

## Tips for Applying for Scholarships

1. If you meet the minimum qualifications, apply for it. There are no guarantees you will get the scholarship (someone else may be more qualified than you), but if you don't apply, you are sure not to get it!
  - a. Never pay for scholarship applications.
2. Watch the deadlines for scholarships. That's your responsibility. If your application arrives after the deadline, you won't be considered. If your letters of recommendation are mailed separately, be sure they arrive on time, as well.
  - a. **Read the Application.** Start going through all the scholarships you are planning to apply for and determining if an essay is required.
  - b. Make a list of deadlines for the applications; give yourself a minimum of three to four weeks to work on the essay component.
  - c. Make sure **ALL** application materials are completed and included for submission.
3. Type your applications if possible, unless you are told to write in your own handwriting.
  - a. Save the essay and adjust it as needed so you can re-use it for other applications. Be sure that relevant, key points are added for each application and remove others that are not applicable.
4. The outward appearance of your application counts—neatness, punctuation, grammar, and spelling. ***Proofread!!!*** Have someone read it over (counselor, friend, parent, or teacher) before submitting.
  - a. Use your resources: library, TRiO, etc.
  - b. Read the essay requirements carefully.
  - c. Do a final check to make sure your essay addresses each requirement.
  - d. Research: even if it is an opinion piece, try to back your ideas up by research.
5. Ask your references well ahead of time to prepare a recommendation letter. Teachers and employers are busy; out of courtesy, give them a couple of weeks or more. They need time to write a letter that accurately and sincerely states why you deserve to receive that scholarship, how long they have known you and how they know you, your work ethic, extracurricular activities you are in, why you decided to receive a higher education, and what they think of you as a person/employee.
  - a. It is helpful to give your references a copy of the scholarship description and/or a "tip sheet" which lists information about yourself that would be especially good for them to mention in their letter of recommendation.
  - b. Ask them to keep a copy for future references. Also, ask if they mind if you keep a copy of their letter for future scholarships, unless they send the letter directly to the donor.
6. There are commonly asked questions or statements you may be asked to write about. Be prepared and think about what you would write. For example:
  - a. Make a statement about your short-term and long-term goals. (This shows them a commitment to your education.)
  - b. Describe any unusual family/personal circumstances that have affected your achievement in school, work experience, or participation in school activities.
  - c. List experiences pertaining to your field of endeavor: work, volunteer, etc.

- d. If your academic record does not accurately reflect your intellectual potential, please explain.
- e. Make a statement about your notable achievements or attributes, or about your personal and professional goals.

### **Writing an Essay**

***Don't be scared off by this!*** Stay within the word count. It should be typed and double spaced. You may be asked to write on a specific topic or to write an autobiography. Write about you. If it is appropriate, you may include any of the following:

- Name, address, date and place of birth, year and semester in school, the college you attend or will attend, ethnic background or tribal affiliation if appropriate, and the scholarship for which you are applying.
- What you will use the scholarship for (tuition, fees, books, room, board, gas, daycare, other supplies, computer, personal needs).
- Discuss your major, expected graduation date, education and career goals, extra-curricular activities, and current or past jobs.
- List any experiences which may have had an impact on you and your family in the past or while attending school, and any aspirations that you feel have helped you or led you to attend school.
- Finally, share anything else that will help the scholarship committee get to know you and why you deserve to be awarded this scholarship.

Your story doesn't have to be amazing—it just has to be real and honest. Be you!

***Good luck!*** Remember, it's people like you and I who will read your application. You want your application to express you as a person.

And, finally, ***don't give up!*** It's unlikely that you will receive *every* scholarship you apply for, but don't give up. Continue to apply until you receive one or more scholarships.

**REMEMBER...THE RESULTS ARE WORTH THE EFFORT!**