



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2026 YMCA of the USA Competitive Swimming Adolph Kiefer Youth Character Award Application

As part of the YMCA's commitment to strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) will select two individuals from submitted candidates to receive the Adolph Kiefer YMCA Youth Character Award. Each year, the award recognizes two youth athletes for their excellence in academic achievement, demonstration of the YMCA core values and commitment to strengthening their community through participation in the YMCA competitive swimming program. The selected individuals will each be granted \$2,500 to be issued directly to their respective institutes for higher learning.

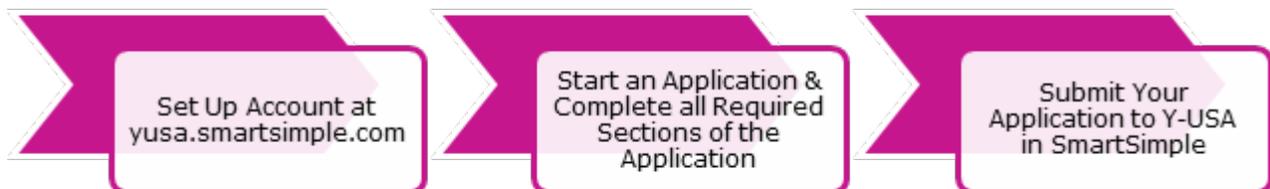
Applicants Must Meet the Following Criteria:

- Be a graduating High School Senior and be a YMCA swimmer for five years.
- Maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 or equivalent scale during Senior year in high school.
- Have volunteer experience with community service organizations/activities.
- Have plans to continue their education at an accredited university or junior college.
- Compete at the YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championship in their senior year and be present to accept the award.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are accepted via Y-USA's Grants Portal (<http://yusa.smartsimple.com>) from **February 5, 2026 to March 5, 2026 at 11:59PM Eastern Time.**

Steps to Apply



- Register for an Account & Login: First-time applicants must register online at yusa.smartsimple.com. Please select "**Community Member**" as your registration type when setting up your account. Returning users can find their password by clicking on "Forgot Your Password?" Your password will be sent to the email as

established in the profile section. Be sure to check spam or junk mailboxes. If you are having trouble, email grants@ymca.net.

- Start an Application:
 - On your homepage, select you are applying as a "Community Member" in the "Applying on behalf of" box
 - Select "**YMCA of the USA Adolph Kiefer Scholarship Application**" and click "Apply"
 - Answer eligibility questions and click "Check Eligibility"
 - If eligible, click "Proceed to Application" then "Begin Application". If not eligible, you may email grants@ymca.net for clarification

- Complete the application: Answer each question, save and submit each section. Read all instructions in the application. A copy of the application questions/required uploads is provided on the following pages.

- **Submit** (at the bottom of the page): You will receive an email confirming that your application has been submitted. You must submit prior to the listed deadline.

Selection & Notification Process

Applications will be reviewed, and the final selection made by a panel of individuals appointed by the YMCA of the USA National Competitive Swimming & Diving Advisory Committee.

The recipients will be announced at the 2026 YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championship Meet.

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

The application questions are provided for reference only; applications must be completed and submitted in Y-USA's Grants Portal (yusa.smartsimple.com) to be valid.

Application Eligibility Questions

- Are you a graduating Senior?
- Have you been a YMCA swimmer for at least five years?
- Have you maintained a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 or equivalent scale during your Senior year in high school?
- Do you have volunteer experience with community service organizations/activities?
- Do you have plans to continue education at an accredited university or junior college?
- Will you be competing at the YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championship in your senior year and be present to accept the award?

Applicant Account Profile Details

- Applicant Name
- Applicant Email
- Applicant Address
- Applicant Phone Number

Application Questions

- Name of High School
- Date of Graduation
- Grade Point Average Senior Year
- Please upload unofficial transcript
- Name of Swimming Coach
- YMCA Name
- Swim Coach Phone
- Swim Coach Email
- Number of Years Participating in YMCA Competitive Swimming
- Number of Years Competing in the YMCA Short Course National Championships
- Name of Post-Secondary Institution attending next year:

Volunteer activities: Please list your volunteer activities. Applicants are encouraged to name the organization with which they have volunteered and provide a short description of each organization's work and their personal contribution to, and leadership in that work.

Letters of Recommendation & Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Upload three letters of recommendation from a coach, clergy, teacher, community leader or YMCA staff person. Letters of recommendation are **not** to exceed one page and should reflect the individual's display of the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility and how they have impacted others.

Upload a signed copy of the parent/guardian consent form.

Essay

Enter a 500-750 word reflection essay on how participation in YMCA programming has influenced your character development and your connection and commitment to your community.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA of the USA Adolph Kiefer Youth Character Award

PARENT / GUARDIAN APPROVAL FORM

As part of the YMCA's commitment to strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) will select two individuals from submitted candidates to receive the Adolph Kiefer YMCA Youth Character Award. Each year, the award recognizes two youth athletes for their excellence in academic achievement, demonstration of the YMCA core values and commitment to strengthening their community through participation in the YMCA competitive swimming program. The selected individuals will each be granted \$2,500 to be issued directly to their respective institutes for higher learning.

Applicants Must Meet the Following Criteria:

- Be a graduating High School Senior and be a YMCA swimmer for five years.
- Maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 or equivalent scale during Senior year in high school.
- Have volunteer experience with community service organizations/activities.
- Have plans to continue their education at an accredited university or junior college.
- Compete at the YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championship in their senior year and be present to accept the award.

Application Process

- Applications are accepted via Y-USA's Grants Portal (<http://yusa.smartsimple.com>) during the designated application period.
- Applications will be reviewed, and the final selection made by a panel of individuals appointed by the YMCA of the USA National Competitive Swimming & Diving Advisory Committee.
- The recipients will be announced at the upcoming YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championship Meet.
- The selected individuals will each be granted \$2,500 to be issued directly to their respective institutes for higher learning after receipt of proof of enrollment

PARENT & GUARDIAN APPROVAL

In order to apply, applicants must upload a signed copy of this form. The applicant and the applicant's parent/guardian must sign the form.

Confirmations

I understand that if the applying athlete is selected as the recipient of the YMCA of the USA Adolph Kiefer Youth Character Award, awarded funds will be paid directly to the institution of higher learning in which the athlete officially enrolls (proof of enrollment must be submitted). If, for any reason, the athlete decides not to attend university or college the scholarship will be null and void.

Please note this form must be signed and uploaded into YMCA of the USA's Grants Portal (yusa.smartsimple.com) as part of the application packet.

Applicant's Signature_____ **Date**

Parent / Guardian's Signature_____ **Date**