



**Oncology Nursing  
Society**

# **Certification Scholarship Toolkit**

**Providing Financial Aid for ONCC Certification**

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Links to Additional Toolkit Resources

- [Scholarship Application Template \(Google Forms\)](#)
- [Scholarship Application Template \(Paper\)](#)
- [Reimbursement Form Template](#)



## Success Metric: Certification Scholarships

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This toolkit provides information on the *Certification Scholarship* success metric. **To complete this success metric, your chapter must provide at least two scholarships toward an Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC) certification.**

## Overview of Chapter Grants and Scholarships

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Scholarships and grants are a wonderful way for chapters to utilize their funds to promote oncology nursing as a career and provide continuing education to chapter members. Chapter grants and scholarships can take many forms, such as certification support, which is funding to renew or obtain oncology nursing certifications (e.g., OCN®, TCTCN™, AOCNP®).

Whenever possible, chapter grants and scholarships should be paid **as a reimbursement to the member**. This means the member pays the initial costs of their certification test or renewal, then provides receipts to the chapter for approval and reimbursement. This method not only ensures that chapter funds are being used appropriately but also avoids tax implications and paperwork for the chapter and the recipient.

## Creating a Chapter Scholarship Program

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### Step 1. Allocate Funding

The first step in offering grants or scholarships is determining the chapter's financial capacity. Does the chapter have excess funds in the operating budget that allow for this added expense? Upfront budgeting is key to ensuring a successful scholarship program.

While there is no right or wrong amount for a grant or scholarship, a good rule is to provide recipients with enough funding to offset costs. It's also important to determine if the chapter's priority is offering larger scholarships to a few members or offering more modest scholarships to a larger number of members.

Consider creating a mock budget of the costs the member will incur. For example, in the case of certification, this would include test registration or renewal costs. If the total budget is too high for the chapter to cover, consider offering partial scholarships.

Scholarship costs may vary from year to year, depending on the cost of certification or renewal. It's important to recalculate scholarship amounts regularly to make sure they reflect current pricing.

[You can learn more about ONCC certification fees and test dates here.](#)

## Step 2. Identify Chapter Needs

Like the rapid advancement of oncology treatments, the educational needs of chapter members will change over the years. It is important to continually check with members to determine what certification opportunities they are looking to pursue and how the chapter can assist. In some areas, large employers may offset the cost of certification, so demand is higher for conference or educational-related expenses. A scholarship program is useless if members don't apply.

Consider sending a needs assessment to your chapter members, asking them questions like:

- Are you interested in obtaining an oncology nursing certification?
- Which ONCC certification are you most interested in obtaining?

## Step 3. Establish Applicant Criteria

Once the chapter has budgeted for scholarships and determined the focus and amount of each, it is time to establish the criteria for applicants. Although not a requirement, many chapters include criteria that may help incentivize participation in chapter activities. Some optional criteria for scholarship applicants can include, but are not limited to:

- Applicant must have been a chapter member for [x] years.
- Applicant must have attended [x] chapter events in the past year.
- Applicant must not have received a chapter scholarship in the past [x] years.
- Applicant must be an early-career professional.

If the chapter establishes scholarships that board members are eligible for, ensure that the information regarding these scholarships is publicly available to all chapter members. Transparency is crucial; ensure that the selection committee for these awards is free of bias.

## Step 4. Create and Distribute Applications

Once the criteria have been established, it's time to create the scholarship application. Application length can vary from simple to in-depth. The application length and complexity should be informed by the amount of the scholarship; for example, a full certification scholarship may have a more in-depth application than a partial stipend.

In addition to collecting basic demographic information (name, email, ONS member ID, etc.), some chapters like to include additional fields to help in the selection process. These additional fields can be particularly useful if the application field is particularly competitive. Some optional fields include the following:

- A paragraph or essay response detailing how the certification scholarship would support the applicant in their career as an oncology nurse.
- A paragraph or essay response on what the member is most excited to learn about during their certification journey.
- An agreement that the member will present on what they learned at a future chapter meeting.

It is important to clearly state on the application what the scholarship **will** and **will not** cover. For a certification scholarship, disclose exactly what that entails, including any expense caps. It may also be useful to have members acknowledge their understanding of the reimbursement process on the application, if applicable.

Applications may either be entirely digital or may be printed and filled out on paper, depending on the preferences of the chapter and the scholarship committee. For templates of applications, please see [Sample Scholarship Applications](#).

The application deadline must be clear. The chapter should share several reminders during the application period to ensure members have ample opportunities to apply.

## Step 5. Select and Notify Applicants

Once all applications are submitted, the chapter can select recipients and notify members of their application outcomes.

It is important to remove bias when selecting scholarship recipients; this can be particularly difficult in a chapter setting, where many members are friends or colleagues. ONS recommends that the chapter employ a scholarship selection committee; this can be a standing committee or an ad hoc group created for the purpose of selecting a particular round of scholarship recipients.

Scholarship selection committee considerations:

- The committee is comprised of members from a variety of employers.
- Members are willing to recuse themselves from judging applicants they have close work or personal relationships with.
- If selecting board-specific scholarships, consider having members outside of the board participate.

It is important that the chapter have a uniform and formalized system for scoring scholarship applications. Please see [Sample Scholarship Scoring](#) for an example scoring set, including eligibility questions and a criteria scoring rubric.

Once recipients have been selected, the board can notify them that their applications have been successful. The chapter should provide recipients with the terms of the scholarship, as well as deadlines for submitting their receipts for reimbursement.

It is important to also notify members who were not selected, to ensure the loop is closed with all applicants.

## Step 6. Approve Receipts and Distribute Reimbursement

### Receipt Submission

Recipients should submit their receipts by the specified deadline. The submission should include:

- Original receipts or electronic copies
- A completed reimbursement request form (if provided)
- Any additional documentation required as per the scholarship terms

### Approval Process

The committee should follow a formalized system for approving receipts. This may include:

- Verifying that expenses align with the scholarship terms
- Ensuring the receipts are for eligible expenses (e.g., test or renewal registration)
- Recusing any committee member from approving receipts if they have a close personal or professional relationship with the recipient

### Follow-Up With Recipients

When receipts have been approved, complete the following:

- Notify recipients of the approval status of their reimbursement request.
- Provide details of any disallowed expenses and reasons for the decision.
- Inform recipients of the estimated timeline for receiving reimbursement.

## Distribute Reimbursement

The committee should arrange for the prompt distribution of reimbursement funds:

- Ensure all paperwork is complete and funds are available.
- Process reimbursement payments through the designated financial channels (check or direct deposit are preferred).
- Confirm with recipients when payments have been made.

## Record Keeping

Maintain detailed records of the reimbursement process for the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recommendation of seven years, including the following:

- Copies of all submitted receipts and approval documentation
- Communications with recipients regarding the reimbursement
- Proof of payment and any follow-up actions required

If the member was not able to provide costs upfront, the chapter should consider alternative options, such as paying the test or renewal registration fee directly on the recipient's behalf. If a lump sum payment is provided directly to a chapter member upfront, there are tax implications.

Please see the [Tax Implications](#) section for more information.

# Sample Scholarship Applications

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For online applications (preferred), ONS recommends using a platform like [Google Forms](#) or [Microsoft Forms](#), depending on the preferences of the chapter board. Google Forms does require a Google account login; the chapter may create a generic Google account for these purposes (e.g., OurONSChapter@gmail.com). It is also acceptable to create the application form under a board member's personal Google account; the complete set of application data is shared with the board.

[You can find a template for a basic scholarship application using Google Forms here.](#) You will need to update or add to this form to ensure it is relevant to your chapter's particular scholarship offerings. For additional assistance in creating an online scholarship application, please contact [chapters@ons.org](mailto:chapters@ons.org).

## ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY

For a paper application, please see the following template. Information detailing any deadlines for submission, the preferred submission method, what the scholarship entails, and the chapter contact in case the applicant has any questions should appear at the top of the application.

Name:	
Email Address:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
ONS ID Number:	
Current Employer:	
Position/Title:	
Please provide a short statement on why you should receive a chapter scholarship and how you will apply your newfound knowledge to your nursing practice.	

Does your employer provide financial assistance to attend ONS Congress?	Yes	No
Do you agree to present a summary of what you learned at a future chapter meeting?	Yes	No
I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.	Yes	No
I understand that scholarship funds are only to be used for appropriate costs (please see expense policy).	Yes	No
If this application leads to the receipt of a scholarship, I understand that false or misleading information in my application may result in loss of scholarship.	Yes	No



## Sample Scholarship Scoring

Yes/No questions can be implemented at the beginning of the scoring to determine overall eligibility. If an applicant has submitted an answer that conflicts with a required criterion, the application can be disqualified without a need for more in-depth scoring.

Eligibility Questions			
Employer support	Applicant receives employer support for certification.	Yes	No
Membership	Applicant is a current, active member of the chapter.	Yes	No
Previous support	Applicant has not received a chapter scholarship in the last [x] years.	Yes	No
Presentation follow-up	Applicant agrees to present a summary of what they learned at a future chapter meeting.	Yes	No

Once eligibility has been determined via yes/no questions, the committee can submit their scores for any other judging criteria that have been established. An example rubric is provided below; in this sample, scores would be tallied numerically, with the highest scorers being selected as scholarship recipients.

Criteria	Description	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chapter participation	Applicant participates in and supports chapter activities.	1	2	3	4	5
Scholarship impact	Receiving this scholarship would have a meaningful impact in the applicant's professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
Essay response	The applicant's essay demonstrates a clear need for the intended professional development.	1	2	3	4	5
Chapter representation	The applicant would be a good steward of chapter funds and would represent the chapter well.	1	2	3	4	5

## Sample Reimbursement Form

Members must fill out any cells highlighted in blue. Only registrations with a receipt will be considered for reimbursement. If expenses exceed the established expense maximum, the chapter reserves the right to only reimburse to the maximum threshold.

By submitting this reimbursement form, the member agrees that, to the best of their knowledge, all expenses were paid by them directly, and all chapter expense policies have been upheld.

Name	
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	
Reimbursement Check Mailing Address:	
Certification:	
Test/Renewal Date:	
Test/Renewal Cost:	

## Tax Implications

Whenever possible, chapter scholarships should be completed via a reimbursement process to avoid tax implications and ensure responsible use of chapter funds. If the scholarship recipient is financially unable to cover upfront costs, the chapter may be able to pay for costs directly (e.g., sending a check for ONS Congress registration, using the chapter credit card to purchase airfare, paying tuition directly to an educational institution).

**As a last resort**, if chapters do need to provide funds upfront to a member in a lump sum, there are tax implications for any member receiving **more than \$600 total during a calendar year**.

If the chapter has paid a scholarship recipient more than \$600 upfront, please take the following steps:

1. Request a [Form W-9](#) from the recipient; you will need their social security number for your IRS paperwork.



2. Purchase [Form 1099-NEC](#); this form cannot be filled out and printed in its entirety, so you will need to purchase a packet of the form. These can be found at a local office supply store, or on online retailers, like Amazon.
3. Fill out a Form 1099-NEC for each scholarship recipient who received upfront payments of over \$600 during the calendar year.
4. Once those are all filled out, complete [Form 1096](#). This is a cover sheet that would be included in the 1099-NEC packet. Include the number of forms and total of payments on this cover sheet.
5. Once your 1099-NECs and the 1096 are completed, the copies must be distributed to the appropriate recipients by January 31 of each year:
  - **Copy A:** mailed to the IRS
  - **Copy 1:** mailed to the state
  - **Copy B and Copy 2:** sent to the scholarship recipient
  - **Copy C:** retained for the chapter records

For any questions related to filling out or distributing Form 1099-NEC, please contact [chapters@ons.org](mailto:chapters@ons.org).

## Social Media Templates

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### Social Media Post 1

Attention oncology nurses! 📣 We're excited to announce our certification scholarship offerings for aspiring and current oncology nurses. ✍️🌟 Apply by **[Deadline]**! Visit **[Link]** for more details on application requirements and start your journey today!

### Social Media Post 2

Unlock your potential with our scholarships! 🌟 Our chapter is offering certification scholarships to support oncology nurses in their career advancements. Deadline to apply: **[Deadline]**. Requirements include **[Requirement 1]**, **[Requirement 2]**, and **[Requirement 3]**. Don't miss out, apply today: **[Link]**

### Social Media Post 3

Boost your career with scholarships! 🚀 We're now accepting applications for our certification scholarships. Open to all chapter members! Ensure you meet the requirements and submit your application by **[Deadline]**. Visit **[Link]** for more details!

# Email Templates

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## Scholarship Announcement

Dear chapter members,

We are thrilled to announce that our chapter is offering certification scholarships to support the professional growth of oncology nurses. These scholarships aim to provide financial assistance for **[Insert Here]**.

The application deadline is **[Deadline]**. To apply, you will need to submit a completed application form. Additionally, proof of enrollment in an accredited nursing program or documentation of conference attendance may be required.

Visit **[Link]** for more detailed information on application requirements and start your application today! If you have any questions, please reach out to **[Contact]**.

Best regards,  
**[Your Chapter Name]**

## Scholarship Reminder 1

Dear chapter members,

Don't miss the opportunity to advance your career with our certification scholarship offerings.

As a reminder, applications are open until **[Deadline]**. Make sure you meet the eligibility criteria, which include **[Requirements]**. You will also need to provide a plan on how you intend to use the scholarship funds to enhance your career.

Apply now by visiting **[Link]** and following the application guidelines. We are excited to help you unlock your full potential and make a significant impact in the lives of your patients.

Sincerely,  
**[Your Chapter Name]**



## Scholarship Reminder 2

Dear chapter members,

Just a friendly reminder that our certification scholarship application deadline is fast approaching on **[Deadline]**.

We encourage you to apply if you meet the following requirements: **[Requirements]**.

Don't let this chance pass you by. Take the next step in your oncology nursing career by applying for our scholarships today at **[Link]**.

Kind regards,  
**[Your Chapter Name]**

## Last Call for Scholarship Applications

Dear chapter members,

This is a final call to apply for our certification scholarships for oncology nurses. The deadline to submit your application is **[Deadline]**.

Submit your application ASAP to take advantage of this opportunity: **[Link]**. We are dedicated to supporting your growth and advancement in the field of oncology nursing.

Warm regards,  
**[Your Chapter Name]**

## For Scholarship Recipient(s)

Dear **[Recipient's Name]**,

Congratulations on being awarded a certification chapter scholarship! We are thrilled to recognize your dedication and hard work in the field of oncology nursing. This scholarship is a testament to your commitment to advancing your knowledge and skills, and we are confident that you will continue to make significant contributions to the care of patients with cancer.

The scholarship will cover **[Amount]** toward **[ONCC Certification]**.



## ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY

We look forward to seeing the amazing things you will accomplish with the support of this scholarship. Your success is an inspiration to all of us, and we are proud to have you as a member of our chapter.

As a reminder, the terms of the scholarship indicate that you must meet **[Requirements]**. Receipts must be submitted to **[Contact]** by **[Deadline]**. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Once again, congratulations on this well-deserved achievement!

Warm regards,  
**[Your Chapter Name]**

## For Scholarship Applicants (Not Selected)

Dear **[Applicant's Name]**,

Thank you for applying for our certification chapter scholarship. We were impressed by your dedication and hard work in the field of oncology nursing. Your commitment to advancing your knowledge and skills is truly commendable, and we appreciate the time and effort you invested in your application.

After careful consideration, we regret to inform you that we are unable to award you a scholarship at this time. This decision was not easy, as we received many outstanding applications, each demonstrating remarkable achievements and potential in oncology nursing.

We encourage you to continue pursuing your goals and to apply again in the future. Your dedication to providing compassionate care to patients with cancer is an inspiration, and we are confident that you will continue to make significant contributions to the field.

If you have any questions or would like feedback on your application, please do not hesitate to reach out to **[Contact]**.

Thank you once again for your interest in our scholarship program, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Warm regards,  
**[Your Chapter Name]**



## Metric Completion Checklist

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To consider this metric completed, your chapter must have offered two ONCC certification scholarships during the calendar year. To confirm completion of this metric please complete the following checklist.

- ☐ Create a scholarship budget for the year to determine how many scholarships can be offered.
- ☐ Create a scholarship application and open the scholarship to chapter members.
- ☐ Select recipients, notify members, and collect recipient receipts after the exam.
- ☐ Report scholarship recipients and amounts to confirm completion of this metric on your next [Quarterly Report](#).