



En español



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## Help Getting More Scholarships

There are hundreds of thousands of scholarships, but you have to find them and apply for them. Begin requesting applications in the summer after your junior year of high school so you can plan to apply based on each application deadline. Try to apply for as many scholarships as you think you may qualify for as possible, regardless of the award amount. This approach will help you maximize the amount of free (i.e., non-loan) money that you can use to pay for your higher education expenses.

### Ways to get organized.

There are several ways for you to get organized for the application process.

- **Expandable file** – Purchase an expandable file. This will allow you to keep and protect copies of your scholarship applications or printouts of applications that were submitted online.
- **Pictures** – Some applications request a photograph, which should be a head shot with only you in it. Keep it simple. Avoid using glamour shots.
- **Resume** – Prepare an academic résumé that includes all organizations, clubs, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities you have participated in. Include honors and awards you have received, from the ninth grade on, both from your school activities as well as from non-school activities.
- **Recommendations** – Gather at least three recommendations. Ask teachers, counselors, and members of the clergy early, because other students will also likely be requesting recommendations from them. Avoid including recommendations from family members or fellow students.
- **Transcript** – Keep copies of your high school transcript available in case it is requested as part of an application. If a scholarship committee does not specifically ask for an official transcript, include only a photocopy. If the committee requests an official transcript, you may obtain one from your high school counselors' office, and it must be in a sealed school envelope.
- **Essays** – A scholarship committee may request an essay(s) that asks you to reveal something about yourself. Topics may include providing your opinion on social matters, future goals, past achievements, or even an explanation of a financial need. Whenever possible, use these essays over and over, and edit them on a case-by-case basis to meet word count and formatting requirements, as specified by the scholarship committee.

Sample essay topics include:

- What are your future goals and plans?
  - Describe how you feel about an important social issue and provide your ideas for solutions.
  - What person or event has significantly contributed to your personal development?
  - What is your most meaningful personal accomplishment?
  - Do you have a financial circumstance that should be taken into consideration?
- **Other items** – Keep a record of all of the organizations and activities you have participated in since the ninth grade, all awards and achievements received since the ninth grade, and the names and addresses of the colleges and universities you are considering.

### Increasing your chances of obtaining scholarships.

There are several things you can do to increase your chances of obtaining scholarships.

- **Set up an appropriate e-mail address** - Make sure you set up and use an e-mail address that represents you well. Avoid using an e-mail address that leaves the wrong impression. For example, an e-mail address like Baby\_gurl05 should not be used. You can set up a free and appropriate e-mail address on a Web site such as Yahoo.com, Hotmail.com, or Gmail.com.
- **Protect the original application** - When you first receive a scholarship application, make copies, and work off those copies. After you've practiced your answers on the copies, transcribe the best version onto, and then submit, the original.
- **Track due dates** - Pay close attention to all due dates and track them on a calendar. Applications will not be considered if they are not received by the due date. • **Put documents in exact order** - Organize the items requested on the application in the exact order in which they are requested. For example, if the scholarship committee asks for the application, transcript, résumé and two letters of recommendation, make sure the documents are presented in that exact order.
- **Print neatly** - If submitting a paper application, please make sure to print very neatly. The committee must be able to read your answers.
- **Avoid including additional documents** – Do not include any additional information if it is not specifically requested. Extra documents may disqualify your application, and it sends the message that you can't follow directions.
- **Make copies and submit the application** – If you have a paper application, make a copy for your records before sending. It is recommended that you send an application with delivery confirmation so you have proof that it arrived before the deadline.

Start searching for scholarships right here on AIE with our [free scholarship search](#).

Special thanks to Sandra Joseph Taylor, author of *The Scholarship Manual - How to find money for college*, for her contributions to this page.