

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

Scholarships, unlike student loans, don't have to be repaid, and can reduce the cost of college. The more free money, in the form of scholarships and or grants, students find to help pay for college, the less they'll have to finance themselves.

✓ ELIGIBILITY

Students who apply for scholarships must meet specific eligibility requirements, and will be competing against other students who apply. Scholarship eligibility may be based on any combination of criteria including:

- Residency (state, county, or town in which a student lives)
- Affiliation with community or religious organizations
- Extracurricular activities, including community service or clubs
- Degree program, major, or field of study
- Financial need
- The content of essays that a student may be required to write
- Academic, athletic, or artistic achievement
- The content of letters of recommendation

🔍 SEARCHING

It's best to starting looking for scholarships during your junior year of high school since deadlines vary for each award. Find scholarship information from these sources:

- High school counselor's office
- Local library
- College or university
- Visit these websites for information about national scholarships:
 - » collegeboard.com - In the student column, click on "Big Future". Under the "Pay for College" tab, select "Search for Scholarships"
 - » finaid.org - Information on financial aid and scholarships
 - » EducationPlanner.org - In the left column, click on "Find Grants or Scholarships" then click on "Go To Fastweb" - for a free site to search for scholarships
 - » scholarshipexperts.com - a database of free scholarships that match your hobbies, interests and academic background

📄 APPLYING

To apply for scholarships, be sure to:

- Carefully determine that all eligibility requirements are matched
- Submit all required application materials by the deadline
- Find out if applicants are notified of the results (some scholarships notify all applicants; others notify only the winners)



Q: What is a "merit" scholarship?

A: Colleges are increasingly offering merit scholarships and not only for academic achievement or athletic skill. Schools may offer merit scholarships to attract diverse groups of students from states not highly represented at the school, or students with talents or circumstances that few others at the school have. Check with admissions offices at schools you're applying to; ask if they offer merit aid.

Q: Should students pay a company to find scholarships?

A: Students and families need to know that some scholarship offers are not what they seem. You can avoid getting scammed by ignoring offers that require you to attend a "free" seminar, pay a "small fee", and or provide a credit card number.

Q: Will scholarships affect other sources of financial aid?

A: Scholarships from outside sources may affect other financial aid. By filling unmet need, scholarships may reduce the amount a family has to pay out of pocket; or they may reduce loans, work-study, or grant aid. Check with your school's financial aid office to find out how outside scholarships may affect your financial aid package.

Q: How are winners determined?

A: Although scholarships are competitive, keep in mind that you don't have to be the best student in your class to receive one; you simply need to be the best student who applies and matches the qualifications for that scholarship.