Women’s Independence Scholarship Program

What Does A Sponsor Do?
Five Basic Tasks
are requested of sponsors

1. Help select suitable candidates and encourage them to apply.

2. If they apply you will complete a set of forms as part of the client’s initial application.

3. Commit to providing ongoing support to the client while she is an active WISP recipient.

4. Agree to accept funds on behalf of the recipient.
   *If charitable assistance awards - aka funds for help with living expenses - are awarded.

5. Help evaluate WISP if needed.

(We’ll break each task down as we go along)
Task 1: Help Select Suitable Candidates

Before recommending that a client start the application, assess whether she meets our basic eligibility criteria by considering the following:

1. Has she been separated from her partner for at least one year?
   • Does she understand the power and control dynamic?
   • Is she insightful about these patterns and have you observed her using this knowledge to make different choices?
   • Has she found some stability and is she ready for this new challenge?

2. Has she met with me or someone at the agency for at least 6 consecutive months?
   • Do we have a good working relationship and will she come to me if she needs help?
   • Am I confident in her academic abilities?
   • Am I comfortable recommending her?

These two criteria are our attempt at determining whether an applicant has made the transition from victim to survivor mindset. Each individual is different and though we can’t always make exceptions, we do always want the opportunity to try. If your client does not meet the time requirements but she does have this quality check in with your state coordinator about whether she can apply.
3. Has she chosen an accredited school or program?
   • Will credits transfer to another college or university if need be?
   • Does the school offer financial aid?
   • Will this education qualify her for employment?

   Programs that aren’t accredited don’t meet US Department of Education standards and will not be funded.

4. Is she a US citizen or permanent resident?
   • Or does she have some other immigration status that makes her eligible for financial aid and/or work?

   Our goal is that education leads to employment and financial self-sufficiency. If immigration status prevents an individual from working after graduation, we are not fulfilling our goal.

5. Does she demonstrate financial need?
   • Are her expenses greater than her income?
If you have questions, ask!
Your state coordinators are:

**Amy**
States A-N
910-549-1426
amy@wispinc.org

**Tammy**
States O-W
910-397-7742 x 103
tammy@wispinc.org
Task 2: Completing Sponsor Forms
When a client fills out an application there’s an action step for you too.

After completing a release of information the applicant will email you a request to complete two forms:
1. Sponsor Questionnaire
2. Sponsor Agreement

The Questionnaire asks you to assess the following areas:
- The applicant’s understanding of IPV
- Her strengths
- Growth areas
- Educational goals
- Potential barriers and plan to address them

View and download the forms here:
Sponsor Questionnaire and Agreement

In the Sponsor Agreement form, you will:
- Review and agree to sponsor obligations (check appropriate boxes)
- Include your contact information (agency mailing address, Tax ID number, phone and email of primary contact)
- Sign the form
A note about the email...

It’s somewhat confusing to look at, and we can’t change it.
This is what you will see:

[Client name] has invited you to provide additional information to support their WISP scholarship application.

1. Download the appropriate form to your computer. DO NOT complete the form in your web browser. This will cause you to save a blank form.
2. Complete and Save this form.
2. Click the application link at the bottom of this email to upload your completed form.

Thank you for assisting this student. For questions, contact WISP at 910-397-7742.

ADVOCATES FOR NEW (FIRST-TIME) APPLICANTS, please click here: [link]

ADVOCATES FOR RENEWAL/RETURNING APPLICANTS OR GRADUATES, please click here: [link]

Use this link to upload your completed recommendation: [link]

This is the one for new applicants. Click the icon in the top right corner of your browser window to save before completing.

Once complete, use this link at the very bottom of the email to upload your form to the application.
Task 3: Commit to providing ongoing support to the recipient

Goal is to assess needs and proactively respond before they become problems.

- Minimum of one in-person meeting monthly.
  - Visual contact provides more data on how things are going.
  - Keep WISP informed if complications appear to be affecting school performance.

- Additional phone or email contact as needed.
  - Helps with busy schedules.

- Group meetings are a good option.
  - Also helps with busy schedules.

- More meetings if client need or agency policy dictates.

- We intend for this obligation to fit into the case-management type services you’re already providing. (If it doesn’t please tell us!)

- It is ultimately the applicant’s responsibility to set up and keep these commitments.
Task 4: Be able to accept funds on behalf of the recipient

Just like any grant, except a smaller dollar amount and directed to one individual

✓ Most of our awards are for education-related living expenses.
  • Usually financial aid (Pell grant, state grants, Stafford loans) cover tuition, fees and books.
  • Our scholarship fills in the gaps and can cover expenses that could negatively affect a student’s ability to attend classes.

✓ Paying these scholarships to sponsors achieves several goals:
  • Dollars are not counted as income by the IRS. No tax documentation is required of recipient or sponsor.
  • Awards don’t reduce financial aid granted through school.
  • Awards can possibly be used as match money for other grants.
  • Spending of awards is tracked by sponsor to be sure expenditures qualify as “education related”.
What can award money be spent on?

1. Expenses directly related to school, such as books or tuition.
   - *If tuition is not fully covered by financial aid, WISP can make up the difference.*
   - *On occasion WISP may send funds intended for tuition to the sponsor rather than directly to school. This decision is made individually in conjunction with sponsor and recipient.*

2. Expenses directly related to ability to attend classes.
   - *Such as transportation (gas, insurance, car payments, car repairs) or childcare expenses (daycare, after school enrichment programs, summer camp).*

3. Expenses related to not becoming homeless and survival expenses.
   - *Rent, utilities, food, household supplies, feminine products.*
When considering what to spend a WISP award on it may be helpful to filter it through these two questions:
1. Is it an education-related expense?
2. Is it a necessity, or is it something nice to have?

Questions on spending for certain items, like school uniforms for children, washer/dryer purchase, mattress or desk purchase often come up. These are good items to talk about with the coordinator for your state before approving the spending.

When a check is mailed to a sponsor, we include a more complete expenditure list. You may also download a copy here: wispinc.org/forms.
Is there anything WISP can’t be used for?

1. **Legal fees**
   - Payments to attorney for divorce or child custody.
   - Financial obligations related to probation or parole.

2. **Fines**
   - Library fines, parking tickets, late fees.

3. **Entertainment, gifts, discretionary spending**
   - Holiday gifts, big venue events, etc.
   - Tithes
At the end of the semester we ask sponsors to report on two things:

1. How the award was spent according to these categories:
   - Rent/utilities (water, sewer trash, internet, cable, phone)
   - Transportation (gas, car insurance, maintenance, repair, public transportation)
   - Childcare expenses
   - Household expenses
   - Medical expenses
   - School

2. A written paragraph or two summarizing your meetings during the semester:
   - An objective look at how things went – what was great, what wasn’t
Task 5: Help evaluate WISP
On occasion we solicit feedback on areas of our program

We look for sponsor input on your experience with WISP so that we can adjust things to work as easily as possible for you. This means...

• You might get an email survey
• Or we might ask you direct questions
• Honesty is appreciated
• Constructive criticism is welcomed
Sponsors are a crucial part of what we do!

Without you, WISP would not exist.

Thank you for all of your support!