

Find ways to fund your college education by using these free scholarship search tips.

Scholarship search tips

1. Begin your search early, and conduct as much research as you can. Apply for every scholarship for which you are eligible.
2. Meet all deadlines.
3. Follow directions. Provide everything that is requested, but no more than is required.
4. List all activities and honors, highlighting those that are relevant to the scholarship.
5. Neatness counts. Unless handwritten is required, your application should be neatly typed.
6. Make a photocopy of the application before you begin. If you make a mistake, you can start fresh with a clean copy. Also make a copy or scan the completed application, so you can resend it if the original is lost.
7. Ask for help if you need it. Don't hesitate to call the funding organization.
8. Write an essay that makes a strong impression. Tell a story and use personal examples.
9. Choose references that know you well and give them plenty of time to write a recommendation. Provide a stamped envelope to your references addressed to the address that is specified in the scholarship application.
10. Give your application (and/or essay) a final "once-over." Ask a friend, teacher, or parent to proofread it.

Beware of scams

- Read the fine print, and make sure you understand all terms and conditions before accepting any award.
- Be wary of companies that “guarantee” you’ll receive a scholarship, especially if their offer was unsolicited and/or they are requiring that you pay money for their services.
- Never provide any confidential or personal identification information to an unfamiliar person or organization.
- Remember that there are many free scholarship searches available, where you can get all the information you need at no charge.
- Contact the financial aid office at your college with any questions or concerns.
- Learn more about financial aid scams at the Federal Trade Commission's Scholarship Scams website:
www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams
- Call the federal Office of Inspector General hotline at 1-800-MISUSED (647-8733) to report suspected identity theft or fraud.

Start your search:

- Talk to your high school counselor.
- Check with your college financial aid office.
- Visit the local library.
- Ask local businesses and organizations.
- Go to online scholarship search engines.

For a listing of scholarship search engines and for more information, visit Mapping Your Future at **MappingYourFuture.org** or go directly to scholarship resources at **MappingYourFuture.org/paying/scholarshipsearch.cfm**

Mapping Your Future offers a list of websites along with scholarship tips on its website as a resource and a convenience to you. Mapping Your Future does not endorse these sites and is not responsible for the privacy practices or the content of these sites. We review our content regularly to ensure sites work as described; however, web addresses might be re-directed to another site in between reviews.