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| Liftoff | | |
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| PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND NOMINATION FORM | | |

# OVERVIEW

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[[1]](#footnote-1) 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 pro-gram’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.

# The Scholarship Award

Scholarships will be awarded for attendance at any accredited university, college, community college, or technical school leading to an associate or bachelor’s degree or its equivalent as determined by Liftoff program staff.[[2]](#footnote-2)

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, to attend Illinois State Universi-ty during the year of matriculation. This does NOT mean that the student must attend ISU, only that the cost structure of ISU will be used to determine the limit of the award. The scholarship will also cover the cost of a laptop (up to $1,000), required books and course materials, and a monthly stipend for additional living expenses. 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 (including motivation, drive, aspirations, and persistence), 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. Family resources that would make support for college attendance a financial impossibility. Financial need is required, however need alone is NOT sufficient for consideration. Student must also face other barriers as listed below (#6).
6. 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:
   1. Lack of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, or social awareness.
   2. A family background that does not necessarily provide informed guidance or high expectation for the student to go to college.
7. Evidence of a potential for hard work and responsible behavior in preparation for college and during college.
8. 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 re-viewed 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 pro-gram.
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 inappropriate and detrimental to the reputation of 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.

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 Requirements

Junior Cohort (8th grade through 10th grade)

Students will be selected for the Junior Cohort at the end of their seventh-grade year.

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.
* 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)

Senior Cohort activities will include:

* The Senior Cohort will serve as mentors for the Junior Cohort.
* 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.
* 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.
* Students will attend the Senior Half Hour in addition to the monthly group meeting (held immediately after group meeting).

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 be responsible for a monthly check-in call with Liftoff Staff.

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 Liftoff 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

1. Liftoff 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.
   1. Nominating agencies will agree not to inform the students or anyone else of the nominations.
   2. 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.
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 Liftoff program would especially benefit this student’s preparation for college and success in college.
3. An independent selection committee consisting of three people selected by ADI (not including staff for Liftoff, 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.
4. The Liftoff program staff will present to The Woods Foundation Board the results of the nominators scoring on each nomination. 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.
5. At this point, the Liftoff 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 Liftoff program. Should the student and the student’s parents accept the conditions of the Liftoff program, the student will be enrolled in the Liftoff program.

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

# Liftoff Program and Curriculum at a Glance

The Liftoff program’s goal is to boost the prospects of accepted students in Logan County, Illinois, so that they aspire to college matriculation, prepare for college success, and persist to complete college. (College: technical/trade programs, junior college, or four-year colleges/universities.)

Group meetings cover the following curriculum topics:

Personal Wellness: Understand and prioritize physical and mental well-being

* Stress Management (Physical and Mental)
* Nutrition
* Self-checking
* Coping Skills
* Importance of Enjoyable Exercise
* Creating a Health Plan

People Plus: Build positive relationships with teachers, family members, friends, and others

* Professional vs. Casual Interactions
* Social Cues
* Social Media
* Networking and Extracurriculars
* Public Speaking
* Written Communication vs. Verbal
* Cultural Awareness
* Ethics, Values, and Morals

Actistar (Study Skills): Take responsibility for own learning by knowing effective student skills and what works best for academic success

* Study Environment
* Overcoming Test Anxiety
* Close Reading
* Writing and Peer Review
* Scheduling

Creative Power: Practice personal expression and problem-solving

* Personal Expression
* Problem Solving
* Improvising
* Acknowledging Your Accomplishments

Pathways: Equip students to manage time, money, and personal growth

* Accountability and Responsibility
* Career Readiness
* Persistence and Grit for Attaining Goals
* Civic Responsibility
* Goal setting
* Financial literacy

*Group meeting agendas may also include school guidance counselors, college/trade school representatives, career representatives, or 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 will visit various types and sizes of colleges over the course of the five-year program to experience all the types and variations available to find the best fit.*
* *Students will visit various career sites to expose students to multiple career opportunities.*

NOMINATION FORM

***Deadline for receipt of applications is March 14, 2025, at the end of the business day. Application must be received by email, or postal or delivery service.***

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| **Liftoff**  **Academic Development Institute**  121 N. Kickapoo  Lincoln, IL 62656 | **Questions?**  Call Andrew Brinkman or Kathy Schmidt  217-732-6462  abrinkman@adi.org  kschmidt@adi.org |

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| **Nominating Agency 1:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Address:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **City:** | Add text | | | **State:** | text | **Zip:** | Add text. |
| **Telephone:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | **Fax:** | Add text. | |
| **Name of Nominator 1:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Position of Nominator:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Telephone of Nominator:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Email Address of Nominator:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Home Telephone:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |

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| **Nominating Agency 2:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Address:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **City:** | Add text | | | **State:** | text | **Zip:** | Add text. |
| **Telephone:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | **Fax:** | Add text. | |
| **Name of Nominator 2:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Position of Nominator:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Telephone of Nominator:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Email Address of Nominator:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Home Telephone:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |

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| **Name of Nominee:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Name(s) of Nominee Parent(s):** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **Address:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |
| **City:** | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | **State:** | text | **Zip:** | text |
| **Telephone:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | | |
| **Age of Nominee:** | | text | | **Birth Date of Nominee:** | | enter text | |
| **School Currently Attended by Nominee:** | | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | | |

**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.**

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| **Nominating Agency 1:** | Click or tap here to enter text. | | **Name of Nominator 1:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. |
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| **Signature of Nominator 1:** | |  | | **Date:** | Click to enter date. |

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| **Nominating Agency 2:** | Click or tap here to enter text. | | **Name of Nominator 2:** | | Click or tap here to enter text. |
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| **Signature of Nominator 2:** | |  | | **Date:** | Click to enter date. |

# Selection Criteria

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| **Student Characteristics** | | | | |
|  | 1. Student Attendance | | | |
|  | a. Student has missed school and been reported as truant.  b. Student missed more than 6 days in the last semester AND has a history of missing multiple days during the school year  c. Student missed more than 6 days in the last semester  d. Student missed 4 to 6 days in the last semester  e. Student missed 0 to 3 days in the last semester | | |  |
|  | ***Schoolwork*** | | | |
|  | 2. Student effort on assignments/tests | | | |
| a. No effort  b. Minimal effort  c. Some effort  d. Decent effort  e. Great effort | | |  |
|  | 3. Student engagement | | | |
| a. No interest/participation  b. Minimal interest/participation  c. Some interest/participation  d. Participates most of the time  e. Always actively engaged in class | | |  |
|  | 4. Student Grades | | | |
| a. Low grades in all subjects (Ds or Fs)  b. Mix of low and average grades (Cs, Ds, or Fs)  c. Average grades in all subjects (Cs)  d. Mix of average and high grades (Cs, Bs, As)  e. All high grades (Bs and As) | | |  |
|  | ***Classroom Behavior*** | | | |
|  | 5. Student behavior at school | | | |
| a. Highly disruptive  b. Disruptive  c. Occasionally disruptive  d. Mostly good behavior  e. Always good behavior | | |  |
|  | 6. Student demonstrates responsibility in and out of the classroom | | | |
| a. Always  b. Often  c. Sometimes  d. Never | | |  |
|  | 7. Student is respectful with teachers/adults | | | |
| a. Always  b. Often  c. Sometimes  d. Never | | |  |
|  | ***Student Attributes*** | | | |
|  | 8. Student is self-confident | | | |
| a. Always  b. Often  c. Sometimes  d. Never | | |  |
|  | 9. Student is socially skilled and at ease | | | |
| a. Always  b. Often  c. Sometimes  d. Never | | |  |
|  | 10. Student is respectful with peers | | | |
| a. Always  b. Often  c. Sometimes  d. Never | | |  |

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|  | 11. 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. |  |
|  | Click or tap here to enter text. |  |
| **Family Characteristics and Home Environment** | | |
|  | 12. Family Composition | |
|  | * Both parents * Parent and stepparent * Mother only * Father only * Grandparents * Other (please explain) \_Click or tap here to enter text. |  |
|  | 13. Siblings | |
| * Older siblings living at home * Younger siblings living at home * Older siblings not living at home * Younger siblings not living at home * Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | 14. Living arrangements | |
| a. Stable home environment (place to study, appropriate number of people for size of house, permanency, etc.)  b. Fairly stable home environment (recent major change in last couple years, moved, parent moved out, etc.)  c. Unstable home environment (incarcerated parent returning frequently, unhealthy environment, too many people in home, etc.)  d. Moves frequently; possibility of leaving the county |  |
|  | 15. Highest level of educational achievement of parents/guardians | |
| a. Master’s degree or higher  b. Bachelor, Associate, Trade School Degree, or Certificate  c. Some college but did not finish  d. High school diploma or GED  e. Did not finish high school |  |
|  | 16. Level of family support for current education | |
| a. High level of support and involvement (clear that parents/guardians make school a priority for their child)  b. Some support and involvement  c. No support or family engagement with school |  |
|  | 17. Level of family support for advanced education (college, junior college, trade school) | |
| a. High expectation for advanced education  b. Some expectation for advanced education (not sure if feasible)  c. No expectation for advanced education |  |

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|  | 18. Describe what you understand the financial situation to be for the student and the student’s family that impacts daily family life in general and would make attending post-secondary education an impossibility. | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | |
|  | 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. | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |  |
| **Student Interests/Activities/Future Aspirations** | | |
|  | 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. | |
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| **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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1. Students may earn scholarships to attend technical or trade schools, junior colleges, community colleges, or four-year institutions, hereafter all referred to as college. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Students are highly encouraged to attend schools within the state of Illinois unless the degree or certificate sought is not available except in an out of state school. If a student chooses an out of state school, a special appeal will need to be made by the student to the Woods Foundation Board for approval. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)