

## How to Apply for a Scholarship

Applying for scholarships is a lot like applying to colleges. You start with a large number of possibilities and cut that down to a short list of choices. Then you have to complete and submit applications that include essays, recommendations and lists of achievements that highlight your best qualities.

You may hear various suggestions about the best way to apply for scholarships. The truth is, what works for one person may not work for another. There are no secrets to applying. The best advice is to use common sense and follow directions.

Some scholarships have deadlines early in the fall of senior year. Mark the due dates on your calendar and work your way backward to figure out how much time you'll have to get each piece of the application finished.

Researching scholarships, requesting information and application materials, and completing applications all take time. Use [Scholarship Search](#) to get started.



I pretty much got a full ride my first year  
Adam, college senior

If you have a question about whether you qualify for a certain scholarship, contact the scholarship sponsor. There's no point in applying for a scholarship you're not eligible to receive.

Make a separate file for each scholarship and sort the files by application due dates.

You should also gather the items you'll need to apply. Many scholarships ask you to send some or all of the following:

- High school transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Financial aid forms, such as the [FAFSA](#) or [CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE](#)®
- Parents' financial information, including tax returns
- One or more essays

- One or more letters of recommendation
- Proof of eligibility for the scholarship (for example, proof of membership in a certain group)

You might also need to prepare for an interview. And if you're competing for talent-based scholarships, you'll probably need to audition or submit a portfolio.

Stick to the word limit for the essay. If supporting materials are not requested in the application, don't send them.

Use common sense, start early and follow directions.

Before you send the application in:

- Make sure you filled in all the blanks. You can contact scholarship sponsors if you aren't sure how to fill out part of the application.
- Make sure your answers are readable. If you can, fill out the application online. If you have to write out the application, print neatly.
- If you're reusing material (such as a cover letter or an essay) from another scholarship application, make sure you haven't left in any incorrect names.
- Proofread your application. Run spell check and grammar check on the application. Also, have someone else read your essays to catch mistakes and give you feedback.
- Remember to sign and date your application.

Having copies of your scholarship application makes it easy to resend quickly if application materials get lost in the mail. If you're applying for a scholarship online, save copies of your work on your computer.

If you're submitting your application by mail, consider using certified mail or requesting a return receipt to confirm that your materials arrived at their destination.

Source: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/scholarships-and-grants/how-to-apply-for-a-college-scholarship>