

Alpacas of Oklahoma (A-OK)

Youth Competition Scholarship Guidelines

(Applicable age classes based upon 2023 Show System Handbook)

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Youth Competition Scholarship program is to assist A-OK youth members with costs associated with participation at the Alpaca Owners Association (AOA) National Youth Performance Show/Competition, typically held annually during the month of March.
2. **QUALIFYING CALENDAR YEAR:** The calendar year in which the applicant is required to meet the qualifications of the Scholarship described in Paragraph 8 below.
3. **BUDGET:** The Board of Directors shall determine the Scholarship Budget at their annual meeting at the beginning of each qualifying calendar year to be awarded for use at the National Show for the subsequent year.
4. **OVERSIGHT:** The Board of Directors shall appoint a Scholarship Committee to oversee the scholarship application, evaluation, and funding process.
5. **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** Once the budget is determined, the application process shall begin immediately with applications due at the end of the qualifying calendar year (December 31st each year). Scholarship applications will be collected and categorized by the Scholarship Committee based on compliance with the guidelines detailed herein.
6. **QUALITY/ACCURACY:** Applications can be type written, except for the essay portion of the application which can be typed or handwritten by the younger class; however, if handwritten, it must be legible. If illegible, the Scholarship Committee may return the application to the applicant with a request to correct it in a legible fashion. The applicant will be given a minimum of 3 days to correct and resubmit the application. If still illegible, the application will be rejected. Parents of younger children in the Sub-Junior and Junior classes may assist with completing the application, but the child must dictate the information to the parent to be written/typed on behalf of the child. Parents must not compose the essay answers themselves; it must be composed by the child. Any detection of adult assistance in "composition" may be cause for a deduction of points in the evaluation process.
7. **QUALIFICATIONS:**
 - a. **A-OK MEMBERSHIP:** The applicant must be a current A-OK Junior member (no fee for this membership). Membership application must be submitted to A-OK prior to their first participation in "any" AOA Certified Show in the qualifying Calendar year.
 - i. All Ages/Classes - Must attend a minimum of one (1) A-OK General Membership meeting during the qualifying calendar year.
 - ii. Additional Senior Class requirement: Must also attend a minimum of one (1) A-OK sponsored Educational event during the qualifying calendar year.
 - b. **BLUE RIBBONS:** Applicant must have earned at least one blue ribbon in any performance category (not Costume) at any AOA Certified Youth Performance Show during the qualifying calendar year.
 - c. **VOLUNTEER/WORK HOURS:** Volunteer or work hours must be completed throughout the qualifying calendar year at any A-OK event or at any A-OK member farm/ranch. Hours completed on the applicant's own family farm/ranch do not qualify. The idea is to show commitment to the alpaca industry as a whole by giving to others. A "Certificate of Commitment" shall be provided to the organizer of each event or the owner of each member farm/ranch to be completed validating the applicant's hours as proof that this

requirement has been met. All Certificates earned shall be submitted along with the Scholarship Application. The hours required for each age group is modified based upon the age/class of the applicant as follows:

- i. Sub-Junior (Ages 5-8) – No hours required, but may do so
- ii. Junior (Ages 9-10) – 4 hours minimum
- iii. Intermediate (Ages 11-13) – 8 hours minimum
- iv. Senior (Ages 14-17) – 16 hours minimum

d. **ESSAY:** The essay portion of the application is designed to allow the applicant to show knowledge of and commitment to the alpaca industry and is different for each age class based upon the expectations of children of that age (All ages are as of January 1 of the qualifying calendar year). Plagiarism will disqualify the applicant.

- i. Sub-Junior (Ages 5-8): Give a list of a minimum of three facts you have learned about alpacas, alpaca ranching and/or the alpaca industry. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar will not be evaluated. May be handwritten in a legible format.
- ii. Junior (Ages 9-10): Write two paragraphs describing facts you have learned about alpacas, alpaca ranching and/or the alpaca industry. Minor evaluation of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. May be handwritten in a legible format and double-spaced.
- iii. Intermediate (Ages 11-13): Write a 200-word essay describing facts about alpacas, alpaca ranching and/or the alpaca industry. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar will be evaluated and citing resources may add bonus points. Must be type-written and double-spaced.
- iv. Senior (Ages 14-17): Write a 500-word essay about a “specific topic” associated with alpacas, alpaca ranching and/or the alpaca industry. Be clear about your thesis, describing your topic, and provide details supporting your argument or point. Be sure to provide genuine insight and a persuasive argument. Show proof of research by citing resources. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar will be evaluated. Must be type-written and double-spaced.

8. **EVALUATION:** A-OK wishes to evaluate applications blindly, without the knowledge of who submitted the application. Therefore, the Scholarship Committee will request third party evaluations from up to three individuals who are not familiar with the applicants, but have knowledge of alpaca facts, alpaca ranching and/or the alpaca industry. The Cover page will be removed from each application and a number will be assigned to the application in lieu of the applicant's name. The blind applications will be given to each evaluator along with a scoring sheet with criteria categories showing a maximum number of points to be earned for each criterion. Evaluators may deduct points in each category for deficient criteria. Any detection of plagiarism shall be cause for disqualification of the applicant. Points will be totaled for each application, then averaged among all evaluators. Maximum overall score shall begin at 100 points (including any bonus points earned by evaluators), but the scoring criteria will be different for each age/class based upon their respective qualifications listed in Paragraph 8 above. All age classes will be compared collectively for the highest points scored with the top scores overall being awarded based upon the budget for that qualifying calendar year. In the case of a tie score, ties will be broken based upon the applicant's highest Showmanship score in any AOA Performance competition during the qualifying calendar year.

9. **AWARDS:** For funds to be distributed by A-OK to scholarship recipient, a list of anticipated expenses for participation at the National Show must be submitted to the Scholarship Committee. The applicant must include the name and ARI registration number of the alpaca they will be taking to the National show along with a list of the show categories in which they will compete, ie, Showmanship, Obstacles, Public Relations.

10. **REPORTS/RECEIPTS:** The applicant must report back to the A-OK Scholarship Committee the results of their participation at the respective National show and provide expense receipts no later than 30 days after the National show date.