

SCHOLARSHIP POWER!

A GUIDE TO APPLYING
FOR SCHOLARSHIPS
FOR THE
LEYDEN SENIOR CLASS



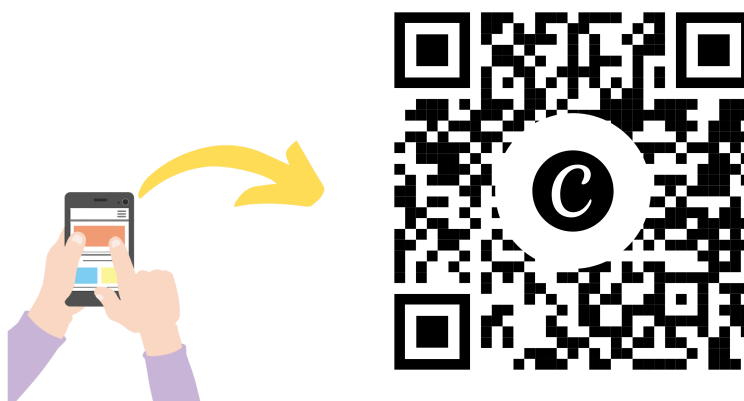
Compliments of Leyden High Schools-Student Services

Introduction

Applying for scholarships is probably a new activity for you. It can be challenging and time-consuming to complete each application, but it also offers an opportunity to learn more about yourself. Additionally, the rewards can be VERY worthwhile: Scholarship awards can range anywhere from a few dollars to full coverage of all college expenses (tuition, room, meal plan, fees, books, etc.)!!!

This booklet is intended to help you and your family navigate this process. Read the booklet completely before you submit any applications. Any further questions you have regarding scholarships can be directed to your counselor.

**TO ACCESS A DIGITAL COPY OF THE BOOKLET
WITH DIRECT LINKS TO RESOURCES, SCAN THE QR CODE**



Terms You Should Know

Before you begin your scholarship search, you will need to understand the following terms:

- **SCHOLARSHIP** – A form of financial aid given to students to help pay for their education. Scholarships are a form of gift aid and do not have to be repaid. Often restricted to students in specific courses of study or with academic, athletic, or artistic talent.
- **MONETARY AWARD** – Award given in \$\$.
- **HONORARY AWARD** – A recognition award; no money is associated with the award.
- **NO-NEED SCHOLARSHIP** – An award issued without regard to financial need.
- **MERIT SCHOLARSHIP** – An award based only on your talents, merits, and/or achievements with no regard to financial need.
- **NEED-BASED AWARD** – An award where financial need is taken into consideration along with your talents, merits, and achievements.
- **ONE-TIME AWARD** – A scholarship that is only awarded for one academic term or year.

- **RENEWABLE AWARD** – A scholarship which you can receive for a certain number of years, provided you meet the renewal criteria.

Deadlines

Scholarship sponsors often set deadlines which they **strictly** follow. If the scholarship specifies that your application must be **received** by a certain date, this means that the college or organization must have your application in possession by that date. Some forms indicate that you must have your application **postmarked** by a certain date. This requires that the date stamped on the application by the post office is no later than the specified postmark date.



If the application requires a transcript, you should make a [School Links](#) request **at least two weeks prior** to the scholarship deadline.

TIP: Add scholarship deadline dates to your calendar. Give yourself a reminder for one week before its due so you have it mailed/submitted on time.

Should You Apply For Scholarships?

If you are reading this booklet, you should seriously consider applying for some awards! However, you might think that you don't have anything special to offer. **DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT!**

Do you know who else is applying for the scholarship in which you are interested? Do you know how many applicants there are? Do you know who is reviewing the applications? Do you know that the other applicants are more qualified than you are? Your answer to most of these questions is probably NO!

The students who win scholarships are *those who apply*, not necessarily those who are the most intelligent or talented. Remember, you have everything to gain and nothing to lose by submitting scholarship applications!

Even if you do not win a scholarship, filling out applications is a good experience. It helps you begin to feel more comfortable talking about yourself and highlighting your talents, skills, and accomplishments. This is a skill that is beneficial in both the college application and job search processes.

For Which Scholarships Should You Apply?

Hopefully, you are now **convinced** that **YOU** should apply for scholarships! So what is your next step? Select those scholarships that you have the best chance of winning.

Generally speaking, you need to follow the criteria identified on the scholarship application. For example, if the application states that you must have a minimum 3.0

cumulative GPA to apply, then your GPA should not be lower than this. (If you are uncertain what your cumulative GPA is, check with your counselor.) Having a higher GPA than the minimum indicated could increase your chances of winning the scholarship.

If the scholarship application indicates that you must plan to major in a certain field, or that you must attend a college in Illinois, you must meet these criteria. Look for clues as to what might be the most important factors for each award. If you have questions, ask your counselor for assistance.

Most importantly, if it looks like you have a chance, **apply!** Remember, **you have everything to gain and nothing to lose!**

There are no limits to the number of scholarships for which you can apply. You can also accept any amount of awards you receive, as long as you do not exceed your college expenses. The only exception would be if the award you receive is not tied to attending college.

Types of Scholarships

Scholarships are sponsored by a variety of different groups:

- **Colleges and universities** offer awards in order to recognize and attract quality students. Scholarships may be based on academic merits; athletic, musical, or artistic talents; or involvement in specific clubs or activities, such as community service. *Of all available scholarship sources, these awards are often the highest in monetary value!*
- **Organizations** such as local Rotary or Kiwanis clubs offer scholarships to those students who meet their designated criteria.
- **Unions and companies** sponsor awards for students whose parents are union members or are employed by the companies, respectively.
- Students who are members of certain **religious congregations** may be eligible for church-sponsored or religiously-affiliated scholarships.
- **Ethnic groups** offer awards to students who can claim ancestry in these groups; the Hispanic Scholarship Fund (<https://www.hsf.net/>) is an example of a resource available to students.
- **Professional associations** sponsor scholarships for students planning to major in certain subjects or pursue certain careers.
- **Veterans' groups** sponsor scholarships and contests for students in general and specifically for students whose parents or grandparents are veterans.
- **Privately funded** scholarships in recognition or memory of some individuals may be offered to students who exemplify characteristics or interests of that person.
- Some organizations and colleges sponsor **contests** to win



scholarship money. Contests may require an essay, speech, portfolio, etc.

- **Military** scholarships for each branch of the armed forces are provided through ROTC programs and military academies. Upon graduation from college, recipients must fulfill a military commitment.

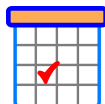
Who Else is Applying for Scholarships?

Competition for scholarships may be national in scope or may be limited to Illinois, the Chicago metropolitan area, Cook County, or Leyden High Schools. National, state, and Chicago metropolitan awards are too numerous to mention in this booklet but are available from other sources (see the “Scholarship Sources & Resources” section for information).

Local Scholarships

Local sponsors in the Leyden Township area have been very generous in offering scholarships to our seniors. Since these local awards are **ONLY** offered to Leyden students, they offer the greatest opportunities for you to win! The following local scholarships have been offered in previous years:

- Dr. Dilip and Dr. Krishna Patel Scholarship
- Donald E. Stephens Academic & Athletic Scholarship
- East/West Leyden Parents’ Club Scholarship
- Franklin Park District 84 PTA/Hester Junior High Scholarship
- Franklin Park Firefighters Local 1526 Scholarship
- Franklin Park Kiwanis Club Scholarship
- Gene Haas Scholarship
- Gottlieb Memorial Hospital Auxiliary Scholarship
- Illinois Federation of Teachers Local 571—Leyden Council Scholarship for Future Educators
- Kevin “Big Kat” Foundation Scholarship
- Lucia Ramirez Community Involvement Scholarship
- Robert Radak Memorial Scholarship
- Rotary Club of Chicago-O’Hare Scholarship
- Rundquist Opportunity Scholarship
- Schiller Park Firefighters Local 5230 Scholarship
- Smerz-Horvath Athletic Scholarship
- Student Council Scholarship



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: The **Leyden Local Scholarship application** will open in

January (subject to change). The application offers you an opportunity to apply to over 25 local scholarships using one application. Don't miss out on this opportunity!

Scholarship Sources & Resources

There are a wide variety of websites that allow you to conduct **FREE** scholarship searches.



- CollegeScholarships.org: www.collegescholarships.org
- Fastweb: www.fastweb.com
- FinAid: www.finaid.org
- Scholarships.com: www.scholarships.com
- [SENIORS: LIVE SCHOLARSHIP LIST](#)

Scholarship Lists and/or Search Engines Inclusive of Undocumented Students



- Immigrants Rising:
www.immigrantsrising.org/resource/list-of-undergraduate-scholarships
- IACAC: www.iacac.org/undocumented/money

[Bonus Resource: Sharing the Dream Resources List for Undocumented Students](#)

In addition to offering free scholarship searches, many of the above sites provide tools such as college search engines, tips for writing college admission essays, and information regarding financial aid.

In addition to scholarship search information, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission sponsors a site (www.isac.org) that provides details on Illinois-sponsored scholarship opportunities, including the Illinois Special Education Teacher Tuition Waiver Program and the Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois.

Finally, have your parents check with their employers or any clubs, organizations, and unions to which they belong. You should also check with your employer to see whether they offer any awards or scholarships for seniors.



Remember, there are many scholarship opportunities available—be proactive in seeking them out and applying!!!

Scholarship search services are available but often costly—fees for these services can cost well over \$1,000! You might hear or see these claims at seminars, online, or from telemarketers over the phone. If you decide to use a search service, check its reputation by contacting the Better Business Bureau, your school counselor, or the state attorney general's office. *Many of the services that these agencies provide are available to you **AT NO COST** through free scholarship search sites.*

Also, be aware that scholarship scams *do* exist. The Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Education caution students to look and listen for these telltale lines:

- *“The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”*
This claim doesn't mean anything. Many students are eligible for student loans—and because a student loan is considered “aid,” you won't be able to ask for a refund if that is all you are offered. No one can guarantee to get you a grant or scholarship.
- *“You can't get this information anywhere else!”*
Many services make you pay for information you could have gotten for free from a college financial aid office, state education agency, local library, the U.S. Department of Education, or the Internet.
- *“I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.”*
Search services do not, in most cases, provide awards directly to applicants, apply on behalf of applicants, or act as a disbursing agent for financial aid providers. It's also rare for a legitimate organization to charge a processing fee. Never give out a bank account or credit card information unless you know the organization you are giving it to is legitimate. You could be putting yourself at risk for identity theft.
- *“Take advantage of our scholarship search services now or you'll lose out on this chance!”*
Legitimate services don't use such pressure tactics—be wary of any person or organization that asks for money on the spot.
- *“Applying for student aid is complicated—we're the only ones who can help you through the process and find all the aid for which you are eligible.”*
There are MANY places to get free help applying for student aid! Check with your counselor for assistance.



What Do Scholarship Applications Look Like?

Scholarship applications typically ask you for some or all of the following information:

- Name
- Address

- Phone number
- Age/Date of birth
- Parents' occupations
- Post-high school plans
- GPA
- Extracurricular activities
- Community service activities
- Part-time employment
- Financial need
- Other scholarships for which you have applied

To assist you with the scholarship application process, we encourage you to fill out the “Facts About Yourself” section in this booklet or create your own similar electronic document. It will familiarize you with the scholarship application process, as well as help you recall what you have done during your high school career. Keep it, update it as needed, and have it ready to use for scholarship applications.



Often, you are asked to submit an **official transcript** along with your application. **Please use [School Links](#) to make a transcript request.**

To ensure that your application arrives in a timely fashion, you should submit it ***two weeks prior*** to the scholarship deadline.

When asked to describe your family's financial situation or any extenuating circumstances, discuss your response with your parents and/or your counselor. Your willingness to accurately and honestly describe your situation may be a determining factor for some scholarships. Remember, a scholarship committee does not know you—they can only evaluate what you write on your application. Practice applications can be found at the end of this document.

Writing Scholarship Essays

Some scholarship applications request that you respond to personal essay questions. You may be asked to discuss why you wish to apply for a particular award. You may need to discuss your educational plans and career goals. Or you may be required to write an essay highlighting your special interests, hobbies, honors, awards, values, and/or aspirations.

Other essays may not be as personal in nature. You may be asked to share your viewpoint on any number of topics, such as leadership, the community, the current political climate, or the U.S. Constitution.

When writing an essay or answering essay-type questions, you can enhance your chances of success if you consider the following suggestions:

- In most cases, **the scholarship selection committee does not know you!** They will only get to know you by what you write. **Make your essay interesting**—you want the committee to remember you.
- Discuss information otherwise not addressed in the application, or further elaborate on the objective portion of your application. **Avoid being redundant.** Quality is more important than quantity.
- Your essay should be **reflective, logical, well-organized, and free of spelling and/or grammatical errors.**
- Don't be afraid to talk about your achievements, as well as any difficulties you have faced and overcome. **Be confident but not conceited.**
- **Use specific examples** when describing your interests and achievements. Explain your involvements—why the things you choose to discuss are important to you. It is better to emphasize **depth of involvement** in a few activities rather than a long list of superficial interests.
- **Be honest but positive** in your approach. Try to avoid making negative statements.
- If asked why you are going to college, **avoid simplistic answers and reasons.** If you want to be an engineer, for example, cite some experiences from your own life that led you to this choice.
- Some students choose to use one or two essays and adapt them for various essay prompts—if you do so, be careful to **make sure that you fully address the questions being asked.** You want your essay to come across as both thoughtful and focused entirely on the topic at hand.



Remember, your responses can be the primary factor that distinguishes your application from any other! Retain your honesty, but show your imagination, as well.

Do's & Don'ts of Scholarship Applications

Consider the following suggestions when filling out a scholarship application:

- Read all directions carefully before you begin and **FOLLOW THESE DIRECTIONS!** Not following directions may result in your application being disqualified from consideration!
- Print, save, and/or make a copy of the application to use as a rough draft.
- Unless directed otherwise, type your application. Take particular care with grammar, punctuation, spelling, and neatness. Use formal English. If you make a mess of the application, request or download another.

- Have someone such as a teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult review your application prior to submission. This is especially important if the application includes an essay or some other type of written statement.
- Save/make a copy of your completed application for reference when completing others.
- If you need a recommendation, give the recommender at least two to three weeks to complete it.
- Send a thank you letter to the sponsor of any scholarships you receive.

Getting Letters of Recommendation

The application process for some scholarships requires submission of letters of recommendation. You may be asked to submit a letter from a teacher, counselor, employer, or other adult. **Select those people who know you best and will be able to write you a good recommendation.** To help them in writing the best recommendation, make certain to provide them with a personal resume or list highlighting your extracurricular involvements, talents, interests, and academic profile. There is a form available on the East/West Student Services section on the Leyden website that you can complete and give/send to prospective recommenders.

Give your recommenders **at least two to three weeks** (prior to the scholarship deadline) to complete their letters for you. Remember, you are probably not the only student for whom they are writing a recommendation! You may also wish to follow up with your recommenders to be certain they do not need any additional information about you.

What to Do When You Win

When you find out you have won a scholarship, make sure you write a letter of appreciation to the company, college, private sponsor, or association sponsoring the award.



It is also a nice touch to write another letter at the end of your first semester or first year in college to inform the scholarship sponsor how your semester or year has progressed.

Closing Remarks

Take advantage of all of the scholarship resources available to you. The most important thing to remember is *you can't win a scholarship you don't apply for!* The time you put in now could result in money later.

If you have any questions or concerns about the scholarship process, schedule an appointment to talk to your counselor. We are here to help you make your dream of attending college a reality.



GOOD LUCK WITH THE SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH!

PRACTICE APPLICATION

Facts About Yourself

Legal Name _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Parents' Legal Names _____

Counselor _____

Principal _____

School Address _____

School CEEB Code ____ East 141-960 ____ West 143-223 ____

Cumulative Unweighted GPA _____ / 4.0 scale

Cumulative Weighted GPA _____ / 4.0 scale

Names of three people (teachers, coaches, community members, employers, etc.) who can provide personal recommendations:

Courses for 1st semester:

Courses for 2nd Semester:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Standardized Test Information:

SAT: Date Taken: Month _____ Year _____
Critical Reading _____ Math _____
Writing _____

ACT: Date Taken: Month _____ Year _____
Composite _____
English _____ Math _____
Reading _____ Science _____
Writing _____

High School Activities:

Community Activities:

Service/Volunteer Work:

High School Awards:

Academic:

Athletic:

Service:

Community Awards:

Academic:

Athletic:

Service:

Work Experience:

Employer: _____

Job Title: _____

Dates of Employment: _____

Special Interests:
