

**STUDENT APPLICATION**

Seeking 9th through 11th grade college-bound youth in care

**WHAT IS THE ACADEMY?**

First Star Academy is a college preparation program which supports the academic and social emotional goals of youth in care throughout high school. This program includes monthly Saturday workshops that focus on life skills and academic preparation on the Illinois State University campus throughout the school year, opportunities for peer connections with other college-bound youth in care, and a three-week summer residential campus immersion program at Illinois State University. During the three-week summer immersion program, students will participate in academic enrichment classes, social support seminars, creative arts, and community service-learning projects. Caregiver engagement workshops are also provided as part of this program. First Star Academy students receive:

* College academic instruction (Math and English) – a real start toward college immersion
* Encouragement, motivational training, life skills instruction
* Mentoring opportunities with Illinois State University college students and college professors
* Individualized attention and services focused on college admissions
* Theatrical and artistic expression
* Group reflections and team building
* Enrichment activities (e.g., recreation; physical education; game nights)
* Field trips and Service learning
* A laptop computer and technical support

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**GETTING INVOLVED**

1. **We are seeking students who meet these eligibility requirements by being:**

* Current foster care youth
* Currently in the 9th, 10th, or 11th grade with at least a 2.0 GPA
* Youth interested in college and academic support
* Youth interested in social emotional supports and life skill enrichment
* Able to participate in Saturday Academies once a month at Illinois State University
* Able to participate in the three-week residency Summer Immersion Program on Illinois State University campus **June 4, 2022 – June 25, 2022**
* Have caregivers or a concerned adult who can provide supports

1. **Students should complete the student portion of the application and attach essay.**
2. **Student’s caseworker should complete the Caseworker** **Recommendation portion.**
3. **Provide student’s most recent report card noting student’s GPA with guardian permission to release academic information to First Star Illinois State University Academy Director.**
4. **Email the entire application packet (3 items listed below) to: Stacey Wiggins, Interim Academy Director at** [**firststaracademy@ilstu.edu**](mailto:firststaracademy@ilstu.edu)**.**

* + *Student Application with essay*
  + *Caseworker/Counselor Recommendation*
  + *Academic Report Card*

It is important that you complete your application as soon as possible, as there are a limited number of slots in the Program. **Priority deadline for application is December 18, 2021.**



**SELECTION PROCESS**

Once the completed application has been received, a selection committee will review all eligible candidates in order to select the top students to participate in First Star Academy. Selection will be based on a combination of:

* Academic potential
* Student written responses
* Adult and Caseworker recommendations
* Interview

Both the student and the adults making the recommendation will be notified regarding acceptance into First Star Academy. The student and caregiver will be required to attend a New Scholar Orientation; Scholars officially begin in March 2021.

**For more information, please contact:**

Stacey Wiggins

First Star Academy ISU Interim Director

Illinois State University

School of Social Work

275 S. University Street

Campus Box 4650  
201 Rachel Cooper   
Normal, IL 61790-4650

**Phone:** 309-438-8541

**Email:** swiggin@ilstu.edu

<https://adoptionresearch.illinoisstate.edu/projects/first-star-academy/>

**STUDENT-PORTION OF APPLICATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CONTACT INFORMATION** | |
| Student Name: | Phone No.: |
| Student Email: | |
| Caregiver Name: | Phone No.: |
| Caregiver Email: | |
| Mailing Address: | |
| **BACKGROUND INFORMATION** | |
| Gender: \_\_\_Male \_\_\_Female | Date of Birth:      /     / |
| Ethnicity: African-American/Black American Indian Asian-American  Chicano-a/Mexican-American Latino-a  Pacific Islander  Filipino-American White/Caucasian Other  Prefer not to answer | |
| Caseworker Name: | Phone No.: |
| Caseworker’s Email: | |
| Association/Agency: | |
| Placement:  Relative Foster Home  Non-relative Foster Home  Group Home  Legal Guardian Other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

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| **SCHOOL/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Current Grade Level: | Current cumulative GPA (use a 4.0 scale): | |
| High School Name: | | |
| School Social Worker/liaison: | | Phone No.: |
| School Social Worker/liaison’s Email: | | |
| Please mark the programs in which you are a member (if any):  AVID  The College Partnership Program (CPP) The Early Identification Program (EIP)  The Pathway to the Baccalaureate Program Project Discovery | | |
| List any other programs and extracurricular activities in which you have participated (i.e. sports, clubs, band, volunteer groups, student government, etc.):  Name of Club or Organization Role Years of Involvement Hours Per Month/  (please circle) Months Per Year              9th 10th 11th              9th 10th 11th              9th 10th 11th              9th 10th 11th              9th 10th 11th | | |
| Do you have a conflict with attending the monthly Saturday Academies on Illinois State University campus?  Yes No | | |
| Do you have a conflict attending the 3-week Summer Immersion Program on Illinois State University campus,  **scheduled June 4, 2022 – June 25, 2022?**  Yes No | | |

**STUDENT-PORTION OF APPLICATION (Continued)**

**Open-ended Essay Response: 100 or more words (submit as attachment):**

1. **What are your career goals after high school?**
2. **What do you like most about yourself AND what would you like to improve?**
3. **What brings you the greatest joy in life?**
4. **What is something that you do best?**
5. **Why do you wish to enroll in First Star Academy?**

**Signature**

The information presented in my application is accurate, honestly presented, and has been written solely by me.

*Student Signature Date*

     

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Caregiver’s or Caseworker’s Signature Date

**A group of people standing together

Description automatically generated with medium confidence** Mandatory Caseworker Recommendation

*(This section is to be completed in confidence by the caseworker).*

Name of Student you are recommending:

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| --- | --- |
|  | |
| Name: | Agency: |
| Phone: | Email: |
| Student’s Therapist Name:       Phone No.: | |
| Therapist’s Email: | |
| Association/Agency: | |

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| --- | --- |
| **STUDENT’S INFORMATION** | |
| Does this student have a significant history of behavioral or school disciplinary concerns? | Yes  No |
| Does this student have significant mental health or medical needs that would prevent participation? | Yes  No |
| Does this student currently have an Individualized Education Program, Section 504, or receive other academic supports? | Yes  No |
| Is this student self-sufficient to manage his or her own health (i.e., able to commit to taking and self-administering their prescribed medication regularly and timely)? | Yes  No |
| Are there any topics and/or instances that may cause the student to display intense emotion? | Yes  No |
| Has this student ever been adjudicated delinquent based on the commission of first degree murder, attempt to commit first degree murder, aggravated criminal sexual assault, a felony, act in furtherance of a felony or act that would be a classified as a felony except for the applicant’s age? | Yes  No |
| Is there additional necessary information that is pertinent and relevant to the health, safety or social-emotional development of the student or the student’s contact with other youth or adults? | Yes  No |
| **Please note: Yes responses must include proper consent for release of information forms for any confidential and or protected information.** | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **I recommend this student for**  **First Star Academy:** | Recommended Enthusiastically | Not Recommended | Recommend with Reservation |
| For academic potential: |  |  |  |
| For character and personal promise |  |  |  |
| For ability to work well with others |  |  |  |
| **Overall recommendation** |  |  |  |

**Please respond to the following questions below (Submit as attachment):**

1. Discuss the student’s ability to succeed in a classroom setting without significant specialized academic resources or behavioral supports.
2. Share information about the student’s goals, aptitude, character, and enthusiasm.
3. What coping strategies does the student utilize when in a stressful situation?
4. How would you describe the student’s ability to self-regulate and self-soothe?

**Submit Application to Stacey Wiggins Interim Director at** [**firststaracademy@ilstu.edu**](mailto:firststaracademy@ilstu.edu)**.**

For more information contact:

Stacey Wiggins

First Star Academy ISU Interim Director

309-438-5841

[Swiggin@ilstu.edu](mailto:Swiggin@ilstu.edu)

Illinois State University School of Social Work and Center for Child Welfare and Adoption Studies are proud partners of First Star Academy.

Dr. Deneca Avant

Interim Department Chair, School of Social Work, Planning

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<http://socialwork.illinoisstate.edu/>

<http://adoptionresearch.illinoisstate.edu/>