

Scholarship Tips

Follow these few tips to get started on your scholarship journey and earn money!

1. Get organized.

Create a filing system so you can keep track of all the scholarship applications you have submitted and easily locate documents such as your transcripts, resumes, letters of recommendation, test scores, personal statements, and essays. File these using clearly-worded labels, such as Resume_Scholarship2018 or Essay_ScholarshipName_2018. Keep these stored in a folder on your computer, flash drive, and/or Google Drive to make sure you have back-up copies in case anything gets lost.

2. Create a separate professional email address for your scholarship search.

For professional emails, use your name or initials, and leave the inappropriate stuff out. It can feel overwhelming to be bogged down by emails, so a separate email account for scholarships can simplify the process. An appropriate email for Ricardo John Smith might be ricardo.j.smith@gmail.com or something similar. Monitor and manage your emails on a weekly or even daily basis and remove your email address from sites you no longer find helpful. Make sure to reply to emails in a timely manner.

3. Polish your social media accounts and update your privacy settings.

Be aware that some schools (and employers) will search online for social media accounts or profiles when evaluating your application - what you present to the public is extremely important in the online world. You could have a perfect application, but inappropriate or offensive photos, posts, comments, or statuses could potentially disqualify you. Check your privacy settings and make sure that what is on your public feed presents your best self!

4. Dedicate yourself to the search and plan ahead.

Searching for and applying for scholarships takes a lot of work and time, but it can really pay off. Make sure to start researching scholarships as soon as possible, as deadlines occur throughout the year. Mark deadlines in your calendar and create a list or excel spreadsheet. Search for scholarships according to your extracurricular activities, jobs, academic interests, and more. There are so many scholarships out there! Commit yourself to applying to scholarships a few hours every week if you can. Plan ahead.

5. Start your search where you plan to attend. Apply to local scholarships whenever possible.

Colleges and universities often have privately funded scholarships offered according to department/academic majors, academic status, and other categories. Research the requirements for these scholarships at each school. Check at your school and in your community and then use online search engines that match your profile to scholarships you meet requirements for. Keep in mind: you may have a greater chance of being awarded a local vs. national scholarship, so make sure to apply locally!

6. Do not avoid applying to scholarships because they require an essay.

Applying to the types of scholarships which require essays increases your odds! Scholarships which have essay requirements sometimes receive very few applications. If you need help writing a personal statement for a scholarship or college admissions essay, you can always come to SOAR and meet with one of our advisors or attend one of our scholarship and college essay writing workshops.

7. Talk to your counselor, friends, and family members about your scholarship applications.

Let everyone know you are looking for advice and assistance in applying for scholarships. There are many organizations which offer scholarships, so the more you ask around, the more opportunity you have to better your odds. Additionally, talk to any teachers and/or employers you might want to request letters of recommendations from. Talk to your counselor and/or advisor to see if they know of any scholarships you might be unaware of.

8. Complete the FAFSA.

Students who are eligible and are planning on higher education should complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online. You can complete the FAFSA Forecaster now and submit the actual application after October 1st of your senior year by logging on to www.fafsa.gov - IT IS FREE! It is always best to complete the FAFSA, even if you are not sure if you are eligible. Plus, some scholarships may require that you complete it!

Admissions • Financial Aid • Scholarships

Three Categories of Scholarships

Scholarships generally fall into one of three categories. Although category 1 scholarships may be the easiest to apply for, category 2 and 3 scholarships often yield higher scholarship amounts for winners.

Category 1 Scholarships:

Category 1 Scholarships are based on random selection or simple criteria, such as entering a drawing, filling out basic information, or taking a simple quiz to get a scholarship entry. Many students may apply to these types of scholarships as they take a small amount of time to complete.

Category 2 Scholarships:

Category 2 Scholarships may base requirements and qualifications on talents, abilities, academic and personal profiles, community service, interests, or background. Colleges sometimes automatically give these scholarships to eligible applicants as part of financial aid packages.

Category 3 Scholarships:

Category 3 Scholarships will require an essay or multiple essays. These awards may require Category 2 areas, and sometimes they may simply require an essay. Letters of recommendation are often required. Make sure that you give yourself enough time to apply to these types of scholarships.

You should apply for scholarships in each of these categories to improve your chances to win!

Scholarship Searches for Everyone

<http://cfgreateratlanta.org/> Georgia Community Foundation is the largest private provider of scholarships in Atlanta, awarding millions of dollars to help students achieve their education goals.

www.gsfc.org This site provides information about financial aid programs administered by the Georgia Commission for Postsecondary Education.

www.collegegreenlight.com This site offers information on college planning and scholarships. College Greenlight is a free online resource that addresses the needs of first-generation and underrepresented students and matches students to scholarship opportunities based on their profile. *Select SOAR as your community base organization when you complete your profile.

- www.salliemae.com/college-planning/college-scholarships/ This site offers access to an award winning database that contains more than 3 million scholarships worth over \$16 billion.

www.scholarship.com This website offers lots of current scholarships and matches you to scholarships based on your personal profile. Scholarships are organized by various categories.

www.scholarshipsAZ.org ALL students can go to college, regardless of immigration status. And yes, there are scholarships available too.

www.scholarships360.org This website is dedicated to bringing students one great scholarship opportunity each day.

www.unigo.com/ This website offers an easy to navigate scholarship database and a personalized scholarship search with over 3.6 million scholarships worth over \$14 billion.

**Good site for Graduate Students.*

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