



Scholarship Tips for College Students

Scholarships are free money that you don't have to repay when you graduate from college. By earning scholarships you can reduce the amount of money that you will need to borrow for loans. A few hours spent filling out scholarship applications could save you thousands of dollars.

Searching for Scholarships

Start your search early— don't wait and find out you already missed the deadline. Sometimes you have to apply a year ahead of time.

Search locally:

- ◆ Find out what scholarships are available for your college/ university/major/department.
- ◆ Ask TRIO professionals, advisors, counselors, and instructors about scholarships.
- ◆ Learn about transfer scholarships if you plan to transfer.
- ◆ Find out which local churches, clubs/organizations, credit unions, etc. offer scholarships. Your parents' employer or your employer may offer scholarships. Less people apply for these, so you may have a greater chance of winning.

Search online:

- ◆ Fastweb, College Board, CollegeNet, CollegeView, etc.

Don't forget to fill out the FAFSA! You may also need to fill out the CSS Profile if you are applying for private colleges.

Beware of scholarship scams. Never provide your bank account information or credit card number to apply for a scholarship.

Asking for Letters of Recommendation

Ask early! Most people need at least 3 weeks notice so that they will have enough time to craft a well-written letter.

Ask the right person. Choose someone who actually knows you like an instructor, coach, counselor, or employer. Do not ask a family member.

Give them information about the scholarship so they know what the scholarship committee is looking for.

Refresh their memory by talking to them or giving them a list of your career goals, volunteer/extracurricular activities, and anything else that will help them know more about you and how you fit the scholarship.

Make sure they know the due date and follow-up with them to make sure the letters have been sent.

Remember to say thank-you; send your reference a note or e-mail

My Scholarship Action Plan

Right now:

- Search for scholarships
- Make a list of scholarships and deadlines
- Get started on your personal essay
- Build relationships with people who can write you letters of recommendation later

3-4 weeks ahead of due date:

- Ask for letters of recommendation
- Revise, revise, revise your essay
- Collect and submit all required materials

Writing Your Essay

Grab the reader's attention and write about what makes you unique.

Include your career/educational goals, what skills you've gained through related work or volunteer experience, and how you fit specific requirements of the scholarship.

Follow the instructions carefully! Answer specific questions the essay prompt may ask and make sure to follow the word limit.

Recycle your essays for more than one application, but make sure to take the time to adjust them to fit each scholarship's specific guidelines and focus.

Check for spelling and grammar mistakes!

Have someone review your essay and provide advice such as a TRIO professional, instructor, or counselor.



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