

Scholarship Process for Seniors at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

At the beginning of the year, seniors should begin their search for scholarship money if they have a need for some financial assistance to attend post-secondary programs at a college, a university, or a technical center. Scholarships most often WILL NOT cover the cost for an ENTIRE post-secondary degree or program; they are merely SUPPLEMENTS which will help with book or tuition costs.

Federal financial aid is also available for families with the greatest need; this application for federal aid cannot be completed until **AFTER JANUARY 1 in the senior year** at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Parents are advised to complete their income taxes for the spring of their student's senior year BEFORE attempting to complete the FAFSA.

Please BEWARE! Seniors should never PAY for scholarship searches! Any requests for money for such searches with the promise of scholarship money are scams! All information that is available in the area of scholarships can be found for FREE. Read on for tips on how to search!

BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIPS

How does a senior qualify for the FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

The Bright Futures scholarship is one of the best scholarships that students can earn because it covers a portion of tuition charges for 2-4 years of post-secondary programs in the state of Florida.

Students, from the beginning of freshman year in high school, are encouraged to keep their academic grades high in order to qualify for Florida **Bright Futures** scholarships if they plan to attend a college, university, or tech center in the state of Florida. The state uses lottery money to fund these academic scholarships which are currently based upon academic grade point average (GPA) as calculated by the state computer system, ACT/SAT test scores, and volunteer hours.

At the conclusion of 8 semesters of high school, students earning these scholarships can supplement their TUITION COSTS for college or a tech center. The state legislature controls the REQUIREMENTS for these scholarships and can change the requirements at will. Each student who aspires to one of these awards must keep track of the possible changing requirements at <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/>. There are also requirements to continue these scholarships each year as students progress through their post-secondary programs.

How to apply for Bright Futures

The CXC Rtqi tco 'F ktgevt takes all seniors to the Tguqwtg Lab to fill out the "Florida Financial Aid Application" when it becomes available online at the beginning of December. It is each student's responsibility to make sure he/she earns the appropriate college entrance test scores and turns in the required number of volunteer hours by the end of senior year in order to be eligible.

Parents and students must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), www.fafsa.ed.gov, as a requirement to receive Bright Futures money even if they will not qualify for any additional federal aid from the program.

Additional information about Bright Futures can be found at www.flvc.org.

NOTE: Charlotte County sends senior transcripts to the state at the end of first semester in the senior year AND in JULY after seniors graduate because qualifying ACT/SAT test scores for seniors are still accepted from the June test dates AFTER graduation in May.

IMPORTANT SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

WHAT KINDS OF SCHOLARSHIPS EXIST?

- **Depending upon the student and the student’s family, scholarships MIGHT be available for seniors based upon disabilities, ethnicity, state of residence, military service, employer, etc.** Scholarships are awarded based upon achievement, need, or both. Many scholarships have other requirements – they may only be offered to students who live in a certain locale, are interested in a certain major, or who have a certain disability.
 - **Scholarships are available from different sources at the national, state, college/university, and local levels.** Most scholarships have different requirements. Students must READ the specifics for each scholarship opportunity and comply with every requirement, e.g. an attached transcript or letters of recommendation or deadline date or requested essay. Many scholarship committees reject applications that are not completed as they request.
 - **Students need to aggressively research scholarship opportunities.**
 - Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) is a state operated site offering students several scholarship websites. Financial Aid information can be found under the Student Services Tab.
 - Some websites ask students to enter specific information about themselves so scholarship opportunities can be sent to them via email, for example:
 1. www.fastweb.com
 2. College Board Scholarship Search found at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/scholarships-grants>
 - The local newspaper often advertises scholarships available in the local community. Watch the Charlotte Sun especially during second semester.
 - Each college or university has a Financial Aid tab on its website pertaining to available scholarships and an explanation of the financial aid process. Students need to examine the websites of the schools to which they are applying or have been accepted. Deadlines are important in this process.
 - Parents should inquire at their places of worship and employment or from the organizations in which they participate to see if any scholarships exist for graduating seniors.
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