

SCHOLARSHIPS



What is a Scholarship?

A scholarship is a merit based financial aid award that is applied to a student's cost of education. This money does not have to be paid back. Scholarships are offered by people, organizations, and businesses that want to support a student financially, because they have a based interest in that student's success.

How to find a Scholarship

Local Scholarships:

Often times the best scholarships are local scholarships. To find local scholarships, we suggest you speak to your college and career counselor, or go to a local college's Financial Aid Office and ask if they have any scholarship listings.

You can also ask local businesses, foundations, and organizations if they offer scholarships. Typically the more involved in the community a business is, the more likely it is that they offer a scholarship. So check out businesses that tend to be sponsors, host fundraisers, and are active members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Scholarship Search Engines

Another great way to find scholarships is to create accounts on scholarship search engines. Scholarship search engines are websites that students create profiles on. The website takes the information from these student profiles and forwards scholarships the student is eligible for to them. There are many scholarship search engines, most are free and some cost a small monthly fee, but do a better job of filtering the scholarships for the students. Please look at the list of search engines to the right.



Scholarship Search Engines

- Fastweb.com
- Petersons.com
- Unigo.com
- Scholarships.com
- Cappex.com
- Myscholly.com



TOP 10 WAYS TO MAKE YOURSELF COMPETITIVE

The best way to be competitive is to be accomplished and prepared. Strive for the below and create a portfolio of your successes.

1. Strive for your highest GPA
2. Volunteer in fields you want to pursue academically
3. Obtain three letters of recommendations
4. Join clubs that correspond to what you want to pursue academically
5. Find positions of leadership in your community (i.e. student council)
6. Play school sports
7. Research topics relating to your passions
8. Learn a skill that not many students possess
9. Network with members of the community
10. Be positive and professional



SELECTING SCHOLARSHIPS TO APPLY TO

You can apply to as many scholarships as you want to. The more you apply to, the better your chances. However, with so many scholarships, you should start by applying to scholarships that directly impact you. Below are some things to consider:

- **Demographics:** What is your race, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation?
- **Employment:** where do you work, intern, or volunteer?
- **Aspiration:** What do you want to do; why do you want to do it?
- **Service:** Are you/were you with AmeriCorps or the California Conservation Corps?
- **Military Service:** Are you planning a career in the military; did your parents serve in the military?
- **Skills and hobbies:** What are you good at, and what do you do because you enjoy doing it?



CREATING A GREAT WRITTEN RESPONSE

Intro: Most scholarships worth applying to will require a written response from you. When writing your written response it is important to do the following:

Know your audience: Organizations and businesses that offer scholarships have causes they support and care about. So, if you come across a scholarship offered by a certain entity, google search them, and find out what they are passionate about supporting. By doing this you can better assess your approach, and can tailor your essay in ways that shows you understand the importance of what they care about.

Following directions: As someone who has scored essays, I can assure you the fastest way to get a low score is by not following directions. If a scholarship asks for a certain word-count, font, text-size, or format, make sure that you have it covered. If there is a deadline to apply, make sure you submit your response well in advance. However, the area where the vast majority of students make mistakes is not answering the prompt...

Answer the prompt: This is the most important part of any written response. The prompt is all the awarding entity wants you to answer, so do NOT deviate from the prompt. It is also important to make sure that you are explicit in answering the prompt. For example, if the prompt states:

‘Explain a major issue that exists in the field of Criminal Justice? Provide a solution to the issue? What are some of the cons to your proposed solution?’

Your first supporting paragraph should start as ‘A major issue in the field of Criminal Justice is...’, your second supporting paragraph should start as ‘A solution to this issue is...’, and your third supporting paragraph should start as ‘Some cons of my proposed solution are...’.

Scholarship scorers are looking through dozens of these responses, so the easier you make it for



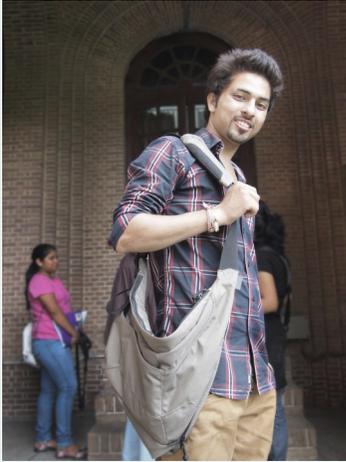
them to follow, the better your score will probably be.

Structure it: Many scholarship scorers are looking for the typical 5 paragraph essay. That means you should have an intro, 3 supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. Taking ten minutes to make an outline will help you organize your ideas, so take the time to do so.

Provide examples: Some prompts will ask you to tell them why you deserve to receive the scholarship. Be aware that scorers expect you to back any claim of merit with strong examples showcasing it. Strong examples tend to showcase multiple strong elements of why you are worthy, and they should be positive and unique to you.

Research: If you make any claims in your written response that are not common knowledge, or cannot be backed by a personal anecdote, then you should cite where you obtained the information from. If there is a word/character limit then use the (author/year) approach. However, make sure that the author of the quote is notable enough for the average person to recognize. If there is no length stipulation, then use a formal citation like APA or MLA.

Review: After you finish writing your essay, take a break, and then go back and review it. Edit for grammar, sentence structure, and flow. Ask a parent or friend to help you edit it. You should then read the final response three times allowed before you submit it.



OTHER USEFUL LINKS

[Top Ten Myths About Scholarships](#)

This article from fastweb.com puts to rest some of the major misconceptions about private scholarships.

Foster Youth scholarships

[Chafee Grant for Foster Youth](#)

[Foster Care to Success](#)

African American scholarships

[United Fund](#)

[National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#)

Asian and Pacific Islander scholarships

[Asian and Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund](#)

American Indian scholarships

[American Indian College Fund](#)

Latino scholarships

[Hispanic College Fund](#)

[Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#)

Undocumented student scholarships

[Edvisors](#)



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