

Scholarship Guide

Hunt for Scholarships: How to Start

- **Go online.** Take advantage of free online scholarship searches, such as www.fastweb.com. Your college's Web site may also have a list of scholarships.
- **Search your community.** Who might offer scholarships?
 - Organizations in your neighborhood
 - Cultural organizations who provide awards based on ethnic background or heritage
 - Your parents' employers
- **Talk to faculty and your academic advisor.** Professors and academic advisors may know about grant opportunities. Ask them about grants and private and corporate sponsorships for which you might qualify.

Scholarships & the Current Student

How can you preserve your scholarship?

Is Your Scholarship Renewable?

If there is any question whether your scholarship has renewal provisions, talk to your school or scholarship sponsor as soon as you've won the scholarship. You may have to:

- **Submit a renewal application.** Scholarships may require you to submit a new application each academic year.
- **Maintain your grade point average (GPA).** You may need to maintain a minimum GPA to remain eligible.
- **Complete the courses you need.** You may be required to fulfill certain academic requirements, such as a certain number of credits or specific courses.
- **Keep track of your hours/credits.** Scholarships frequently require you to be considered a full-time student.

Is Your Scholarship Taxable?

Not sure? Ask the organization award sponsor or contact the IRS (www.irs.gov or 800-829-1040). Also, review IRS Pub. 520 (on the IRS site) that details scholarships and taxes.

Generally, a scholarship is *tax-free* if:

- You are a full-time or part-time candidate for a degree at a primary, secondary or accredited post-secondary institution.
- The award covers tuition and fees to enroll in or attend an educational institution.
- The award covers fees, books, supplies and equipment required for your courses.

A scholarship is considered *taxable* if it is used to cover:

- Room and board
- Clerical help
- Research
- Non-course-related equipment
- Travel

If your scholarship is **tax-free**, you won't have to file a tax return or report the award. But if you have a **taxable** scholarship, you will have to report your scholarship to the IRS.

Scholarship Essays: Master the Basics

Pay attention to details for a high quality essay.

Get organized. Brainstorm to generate some good ideas and then create an outline to help you get going.

Demonstrate originality and creativity. To catch the attention of a scholarship judge, find a hook that will interest the reader right away.

Show, don't tell. For example, if you're describing an activity you participated in, don't describe it in general terms. Be specific! What duties did you perform? What affect did it have on your life or the lives of others?

Develop a theme that fits the scholarship. What sort of student is the sponsor looking for? Include elements in your essay that complement the sponsor's expectations (without pretending to be someone you aren't).

Turn in a professional-looking essay. Write a second draft to catch mistakes and better organize your thoughts. If possible, type and double-space your essay. Check spelling and grammar. Finally, share your essay with friends, family or teachers for another proofread.

What Do Judges Look For?

Make it past the first round by following these simple rules:

- **Do you qualify?** Sounds simple, but students every year waste time by applying for awards they aren't eligible to win. If you don't qualify, don't enter.
- **Is your application presented well?** Type your essay application. Mark each page with your name, so even if your application gets separated, it can still be identified.
- **Did you include all required documents?** Required documents that are frequently left out of applications include: transcripts, references and a letter of recommendation.
- **Did you answer all of the questions?** Double-check that you haven't forgotten any required information.

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