

YOUR JOURNEY TO COLLEGE

Scholarships



There is approximately fourteen billion dollars of scholarship monies available each year from over two million organizations. While that sounds like scholarship money may be easy to come by, that is not always the case as competition is fierce. Searching for and applying for scholarships takes time and effort but has the potential for a big payoff. It is important to begin early and stay organized throughout the process. You can begin searching for scholarships in grade nine and even earlier. If you are motivated and determined, you may secure substantial funding to help you on your path to a college education.

Scholarship money is available through both public and private institutions. You can increase your odds by being tenacious – by applying to as many scholarships as you find that matches your profile. Generally speaking, you can expect to receive money for one out of every one hundred scholarships you research; about one out of every ten you apply to. Don't overlook the smaller scholarship sources – they add up. You will increase your odds by applying to as many sources as possible and by following these tips:

Highlight your community service involvement and leadership positions.

Apply only if you meet the eligibility criteria.

Do not omit any questions and make sure your application is error free.

Write a powerful, creative essay that answers the question asked – customize your essay for each application.

Mail or submit your application well before the deadline.

Make sure you have the correct postage on the envelope and that it is addressed correctly.

Enclose all supporting documents in the manner requested.

Demonstrate what sets you apart from other candidates and highlight what you are passionate about.

Make sure you have set appropriate privacy settings are on your Facebook account and other Internet sites.

There are scholarships that everyone can apply to. They will be based on certain criteria: academic, athletic, community service, special talents and there are also essay based scholarships. Keep a list of the scholarships you are applying to and be cognizant of the deadline dates. It may be helpful to compile a spreadsheet with information such as the name of the scholarship, deadline date and materials needed. If you are applying to scholarship programs in senior year, you will find that they are similar to college applications in regard to the documents requested.

The Internet contains great resources for scholarship searches. Some helpful websites are listed below as well as some written resources. If you are using a book for scholarship searches, make sure the book has been published within the year. Unions, banks, private & public foundations as

well as your parents' employers may offer programs as well. Don't overlook your high school Guidance Office. They should publish a listing of offerings for students each month, particularly in senior year. If the program is offered through the high school, you have a greater chance of winning those scholarships. Research scholarships available at the colleges you are applying to and contact the Financial Aid Office for direction. You can find information on scholarships at individual colleges at www.meritaid.com. Do not forget to submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1st of senior year; this form can be found at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Filing this form may offer many grant & loan programs. Another overlooked source of college funding are CLEP exams – College Level Exam Program sponsored by the College Board. There are a number of CLEP exams that you can sit for at the college level for a small fee. These exams could grant you from 3 to 6 credits per exam if you pass; they are graded on a Pass or Fail basis. You can find information on this program at www.clep.collegeboard.org.

There are some scams that you should be aware of in regard to scholarship promotions. Do not apply for scholarships that charge a fee, require personal information such as a photo or social security number or guarantee that you will be granted a scholarship. Beware of free seminars that promise funds as well. A legitimate scholarship organization should provide valid contact information and they will not solicit you by phone or email.

A Sampling of Internet resources:

www.fastweb.com
www.studentscholarshipsearch.com
www.scholarships.com
www.scholarshippoints.com
www.supercollege.com
www.collegeanswer.com

A sampling of books with Scholarship information:

The Ultimate Scholarship Book: Billions of Dollars on Scholarship, Grants and Prizes, Gen Tanabe & Kelly Tanabe
Scholarships, Grants and Prizes, Peterson's
Scholarship Handbook, College Board
Kaplan Scholarships, Kaplan
How to Write A Winning Scholarship Essay: 30 Essays that Won Over \$3 Million in Scholarships, Gen Tanabe & Kelly Tanabe

www.yourjourneytocollege.com