



Getting started with scholarships

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Getting started with scholarships

Use this convenient guide to get the basics down for most scholarship applications. Once you master this, you can start sending out applications with confidence!

Where to find scholarships

Start with websites of the colleges you are considering. Scholarships can be found in a variety of locations. Common areas of the site include:

Admissions

These are usually scholarships based on academic performance and the most attractive awards.

Financial Aid

These scholarships are usually based on financial need.

Foundation/Development

Scholarships that are supported by alumni and friends of the university can be very personalized, based on the donors' interests. Read criteria carefully as there

could be wonderful opportunities that are not tied to GPA, class rank or need.

Department scholarships

Some academic departments may have a list of major-specific scholarships. For example, if you are interested in science, check all the science-related department websites.

Other opportunities

Don't forget to inquire in your community, in places like your high school, library, the chamber of commerce, service organizations and churches.

Tips on how to fill out scholarship applications

Address any topics that will show the scholarship committee and donor that you are a committed and successful student. You might include one or more of the following items or others that you wish to address.

What are your goals?

Scholarship questions often revolve around your interests and future plans. Why/How did you choose the major you are in? What are your goals? Be as specific as possible. Include:

- Relevant employment experience
- Special skills that support your goals (computer, languages, work with children, elderly, etc.)
- Volunteer experience
- Personal or family experience
- Your passions and interests

TIP: Make a spreadsheet!

Record your answers to common questions once and use or modify them on additional applications.

Your personal statement

What sets you apart from others? Do not neglect to mention if you are a member of the military, first generation college student, or if you have a documented disability or family obligations (such as a child/family/parents to care for).

Be authentic

A critical point to keep in mind as you write your essay is to be truthful and sincere. Let your personality shine through! Ask someone whose opinion and expertise you value to review your scholarship resume and application.

Your potential

It's not always about what you've already accomplished, it's also about what you aspire to do.



TIP: Proofread!

Proofread, have someone else proof and then re-proof it again.

Keep yourself organized

It is important to keep a record of your scholarship searches and applications. One way to do this is by keeping a spreadsheet with labels.

Once you have a “working” scholarship essay, keep it in a separate folder labeled Scholarship Searches, or something to that effect, so you can easily find it. Be sure to give it a file name that will help you to identify it quickly. It is also a good idea to include the full date in the file name for your reference. You can then reuse this essay and/or edit it to fit each scholarship you apply for.

Additional scholarship information can be found through Fastweb.com, a national scholarship search engine.

GOOD LUCK!