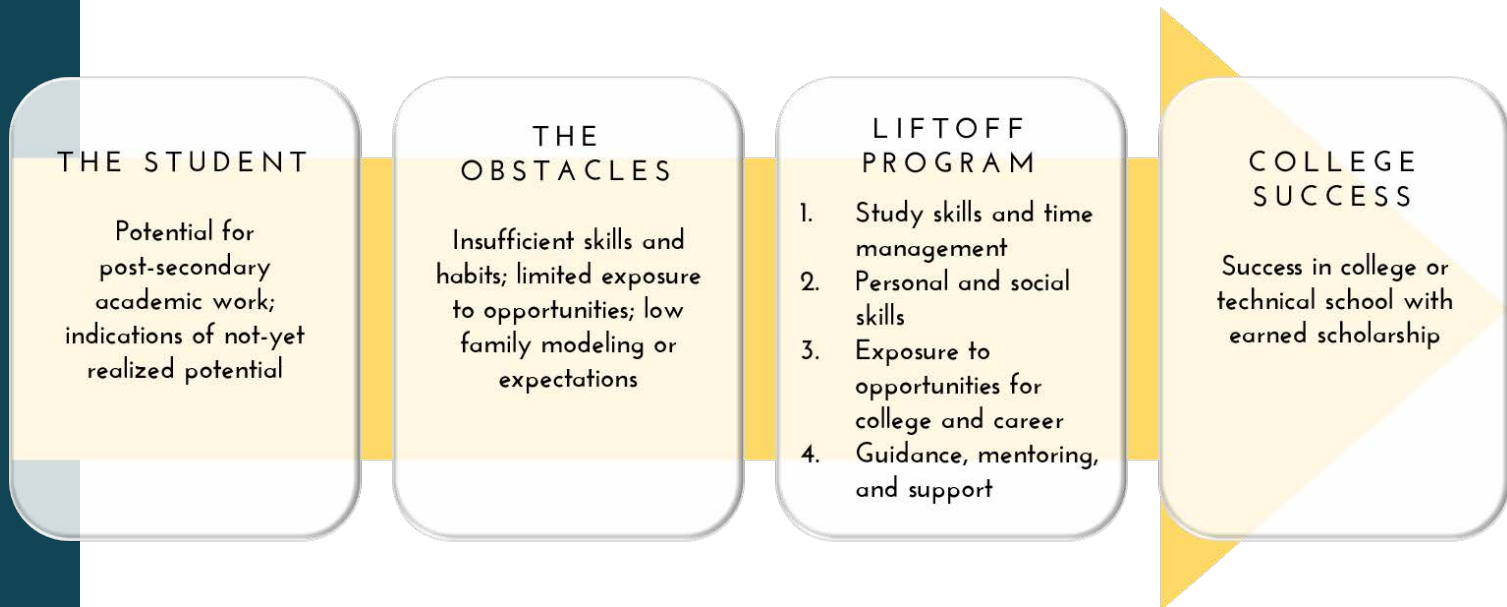
Nominating Agency 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominator 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominator 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide evidence that this student meets the Liftoff selection criteria and make the case for this student's selection to participate in the youth development program with the opportunity to earn a scholarship. In particular, explain how the Liftoff opportunity will help the student overcome obstacles that might otherwise limit his or her prospects for college success. Financial need alone is not sufficient for consideration of a nominated student's acceptance for the program.  
(Extra pages may be attached if necessary.)



Student Characteristics (What teachers see; Now vs. Future with Liftoff)	
1. Student Attendance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Student missed more than 6 days in the last semester AND has a history of missing multiple days during the school year</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Student missed more than 6 days in the last semester</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Student missed 4 to 6 days in the last semester</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Student missed 0 to 3 days in the last semester</li> </ul>	
2. Student has been truant. If yes, please explain.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> Yes</li> <li><input type="radio"/> No</li> </ul> <p>Explain:</p>	
<i>Schoolwork</i>	
3. Student effort on assignments/tests	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> No effort</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Minimal effort</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Some effort</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Decent effort</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Great effort</li> </ul>	
4. Student engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> No interest/participation</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Minimal interest/participation</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Some interest/participation</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Participates most of the time</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Always actively engaged in class</li> </ul>	

5. Student Grades	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Low grades in all subjects (Ds or Fs)</li> <li>○ Mix of low and average grades (Cs, Ds, or Fs)</li> <li>○ Average grades in all subjects (Cs)</li> <li>○ Mix of average and high grades (Cs, Bs, As)</li> <li>○ All high grades (Bs and As)</li> </ul>	
<i>Classroom Behavior</i>	
6. Student behavior at school	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Highly disruptive</li> <li>○ Disruptive</li> <li>○ Occasionally disruptive</li> <li>○ Mostly good behavior</li> <li>○ Always good behavior</li> </ul>	
7. Student demonstrates responsibility in and out of the classroom	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Always</li> <li>○ Often</li> <li>○ Sometimes</li> <li>○ Never</li> </ul>	
8. Student is respectful with teachers/adults	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Always</li> <li>○ Often</li> <li>○ Sometimes</li> <li>○ Never</li> </ul>	

	<i>Student Attributes</i>	
	9. Student is self-confident	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Always</li><li>○ Often</li><li>○ Sometimes</li><li>○ Never</li></ul>	
	10. Student is socially skilled and at ease	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Always</li><li>○ Often</li><li>○ Sometimes</li><li>○ Never</li></ul>	
	11. Student is respectful with peers	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Always</li><li>○ Often</li><li>○ Sometimes</li><li>○ Never</li></ul>	

12. Please explain how the student's current characteristics are either a true representation of the student's potential or does not represent the student's true potential and how the Liftoff program will benefit the student to reach his or her full potential.

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Family Characteristics and Home Environment

13. Family Composition

- Both parents
- Parent and stepparent
- Mother only
- Father only
- Grandparents
- Other (please explain) -----

14. Siblings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Older siblings living at home</li> <li>○ Younger siblings living at home</li> <li>○ Older siblings not living at home</li> <li>○ Younger siblings not living at home</li> <li>○ Other (please explain) -----</li> </ul>	
15. Living arrangements		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stable home environment (place to study, appropriate number of people for size of house, permanency, etc.)</li> <li>○ Fairly stable home environment (recent major change in last couple years, moved, parent moved out, etc.)</li> <li>○ Unstable home environment (incarcerated parent returning frequently, unhealthy environment, too many people in home, etc.)</li> <li>○ Moves frequently; possibility of leaving the county</li> </ul>	
16. Highest level of educational achievement of parents/guardians		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Master's Degree or higher</li> <li>○ Bachelor's, Associate's, Trade School Degree</li> <li>○ Some college but didn't finish</li> <li>○ High school diploma or GED</li> <li>○ Didn't finish high school</li> </ul>	
17. Level of family support for current education		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High level of support and involvement (clear that parents/guardians make school a priority for their child)</li> <li>○ Some support and involvement</li> <li>○ No support or family engagement with school</li> </ul>	
18. Level of family support for advanced education (college, junior college, trade school)		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High expectation for advanced education</li> <li>○ Some expectation for advanced education (not sure if feasible)</li> <li>○ No expectation for advanced education</li> </ul>	

<p>19. Other than financial need, explain how the student's family situation/home environment creates a barrier for the student to reach their full potential and how the Liftoff program would mitigate those barriers.</p>	
<p>Student Interests/Activities/Future Aspirations</p>	
<p>20. What are the student's interests and activities, including personal interests, school co-curricular activities, and community and family activities? Has the student expressed any aspirations for their future? Explain how the student's interests, activities, and aspirations influence your understanding of the student's potential, and how Liftoff would guide the student toward those aspirations.</p>	

Final Thoughts

21. This is your last chance to make the best case for why this student should be considered for enrollment in the Liftoff Youth Development Program with an opportunity to earn a scholarship. What aspects of the Liftoff Program might be particularly beneficial to this student and why? (Study skills and time management; Personal and social skills; Exposure to opportunities for college and career; Guidance and support). Financial need alone is not sufficient for consideration of a nominated student's acceptance for the program.

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