

The Scoop on Scholarships

Scholarships are awarded to students by generous companies, organizations, and individuals who are committed to helping students achieve their goals. Scholarships come in all shapes and sizes and are awarded for a variety of reasons, such as financial need, academic achievements, special interests, or other criteria. Many people think of scholarships as **free money** because, unlike loans, they don't have to be paid back. Before you begin your scholarship search, consider these tips:

Start early. Researching scholarships and completing applications can take time, so the sooner you get started, the better.

Get organized. Before you submit the first application, you can prepare by gathering these items:

- High school transcript
- Parents' financial information and tax returns
- GPA
- SAT and/or ACT scores
- Your activities list

Keep track of everything you do. Maintain an activities list and update it often. Be sure to include:

- Volunteer work
- Community service
- Extracurricular activities
- Achievements
- Awards or recognitions
- Church involvement
- Interests and hobbies
- Leadership experience
- Employment

Pay attention to particulars. Make sure you're familiar with application deadlines, eligibility requirements, and supporting materials requested. Never submit an incomplete application, and don't waste time applying for scholarships unless you're eligible.

Proofread. Before you submit an application, check for spelling and grammar and have someone else double-check your work.

Keep copies on your computer. Many applications have similar questions, so you may be able to copy and paste responses onto future applications.

Watch for the award notice. Be on the lookout for an email or letter in the mail announcing a scholarship award and pay close attention to the requirements. Be sure to respond promptly and by the deadline.

Where to Find Scholarships

- Start with the institution you plan to attend.
- Ask your high school counselor.
- Check local newspapers for scholarships offered by professional or service organizations (4-H, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc.).
- Find out if your employer or your parent(s)' employer offers scholarships.
- Use free scholarship databases at the public library.
- Search online:
 - FinAid**
www.finaid.org/scholarships
 - TG Adventures in Education**
www.aie.org/scholarships
 - FastWeb**
www.fastweb.com
 - Scholarships.com**
www.scholarships.com

Avoid Scholarship Scams!

If you're told one of these lines, chances are it's a scam.

- "The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."
- "I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship."
- "We'll do all the work. You just pay a processing fee."

*Source: Federal Trade Commission
www.consumer.ftc.gov*



GenTX-Victoria, a part of the statewide Generation TX movement, is a community-wide collaboration aimed at encouraging an entire generation of Texans to pursue education or training after high school.

You will be off to a good start by following these tips, but keep in mind that all scholarships have unique requirements. For example, some scholarship applications may require essays or reference letters, and some institutions may require you to complete the FAFSA before applying for scholarships.