



## **Scholarship Tips**

### **Finding College Scholarships**

**Golden Rule: Never pay money to get money.**

If there is an offer to search scholarships for a fee, just know that the search is generally using the same websites that you can access on your own for no fee.

- Check the college website. Type scholarships or foundation in the search bar.
- Check your counselors office and/or school sponsored programs (Naviance/MCIS)
- Check your local businesses, organizations and your own workplace. Just simply ask the question; "Do you offer any scholarships for college going students?"
- Apply to as many scholarships as you have time for. But remember Quality matters, so choose quality over quantity if you must make a decision about that.
- Google has produced many scholarship matches. Again, the more defined your search the more likely you will find good results. Remember Rule #1 when using this technique

Utilize scholarship search programs such:

<http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/sPages/scholarshipsAll.cfm>

[www.Fastweb.com](http://www.Fastweb.com)

[www.scholarshipmonkey.com](http://www.scholarshipmonkey.com)

[www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

[www.collegeboard.com/pay](http://www.collegeboard.com/pay)

### **Essential Tips for landing Scholarships**

- List your accomplishments. You need to really think this through: your awards, your work, your volunteer efforts, your activities and your grades. You are in competition so leave nothing out.
- Be selective with your Letters of Recommendation – Great letters can make all the difference. Don't rush your writers. Give them time and as much information about you as possible. It is helpful to provide them with a brief resume or summary of your skills and goals. You can find a letter questionnaire form on our website at [www.mnsu.edu/ets](http://www.mnsu.edu/ets) under Forms. Also, you can ask for a couple general letters to be used at your discretion as some letters may be more fitting than others for some applications.
- Think about quality. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well. You don't want to leave essential information out – you want to show your best. The scholarship reader is deciding whether or not to invest in you. Make them realize you are well worth their investment.
- Personalize your essay when possible. Be passionate about your cause, your story, and your background. Stand out from the crowd. Show them you believe in the mission of their scholarship.
- Create a solid essay and you can use the core for many other scholarship essays, however, proof it carefully if you've done any personalization so you are not referencing the wrong organization.

- Clean up your social media. Yes, they can and many do look at your character beyond your written essay; it is advised that you remove inappropriate or immature material.
- Use a professional email (first name/last name) address and check it often.
- Be sure you read criteria for selection and address each point and how you match/meet that criteria.
- Proofread your essay

## **Winning Scholarships**

- Many scholarships are awarded after a successful first semester and require follow up with grades—don't miss the opportunity to receive your dollars.
- Write a THANK YOU to your donors if you are a recipient of the scholarship. This is good practice in general, but in some circumstances can lead to other opportunities based on your communication.
- In almost all cases, being awarded scholarship dollars does not affect your financial aid grant dollars. Most colleges apply the scholarship funds directly to your expected family contribution or they will reduce loans to lower your overall debt. Scholarships reduce your out of pocket contribution to your education.
- Continue to seek scholarships after your first year. Many scholarships look for college success and specific majors to award dollars, so continue to hunt down those dollars.