

Personal Weaknesses:

Career Goals:

Work Experience:

POSITION	YEAR	EMPLOYER
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Final Tip: Stay organized! Keep copies of all important letters, forms and applications. Keep everything in one place so you can find it quickly and easily if you need to.

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Scholarship Application Tips



- Including:**
- Scholarship Etiquette
 - Applications
 - Essays

To the student.....

Now that you've decided to apply for a scholarship, the work begins. You have one chance to make a first impression so it is critical that you give your application some thought. The student record in this booklet is useful for organizing information. Fill out the form carefully and then have a parent or teacher check it to be sure you haven't missed anything.

Most scholarships have an application procedure and deadline. If you have done some research, you should know the scholarships for which you are eligible. The next step is to work through the requirements carefully. Resist the temptation to scribble down one copy and send it off.

The main reason many potential candidates don't apply is that there seems to be a lot of work involved. When taken in small steps the process does not have to be overwhelming.

Some applications require a short essay, usually no longer than 600 words. Topics for the essays vary, but they involve the attitudes and values of the applicant in some way. Essays are judged on form and content. They should be well written and creative.

The more scholarships for which you apply, the more chances you have to win. Create a balance between quality and quantity. It is important that you take time to do paperwork correctly. If you don't someone else will. Prioritize the scholarships to which you want to apply. Do those that best match your background, experience and goals first. If time runs out and you can't get to all of the scholarships on your list, at least you have applied to those you have the best chance of winning. Remember the application represents you.

Scholarship information is available on the LaGrange County Community Foundation website at www.lccf.net making access available at home, at schools and at public libraries.

Wishing you success!

Your friends at LaGrange County Community Foundation

Community Service (volunteer work done outside the school):

SERVICE	YEAR	REFERENCE PERSON
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Leadership Experience (team captain, coach, manager):

ACTIVITY	YEAR	REFERENCE PERSON
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Hobbies, Interests and Recreational Sports:

Personal Strengths:

Extenuating Circumstances (events that had an effect upon recent school performance like a death in the immediate family, prolonged illness or injury, family bankruptcy or unemployment, frequent change of schools or travel, including exchanges):

Awards (school awards and prizes for academic subjects, athletics and community recognition):

AWARD	YEAR	REFERENCE PERSON
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School Activities (clubs, teams, yearbook, student government, stage, committees):

ACTIVITY	YEAR	REFERENCE PERSON
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Music Training (both in and out of school):

INSTRUMENT/VOICE	YEAR	REFERENCE PERSON
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Scholarships—

How do I find them?

Each year large scholarships are awarded by nationally recognized companies. While you should definitely apply for these awards, keep in mind that competition is stiff and of the thousands who enter only a few will win. And don't overlook one of the best sources of scholarships—your own community.

Possible sources:

Counselor/Financial Aid Office

—If you are a high school student, start with an appointment with your counselor to discuss financial aid. Ask if scholarships requiring nomination are available.

Community Organizations—

Call the five largest organizations in your area and ask if they offer scholarships.

Church or Religious Organizations—

If you or your parents are members of a religious organization, check with the leaders to see if scholarships are offered.

Employer—Ask your work manager if your company has any scholarships available.

Internet—Among the databases to choose are: SuperCollege.com and www.fastweb.com. One of the largest directories of information is Yahoo. They have an information page on education and information about preparing for college and paying for college. This is a great starting point.

Local Businesses—Check with the businesses or your local Chamber of Commerce to see if there are local businesses that offer scholarships.

Parents' Employers—Your parents should speak to someone in the human resources department about scholarships offered by their companies.

Parents' Organizations—Service, political, ethnic and recreational organizations often offer scholarships.

Parents' Unions—Your parents should speak with the union officers about scholarships.

School Activities—Bands, newspapers, academic clubs, athletic organizations, and service organizations often have scholarships that are awarded to outstanding members.

General Application Guidelines

The application is a vital part of winning any scholarship. It is necessary to construct an application which will carry you through the first elimination. You can control how you portray yourself on paper.

Make application form triplets—The first thing to do with scholarship applications is to make two photocopies. A spare copy is your insurance should you make a mistake. Regardless of how many copies you make, never use your last clean copy of the form. Trust us—and every student who has ruined their original at 2 a.m. on the day the application was due. It is well worth the investment of a few dimes to have plenty of extra copies.

Crafting a Winning Application

You need to present yourself as the perfect applicant for each scholarship for which you apply by displaying how you meet the criteria. In each application you may in fact present different aspects of you. For a sports scholarship you may focus on your abilities on the court and get your coach to write your recommendation. For a science award you might focus on your winning science project.

Be a neat freak—When it comes to applications, be incredibly neat. Submitting an application with globs of correction fluid, scratched out words and/or illegible hieroglyphics will severely diminish your message. In a sea of hundreds of other applications, you don't want yours to be penalized by presentation.

Look for recycling opportunities—The second scholarship you apply for will be quicker and easier than the first, and the third will be quicker and easier than the second. This is because for each successive application, you can draw on the materials you've developed for the previous one.

Whatever the scholarship, the key is to determine what values and qualities the scholarship committee is looking for in the winner and construct every part of your application (essay, recommendation, interview, etc.) to demonstrate how you meet these objectives. Prioritize the information you present, and rank your accomplishments according to the following:

Personal Student Record

Since most students apply for scholarships in their year of graduation, they find that time runs short and the quality of their paperwork suffers. When it comes to a choice between doing well on a term essay or sweating over the details of a scholarship form, students usually choose to put time into their schoolwork and forget about scholarships. In order to help prepare for the various forms you will likely see in your last year of high school, the following should be completed in the first term of that year. The "Reference Person" column refers to the individual(s) who can substantiate your record. This form should NOT be sent with applications. However, you could give it to people who are writing letters of recommendation to give them background information.

Full Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Parents' Employer(s) _____

University/College Choices:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Program(s): _____

Special Characteristics (physical disabilities, identified learning disabilities, giftedness):

Writing a Winning Scholarship Essay

To begin, just start writing and later edit your work. Essays are the window into the hearts and minds of applicants for the scholarship committee. They should be original, well written, honest and describe something meaningful about the applicant. They should interest the reader and make him/her care about the writer. Make sure your essay answers the question asked. Essays need to be appropriate in word choice and tone for the audience who will read them.

Pointers:

1. Answer the question.

Ace the Scholarship Interview

The interview is usually the final stage. Here are some pointers:

Practice—Have a friend, parent or teacher give you an interview.

Arrive early—Remember to relax while waiting.

Relax and be confident—Smile and give a proper handshake. Remember to smile. Avoid nervous tapping, throat clearing, and defensive postures.

Focus—Stay focused. Make eye contact—Look into the eyes of panelists—all panelists.

2. Be original.
3. Don't "thesaurize;" big words are fine, but only in the appropriate context.
4. Spend the most time on your introduction. Use it to grab the interest of the committee.
5. The paragraphs that follow the introduction must relate to the introduction.
6. Give a rough draft of your essay to others (parents or teachers) to read.
7. Revise, revise, revise. You are only allowed so many words or so much space; use them/it wisely.

Answer questions—Pause and think before answering. Be honest. Speak slowly and clearly.

Try to include everyone—Don't focus on one person. Spread your attention around evenly.

End on a professional note—Stand and say thank you and goodbye. Send a handwritten note the next day.

Note: Don't be upset if someone is taking notes during your interview. If the group is to compare results, they must collect written scores.

Fit with scholarship organization's goal—The most important factor in prioritizing your achievements is to show they fit with the goal of the scholarship.

Scope—Prioritize your accomplishments by their scope, or how much of an impact they have made.

Uniqueness—Since your application will be compared to that of perhaps hundreds of others, include accomplishments that are uncommon.

Write to Impress—Delivery of your application is very important. You must present your information in a compelling way.

Think carefully—Keep in mind that while you may be applying for a public service scholarship you should also include at least a few academic achievements. For example, it does not hurt to list on an athletic scholarship that you also came in second place at the science fair. This should not be their first thing you list but it certainly should be included to show the committee that you have brains in addition to brawn.

Leadership is Always Better than Membership—It takes intelligence and creativity to be a leader. Because of this, many scholarships give extra points to reward leadership. Scholarship judges want to know that the

dollars will be awarded to someone who will not only make a difference in the future but who will also be a leader and motivate others to do so as well.

Extracurricular Activities & Hobbies—Scholarship committees want to see evidence that you do more than read textbooks and take exams. They want to know that you have a variety of interests and that at least some of these transcend studying.

Honors & Awards—For applications that ask for your honors and awards, highlight your accomplishments in a way that gets the scholarship committee to pay attention to your application. Impart some of that victorious roar and attitude that comes with being "the best".

Adjust to Fit the Space—As you fill out the application, you may find that you are trying to squeeze in too many details or that you have more room and can expand on your most impressive achievements. You have limited space in which to cram a lot of information. You will need to do a lot of editing and may even have to omit some of your accomplishments. Don't forget to adjust font sizes and line spacing if necessary—just don't sacrifice readability. (i.e. Don't go below 10 point fonts.)

Top Scholarship Do's

- DO** make sure you are doing your rough draft on a photocopy of the form and not an original.
 - DO** get your parents or an adult to proofread your rough draft. Every one makes mistakes. You won't get it right the first time.
 - DO** be sure to plan ahead. Many applications require Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores and your Social Security number. Since such things take time to acquire, you had better get them in advance.
 - DO** be certain that you have read over the instructions carefully before you begin, taking careful note of the deadline date. Look at all the questions and make a note of the ones that you will want to discuss with your counselor.
 - DO** try to be creative. Unless it is stated explicitly otherwise, feel free to personalize your application with a good photograph of yourself or by enclosing an additional reference or two.
 - DO** apply for as many scholarships as possible. Once you have done all the preparation for one application the rest are easier to complete.
 - DO** type the final copy or write it by hand, using blue or black ink and spacing your writing carefully.
 - DO** make a photocopy of your entire application and file it safely. It may be useful if the original goes missing or if you prepare a similar application. It also may be useful if you are called for an interview.
 - DO** remember it is best to get your completed application to its destination at least one week before the final deadline.
 - DO** ask for help from your counselor or another adult/teacher if you get stuck while filing out forms. If necessary you can contact the sponsor for more information.
- ALWAYS REMEMBER:** Most scholarship sponsors give awards out of a sense of generosity. Classy recipients always send thank-you letters to show their appreciation for the recognition and money.

Top Scholarship Don'ts

- DON'T** prioritize quantity over quality. It's not the quantity of accomplishments that is important, it's the quality of your contributions.
- DON'T** stretch the truth. Tall tales are prohibited.
- DON'T** squeeze to the point of illegibility. Scholarship applications afford minimal space. It's impossible to fit everything you want. Don't try by sacrificing legibility.
- DON'T** write when you have nothing to say. In general it is not a good idea to leave any area blank. You don't need to fill the entire space, but you should make an effort to list something in every section. If you've never held a job, then don't list anything under work experience. If, however, you painted your grandmother's house and got paid for it, consider listing it if you don't have any other options. If you don't have something meaningful to write, leave it blank.
- DON'T** create white-out globs. If it's sloppy, start over.
- DON'T** procrastinate. Don't think you can finish your applications the night before they're due.
- DON'T** be less than perfect. You can have imperfections. Just don't exhibit them on paper.
- DON'T** miss the deadlines.
- DON'T** turn in incomplete applications. Make sure you have everything you need before sending your application.
- DON'T** underestimate what you can convey. The applications may appear to be short and simple. Don't undervalue them. In a small space, you can create a powerful story of why you should win.

Judging Scholarships

It may be helpful to understand a basic scholarship judging process.

1. "Weed out the junk" stage—The applications are opened and any which do not meet criteria or are not neat, clean and readable are discarded.
2. "Pick the contenders"—Judges now are looking at grades, community service, school

activities. Rudeness or spelling errors will matter.

3. "Pick the winner"—Discussion, votes or points are used to determine why one applicant stands out above others. Something needs to make you and your application stand out from the crowd in order to win.