



Letter of Recommendation Guide

The Caleb Scholars Program fellowship is highly competitive, and a strong letter of recommendation is an important part of the application process. This optional resource is designed to help applicants submit their strongest application.

To better understand each applicant's fit for the program, we require one letter of recommendation written specifically for the Caleb Scholars Program. This packet provides guidance and key information for writing a strong recommendation letter.

Applicants are encouraged to share this resource with their recommender for reference, and it may also help in deciding who is best suited to provide a meaningful recommendation.

Letter of Recommendation Requirements

- Applicants must submit **one** letter of recommendation. Letters written within the past three years will be accepted.
- Letters should be addressed to the Caleb Scholars Program Selection Committee and include the recommender's contact information.
- Letters may be submitted by the applicant or sent directly by the recommender to: calebscholars@kawerak.org, please use the subject line **[Scholar Name] Letter of Recommendation**
- All application materials are due by **July 15 at 11:59 P.M. (applicant's local time zone)**

Guidance for Recommenders

- Letters should not be written by immediate family members. Exceptions may be considered when a family member is best positioned to speak to the applicant's cultural engagement, commitment to conservation, and academic experience.
- Suggested recommenders include teachers, professors, employers, supervisors, and/or cultural teachers and mentors who have worked closely with the applicant and can speak to the applicant's strengths and overall fit for the Caleb Scholars Program.
- A sample letter is included as a reference to support your writing process. **This is not a required format**, but it may be helpful in identifying what to include.
- Strong letters typically highlight specific examples of the applicant's academic achievement, cultural knowledge, and/or engagement with subsistence practices as they relate to their commitment to Inuit-led conservation advocacy.

About the program

The Caleb Scholars Program is an Inuit-led conservation advocacy fellowship that supports Alaska Inuit students from the Norton Sound, Northwest Arctic, and Arctic Slope regions.

The program supports the development of emerging leaders committed to Inuit-led conservation advocacy and the stewardship of our lands and waters.

The fellowship honors the legacy of Caleb Lumen Pungowiyi by investing in students pursuing higher education and supporting the next generation of Alaska Inuit leaders in environmental conservation advocacy.

By centering cultural and community connection, professional development, wellness, mentorship, and financial support, the program creates space for scholars to grow in ways that are both academically and culturally grounded.

Priority consideration is given to applicants whose long-term goals contribute to the well-being of Inuit communities through research, policy, and advocacy grounded in Alaska Native knowledge systems and values.

Strong applicants demonstrate alignment with CSP values, including:

- Commitment to community and conservation advocacy
- Commitment to perpetuating Inuit culture, values, and traditions
- Commitment to sharing and cooperation in relation to resources
- Commitment to preserving subsistence practices
- Commitment to personal, professional, and academic growth

Learn more about our program, including information on our current cohort, online at www.calebscholars.org

Sample Letter of Recommendation

The following page includes a sample letter of recommendation. This letter is provided as a reference only. It is intended to demonstrate the type of information that helps strengthen an application and is ***not a required format***. If you have questions about the letter of recommendation, our application process, or the Caleb Scholars Program, email us at calebscholars@kawerak.org.



Jane Smith, Program Coordinator
Example Alaska Native Youth Summer Program
000-555-1234
jsmith@email.com

July 4, 2026

Dear Caleb Scholars Program Selection Committee,

It is my pleasure to recommend Les Washington for the Caleb Scholars Program. I first met Les through my role as Coordinator for the Example Alaska Native Youth Summer Program, where she participated for two summers. During that time, I observed her strong leadership, sense of responsibility, and commitment to her Inupiaq heritage. She consistently led by example, shared her cultural knowledge, and supported her peers with care and respect.

Why this section is important: *This opening paragraph explains the recommender's relationship to the applicant and provides context for how they know them.*

During her time in our program, Les often shared cultural knowledge with others. While preparing for our program potluck, she explained how the Iñupiat value of "Hunter Success" reflects preparation, patience, and a responsibility to share resources with the community. Through her perspective, I gained a deeper understanding of how an Indigenous approach to conservation includes protecting both resources and the knowledge systems tied to them.

Why this section is important: *This paragraph provides an example of the applicant's cultural knowledge and demonstrates how they connect Inuit values and subsistence practices to conservation, stewardship, and community well-being.*

Les consistently puts her values into action through leadership and service. During our program, participants are supported in designing a community project each summer. For her project, Les organized a beach clean-up that collected over 20 large bags of trash. This project reflected her commitment to protecting shared spaces, supporting healthy ecosystems, and giving back to her community. Les is currently studying Rural Development and plans to return to Kotzebue to work in tribal planning and community development, with a focus on supporting food security, subsistence access, and long-term community well-being. Her academic and professional goals reflect her commitment to service, stewardship, and Inuit-led conservation advocacy.

Why this section is important: *This section explains why the applicant is a strong fit for the Caleb Scholars Program by highlighting leadership, community engagement, and future goals rooted in service and conservation advocacy.*

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

