

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES

- Get involved! Community service is always a way to boost you application.
- Study! Many scholarships ask for your cumulative GPA.
- Write a resume: This will help you keep track of your involvement in various communities.
- Apply for scholarships that require essays or projects. Fewer people will apply to these which equals less competition.
- Write a strong essay: Be sure to utilize the tips on the back of this sheet!
- Ask early and nicely for letters of recommendation from teachers, employers, etc.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Paying for scholarships and/or advice.
- Giving out your phone number.
- Scholarships that are open to everyone.
- No proof of any past winners (Except in the case of new scholarships).
- Fake nonprofit or federal status.
- Any request for personal financial information.
- Winning a scholarship you didn't apply for.
- Organizations that claim that they will, "Do all the work for you".
- Search fees and claims that, "You can't get this information anywhere else".

HOW TO FIND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Ask your employer as well as your family members' employers for any suggestions.
- Contact your state or local agencies.
- Check out the WCU Financial Aid webpage and social media sites every Wednesday for FREE Money Wednesday.
- Check with your church or other community based organizations.

WHEN TO APPLY

- Utilize the summer to boost your scholarship applications for the fall. Winter break is a great time to work on your personal statement.
- Search for scholarships often.
- Apply for any scholarships that you are interested in early, and always be mindful of any deadlines that are put in place.

OUTSIDE SOURCES

- PETERSON'S
- UNIGO
- FASTWEB
- CAPPEX
- CHEGG
- THE COLLEGE BOARD
- NICHE
- SCHOLARSHIPS.COM
- COLLEGENET.COM
- SCHOLARSHIP MONKEY

SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY TIPS

WHAT IS A PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Your personal statement is an essay that is used to provide the donor with a brief understanding of who you are as an individual. This should give the reader a glimpse of your daily life.
- Possible topics to include are: family background, academic plans and career goals, personal and academic rewards, extracurricular activities, community service, and your financial need.
- Some scholarships will require that you include a personal statement with your application and some may not; however, it is a good idea to have a personal statement on file to include with your application.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD PERSONAL STATEMENT

- It is highly important for you to grab the readers' attention in a unique manner. There are plenty of other applicants who decided to be cliché, but that is not going to win you the scholarship. You must make the reader want to invest his/her time in your essay.
- Hit the ground running in your first paragraph. This will help your scholarship essay stand out from the pack.
- Never underestimate the power of a strong introduction. Look at these two examples of introductory lines. Can you spot the difference?
 - Example #1: Strong leadership skills are important for many reasons.
 - Example #2: November 12, 2016, was the day I lost everything.Example #1 is vague, impersonal and boring. But example #2 is personal, specific and intriguing. It leaves the reader interested and wanting more.
- Be certain to cover all of the qualifications that are specified in the application to be considered for the scholarship.
- It is critical that you highlight your strengths. If you are strong in one area but not another, be sure to put more emphasis on the richer part of your essay.

EDITING YOUR ESSAY

- Reviewing is one of the most important components of writing an essay. You should review the draft yourself as well as a peer or adult.
- If time permits, make the necessary corrections and then go through the process once more.
- Finalize the draft and be sure to make photocopies as well as an electronic copy.

THE DO'S

- Be brief in your description.
- Identify any long term goals.
- Use present tense.
- Allow time for breaks while writing.
- Follow the rules exactly how they are stated.
- Be creative.
- Know your audience: study the organization.

THE DON'T'S

- Don't replicate the information you have on your application.
- Don't compliment yourself.
- Don't make too many statements about what you plan to do.
- Don't begin with, "Hello, my name is..."
- Don't "text talk" - write professionally.
- Don't rush your writing.