

North South Foundation Scholarship Program in India Roles and Responsibilities of the NSF India Chapter Coordinator

North South Foundation of USA provides college scholarships to brilliant students among the poorest of the poor in India. The scholarships are given for studies in science and technology fields: medicine, engineering, polytechnic (3-year diploma), agriculture, dental, and science. The list of supported studies is updated and is available on-line at:

<https://www.northsouth.org/public/docs/indiascholarships/docs/scholarshipflier.pdf>

Sometimes donors specify a particular college where the scholarships are to be given. Some donors give their designated scholarships in the memory of a loved one in the family. The Chapter Coordinator is informed if there are such scholarships in his/her chapter.

NSF India Chapter Coordinator (ICC) plays a critical role to make sure that scholarship are awarded to the most deserving students. The ICC is key liaison between NSF India central office in Hyderabad and the students seeking the scholarships. The ICC generally works with a Liaison officer in US, but not always required. Here are some of the key roles and responsibilities:

1. Getting Ready for the Job

- i. First and foremost, the ICC should have passion to help academically brilliant and poor students
- ii. Some familiarity with internet and basic web skills to help prospective students are desirable, but they can be learned on the job.
- iii. Please register yourself as a NSF India volunteer at:
<https://www.northsouth.org/app6/Maintest.aspx>
- iv. If you have not already formed a chapter, please send your interest to begin a chapter to indiascholarships@northsouth.org.
- v. Please review existing chapter locations. The list is available at: (<https://www.northsouth.org/public/IndiaScholarships/IndiaChapterLocation>). Ideally, begin a chapter where there is no existing chapter.
- vi. Be familiar with overall NSF India scholarship application process. It is available at: <https://www.northsouth.org/public/IndiaScholarships/GeneralInfo>

2. Spread the word out to get applications

The objective is to provide equal opportunity to all eligible students regardless of religion, caste, creed, gender or region. To assure this, it is essential to publicize the North South Foundation scholarship program in all regions of a chapter, which typically tends to cover a state. To seek potential applicants, North South Foundation has traditionally used newspapers as the main media. Radio and TV announcements are also used whenever feasible. To make the best use of the media, the NSF Chapter will identify the most popular daily newspapers, both in English and local language, as well as radio and TV channels in the state. Social media (e.g. FaceBook, What'sApp) should also be utilized.

As a first step, the Coordinator is encouraged to arrange a press meet and announce the NSF Scholarship program. The journalists should be provided with readymade material to facilitate publication in the media. The ideal time for this would be just before the announcement of the entrance exam results. In the absence of the entrance exams, the timing could be just before

Intermediate or Plus 2 results are announced. As an alternative or as a supplement to the press meet would be to simply mail a press release of an announcement to the major daily newspapers, radio and TV channels.

All announcements are to be published free of charge by the media as a community service. If desired, the USA office will be happy to do the necessary mailing on behalf of the NSF chapter, if the chapter can supply the names and addresses. In this connection, it is important for the Chapter Coordinator to keep track of the entrance examination schedules (both state and central) for medicine, engineering, and polytechnic (3-year diploma) disciplines. The scholarship program announcements are to be sent out just before the exam results are announced. The students are generally given few months to send applications.

As a second step, the Coordinator can arrange to have an announcement displayed prominently at Counseling Centers for admissions, with the consent of the Conveners. As a third step, the Coordinator may approach the Principals of reputed Colleges for displaying NSF scholarship program in their Notice Board. In subsequent years, the Chapter Coordinator can seek the assistance of senior NSF scholars studying in the same colleges for distribution of application forms and for dissemination of any additional information.

Distribute NSF Scholarship flyer, link is below, to potential students, colleges, and other organizations who may spread the word:

<https://www.northsouth.org/public/docs/indiascholarships/docs/scholarshipflyer.pdf>

3. Encourage Students to Complete Online Applications

The India Chapter Coordinator (ICC) encourages prospective students to apply online (<https://www.northsouth.org/app6/Maintest.aspx>). The ICC monitors applications and helps students' complete applications prior to the deadline.

4. Formation of the Selection Committee

The selection of the members for the selection committee for recommending candidates for award is one of the most critical elements for the overall success of the NSF scholarship program. The selection committee should consist of three to five competent and well-respected individuals in academia, media and social service. The inclusion of a journalist into the Selection Committee is important, as this would facilitate the involvement of the press for publicity. The credentials of the members of the selection committee should be impeccable with integrity, honesty, character, and reputation. The most often asked question from donors is about the selection process. So it is important to earn their trust.

5. Screening Applications

The selection committee screens the applicants on the basis of academic qualifications first and financial need second. Based on the merit and means norms, the committee makes a short list of the most eligible candidates for a subsequent interview. For example, if there are 10 fresh scholarships for disbursement, the chapter may invite 15 or 20 eligible candidates for a personal interview. NSF scholarship is to be considered as the last resort to the candidate. In other words, the candidates should avail all other opportunities first (government, community, etc.) before availing aid from the North South Foundation. The selection is to be made regardless of gender, caste, creed, religion or geography. The financial need of the candidate is to be evidenced by the signature of the Revenue Mandal Officer or equivalent. While such a certificate is not always reliable, it becomes the first screen.

6. Applicant / Parent Interview

The selection committee interviews each screened applicant together with one parent to determine the genuineness of each case on a personal basis. The interviews are done at the regional office. Each candidate is reimbursed for his/her own bus or train ticket. The regional office prepares a short document on its perception about the candidates, and assigns a rank order based on this interview. The most deserving would get the higher ranks.

7. Recommendation to Central Office

The regional office sends documents of the deserving candidates to the central office in Hyderabad upon completion of the interviews. In addition, the regional office should email an Excel Spread Sheet in an approved standard format containing key data on the applicants recommended. The documents should include a photo of the applicant. It is also desirable to get a photo with the family standing in front of their residence or house. The central office reviews the recommended applications for completeness, uniformity across chapters and merit/means against norms. After the review, the National Coordinator provides feedback to the regional office. Finally the National Coordinator prepares his own recommendation and emails to the NSF USA for approval. The US Liaison Team lead provides the final feedback to NSF India. The process is transparent and the chapter coordinator will receive feedback from both the National Coordinator in India and the NSF USA liaison team.

8. Disbursements of Funds

The checks are mailed from the central office in India to the candidates directly or via the Chapter Coordinator based on the preference of the regional office. The regional office is duly communicated about these disbursements. The receipts for the checks are returned to the central office in India for record keeping.

9. Student Recognition Ceremony

Although this step is not necessarily critical for the overall process, it is encouraged for several reasons. First, recognizing the selected candidates in a public forum helps in motivating them for continued high performance. Second, it helps in creating a personal bond between the candidate and the organization. We feel that developing such a bond is essential for nurturing and mutual success in the long run. Third, the local news papers, radio and TV media will have an opportunity to publicize such events, which will in turn lead to increased awareness about the Foundation and its scholarship program. Such awareness would encourage other under-privileged children to excel in their field of studies, as they now see a ray of hope. Finally, during the Awards Ceremony, the awardees get an opportunity to take an oath on conduct, character, studies, seva and citizenship.

10. Designated Scholarships

a) College Level: Some times the donors give scholarships in the name of a loved one such as a parent. In such cases, of the successful candidates, particular students need to be identified for designation. They should receive a letter stating the nature of the designation. Similarly some donors give scholarships to a specific college. Again students entering that particular college need to be identified and need to receive a letter confirming the designation. Some donors want to communicate with the students and mentor them.

b) High-School Level: some donors give scholarships to students graduating from a specific high school. In this case, communication needs to be established between the regional office and the particular high school. The high school needs to advertise and have students compete for the scholarships. A selection committee in the village or town of the high school is a must for the long-term success of the high-school level program.

While designations involve a little more legwork, it is worthwhile as some donors like that identification to a school or college they attended. Further instructions can be obtained from central office.

11. Communication with the Central Office in India

Communication is obviously critical for the success of the program. The regional office, for example, is responsible for monitoring newspaper announcements for the applicants as well as the stories covering the awards ceremony, and mail clippings to the central office (currently in Hyderabad) in India.



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