

## Kaplan Leadership Program Application: Do's and Don'ts for Short Answer Questions

*Kaplan Leadership Program Application - Deadline: Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020*

### **Essay Instructions**

You have reached the essay portion of the Kaplan Leadership Program application. The essay prompts with spaces for your answers are listed below. We strongly encourage you to take your time and compose your answers in a word processor (e.g. Microsoft Word) and then copy and paste your responses into the answer boxes.

### **Short Answer Question 1 - (200 – 300 words)**

This program helps remove barriers to a student's success, whether they are academic or personal. What barriers are currently limiting your academic and/or professional goals? Note: the barriers you indicate should not be limited to financial constraints

Question 1 Do's and Don'ts:

- **Do:** Write honestly and clearly about any limitations you've encountered. In addition to financial concerns, these limitations might include issues of personal or familial obligation, educational access, lack of support from family or community, personal disabilities or setbacks, etc.
- **Don't:** Use this answer to make excuses for yourself or blame others. The objective here is to identify problems that you intend, through planning and strength of character, to overcome.

### **Short Answer Question 2 - (200 – 300 words)**

If you had no barriers and could do anything you wanted, what would your long-term academic and career goals be?

Question 2 Do's and Don'ts:

- **Do:** Be clear, specific, and include examples, if possible. You are encouraged to be bold and ambitious in stating your long-term goals, while remaining realistic.
- **Don't:** Be overly broad and general. "I want to be President of the United States" is a much less effective answer than "My interests are in political science and educational reform. While pursuing my Bachelor's degree in education I intend to volunteer my time in community programs that focus on education. In graduate school I'd like to study politics and social work, and eventually work on legislation that will improve the quality of education in public schools."

### **Short Answer Question 3 - (300 – 500 Words)**

The families and communities we come from shape who we are. In many ways they strengthen and empower us, while in other ways they might limit our growth. In what ways has the place you come from ---familial and cultural---strengthened and/or limited you?

Question 3 Do's and Don'ts:

- **Do:** Write a clear and specific account of your background, family situation, community, and cultural context. Feel free to use a particular story to illustrate either ways this background empowers and or limits you. For instance, you might write about a conversation you had with a friend or mentor who expressed admiration for your educational goals, even though being a dedicated student is considered "uncool" in your neighborhood.
- **Don't:** Turn your answer into an unfocused rant about your family or community. If you've felt limited or unsupported by where you come from, please describe how and in what ways. If you have felt supported, be specific, naming people and particular instances in which this support was made clear.