STEMM SCHOLARS ACADEMY

APPLICATION QUICK GUIDE

THE PROGRAM

DEADLINE: LAST WEEK OF FEBRUARY ANNUALLY

A tuition-free, 3-year STEMM program for Illinois 9th graders. Includes a 5-week residential summer experience each year plus monthly Saturday Academies (leadership, academic enrichment, college credit courses, career exposure).

**SEE WEBSITE FOR OFFICIAL AND MOST UPDATED DEADLINE.

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ELIGIBILITY

PRIORITY GIVEN TO: PREVIOUS CPASS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS, AND LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

- Must be in 9th grade at time of application
- Minimum 3.2 cumulative GPA
- On track to complete Algebra I by end of freshman year
- Live within 25 miles of metro Chicago, Carbondale, East St. Louis, Joliet, Springfield, or Peoria
- Must commit to the full 5 weeks (July 4–Aug 8, 2026) + academic year programming

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Parent/guardian contact & household information
- PSAT or PreACT score report (if available)
- Most recent official transcript (must show name, school, all classes, grades, and GPA)
- Completed personal essay (500 words)
- Income verification document
- Photo headshot
- Two recommenders: one math teacher + one other teacher/mentor

TIME COMMITMENT

Section	Time
Student & Parent Info	5-10 minutes
Household Info	10-15 minutes
Student Essay	1.5-2.5 hours
Required Documents	5-8 minutes
Recommendation Forms	15 minutes
Total	2-3.5 hours

5 STEPS TO APPLY

- Go to SmarterSelect Appliction link on our website and click Apply
- Create an account using the student's name (not parent's), school name as "Organization"
- Complete Student & Parent Info, Household Info, and Opportunity & Access sections
- Write your essay, then upload transcript, income verification, and photo
- Request 2 recommendations, review everything, type your name to sign, and submit

ESSAY PROMPT

What motivates your interest in STEMM, and how do you envision using STEMM knowledge in the future to make a positive contribution to your community? Feel free to share your career aspirations.

3 paragraphs (Intro, Body, Conclusion) • 500-word limit • Have 2 people proofread it

TOP TIPS

- Request your transcript early — it can take a few weeks
- Transcript must include GPA — report cards and portal screenshots are not accepted
- Income documents must be dated 2024 or later — no pay stubs or bank statements
- Double-check your recommenders' email addresses before submitting
- Review every page carefully — you cannot edit after you submit

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE READY FOR CPASS FOUNDATION STEMM SCHOLARS ACADEMY.