Understanding the Scholarship Hierarchy

- **Institutional Aid & FAFSA:** The vast majority of gift aid comes directly from the universities themselves or the federal government. If a student's dream school is out of reach, the best bet is usually a higher GPA/test score for merit aid, not a flurry of small outside scholarship applications. *Side note: federal aid rules are changing due to the BBB (Big Beautiful Bill).*
- **State Aid:** Programs like Bright Futures are the most reliable way to cover tuition. Students are encouraged to work hard to meet those benchmarks, even if they think they're heading out of state.
- **Local Scholarships:** Organizations like the Collaboratory or local foundations are fantastic, but they are highly competitive. These are great gap fillers, but rarely cover the whole bill. See list below.
- **Microscholarships:** Sites like FastWeb and Niche are often what students find first, but they are also the hardest to win. The return on investment for the time spent on these is often very low.

(Mostly) Local College Scholarship Opportunities

Scholarship Name	Website	Deadline (if known)
Collaboratory of SWFL	https://collaboratory.org/more/our-scholarships-program/	Annually in January
Uncommon Friends of SWFL	https://uncommonfriends.org/programs/scholarships/	Annually in May
St. Vincent de Paul Step Forward	Paper application sent to seniors yearly	Annually in May
FMB Lions Club Scholarship	https://fmblions.com/scholarship-applications/	
Sanibel Captiva Lions Club Scholarship	https://www.sanibelcaptivalionsclub.com	
Foundation for Fraternal Excellence	https://foundationfe.org/highschoolscholarship/	Annually in April
Kantner Foundation Scholarships	https://www.kantnerfoundation.org/	Annually in June
Hagan Scholarship Foundation	https://haganscholarships.org	
McDonalds HACER Scholarship	https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us/community/hacer.html	Annually in February
Knights of Columbus Scholarships	https://www.kofc.org/resources/scholarships/	
Ancient Order of Hibernians Scholarships	https://aoh.com/scholarships/	
Fort Myers Beach Community Foundation	https://fmbcommunityfoundation.com/	Annually in March
Fort Myers Beach Kiwanis	https://www.fortmyersbeachkiwanis.org/page/scholarships	Annually in April

FGCU Foundation Scholarships	https://www.fgcu.edu/admissionsandaid/financialaid/undergraduate/typesofaid/fgcufoundationscholarships	Annually in March
Cape Coral Garden Club	https://www.gardenclubofcapecoral.com/awards/meritawards/	Annually in February
Organization of Latino Actuaries	https://members.latinoactuaries.org/page/OLA-Scholarship-Avanza-2026	Annually in March
Fort Myers Villas Neighborhood Scholarship	Paper application sent to seniors yearly	Annually in February
Sanibel Captiva Rotary	https://www.sanibelrotary.org/index.php?storyid=326979	Annually in March/April
Epilepsy Foundation Scholarships	https://www.ucbepilepsyscholarship.com/	
Hispanic Scholarship Fund	https://www.hsf.net/scholarship	
Marine Industries Association	https://miaswf.com/scholarship-opportunities/	
SWFL Scholarship Finder	https://www.swflscholarships.org/finder/	
Raise.Me	https://www.raise.me/	Ongoing, can start in 9th grade - guaranteed
Florida Bright Futures	https://www.floridabrightfutures.gov/	Students have until August after graduation to meet qualifying scores

**Additional Scholarship opportunities are posted on Scoir throughout Senior Year.*

Bright Futures Benchmarks

Type	16 High School College-Preparatory Course Credits[1]	High School Weighted Bright Futures GPA	College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year (ACT®/CLT®/SAT®)[2]
FAS	4 - English (three must include substantial writing) 4 - Mathematics (at or above the Algebra I level) 3 - Natural Science (two must have substantial laboratory) 3 - Social Science 2 - World Language (sequential, in same language)	3.50	2025-26 Graduates: 29/95/1330 2026-27 Graduates: 29/95/1330
FMS		3.00	2025-26 Graduates: 24/82/1190 2026-27 Graduates: 24/82/1190

FAS pays 100% tuition; FMS pays 75% tuition at a public university in FL